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The Ambassadors of Henry VIII,

The Personnel of English Diplomacy,
c.1500 - c.1550

By

Luke MacMahon

Dissertation submitted for the degree of Ph.D to the
University of Kent at Canterbury,

1999

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the nature and function of the English diplomatic service in the early 16th century. The first chapter will explore the gradual adoption by Henry VIII's government of resident diplomacy and the impact its use had on those employed as permanent ambassadors. The three central chapters will look at the three main groups from which Henry drew his ambassadors: the clergy, the titled aristocracy and gentry, and merchants. Each section will examine the background, education and training, and specific skills which each group contributed to the king's diplomacy. The final chapter will evaluate the pros and cons of diplomatic service and consider what part it played in the overall development of the careers of those chosen to perform it. In order to place the Tudor diplomatic service in context periodic comparisons will be made with its Habsburg and Valois rivals.

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In memory of Graeme Dodds

Abbreviations

Bell, <i>Handlist</i> ,	<i>A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688</i> , (London, 1990).
BL,	British Library
BIHR,	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
CAF,	<i>Catalogue des actes de François I^{er}</i> , ed.F.Marichal, (10 vols, Paris, 1887-1910).
<i>Contemporaries</i> ,	<i>Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation</i> , ed. P.G.Bientenholz, 3 vols, (Toronto, 1985).
CSPS,	<i>Calendar of State Papers Spanish</i> , eds.G.A.Bergenroth and P.Gayangos, (1862-1886).
CSPV,	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Venetian</i> , eds.R.Browne, C.Bentink, H.Brown, (9 vols, 1864-98).
DBF	<i>Dictionnaire de Biographie Française</i> , 17 vols, (Paris,1933-1988)
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
EHR,	<i>English Historical Review</i>
HP	<i>History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509-1558</i> , ed.S.T.Bindoff, (London, 1982).
Kaulek,	<i>Correspondance politique, MM de Castilon et de Marillac, ambassadeurs de France en Angleterre, (1537-1542)</i> , ed Kaulek, (Paris, 1885).
L&P,	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509-1547</i> , eds.J.Brewer, J.Gairdner and R.H.Brodie, (21 vols, 1862-1910).
PRO,	Public Record Office
Rogers,	<i>The Letters of Sir John Hackett</i> , ed.E.F.Rogers, (Morgantown, 1971).
Rymer,	<i>Foedera Conventiones Litterae</i> , ed.T,Rymer and R.Sanderson, (20 vols, London, 1727-35).
<i>SCJ</i> ,	<i>Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
St.P.	<i>State Papers of Henry the Eighth</i> , (11 vols, 1830-1852).

Introduction

The idea for this thesis came from an earlier piece of research concerned with Henry VIII's final invasion of France in 1544.¹ A large part of the surviving documentation consisted of dispatches from Henry's ambassadors with the emperor and his sister, Queen Mary of Hungary, regent of the Low Countries. In addition to the reams of diplomatic news and information about Habsburg military preparations and Valois counter-measures there were occasional remarks alluding to the personal circumstances of the ambassadors themselves - usually explaining just how bad they were. It struck me that if one were to distil these fragments of personal information from a far wider collection of correspondence, for example all diplomatic dispatches written in the reign of Henry VIII, it would be possible to draw a detailed picture of what it was like to serve as an ambassador in the sixteenth century. A cursory assessment of literature on the subject made clear that the period in which I wanted to base my study, was, in terms of diplomatic history, highly significant. I could not only indulge my curiosity but shed some light on the early development of modern diplomacy.

My 'cursory assessment of the literature', had largely consisted of reading Garrett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy*.² Yet years afterwards with many books, theses and articles on early modern European diplomacy behind me, Mattingly's work remains perhaps the most relevant and important on the subject. The primary objective of *Renaissance Diplomacy* was to chart the birth and development of resident diplomacy from its beginnings in the city states of Italy to its wide scale adoption by the governments of western Europe. As well as tracing the spread of the resident system Mattingly examined how different governments applied the new diplomatic practice and briefly described the experiences and activities of the men chosen to serve as permanent envoys. Impressive as his work remains, however, the sheer breadth of its scope

¹ L.MacMahon, 'The English invasion of France, 1544', MA, (Warwick, 1992).

² G.Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, (London, 1955).

concerned as it is with changes in diplomacy throughout western Europe over two centuries, ensured that it was simply not possible to describe in any detail the development of individual countries' diplomatic services. As a consequence the changes which took place in England between 1485 and the accession of Elizabeth are summed up in one or two pages.³

Amazingly in the near fifty years that have passed since the publication of *Renaissance Diplomacy* few books have been published dealing specifically with the practice of diplomacy in the early modern period and none concerned with the English diplomatic service under the Tudors. The reason why this is so astonishing is that few areas of potential study are quite as rich in documentation as that dealing with diplomacy. One might speculate that it is the sheer glut of sources which deter historians from pursuing the task. Donald Queller's *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, comes closest to following up Mattingly's work taking into consideration the early part of the sixteenth century in its survey of diplomatic administration.⁴ Yet this very scholarly work, as its title would suggest, is primarily concerned with the centuries before the sixteenth, and for the most part concerns itself with the development of diplomatic practice in Italy, and in particular Venice. The work of Jocelyn Russell is very much concerned with renaissance diplomacy but is largely devoted to the description and analysis of specific diplomatic events such as the conference held at Calais in 1521 and the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. Although these case studies provide valuable insights into the diplomatic practice of the time, they nevertheless deal with extraordinary events and tell us little about diplomatic service in general and those who undertook it.⁵

³ *Ibid*, pp.151-153, 174-175.

⁴ D.E.Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1967).

⁵ J.C.Russell, *Peacemaking in the Renaissance*, (London, 1986); *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies*, (Stroud, 1992). Both books open with a chapter discussing the general conditions in which renaissance diplomacy was carried out and devote considerable attention to the problem of language. Again given the breadth of the subject Russell's treatment of it is necessarily superficial.

