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CESARE BORGIA, MACHIAVELLI,
AND THE ROMAGNOL MILITIA

Following the pattern of argument laid down in the seventh chapter of Machiavelli's *Prince*, most modern interpreters of the character and career of Cesare Borgia have portrayed him as a man who, despite his cruelty and treachery, was the author of an imposing system of good government within his duchy of Romagna. Among the many aspects of this government, none has been considered more important than his military policy. Whereas, it is said, the other political leaders of Italy in his age relied upon the mercenary services of the *condottieri*, he alone established *una milizia di paese*: a military force formed from his own subjects. Nothing has gained Cesare more praise. Eduardo Alvisi, who first fully developed the claims for Cesare's *buon governo*, remarked:

Cesare armava i suoi popoli, quando fino allora tutti i Signori d'Italia li tenevano disarmati per potere, come dicevano, più facilmente comandarli ... Né solo le milizie del paese istituiva, ma alle ordinanze poneva capi pur del paese anche se nuovi alle armi ... affinché i Romagnoli si avvezzassero a difendere ed a reggere se stessi per l'onore suo.

Woodward developed this theme in similar terms:

That Cesare Borgia determined to base his sovereignty upon an army owing direct allegiance to himself, and recruited as far as possible from his own states, constitutes a notable claim to the high place in the evolution of Italian politics which historians, with whatever reservations on other grounds, must accord him.

Among military historians Cesare's originality has been stressed by Hobohm and Delbrück, and has caused Pieri to describe him as « vero principe precursore dello stato moderno » (1).

It can be seen that the arguments of Gabriele Pepe, who attacked the whole concept of *buon governo*, are gravely weakened by his silence on this point (2). For if Cesare in fact established a citizen militia, it seems to show a confidence in his subjects and a loyalty on their part which in the Italy of his time was truly impressive. It would show that he was no mere adventurer or tyrant, but a man bent upon the just enrolment of his subjects in his projects and in his rule.

Unfortunately this militia has been more often praised than described, and the authorities mentioned above often differ in their accounts of it. In order to clarify the issues, this paper will try to answer five questions:

- I) What evidence is there that as a conscious policy Cesare Borgia set out to establish a citizen militia?
- II) What evidence is there for the use of native Romagnols in Cesare's armies?
- III) What proportion of Cesare's armies were formed from Romagnol troops?
- IV) Were native troops used to a greater or lesser degree by the Romagnol lords whom Cesare had displaced?
- V) In the light of the answers to these questions what significance can be given to Cesare's militia?

I

In claiming that Cesare determined, as a deliberate policy, to establish a Romagnol militia, his biographers have relied exclusively upon the words of Machiavelli, and indeed no other source refers to this. What in fact can be gleaned on this subject from his writings?

(1) E. ALVISI, *Cesare Borgia: Duca di Romagna*, Imola 1878, pp. 385, 387; W. WOODWARD, *Cesare Borgia*, London 1913, pp. 291-2; M. HOBOLM, *Machiavelli's Renaissance der Kriegskunst*, Berlin 1913, I, p. 182; H. DELBRÜCK, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst in Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, Berlin 1920, IV, pp. 22-23; P. PIERI, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana*, Florence 1952, p. 601.

(2) G. PEPE, *La politica dei Borgia*, Naples 1946, especially pp. 271-284.

In a private conversation which Machiavelli held with the Duke in October 1502, Cesare sought to minimise the strength of the forces opposing him by deprecating the value of the mercenary captains who had gathered against him at Magione. Of Vitellozzo, for instance, he remarked that: « solo è buono a guastare i paesi che non hanno difesa, e a rubare chi non gli mostra il volto, e a fare questi tradimenti » (3). Machiavelli, smarting under the recent failures of the *condottieri* employed by Florence in the Pisan war, and already influenced by a long tradition of humanist rhetoric in favour of native soldiers, was perhaps persuaded by these words that the Duke was a convert to his own militia doctrines. In fact, earlier, on the 9 October he had reported that, Cesare, faced with the Magioneschi, has ordered all those « che sono degli stati suoi » to enter into his service (4).

Certainly, in his letter to the Ten of 3 November 1502, Machiavelli wrote that a confidant of the Duke had told him that: « Questo Signore conosce molto bene che il Papa può morire ogni dì, e che gli bisogna pensare di farsi avanti la sua morte qualche altro fondamento, volendosi mantenere gli stati che lui ha. Il primo fondamento che fa, è sul re di Francia: il secondo, sulle armi proprie ». Cesare, he continued, had already made preparations for a native force of 1,000 troops. Who here was Machiavelli's informant? Probably Machiavelli was following the diplomatic practice which he was to recommend to Raffaello Girolami, and modestly ascribing to some anonymous well-informed person, the opinions which he himself held (5).