Yet the absence of monographs on the subject does not mean that much good work has not been done on specific areas. John Ferguson's study of English diplomatic policy in the fifteenth century contains a useful concluding chapter dealing with diplomatic law which has much relevance to the later period.⁶ David Potter's thesis on Anglo-French diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century also includes a chapter on the comparative development of the English and French diplomatic services, and is particularly strong on the relationship between the respective governments and their ambassadors and the practice of intelligence gathering.⁷ Charles Giry-Deloison by means of qualitative analysis has not only provided us with an accurate statistical breakdown of the diplomatic personnel used in Anglo-French diplomacy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but also given us a much better understanding of their social and political backgrounds.⁸ One aspect of Glenn Richardson's thesis on Anglo-French political and cultural relations between the courts of Henry and Francis is his illuminating descriptions of the experiences enjoyed by English ambassadors dispatched to France, particularly in the 1520s.⁹ A more general analysis of Henry's diplomatic service has been offered by G.M.Bell who seeks to contextualize it by making comparisons with that of Elizabeth.¹⁰ Unfortunately these articles illuminate most of all the disparity of the author's knowledge. A specialist on Elizabethan diplomacy, Professor Bell's grasp of the earlier period is distinctly less firm. For the most part,

⁶ J.Ferguson, *English Diplomacy 1422-1461*, (Oxford, 1972), pp.146-175.

⁷ D.L.Potter, 'Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century: England and France, 1536-1550', Ph.D, (Cambridge, 1973), pp.273-343.

⁸ C.Giry-Deloison, 'Le personnel diplomatique au début du XVI^e siècle. L'exemple les relations franco-anglaises de l'avènement de Henry VII au Camp du Drap d'Or, (1485-1520)', *Journal des Savants*, (July-December 1987), 205-249. See also, 'La naissance de la diplomatie moderne en France et en Angleterre au début du XVI^e siècle, (1475-1520)', *Nouvelle revue du seizième siècle*, 5, (1987), 41-58.

⁹ G.Richardson, 'Anglo-French political and cultural relations during the reign of Henry VIII', Ph.D, (London 1995).

¹⁰ G.M.Bell, 'Elizabethan diplomacy, the subtle revolution', in *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy*, eds.M.A.Thorpe and A.J.Slavin, (Missouri, 1994); 'Tudor Stuart diplomacy, history and the Henrician experience', *State, Sovereigns and Society*, ed.C.Carlton, (Stroud, 1998), pp.25-43.

however, the research of these historians has added significantly to our understanding of diplomatic history in the period. Yet this work, valuable though it has been, has focused primarily on England's relations with France, which although of great importance constituted only part of the work performed by Henry's ambassadors.

If one wishes to get a clearer picture of the purely diplomatic activities carried out by Henry's ambassadors there is no shortage of material. J.J.Scarisbrick's *Henry VIII*, for all its thirty years in print, still offers the best overall account of Tudor diplomacy at this time.¹¹ R.B.Wernham's study of Tudor foreign policy from the accession of Henry VII to the arrival of the Armada, provides a handy if rather dull narrative, which at least for the Henrician period often lacks perception and is at times positively ill-advised.¹² Nearer the present, Susan Doran's survey of English diplomacy in the sixteenth century provides a useful summary of the key issues and an assessment of recent historiography on the subject,¹³ and D.L.Potter's essay on the foreign policy of Henry VIII re-considers the role of honour in policy formulation and the impact of the French pension on English diplomacy.¹⁴

¹¹ J.J.Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, (London, 1997).

¹² R.B.Wernham, *England Before the Armada: the growth of English Foreign policy, 1485-1588*, (Oxford, 1966). Of the motivation for the king's second war with France, Wernham observed, 'In short, the explanation of Henry's undertaking to invade France with a force of 40,000 men is probably to be found in Charles' promise to marry Mary when she reached the age of 12.', p.102. The apparent reason for the final Anglo-French war was Henry's desire to eliminate the threat posed by Scotland by crippling her more powerful ally, pp.149-152. Yet why if the king felt such anxiety about his northern neighbour did he not simply pressurize Francis into remaining neutral and send his 42,000 strong army across the border to impose his will upon Scotland? It hardly requires retrospection to work out that by attacking Montreuil and Boulogne Henry was far more likely to provoke French intervention in Scotland than deter it! See Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.425-426.

¹³ S.Doran, *England and Europe, in the Sixteenth Century*, (Basingstoke, 1998).

¹⁴ D.L.Potter, 'Foreign Policy', in *The Reign of Henry VIII, Politics, Policy and Piety*, ed.D.MacCulloch, (London, 1995). For an assessment of the importance of French pensions to individual courtiers see, C.Giry-DeLoison, 'Money and early Tudor diplomacy. The English pensioners of the French kings, (1475-1547)', in *Medieval History*, 2, (1993), 129-147. Steven Gunn's studies of Henry's wars with France also provide useful insights into the motives which drove the king's policy. Gunn emphasizes the importance of Henry's honour in his conduct of foreign affairs, observing that, 'chivalry defined his relationship with other monarchs, and above

There has also been much written on Henry's diplomacy in specific periods of the reign and on his relations with individual countries - other than France. Peter Gwyn's biography of Cardinal Wolsey contains perhaps the most detailed analysis of any part of Henry's diplomacy that I have read.¹⁵ The best treatment of the king's dealings with Rome prior to the divorce is to be found in William Wilkie's, *The Cardinal Protectors of England*¹⁶ although the waters have been somewhat muddied by Elton's determination to hold the old Pollardian line that English policy was driven by Wolsey's loyalty to Rome and hunger for the papal tiara.¹⁷ His stance on this is made particularly inexplicable given the article written by David Chambers twelve years earlier that conclusively demonstrated that Wolsey's interest in becoming pope was at best luke warm.¹⁸ Rory McEntegart's thesis on Anglo-Schmalkaldic relations provides not only a new approach towards England's diplomatic dealings with the German princes, but a re-appraisal of the impact of religious divisions and government faction on the formation of England's foreign policy in the 1530s.¹⁹ England's relations with Scotland, particularly in the minority of James V have been

all Francis I.' He also draws attention to the king's sense of history and the need he felt to compete with his ancestors, in particular Edward III and Henry V; S.J.Gunn, 'The French wars of Henry VIII', in *Origins of War in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J.Black, (Glasgow, 1987), pp.28-52; esp.pp.36-37. See also, 'The Duke of Suffolk's march on Paris in 1523', *EHR*, 101, (1986), 596-634.