However this may be, in 1506, when he was planning the militia army in Florence, Machiavelli remembered Cesare as a militia leader. As commander of his new force he secured the appointment of the Spaniard Don Michele de Corella (known in Italy as Michelozzo): « essendo dall'altro canto uso, mentre fu con il Duca a comandare e maneggiare simili uomini » (6). Seven years later in *The Prince* he observed that when Cesare had acquired Romagna two things hindered him from further advances: the first, the will

(3) (*Le Legazioni (e Commissarie di Niccolò Machiavelli)*, Florence-Rome 1875 (vols. III and IV of *Le opere di N. Machiavelli*, 1873-7; henceforth cited as *Legazioni*), II, p. 107.

(4) *Ibid.*, II, pp. 75-6.

(5) *Ibid.*, II, p. 160; cf. *Memoriale a Raffaello Girolami*, in *Opere di N. Machiavelli*, Milan-Rome 1939, II, p. 725.

(6) P. VILLARI, *Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi*, Milan 1895, I, p. 527; R. RIDOLFI, *Vita di Niccolò Machiavelli*, Rome 1954, pp. 132-3.

of the King of France, the second « L'arme sua che non li parevano fedeli ». He remarked, for instance, that when Borgia planned to attack Bologna, he found the Orsini hostile. « Onde che il duca deliberò non dependere più dalle arme e fortuna d'altri ». Again, he said that for a new prince who has among other desires, that *spegnere la milizia infedele* (a reference to Cesare's capture of his rebellious *condottieri* at Senigallia) *creare della nuova*, he could find no better example than Cesare. In the *Art of War* however, which was finished about 1520, and which was Machiavelli's fullest formulation of the need for citizen militias, no mention was made of the Borgia in this respect (7).

It is obvious then that from Machiavelli's writings alone it is impossible to build up any full picture of Cesare as a ruler who determined to base his sovereignty upon a primarily Romagnol army. All we have here are a few unsubstantiated hints that the Duke was thinking along these lines.

II

However, Machiavelli's reports from Cesare's camp, together with other sources, show that Cesare did indeed from time to time employ Romagnol soldiers. In order to give some precision to what has previously been considered in a confused and generalised way, it is useful to tabulate all the evidence which can be found on the subject.

1) In September 1500, Cesare called up the men of Imola, Forlì and Cesena, on the basis of « one man from each household » (*un uomo per casa*) in preparation for his attack upon Rimini (8).

2) In 1502, the Ten of Florence wrote that in the previous year the Duke had called up his subjects on the basis of « one man from each household » (9). This should presumably be connected with his attack on Faenza in March 1501.

3) On 24 January 1502, Ramirez de Lorqua, the Lieutenant General of the province, wrote to the *anziani* and council of Forlì ordering them to provide a guard of 500 well-armed horsemen to

(7) *Il Principe*, Florence 1947, pp. 48, 55. In the *Dell'Arte della Guerra* (in *Opere*, cit.), Cesare is only mentioned in connection with the attack on the *rocca* of Forlì (p. 641), and the taking of Urbino (p. 648).

(8) M. SANUTO, *I diarii*, Venice 1879-1902, III, p. 832.

(9) G. CANESTRINI, *Scritti inediti di N. Machiavelli riguardanti la storia e la milizia*, Florence 1857, p. xxxvi.

escort Lucrezia Borgia through the province on her way to Ferrara (10).

4) In June 1502 2,000 infantry (*fanti*) from Romagna took part in the attack upon Urbino under the command of Lorqua. These were probably additional to 1,500 infantry despatched from Fano. It is not clear from the sources whether these were raised on the principle of « one man from each household », though it is probable that they were. Two passages in Machiavelli's despatches seem to indicate that a selection was made of men suitable for duty from those who duly reported themselves (11).

5) Buonaccorso recorded that in September 1502 Valentino called up « one man from each household » (12). For how long they were under arms is uncertain. In the following month Machiavelli wrote that on the 9th October Don Michele de Corella had inspected at Imola, 6,000 men from Cesare's own lands, « i quali in due dì può avere insieme ». These last words seem to imply that after the *mostra* the men were sent home to be recalled again when needed. In fact they do not seem to have been called out again once Cesare had built up his new mercenary army to replace that of the rebellious condottieri of Magione (13).

6) In December 1502 Cesare ordered the men of Forlì to assemble and destroy the Castle of Teodorano, belonging to the Archbishop of Ravenna. Very few Forlivesi, however, agreed to go. On the 26 December the Lieutenant of the town sounded the town bell, and threatened to hang anyone who refused to go. Despite this, the people claimed that it would be sinful to attack the castle « dicendo che tale castello siando de dito Monsignor » (14). What happened after this is not known.