¹⁵ P.Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal*, (London, 1990). Dana Scott Campbell's thesis, 'English foreign policy, 1509-1521,' Ph.D, (Cambridge, 1980), gives a very detailed account of the tortuous diplomacy which preceded Henry's first war with France, but her frequent outbursts against Henry's first minister leave one with the impression that at some point she must have suffered personally at the hands of Cardinal Wolsey. See also, S.J.Gunn, 'Cardinal Wolsey's foreign policy and the domestic crisis of 1527-1528', in *Cardinal Wolsey, Church, State and Art*, ed.S.J.Gunn and R.G.Lindley, (Cambridge, 1991), for an analysis of the economic and social issues which influenced Henry and Wolsey's anti-Habsburg policy at the close of the 1520s.

¹⁶ W. Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and England Before the Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1974).

¹⁷ G.R.Elton, *Reform and Reformation, England 1509-1558*, (Cambridge, 1977).

¹⁸ D.S.Chambers, 'Cardinal Wolsey and the Papal Tiara', *BIHR*, 28, (1965), 20-30.

¹⁹ R.McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531-1547', Ph.D, (London, 1992). McEntegart rejects the traditional idea that Henry's dealings with the German princes were solely motivated by a desire to find an effective ally in the face of Habsburg animosity. He

thoroughly explored by R.G.Eaves,²⁰ while her involvement with lesser powers such as the Scandinavian countries and the Hanse has received at least some attention in a small number of articles and books.²¹

Between them, these books, theses and articles afford us a good picture of what Henry and his advisers did, and to a lesser extent why. They do not explain how they sought to achieve their diplomatic objectives nor in most cases consider the part played by the men appointed to carry them out. Who these people were and what they did to fulfil their missions are at best subjects touched upon in order to explain the outcome of a particular diplomatic initiative.

In no small part this gap has been filled by the numerous biographies of Tudor statesmen, an important part of whose careers involved the performance of diplomatic service. The usefulness of these biographies as an aid to understanding the nature and function of the Tudor ambassador is not surprisingly closely linked to the extent of an individual's involvement in diplomacy. Thus David Chambers's biography of Christopher Bainbridge is almost entirely devoted to his activities as the king's resident ambassador in Rome, and tells us much not only of the negotiations which took place between Henry and Julius II, but also about the life and routine work of an ambassador, albeit a far from typical one.²² The chapter in Samuel Rhea Gammon's biography of William Paget concerned with his residency at the French court in the early 1540s also offers interesting information on the organization of an ambassadorial household and the

argues that Henry and particularly Cromwell had a genuine interest in opening a dialogue with protestant league with a view to introducing at least certain aspects of the Reformation to England.

²⁰ R.G.Eaves, *Henry VIII's Scottish Diplomacy, 1513-1524: England's Relations with the Regency Government of James V*, (New York, 1971); *Henry VIII and James V's Regency, 1524-1528*, (London, 1987).

²¹ T.H.Lloyd, *England and the German Hanse, 1157-1611: A Study of their Trade and Commercial Diplomacy*, (Cambridge, 1991); J.D.Fudge, *Cargoes, Embargoes and Emissaries: The Commercial and Political interaction of the German Hanse* (Toronto, 1995).

²² D.S.Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge at the Court of Rome, 1509-1514*, (Oxford, 1965).

practice of intelligence gathering.²³ Yet often, even where an important part of an individual's career was devoted to diplomacy, little effort has been made to contextualize their work. In such cases authors either preferred simply to use their subjects as vehicles to explain a particular diplomatic episode, or present their work as ambassadors purely in terms of an extraordinary and isolated interlude in their careers.²⁴ Among others Jervis Wegg, Charles Sturge and Arthur Slavin in their respective biographies of Richard Pace, Cuthert Tunstall and Ralph Sadler provide detailed accounts of their various missions, which if now somewhat dated still tell us much about Henry's diplomatic relations with his rivals.²⁵ What they fail to do is give us any idea of what life was like as an ambassador and whether the experiences of their were out of the ordinary or par for the course.²⁶

At present therefore there is much disparate information to be found on the early Tudor diplomatic service and considerable amounts of research available on individual ambassadors. One objective of my thesis will be to bring together these constituent studies and by augmenting them with my own research construct a complete model of Henry's diplomatic service. Whereas earlier work either approached the subject as part of a much wider study, or pin-pointed specific periods, countries or individuals, the aim of this study will be to group all these men,

²³ S.R.Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William First Lord Paget - Tudor Minister*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.40-65.

²⁴ This remark is not intended as a criticism. As my own work will show all but the most frequently employed of Henry's ambassadors served abroad for only a fraction of their public careers which often embraced a wide variety of different activities.

²⁵ J.Wegg, *Richard Pace, a Tudor Diplomatist*, (London, 1932); C.Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall, Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator*, (London, 1938); A.J.Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966).

²⁶ Although there are a large number of biographies which look at the diplomatic work of their subjects, among those which devote considerable attention to it are: G.J.Undreiner, 'Robert Wingfield: erster ständiger englischer gesandter am deutschen hofe', Ph.D, (Freiburg, 1932); G.M.V.Alexander, 'The life and career of Edmund Bonner until his deprivation in 1549', Ph.D, (London, 1960); W.C.Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan, Financial Agent of Henry VIII*, (Louisiana, 1953); D.Willen, *John Russell, First Earl of Bedford: One of the King's Men*, (IRHS, 1981), and B.Ficaro, 'Nicholas Wotton: Dean and Diplomat', Ph.D, (Kent, 1981).

geographical and chronological strands together to provide a coherent picture of how early renaissance diplomacy worked and who, aside from princes and their advisers, was responsible for its application.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the identity of Henry's ambassadors, I shall combine qualitative analysis with individual assessment. The three central chapters of the thesis will each deal with a group of ambassadors, the clergy, gentry and aristocracy, and merchants. Each group of men possessed specific talents and abilities which made them peculiarly appropriate for different types of diplomatic work. In each section I will examine what these strengths were before exploring how the king made use of them in his diplomacy. The first and last chapters will seek to put the work of Henry's ambassadors into perspective. A central theme of any study of diplomatic history at this time must be the growth of resident diplomacy, and it was in Henry's reign that the practice was first properly adopted. The growing use of the new diplomatic practice by the king and his advisers had a significant and rapid impact on the type of men chosen for diplomatic service, the amount of time they served as ambassadors and the type of work they were expected to perform. As yet no study has looked in detail at how a specific government introduced the practice of permanent diplomacy or the changing role of the ambassadors involved in it.²⁷ This will be the central aim of the first chapter. The final section will seek to place the work of Henry's envoys in perspective. Few if any of these men saw themselves primarily as ambassadors, but rather viewed diplomatic service as an unavoidable means to an end. The objective of the final chapter will be to evaluate the pros and cons of diplomatic service for individuals and to assess how important to the future career of a would-