7) On the 7 December, 1503, a commissary of the Duke at Sant'Arcangelo attempted to call up 400 men for military service, but, in some unspecified way, had difficulty in securing their obedience (15).

(10) R. ZAZZERI, *La storia di Cesena*, Cesena 1889, p. 420.

(11) *Legazioni*, cit., II, pp. 14, 24; P. M. AMIANI, *Memorie storiche della città di Fano*, Fano 1751, II, pp. 83-4.

(12) B. BUONACCORSO, *Diario*, Florence 1568, p. 65.

(13) *Legazioni*, cit., II, p. 76. The reference of Alvisi and Woodward to a muster of Romagnol militia on 24 December 1502 is mistaken. Their source, *Legazioni*, cit., II, p. 250, mentions only: « 2500 fanti oltremontani e quasi altrettanti Italiani ». For the October muster, SANUTO, op. cit., IV, pp. 375-6 (« per una spia ») records only 1,600 *paesani*, though here, presumably, Machiavelli's figures are more likely to be true.

(14) A. BERNARDI, *Chronache Forlivesi*, Bologna 1895-7, II, pp. 26-7.

(15) SANUTO, op. cit., IV, p. 727.

8) At the same time Cesare employed some paid, regular, Romagnol troops. On 8 October 1502, Machiavelli reported the raising of '800 infantry from the Val di Lamone ». It seems probable that these were the same forces (then estimated to be only 500 in number) who were found under Dionigi Naldi, the *condottiere* from the Val di Lamone, in his report of 13 November. In this same report l'Imola was noted as having 200, and Marcantonio da Fano as having 500 infantry. As these two men were subjects of the duchy of Romagna it seems reasonable to assume that their troops were predominantly Romagnol. By 23 December Naldi's forces had been increased by another hundred men who were specifically said to have come from the Val di Lamone. Machiavelli also refers to forty men at arms (*uomini d'arme*) under Guido Vaini, and forty under Giovanni de' Sassatelli, both of whom were Romagnol, and another fifty men *raccolti de' paesi suoi* (16). These troops certainly took part in the march on Senigallia, and probably too, in the capture of Città di Castello and Perugia in January 1503.

After this date there is other evidence for the employment of paid Romagnol troops. In a letter of 22 April 1503, Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador at Rome, reported that he had seen « circa 500 fanti de quelli de Romagna, tutti vestiti a un modo alla divisa del Duca » (17). It was perhaps for these troops that Cesare ordered arms (never in fact delivered) from merchants of Brescia in 1503 (18).

Examining this evidence it appears that there were two different uses of native troops in Cesare's armies. First there was the calling up of inhabitants for emergency levies, generally on the principle of *un uomo per casa*. Such levies seems to have been summoned only at times of crisis: at the siege of Faenza, at the revolt of the conspirators of Magion, and so on. Sometimes, we have seen, they were difficult to raise. Their military efficiency was probably slight. It is probably significant that the word used to describe the soldier levied in this way: *cerna*, also bore the subsidiary meaning: « uomo da poca esperienza nelle cose e da niente » (19).

(16) *Legazioni*, cit., II, pp. 75-6, 174-6, 247.

(17) A. GIUSTINIAN, *Dispacci*, Firenze 1876, I, p. 487. Alvisi's reference (p. 386 n. 1) to the letter of 3 July 1503 does not, as he claimed, show any use of Romagnols, cf. GIUSTINIAN, op. cit., II, p. 61, n. 2.

(18) ALVISI, op. cit., p. 388.

(19) N. TOMMASEO, *Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, II, Turin 1929, *sub nom.*

In addition to these pressed men, some native infantry, often from the Val di Lamone, were enlisted on a more permanent basis. In that the leaders of these paid troops were themselves Romagnols — men such as Dionigi Naldi, Taddeo della Volpe, Marcantonio da Fano, Giovanni de' Sassatelli, and Guido Vaini — there might seem to be some substance in Alvisi's claim that Cesare's army was commanded by native leaders. But of these men, two at least, were certainly, and the others, probably, professional *condottieri* (20). Moreover the overlordship of the army as a whole rested with Spaniards: with Ramirez de Lorqua, Ugo de Cardona, and, as Machiavelli pointed out, with Michele de Corella (21). With the name of Corella apologists for Cesare's « good government » may be tempted to pause, for he enjoyed among his contemporaries an unsavoury reputation as « a monster of iniquity » and « an enemy of God and man » (22). Villari, writing in a liberal tradition of historiography, was horrified that, after all his fine words about Marcellus and Camillus and Scipio, Machiavelli should have chosen such a man as general of the Florentine militia. Even Hobohm, though dissenting from Villari's moral strictures, found him in the Florentine context, « ein herzlich unbedeutender Mensch ». « Seine Klugheit war, soviel ich sehe, nichts als Verschmitztheit, seine Energie blosse Brutalität. Er war einer solchen Aufgabe doch wohl an Intellect und ausdauernder Willenskraft nicht gewachsen ». Hobohm however assumed that Corella's cruelty was necessary in Romagna (23). Presumably he believed that the peasants of Romagna (though not of the Casentino or the Florentine Romagna) deserved such a leader.