²⁷ Martin Lunitz, *Diplomatie und Diplomaten, studien eu den ständigen Gesandten Kaiser Karis V in Frankreich*, (Konstanz, 1987), has examined the role of the early residents of Charles V, but his study is limited to their use at the French court. As well as David Chamber's work on Christopher Bainbridge, Betty Behrens' articles on the roots of English resident diplomacy and the career of Thomas Spinelly, one of Henry's first permanent envoys, give some idea of the part played by early resident ambassadors and the difficulties they encountered. B.Behrens, 'The origins of the office of English resident ambassador in Rome', *EHR*, 49, (1934), 640-658; 'The office of English resident ambassador: Its evolution as illustrated by the career of Sir Thomas Spinelly, 1509-1522', *TRHS*, 4th series, (1933), 16, 161-195.

be Tudor statesman. To conclude I will consider whether at the close of Henry's reign we have any grounds to talk of 'diplomatic revolutions' or 'the birth of diplomatic professionalism'.

The sources I have relied upon most heavily in my research are the Cotton, Harleian and Additional Manuscript collections at the British Library and the collection of State Papers archived at the Public Record Office. In addition to these I have consulted the Petyt collection housed at the Inner Temple Library and miscellaneous manuscripts stored at the library of the University of Cambridge. In order to add an additional perspective to my analysis of Henry's diplomatic service I have at various points made comparisons with its French and Imperial counterparts. The aim here has not been to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Valois and Habsburg diplomatic services, but rather to draw attention to the most conspicuous difference between them and their Tudor rival in order to place it in a firmer context. To this end I have consulted the copied transcripts of the archives stored in Paris, Rome, Vienna and Simincas as well as the printed copies of diplomatic dispatches from Papal, French and Imperial ambassadors.

A brief comment on referencing related to the dating of missions is required. Rather than provide footnote references for every mission alluded to in the main body of the text, I have included a complete listing of the embassies undertaken by Henry's ambassadors in a separate appendix. The missions are listed alphabetically in order of the courts to which they were sent; each item consisting of the envoys dispatched, the dates of their arrival and return from court, where these can be found, and primary and secondary references for the instructions issued to outgoing ambassadors. As the introductory note to Appendix A will explain, the inclusion of this list within the thesis was unavoidable, it therefore seemed pointless to duplicate the information contained within it by the addition of several hundred footnotes in support of every embassy mentioned in the following pages.

With regard to spelling, I have in most cases adhered to the original text, the exceptions being the conversion of abbreviations, modern capitalization and the exchange of 'u's and 'i's for 'v's and 'j's where applicable. I have also tried to reproduce original spelling in quotes from foreign texts including the use and omission of accents.

Chapter One

Resident Diplomacy

Introduction

The first fifty years of the sixteenth century were those in which the courts of northern Europe adopted the techniques of resident diplomacy. The establishment of permanent embassies particularly by the Tudors, Valois and Habsburgs was a gradual process, and certainly in the case of England could hardly be called systematic. However, more than anything else it was the sporadic growth of this new diplomatic practice that distinguished the experience of ambassadors, both resident and special, in the reign of Henry VIII from those used by earlier princes.

In all 48 men were chosen by the king and his advisers to reside at foreign courts, 43% of all envoys dispatched during the reign. Between them they performed 67 embassies which averaged thirteen months in length.¹ The difference between being accredited as a resident ambassador rather than as a special envoy extended far beyond the duration of one's embassy. Particularly in the first decade of Henry's reign the men chosen by the king and cardinal to serve as residents lacked social and or political importance and were treated very differently from those appointed to special embassies. As the reign continued and the benefits of employing resident ambassadors became more apparent both the calibre of the men chosen and the degree to which they were involved in their master's diplomatic affairs altered considerably. By the close of the 1530s the men chosen for all but the most prestigious special embassies were also likely candidates for resident postings. The changing attitude of Henry's government towards the use of resident

¹ Statistics taken from Appendices A and B.

diplomacy and the contrasting experiences of those chosen to practice it represent the main theme of this chapter.

Before continuing a note on terminology is called for. Earlier historians dealing with this subject paid much attention to the nomenclature given to envoys by their governments. In particular Queller and Behrens stressed the importance of diplomatic titles as a means of determining the status and function of the envoys being dispatched.² More recent work on this subject has convincingly demonstrated that no particular system pertained to the entitlement of envoys and that by the opening of the sixteenth century the list of names given to diplomatic personnel was rapidly diminishing.³ Certainly by the time of Henry's reign instructions and letters of credence not couched in Latin, that is the great majority, referred to fully accredited envoys solely as ambassadors. However, a further group of diplomatic personnel known rather vaguely as 'agents' also existed. Applying a strict definition to this group of individuals is highly problematic. For the most part they were men permanently in the government's employ but not necessarily always active on their behalf. Their responsibilities and authority varied from person to person, but can be most accurately described as a combination of those associated with a medieval nuncio and a

² See B.Behrens, 'Treatises on ambassadors written in the 15th and early 16th centuries', *English Historical Review*, 51, (1936), 616-627. D.Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1967), pp.1-13, 20-59, 60-69, admittedly concentrating on the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, lists three distinct types of envoy, the nuncio, the procurator and the ambassador. He sees a direct line of evolution from the nuncio first used in the twelfth century to the ambassador in regular use by the close of the fourteenth century, the changing as well as overlapping terminology being closely linked to the growing powers of the envoys being dispatched.

³ J.Ferguson, *English Diplomatic History, 1422-1461*, (Oxford, 1972), pp.148-152, makes the point that certainly by the latter half of the fifteenth century the terms nuncio, procurator, orator and ambassador were entirely interchangeable, and bore little or no individual significance. C.Giry-Deloison, 'La naissance de la diplomatie moderne en France et en Angleterre au début du XVIe siècle, (1475-1520)', *Nouvelle revue du seizième siècle*, 5, (1987), 43-58, esp.pp.48-58, has shown that by the beginning of the sixteenth century the term ambassador was by far the most frequently used both in the powers given to envoys and in the chronicles of the time dealing with their missions.

commercial factor.

Another issue which has provoked considerable discussion is that concerning the exact definition of a resident ambassador. Mattingly described him as, 'a regularly accredited envoy with full diplomatic status, but he is sent....not to discharge a significant piece of business and then return, but to remain at his post until recalled, in general charge of the interests of his principal.'⁴ Later historians have sought, rather pedantically, to distinguish between the first use of resident ambassadors and the initial development of a system of permanent diplomacy. Vincent Ilardi's definition of the latter is, 'a continuous post or office that can remain vacant for a time, especially in periods of crisis, but with the expectation that it will be filled upon the resumption of normal relations.'⁵ For the most part the difficulties involved in identifying the status of an ambassador may be overcome through examination of the documentation relating to a given mission. Where available the official documents with which envoys were furnished provide the best source of classification. In particular commissions or powers, letters of credence and written instructions can be relied upon to offer a clear definition of ambassadorial status. Of these types of documentation the commission was the most formal. In nearly all cases written in Latin and addressed exclusively from one prince to another, the purpose of a commission was to define exactly the authority of the ambassadors who presented it. Invariably ambassadors were provided with commissions to carry out specific diplomatic functions such as the negotiation or ratification of a treaty.⁶ I have found only three examples of resident ambassadors as sole recipients of

⁴ Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, p.60.

⁵ V.Ilardi, 'The first permanent embassy outside Italy: The Milanese embassy at the French court, 1463-1494', in *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy*, eds.M.A.Thorpe and A.J.Slavin, (Missouri, 1994), pp.1-19, esp.p.2.

⁶ For example, Rymer, XIII, no.263, (*L&P*, I I, no.161), Commission to Nicholas West to renew peace with James IV, 3 November 1511; *ibid*, no.497, (*L&P*, II I, no.422), Commission to Poynings, Tunstall, Sampson, Knight, More and Clifford to negotiate renewal of the 1506 trade agreement with the Low Countries, 7 May 1515.

commissions, and of these only that given to Christopher Bainbridge prior to his departure for Rome in September 1509 provides any indication of his status as a permanent envoy.⁷

Unlike commissions letters of credence were supplied to all ambassadors, resident and special, and where they have survived usually permit clear identification of an envoy's status. For example Thomas Cheyne's letters of credence introducing him to Chancellor Duprat as Henry's resident ambassador to the French court in March 1526, stated that the king was, 'envoyons presentement devers luy nostre feal conseiller et gentilhomme de nostre privée chamber messire Thomas Cheney, chevalier, pour non-seulement le visiter et lui faire noz tres cordyalles recommendations, mais aussi resider comme nostre ambassadeur avec le docteur Tailleur,'⁸ Most letters of credence were written in French, notably those addressed to the emperor, the regent of the Low Countries and the French king. Embassies appointed to non-French speaking courts, in particular those in Germany and Italy, were not furnished with credentials written in the vernacular. In such cases all letters of credence were written in Latin.⁹ Another difference between commissions and letters of credence was that where the former were addressed specifically from one prince to another, numerous copies of the latter might be given to an

⁷ His commission specified that he held '*mandatum speciale et generalum*', and described him as, '*Oratum, Procuratorem, Actorem, Factorem, Negotiorumque Gestorem ac Nuncium Specialem Fecimus, Ordinavimus & Constituimus prout sic per praesentes Facimus, Ordinamus & Constituimus*', Rymer, XIII, 260. The other commissions were issued to Thomas Hannibal, empowered to treat with the representatives of Charles V and John king of Portugal for a league, 'against the common enemies of Christendom', 9 March 1522, BL, Vit.B V, fo.46, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2098); and John Clerk in Rome to negotiate a defensive treaty with Charles V, Adrian VI, the Duke of Milan and the Swiss, also against the so-called enemies of Christendom, 12 March 1523, *ibid*, fo.164, (*ibid*, no.2887).

⁸ *Capitivité du Roi François Ier*, ed.M.A.Champollion-Figeac, (Paris, 1847), p.525, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2043), Letter of Credence for Thomas Cheyne, March 1526.

⁹ For examples the letters of credence issued to Girolamo Ghinucci and Gregorio de Casali appointing them as Henry's residents to the Vatican 20 September 1525, BL, Add MS, 15387, fos.170-171, (*L&P*, IV I, no.1650).

ambassador for him to present not only to the host prince but also to the leading members of his council and court.

Finally, ambassadorial instructions usually specified the status of an envoy . Thus the instructions of the new residents to France in October 1529 stated that, 'his grace...hath sent the sayd George Boleyn and Mr John Stokesley bothe to visite, see and salute his said good brother,....and also to remayn and be resident for a season in his courte.'¹⁰ Thomas Seymour and Nicholas Wotton dispatched to the Low Countries in 1543, were instructed to inform the queen regent that:

His majeste, being for his parte of no lesse desire and affection to doo all thinges that maye most fyrmely and certainly contynue and advaunce the sayd amytye, hath sent thither the sayd Sir Thomas Seymor and Master Wotton to reside about her as his majestes ambassadors.¹¹

Where instructions relating directly to an embassy no longer remain , it is often possible to establish the status of an envoy through dispatches from the government to other ambassadors. Writing to Stephen Gardiner in 1537, the king directed him to liaise with, 'our servant, John Hutton, owr agent resident in Flanders.'¹² Invariably through the use of one or more of these forms of documentation one can establish whether an ambassador was appointed to perform a specific mission or accredited as a permanent envoy. While documentation for the earliest resident ambassadors or those sent from other courts in the period with which this work is concerned may be lacking, such difficulties rarely apply to the diplomatic service of Henry VIII. Therefore the criterion which will be applied below in determining the status of a resident ambassador will be whether he was described as such by the prince who dispatched him.