III

It must now be considered what proportion of Cesare's army, after the revolt of Magione, was formed from native Romagnol troops. Here one is faced with the difficulty that the sources on

(20) For Taddeo della Volpe in Cesare's service: ALVISI, *op. cit.*, p. 258. For the careers of Dionigi and his cousin Vincenzo, with Taddeo della Volpe, in Venetian service, see L. DA PORTO, *Lettere storiche*, Florence 1857, pp. 242, 292-3, 41, 66. D. ZAULI-NALDI, *Dionigi e Vincenzo Naldi in Romagna (1494-1504)*, Faenza 1925, gives a summary account. Dionigi had served with the Venetians at Pisa in 1496 as « capo di balestre a cavole », BERNARDI, *op. cit.*, I, pt. II, p. 190. Sassatelli had served with the Vitelli before 1500: ALVISI, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

(21) *Legazioni*, *cit.*, II, pp. 75, 80.

(22) For his reputation in 1503, *Legazioni*, *cit.*, II, pp. 429-30, in 1506, F. GUICCIARDINI, *Storie Fiorentine*, Bari 1931, p. 281.

(23) HOBHOM, *op. cit.*, VI, pp. 178-9.

Cesare's army all derive not from nominal rolls but from reports of ambassadors or spies who were driven to fairly rough and ready calculations on the basis of what they had heard or seen. Consequently they are sometimes contradictory and are not to be taken as absolutely accurate. However a reasonably clear general picture emerges. A useful starting point is given by Machiavelli's reports to the Ten on the total military strength of the Duke between October 1502 and 8 January 1503 (24).

From these despatches it appears in fact that Cesare's army consisted of about 500 *uomini d'arme* (*elmetti*, or trained, fully-armoured soldiers, generally serving in « lances »), 800 light horse, and 6,000 foot soldiers (25). (These figures do not include the 450 French « lances » dismissed on the 22 December). Of the *uomini d'arme*, 150 were Spanish, 140 were Romagnols (50 *raccolti de' paesi suoi*, 50 under Guido Vaini, and 40 under Giovanni de' Sassatelli), 90 were other Italians and a 100 consisted of *gentili uomini di casa*. It is more difficult to determine the composition of the light horse (26). Of these, the 150 under Spanish commanders (including Corella) were probably Romagnols, and 180 were other Italians. Another 30 were *stradiotti*, or light cavalry recruited in Albania. I am not certain of the provenance of the other 400 light horse in the army, but feel it probable that, here, Machiavelli is counting in the 400 horse which Giovanni Bentivoglio had agreed to provide from Bologna. Of the foot soldiers, 1,500 were Swiss Gascons, and Germans, 1,200 were Romagnols, 1,050 were Spaniards, and 2,500 were Italians from outside Romagna.

Such was the composition of Cesare's army at the beginning of 1503. What of the position during the rest of the year? Throughout January one can see from reports to the Venetian republic how Cesare was continually reinforcing his army. On the 7 January came news that 600 infantry from Piedmont were passing

(24) The following paragraph is based upon *Legazioni*, cit., II, pp. 75-6, 90-1, 121, 140, 144-5, 153, 174-6, 192, 247, 250 (cf. the claims of HOBOLM, op. cit., II, pp. 295, 273). The list in E. RICOTTI, *Storia delle Compagnie di Ventura in Italia*, Turin 1844, III, pp. 441-3, is based only on II, 174-6.

(25) *Legazioni*, cit., II, p. 273; cf. the figures Alexander VI gave to Giustinian in December (viz. 400 *uomini d'arme*, 600 light horse, and 6,000 foot) and those reported to Venice from Ravenna (« 800 lanze, 800 cavalli lizieri, et 7000 fanti »): GIUSTINIAN, op. cit., p. 297; SANUTO, op. cit., IV, p. 586.

(26) Machiavelli (*Legazioni*, cit., II, pp. 174-6) included horse musketeers and mounted crossbowmen under *cavalli leggieri*. Yet the force of Giovanni de' Sassatelli (who, according to SANUTO, IV, p. 376, was « capitano dei balestrieri ») he included under *uomini d'arme*. Presumably he made a distinction between heavily and lightly armoured archers.

through Ferrara on their way to the Duke; on the 10th that 1,500 Germans were moving through Cesena; on the 26th that Città di Castello had provided him, already, with a force of 500 (presumably native) infantry (27). But by the end of the month, when he returned to Rome many of these troops were doubtless disbanded. The diarist Landucci mentions that on the 2 February 400 German soldiers, dismissed by the Duke, had passed by Florence (28).