¹⁰ *St.P.* VII, p.219-224, (*L&P*, IV iii, no.6073), Instructions to Boleyn and Stokesley, October 1529.

¹¹ *St.P.* IX, pp.365-366, (*L&P*, XVIII I, no.473), Henry to Seymour and Wotton, April 1543.

¹² BL, Additional MS, 25,114, fo.253, (*L&P* XII I, no.817), Henry to Gardiner, 3 April 1537.

Beginnings

Whatever its origins,¹³ the systematic use of resident ambassadors began after the Peace of Lodi in 1454 when the Italian city states began accrediting permanent envoys to one another. In the mid-1460s the use of residents spread outside Italy when Maximilian Sforza pressed a reluctant Louis XI to accept a Milanese envoy at the French court.¹⁴ The first prince outside Italy to make use of residents was Ferdinand of Aragon. A permanent Spanish embassy was established in Rome in the 1480s followed by another in Venice by the early 1490s.¹⁵ Dr de Puebla was appointed resident ambassador to Henry VII in 1495,¹⁶ at roughly the same time that permanent envoys were appointed to the Imperial and Burgundian courts. Even France received infrequent permanent envoys from Spain including Don Juan de Galla, 1501-2, Don Juan de Albion, 1506-9 and Pedro de Quintana, 1514-1515.¹⁷ After Ferdinand it was Henry VII who began to make use of permanent envoys.

¹³ When considering the origins of the resident ambassador Mattingly dismissed much earlier examples of their use such as the Castilian procurators sent to Rome at the close of the thirteenth century, and the succession of English lawyers who spent prolonged periods in Paris in the reigns of Edward I and II, on the grounds that these men did not possess diplomatic credentials. *Ibid*, p.62. Mattingly contends that the real antecedents of the resident ambassador were probably the Italian consuls chosen by Venice and Genoa to protect their trading interests in the Orient, *ibid*, 64-65, the line also held by Queller, *op.cit.*, pp.79-80. An alternative suggestion for the development of the resident system can be found in, B.Behrens, 'Origins of the English resident ambassador in Rome', *English Historical Review*, 49, (1934), 640-658, esp.pp.642-643, who argued that it was from the profusion of legal experts employed by every European monarch to pursue their interests in the courts of Rome that the first fully accredited resident ambassadors evolved, probably in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

¹⁴ Ilardi, *op.cit.*, pp.6-8.

¹⁵ Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, pp.138-139.

¹⁶ G.Mattingly, 'The reputation of Dr de Puebla', *EHR*, 55, (1940), 27-47, esp.p.29.

¹⁷ Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, p.139.

In 1505 John Stile in the company of Francis Marsin and Thomas Braybrooke travelled to Spain in order to assess the suitability of Joanna, Queen of Naples, as a bride for the king.¹⁸ When their mission was completed Stile's colleagues returned to England leaving him in Spain where he remained for the rest of Henry VII's reign. How and when Thomas Spinelly came to serve Henry VIII's father is unknown. It is possible that his connection with the English court came through his uncle, Filippo Gualterotti,¹⁹ who along with the Bonivisi and Frescobaldi provided financial services to both Henry VII and his son.²⁰ The only direct evidence linking Spinelly to Henry VII is the Florentine's letter to Henry VIII in June 1509 gratefully acknowledging his decision to keep him in service.²¹ However, it is important to stress that neither Spinelly or Stile enjoyed full ambassadorial status under Henry VII. It is possible that Stile's original purpose for remaining in Spain after the departure of his colleagues was to transact some personal business. Prior to his employment by Henry as a special envoy he appears to have been a merchant²² and given the

¹⁸ The instructions given to the ambassadors were quite extraordinary. They were to make a full report on Joanna's appearance providing information on the size of her breasts, clarity of her complexion, evidence of facial hair, freshness of breath and the width of her fingers! In an attempt to gain information about any defects not visible to the naked eye, or illnesses of a personal nature the ambassadors held secret meetings with the queen's apothecary, who not surprisingly assured them that he had never served a woman with more robust health than the Joanna. *Memorials of Henry VII*, ed.J.Gairdner, (London, 1858), pp.223-239.

¹⁹ In a letter to Wolsey Spinelly mentioned that he had borrowed money off his uncle, Filippo Gualterotti. BL, Cotton MS, Galba B IV, fo.145v, (*L&P*, II i, no.2275), Spinelly to Wolsey, 14 August 1516.

²⁰ R.Ehrenberg, *Capital and Finance in the Age of the Renaissance: A Study of the Fuggers and their Connections*, trans. H.N.Lucas, (New York, 1963), pp.74-75.

²¹ 'Plaise vous savoir, sire, que jay receu les lettres que de vostre grace vous a pleu menvoyer, contenans que vostre mageste a estre adverty du service, que me suys pardevant perforce de faire a feu de tresdigne memoire le roy vostre pere, que Dieu vueille pardonner, mavertissant que icelle vostre mageste auara agreeable que je persevere et continue en semble pardevers vous, et que en ce faisant vostre mageste le reconnoistra'.*St.P.* VI, p.19, (*L&P*, I i, no.83), Spinelly to Henry, 26 June 1509.

²² In separate grants for May and July 1511 Stile was respectively referred to as a grocer and a draper. *L&P*, I i, nos.784, 833. Whatever Stile's earlier career may have been his appointment as Governor of the Merchant Adventurers in 1527 certainly confirms that in the years after his

frequent commerce between London and Bristol and the Spanish towns of the Atlantic seaboard, it is quite plausible that he took the opportunity which his presence in Spain provided to pursue his commercial interests. In instructions drafted for Thomas Wolsey by the king in 1508, Henry referred to Stile as '*servitorum suum*' clearly implying that while he worked for the king he did so in a relatively lowly capacity.²³ Again in April 1509 Ferdinand in instructions drawn up for an anonymous ambassador going to England, referred to Stile as the king's servant.²⁴ Although a considerable degree of latitude was used in the terminology employed to describe diplomatic representatives at this time, it did not extend to describing royal ambassadors as mere servants. Thomas Spynelly's position in the Low Countries appears to have been no more clearly defined. In July 1509 Jean de Berghes wrote to Henry congratulating him on his accession to the throne and praising his, 'bon et feal serviteur, messire Thomas Spynelly.'²⁵ It seems highly unlikely that had Spynelly actually functioned as a resident ambassador for Henry VII he would have been demoted to the status of agent by his son.