In fact three Venetian reports of a muster of troops held by Cesare near Viterbo on the 9 February gave the following three estimates of the troops he then held:

1) 600 men at arms, 600 light horse, 2,000 Germans, 2,000 French and Gascon infantry;

2) 500 men at arms, about 500 light horse, 5-6,000 infantry;

3) 700 men at arms, 1,000 light horse, 6,000 infantry.

In addition to these troops (or, in part, perhaps, explaining the discrepancies between accounts 1 and 2 and 3), the Duke commanded the assembly of 700 infantry from Narni and 1,500 from Spoleto (29). Something like these forces, which, as can be seen, were still predominantly foreign, probably remained with him until the fall of his power in August and September. In September, in fact, amidst confused reports, we hear of him holding 2,000 Spaniards, and 500 Gascons (30).

In Romagna itself, in October 1503, the Duke held the Romagnol companies of Naldi and Sassatelli (31). But the majority of troops left to guard the province seem to be foreigners. Certainly the castellans of Fano, Forlì, Russi, Brisighella, Rimini, Faenza, Imola, Meldola, Bertinoro, Forlimpopoli, and Cesena, were all Spaniards (32). At the same time we find there 200 Swiss under Antonio del Monte, and, in the garrison at Cesena, a force of 240 Germans, 500 Swiss, 30 Spaniards, and 50 Italians (33). Moreover,

(27) SANUTO, op. cit., pp. 591, 599, 660. A. LISINI, *Cesare Borgia e la repubblica senese*, in « *Bullettino senese di storia patria* », VII (1900), p. 111, assigns Cesare an army of 15,000 men at this period, and other historians have followed him in this. But the figure is given without reference to any source, and is clearly exaggerated.

(28) L. LANDUCCI, *Diario fiorentino*, Florence 1883, p. 254.

(29) SANUTO, op. cit., IV, pp. 740, 749, 733 (and cf. GIUSTINIAN, op. cit., I, p. 391).

(30) SANUTO, op. cit., V, pp. 77, 106 (for other reports, V, pp. 76, 80 and see GIUSTINIAN, op. cit., I, p. 483; II, p. 81).

(31) SANUTO, op. cit., V, pp. 139, 146.

(32) *Ibid.*, V, pp. 128, 154, 228, 262, 394, 468, 565; BERNARDI, op. cit., I, pt. II, p. 316; II, pp. 12, 64, 104, 112, 114-5.

(33) SANUTO, op. cit., V, pp. 229, 508, 565

the 2,000 foot-soldiers, whom Giustinian reports as coming from Romagna to Cesare in August 1503 seem, too, to be predominantly Spanish (34). One cannot avoid here the impression of a province dominated by foreign military leaders and foreign troops.

In fact, with the wealth of the Papacy behind him, Cesare was virtually able to monopolise the mercenary forces of Italy, and these, together with his French allies, provided by far the greater part of his army. He was not, in other words, as Machiavelli was perhaps trying to suggest in *The Prince*, making any attempt to form an army which dispensed with foreign mercenary troops and relied wholly upon native soldiers. On the contrary his success is explained, as the Perugian chronicler put it, through the fact that « tutto e fiore de soldate aveva cum seco, perché tutte li famosi condutieri aveva per sé » (35). His successes were owed, as Machiavelli himself admitted, to « le arme e fortuna di altri ».

IV

With these conclusions in mind, it can now be asked whether the use made by Cesare of native troops was exceptional and revolutionary in the Italy or in the Romagna of his day. Alvisi, it has been seen, at one stage in his biography of Cesare, suggested that Cesare was unique in arming his people and that all other princes sought to disarm them. In the same work, however he had second thoughts on the subjects. Some other lords, he admitted, did have their own native forces, but these were ill-developed and few in numbers. In this he followed Ricotti's old analysis of non-mercenary forces, which recognised such phenomenon as the Este's arming of their own subjects in 1479, but which, none the less, concluded that there were no stable militias in Italy at the beginning of the sixteenth century (36).

Later studies modified Alvisi's conclusions further. Woodward was forced to admit that the raising of native troops on the « one from each household » principle was found in Umbria as early as the fourteenth century, and here, he assumed Cesare must have

(34) GIUSTINIAN, op. cit., II, p. 160.

(35) *Cronaca di Francesco Matarazzo*, in « Archivio storico italiano », XV (1851), p. 221.