Only in Rome did Henry VII possess fully accredited representatives, the most important of which were England's cardinal protectors. The first of these was Fransceco Piccolomini Todeschini appointed in 1492.²⁶ When Piccolmini's brief tenure as Pope Pius III began in September 1503, Adriano Castellesi sought to replace him as cardinal protector to England but was soon ousted from the position by Galeotto della Rovere, the nephew of Pius' successor, Julius II. Upon the premature death of Rovere, another of the pope's favourites, Francesco Alidosi took

diplomatic service came to an end, trade became his primary concern.

²³ Instructions to Wolsey, 1508, *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, ed.J.Gairdner, 2 vols. (London, 1861), vol.I, p.430.

²⁴ *CSPS*, II i, p.3, Instructions for an unnamed ambassador going into England. April 1509.

²⁵ BL.Cotton MS.Galba B IV, fo.61v, (*L&P*, I i, no.89), Jean de Bergh, 29 June 1509.

²⁶ Wilkie, *op.cit.*,p.10.

the position which he retained until the arrival of Christopher Bainbridge in November 1509.²⁷

Undoubtedly important as these men were to Henry one should not confuse them with resident ambassadors. For the most part they performed services for the king only when specifically asked, the great majority of which concerned obtaining papal approval for the appointment of crown nominees to English, Welsh and Irish bishoprics. Furthermore, cardinal protectors often represented more than one prince. Both Piccolomini and Castellesi served Maximilian at the same time that they worked for Henry VII, and Guilio de Medici who became cardinal protector to England after the death of Bainbridge in 1514, already represented the interests of Louis XII in the curia, a position renewed by Francis I in 1515.²⁸ To fill the gap left by the cardinal protectors Henry in 1490 appointed as his, 'procurators and ambassadors to Rome' Giovanni Gigli and David Williams, master of the rolls.²⁹ Although Silvestro Gigli continued in English service after the death of his uncle in 1498, it is unclear whether he did so as a fully accredited resident ambassador. In 1505 he was sent to England by Julius II with the dispensation for the marriage of Prince Henry to the widowed Catherine of Aragon and remained there till 1512.³⁰ It was only with the appointment of Christopher Bainbridge in September 1509 that the consistent use of English residents ambassadors to Rome began.

The importance of Henry VII's reign to the development of the English diplomatic system lay not in its adoption of the practice of accrediting resident ambassadors, but rather in establishing, albeit in the most rudimentary of forms, the machinery necessary to put such a system into

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp.10-15.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.27.

²⁹ *CSPV*, I, pp.191-195, Henry VII to Innocent VIII, 1, 15 and 21 July 1490.

³⁰ *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, ed.J.Gairdner, (2 vols., 1861-63) I, pp.243-245, Gigli to Henry VII, 17 March 1505.

operation. Three of Henry VII's semi-official representatives, Stile, Spinelly and Gigli, went on to serve Henry VIII as fully accredited resident ambassadors and the contributions of these earliest permanent envoys to English diplomacy will be considered below. However, just as importantly Henry VII bequeathed to his son a group of advisers who had seen at first hand the benefits to be gleaned from having permanent representatives at foreign courts. Within months of his accession to the throne Henry had permanent ambassadors in Rome and Spain and a resident agent in the Low Countries. Within three years of his accession the first of an unbroken succession of permanent ambassadors had been dispatched to the Imperial court. Attributing responsibility for policy initiatives and administrative reforms during Henry's reign is often a futile exercise. Yet it is surely reasonable to assume that the newly crowned eighteen year old king who at least for a short time appears to have been prepared to accept the guidance of his councillors over the broadest issues of foreign policy, would not have instituted the new system of resident envoys without some prompting from his advisers.³¹ In October 1511, admittedly some time after the first resident ambassadors were in place, John Yong, master of the rolls to both Henry VII and Henry VIII, did write to the young king drawing his attention to the value of the new system:

therefore yt semeth to us very necessary as we have hertofore written to your highness that your grace have oon contynually resseant in his [Maximilian] comite whose presence with such enformacion as he shall [gather] unto hym wuld do more in your matiers than either my lady's letters or any other writings, for a letter is soon sean and lightly cast in some corner and forgotten, where the presence of your ambassadors.....shal force hym to declar hys mynde oon wey or the other.³²

At a time when Henry was seeking the emperor's co-operation in the newly formed Holy League directed against France and Maximilian was proving frustratingly evasive, the presence of a resident ambassador at his peripatetic court would at least ensure that the English king had a

³¹ J.J.Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, (London, 1997), pp.25-26; P.Gwyn, *The king's Cardinal*, (London, 1990), pp.8-15.

³² BL, Cotton MS, Galba B III, fo.53, (*L&P*, I i,no.3500) John Yong to Henry, 3 November 1511.

permanent line of communications with his elusive ally.

Of course Yong's experience as well as that of several other of Henry VIII's first advisers, among them Richard Foxe and William Warham, was not solely based on the haphazard arrangement of permanent and semi-permanent agents employed by their old master. They had also worked in their capacity as royal councillors with accredited resident ambassadors of other governments. From the mid-1490s Spain, Milan and Venice all sent resident ambassadors to England providing ample opportunity for Henry VII's advisers to observe the new system in practice. Thus when Henry VIII came to the throne eager to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy for his country his advisers were sufficiently familiar with the new diplomatic practices to appreciate the contribution that a network of resident envoys might make. However, despite the rapid institution of the new system by Henry VIII's government it was to be some time before the king and his chief minister, Thomas Wolsey, ceased to depend on special envoys to perform all but the lowliest of diplomatic duties and it is this difficult transition from old diplomacy to new that will be considered next.

Early Years

For the first decade of the new reign the group of men employed by Henry and his advisers as resident ambassadors was both small and largely unchanging. It consisted of Christopher Bainbridge, Silvestro Gigli, John Stile, Thomas Spinelly and Robert Wingfield. In terms of their backgrounds they represented the three main groups of men from which Henry would draw nearly all his envoys throughout the reign. Bainbridge and Gigli were high ranking ecclesiastics, Spinelly and Stile most probably came from merchant backgrounds, and Wingfield was a member of a long established Suffolk family belonging to the gentry.³³ Their experiences as

³³ For biographical details see pp.119-120, 181-183.