(36) ALVISI, op. cit., pp. 384-5; RICOTTI, op. cit., III, pp. 353-6; and in the same sense, G. CANESTRINI, *Documenti per servire alla storia della Milizia italiana*, in « Archivio storico italiano », XV (1851), pp. CVI-CVII.

learnt « much from the experience of the Vitelli and the Baglioni ». Delbrück, quoting a passage from Paolo Giovio, dwelt upon the Vitelli's enlistment of their subjects in Città di Castello in 1496. Again, Hobohm pointed out that Machiavelli himself had reported to the Ten in July 1499 that Caterina Sforza, *Signora* of Imola and Forlì, possessed two regiments of native infantry, one of which had 1,500 soldiers (37). Granting this, however, these writers considered Cesare as bringing something which had previously been spasmodic and very rare to a much fuller development.

In fact, as far as Romagna is concerned, this is not so. The *signori* whom Cesare had dispossessed had for a long time employed their own subjects in their military forces. This is well illustrated by considering the forces held by the Manfredi, who had ruled Faenza and the Val di Lamone before 1501. In the county of the Val di Lamone indeed, the arming of the Manfredi's subjects had been specifically ordained by statute. The Statutes of the Val di Lamone of 1412 laid down that « whenever at the command of the Lord of the county it is necessary to carry out *exercitum vel cavalcata*, the General Massarius, together with the lord Viscount and the two councillors of the said Valle who shall be in office at the time, must elect constables or suitable officers ». Then the daily rates of pay were given: twelve *solidi parvi* of Bologna for mounted, and eight *solidi* for foot soldiers (38).

Presumably these statutes envisaged temporary levies of troops. But the Manfredi also employed native troops on a more permanent basis. This can be seen, for instance, in a letter to the Florentine commissary, Mariotto de' Baldovinetti, telling him of the negotiations concerning the renewal of the *condotta* of the Lord of Faenza in 1425. The Florentines were asked, he was told, first for a provision for 450 « lances » and then « per sostenimento d'uomini poveri et suoi amici da Faenza » for an agreement for the hiring of 300 infantry. Clearly, then, the infantry were to be com-

(37) WOODWARD, op. cit., p. 310; DELBRÜCK, op. cit., IV, pp. 22-3; HOBOLM, op. cit., II, pp. 293-4 (and citing *Legazioni*, I, pp. 21-2, which shows ALVISI, p. 385, to be in error). Delbrück's assertion, IV, p. 23, that Venice only began to raise troops from her own territories as a result of Cesare's experiments, was based on overmuch reliance on a passage in *Dell'Arte della Guerra*, cit., II, p. 663. In fact, BERNARDI, I, pt. II, pp. 186-9, reveals a *mostra* of Venetian troops in 1496 with many soldiers from Ravenna.

(38) Biblioteca Comunale di Faenza, *Statuta Vallis Lamonis*, Bk. IV, rubric 19, f. 75. The statutes of the town of Faenza of 1410 decreed too that none should hold office « unless he goes in the host or in *cavalcata* » (G. ROSSINI, *Statuta Faventinae*, in *R.I.S.*, XXVIII, pt. V, I, p. 69).

posed of native troops; presumably too some of the 450 « lances » that the Lord Astorgio commanded were recruited from his own lands. Again, when, six years later, Guidantonio de' Manfredi held a *condotta* from Florence for 400 horse and 400 infantry, it is reasonable to assume that the latter at least must have been composed of « uomini poveri e suoi amici da Faenza » (39).

The archives of the Manfredi (as of all the other *signori* of Romagna) which might have thrown light on their employment of native troops have disappeared, but references to their use are quite frequent in the chronicles. When, for instance, in 1432, Madonna Gentile, mother of Astorgio II and Guidantonio Manfredi, planned an attack upon Forlì, she hastened, according to the contemporary Pedrino, to the Val di Lamone, where she made a « certa adunanca da pié e da cavallo ». In another attack on Forlì in 1433 Guidantonio Manfredi moved against the town « con alcuna brigad(a) de cavallo che lui avia dentro da Fença, i quali erano de le gente di veneciani e alcuno suo fante da pié del le sue terre paexani ». In November 1454, when Astorgio II Manfredi went to the aid of Cecco degli Ordellaffi, he came with « fante de Fença e de la valle de Lamone ». Astorgio is found with native forces again in 1462 (40). In 1494, the Florentine commissary, Bibbiena, writing to Piero de' Medici, noted that over a thousand foot-soldiers could be provided by the Val di Lamone. In the following year « circa 100 homini armati de quilli de Val da Lamone » moved to assist Caterina Sforza at Forlì. At the same time the chronicler Bernardi mentions 400 infantry of the Valle operating under the command of Vincenzo Naldi (41).

The other states of Romagna had their own paid native soldiers too. At Forlì, for instance, in 1434, Antonio Ordellaffi commanded 200 horse, and many foot-soldiers who were said to have been composed both of men from his own territory and foreigners. In the following year, Forlì attacked Cusercoli with « la nostra brigata de fanti a pié forestieri e alcuno del contado ». Four years later, Antonio sent to Ravenna « 200 fanti, e la maore parte erano da Forlì ». Of Antonio's attack on Sadurano in June 1440, the

(39) Archivio di Stato di Firenze, X di Balía, Missive, Reg. II, 4, 1 Dec. 1425; GIOVANNI DI M. PEDRINO, *Cronica del suo tempo*, Vatican City 1929-34, I, p. 264.

(40) *Ibid.*, I, pp. 384-5, 455; II, pp. 283, 385.

(41) G. L. MONCALLERO, *Documenti inediti sulla guerra di Romagna del 1494*, in « Rinascimento », 1953, p. 236; L. COBELLI, *Cronache Forlivesi*, Bologna 1874, p. 396; BERNARDI, *op. cit.*, I, pt. II, p. 116.

chronicler specifically observed that « Non avea el signore al suo servixio homo nessuno forestiero » (42). In November 1495 native forces from Imola and Forlì united with those from Faenza and the Val di Lamone to attack Count Guido Guerra of Giaggiolo, while in July 1499, as we have already seen, Machiavelli estimated that Caterina Sforza held over 1,500 *fanti*. On the 16th of that month the Priors of Florence wrote to Machiavelli saying that they had been « stati serviti sempre bene dalli huomini di cotesto paese » (43).

In the Malatesti territories the position was probably the same. A book drawn up for Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesti between 1461 and 1463 and containing regulations for castellans in the Marche opens with the words: « In primis che li dicti castellani non tengano paghe morte, et che non possano tener niuno che non sia del terreno de Malatesti ». The Malatesti seems particularly to have been dependant upon their own subjects for archers. In April, 1415, 300 archers were raised from Malatesti lands while in May of the same year, Malatesta Malatesti called for 300 *fanti* from Fano and its *contado*. In 1431 the Malatesti lords sent 60 crossbowmen to Imola, which, Pedrino noticed, were all from their own lands. Eight years later 50 crossbowmen from Fano were acting for Sigismondo in his attack on Pergola (44).

Most, though not all, of the native forces so far referred to, seem to be paid and regular. In addition the Romagnol states enforced the same type of irregular levies as those made by Cesare. Under the ecclesiastical government of Forlì in October 1432 the Papal Governor of Romagna made an irregular levy, though this was not attended by much success: « fe' comandare a Forlì e a le castelle uno homo per caxa, digando stesseno aparechiadi; ma non n'abe efetto el comandamento ché mezzodì la canpanella de monsignore sonò: non ne andò nessuno » (45). The *signori* seem to have enjoyed greater success in this. In March 1410 Antonio Ordelaffi was employing « circa 1000 fanti di suo' de la tera e contadini », and in April, « con grande zente da pié tutte la Forlì ... circa 200 homi(n)i a pié ». It seems probable that these men were raised by irregular levies. In the same way when Forlì and For-

(42) PEDRINO, op. cit., I, pp. 461, 510; II, pp. 42, 98.

(43) COBELLI, op. cit., pp. 394-7; *Legazioni*, cit., I, p. 12.

(44) A. ZONGHI, *Repertorio dell'antico Archivio comunale di Fano*, Fano 1888, p. 149; PEDRINO, op. cit., I, p. 307; AMIANI, op. cit., I, p. 383.

(45) PEDRINO, op. cit., I, p. 365.

limpopoli attacked Bertinoro in 1464 Cecco Ordelaffi « convene a Forlì sonar la canpana grossa, e molta zente prestamente fonno a soccorso del signore. Fonno circha 2 milia homini con arme ... » (46). Under the Sforza, we find the Lady Caterina calling up the Forlivesi, « uno homo per caxa », in December 1498 (47).

In Rimini the system of calling up men on the basis of « one man from each household » had existed already in the fourteenth century. Dr. Jones has explained that this was an expedient to which resort was not normally made, yet it was available in time of crisis. Noticeably during the reign of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesti there was frequent use of the *cerne commandate*. In 1442 he lead « ottocento fanti, la maore parte cerne ». There were other references to these troops in the years, 1446, 1447, 1456, and 1460, while in 1458, according to Pedrino, almost a thousand of them were lost in Sigismondo's attack on Carpegna (48). Again, in 1442, the Malatesti of Cesena sent « many foot from Cesena per cerne » to aid Piccinino's forces. In 1440 Fano provided no less than 3,000 men organised in three companies (49).

How the citizens of the towns would gather in defence of their lord is vividly illustrated by an incident in May 1460 when Taddeo Manfredi, then Lord of Imola, was marching by night to attack his kinsman, Astorgio II of Faenza. The news of the intended assault was brought to Astorgio « and as soon as he had heard the messenger, he got up from bed and caused the bell on the great tower to be run backwards and lights to be placed on the tower, and at once a great multitude of the men of Faenza gathered in his aid and favour ». Again, the Manfredi made at times *uomo per casa* enlistments in the Val di Lamone. In October 1499 Astorgio III Manfredi tried to call up the men of the Valle on this basis, though on this occasion they refused aid without payment. This system was also used in the Florentine Romagna; in January 1436, for instance, Florence called out *un uomo per casa* from Castrocaro and Modigliana in order to attack Salutare, while in November

(46) *Ibid.*, II, pp. 83, 90-4, 407.

(47) SANUTO, *op. cit.*, II, p. 172.

(48) *Cronache malatestiane dei secoli XIV e XV*, in *R.I.S.*, XV, II, p. 39; PHILLIP JONES, *The Malatesta of Rimini*, Oxford, II, p. 736; PEDRINO, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 168, 227, 235, 326, 355.

(49) AMIANI, *op. cit.*, I, p. 386. Under the papal government of Fano, from 1463, there was frequent use of « le nostre cerne »; in 1464, *ibid.*, II, p. 9; in 1473, *ibid.*, II, p. 33; in 1475, *ibid.*, II, p. 39; in 1479, *ibid.*, II, p. 46. See too the 150 *fanti* sent from the papally controlled lands of Verucchio, Sant'Arcangelo, and Cesena in 1482: BERNARDI, *op. cit.*, I, p. 95.

1503, on the same system, they called out local levies from Galeata and Val di Bagno (50).

V

Enough has been said to show that the *signori* who ruled Romagna before the Borgia conquest were accustomed to raise both paid permanent forces and irregular levies from their own subjects. The *signori* themselves drew most of their income from their activities as *condottieri* and it is reasonable to assume that the unmounted parts of their forces were drawn almost wholly from their fellow citizens. So too, probably, were many of the « lances » which they raised, though, for some of these highly trained and specialised units the *signori* would have to look outside their own lands. On balance, when considering, for instance, the 2,000 native foot-soldiers which could be raised from Forlì, the 3,000 men from Fano, and the 1,000 men from the Val di Lamone, it seems safe to assume that the greater part of the total forces of the *signori* were normally raised from their own subjects.

This said, it can be seen that the extravagant claims which have been made for Cesare's military establishment in the Romagna have no basis in reality. The Borgia Duke did not abandon the use of *condottieri* in favour of native forces, he established nothing new or revolutionary, his measures did not « si avvicina all'esercito permanente » (51). All he did was to continue in being the systems of local enlistments of native troops which he already found in existence in Romagna.

In fact, without realising that the Romagnol *signori* had already established their own militia, Hobohm, in the final analysis was forced to admit that, as it was established, Cesare's militia amounted to very little. None the less, basing himself upon what he believed Machiavelli to have said, he concluded Cesare's greatness from what he would have made of the militia, had he continued to rule. What this system would have been, Machiavelli is

(50) B. AZZURINI, *Chronica Breviora*, in *R.I.S.*, XXVIII, pt. III, p. 238; BERNARDI, *op. cit.*, I, pt. II, p. 234; PEDRINO, *op. cit.*, I, p. 536; SANUTO, *op. cit.*, V, p. 306. (Florence similarly « commandà uno homo per caxa » in the Valdichiana in February 1503; *ibid.*, IV, pp. 706-7).

(51) F. CHABOD, *Del Principe di Niccolò Machiavelli*, in *Scritti su Machiavelli*, Turin 1964, pp. 88, n. 4. This observation was based on HOBOLM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 297, against which see DELBRÜCK, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 125.

said to have imported into Tuscany (52). All this is nothing more than speculation and very dubious speculation at that. As Bayley's recent study has shown, Machiavelli did not have to look outside the humanists of his native Florence for dreams about a citizen army (53). There seems no reasonable ground for assuming that Cesare in 1502 should have had any more enthusiasm for Machiavelli's views than did Guicciardini as Governor of the Romagna in 1525 (54). The only evidence that he did is based upon Machiavelli's hints - hints, which, it will be noticed, were never expanded to a direct statement.

(52) HEBELM, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 182-3.

(53) C. C. BAYLEY, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence*, Toronto 1961.

(54) On which, RIDOLFI, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-324; J. R. HALE, *Machiavelli and Renaissance Italy*, London 1961, pp. 216-8. Guicciardini's letter to Clement VII on this theme in F. GUICCIARDINI, *Opere Inedite*, Florence 1857-67, VIII, pp. 266-9.