English resident envoys, however, differed greatly from those who came after them.

The duration of the first English permanent embassies were extremely long and in the case of Bainbridge, Gigli and Spinelly only concluded with their deaths. Bainbridge remained in Rome for five years between 1509 and 1514 to be replaced by Gigli who served as Henry's ambassador to the Pope for seven years until his death in April 1521. John Stile resided in Spain for nine years from 1509 to 1518 when he was replaced by Thomas Spinelly, Henry's representative in the Low Countries since 1509. The Florentine remained at the peripatetic court of the future Charles V until his death in August 1522. Finally, Robert Wingfield resided at the court of Charles' grandfather, Maximilian, for seven years between 1510 and 1517.³⁴

In themselves these long tours of duty need not have been too arduous. As a driving force behind the formation of the anti-French Holy League, and from March 1512 a cardinal, Bainbridge's long stay in Rome hardly represented exile. Silvestro Gigli, both an Italian and an ambitious cleric, would probably have chosen to remain in Rome whether he was Henry's ambassador or not. Thomas Spinelly, a member of an international merchant family, might well have lived in one of the thriving commercial centres of the Low Countries regardless of his diplomatic activities.

The main difficulty to arise from such protracted missions was the sense of isolation most of the residents came to feel and indeed in some cases to believe that their government had forgotten they existed at all. Robert Wingfield complained bitterly and often that he seemed to have been forgotten by his prince. In December 1514 he lamented that he had not been given a new commission since he arrived at Maximilian's court more than four years earlier.³⁵ Less than a year later he wrote to the king, 'yt were much better youre grace revokyd me hens

³⁴ See Appendix A.

³⁵ PRO, SP1/9, fos.214-216, (*L&P*, I ii, no.5686), Wingfield to Henry, 12 December 1514.

before I be as lyghtyll esteemed and as much suspecte to his majeste as it semyth I am to alle his counsell and servants.³⁶ He went on to complain that not only had his letters gone unanswered and the repeated questions of the emperor ignored, he had not even received confirmation that his dispatches had reached England.³⁷

Yet the neglect Wingfield suffered was as nothing to that which John Stile experienced. In February 1518 Henry's Spanish resident complained:

it greveth me sore, your poorest servant, that in these ii years and more and passed, by writing nor by otherwise, I have not had the knowlege of the plesor of your highnes. And in the moneth of July passed I sent a servant of myn hens to your grace with my letter whiche came to your royall house at your castell of Windsore the xi day of August. And from that tyme hitherto, he hath not returned to me with your royal answer for the whiche, please your grace, I do not knowe whatfore to say nor do.³⁸

In part Stile's difficulties were the result of the marginalization of Spain in international affairs brought about by the death of Ferdinand of Aragon in January 1516. For more than eighteen months the country's new king, Charles of Burgundy, remained in the Low Countries, and England's diplomatic intercourse was largely concentrated there and at the peripatetic court of the emperor. Yet Stile's treatment also reflected the continuing lack of interest shown by Henry and Wolsey in the practice of resident diplomacy.

When contact between the English government and its first resident ambassadors did take place it was usually through the medium of other envoys. These special ambassadors were frequently given instructions not to make the permanent envoy privy to their missions, and on some

³⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XVIII, fo.157, (*L&P*, II i, no.684), Robert Wingfield to Henry, 10 July 1515.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fo.125, (*L&P*, II ii, no.3939), Stile to Henry, 11 February 1518.

occasions to completely exclude him from all discussions with the host prince. At the outset of Robert Wingfield and Richard Pace's ill-starred collaboration, Wingfield explained to Wolsey that he could give him no account of his colleague's early progress with the Swiss since he was entirely ignorant as to the nature of his mission.³⁹ Nearly a year later when English ambitions had dwindled from expelling the French from Italy to deposing the pro-French faction in the Burgundian government, Cuthbert Tunstall was ordered by Wolsey to ensure that Thomas Spinelly was not informed of the progress of the negotiations between Henry and Maximilian for the latter's 'descent' into the Low Countries.⁴⁰ The following year Spinelly was chosen to accompany Charles to Spain and might have been forgiven for thinking that he had been restored to the confidence of king and cardinal. Certainly the Florentine appears to have taken particular satisfaction in doing to John Stile what had already been done to him. Several months after Spinelly's arrival in Spain Stile wrote to Henry:

Please it your grace, here is sir Thomas Spinelly, Florentyne, whiche saieth he hathe comysson of your highness and auctoritie and no man but he hath thauritie to be your ambassador in the king of Castylle's corte. And so the said sir Thomas taketh upon hym, and daily is very besy with the lorde Chievres and the chancelor, and medleth with every man's mater, gretly besying hym self in the corte saying daily he hath letters from your royal counsaill and grete promocions of your highnes, and speketh of things whiche I think he has no suche comysson of your highnes⁴¹

Even setting aside Stile's undoubtedly jaundiced account of Spinelly's behaviour at the Spanish court, the fact remains that the old ambassador received no prior notice of the new one's arrival and that Spinelly was given no formal letters to pass on to Stile explaining that his services were

³⁹ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XVIII, fo.108, (*L&P*, II i, no.1377), Robert Wingfield to Wolsey, 1 January 1516. The original manuscript is both faded and mutilated, nevertheless the gist of Wingfield's remarks can still be gathered.

⁴⁰ BL, Cotton Galba B VI, fo.90, (*L&P*, III i, no.2700), Wolsey to Tunstall, 25 December 1516. See below, pp.19-21.

⁴¹ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fo.125, (*L&P*, III i, no.3939), Stile to Henry, 11 February 1518.

no longer required. Stile remained in Spain until May 1518 in time to see his successor suffer a similar humiliation to that visited on him eight months earlier. In April John Kite, Archbishop of Armagh and John Bouchier, 3rd Baron Berners, arrived in Spain, commissioned to maintain sound Anglo-Spanish relations and observe any overtures made to Charles by the French.⁴² From the outset the special envoys excluded Spinelly from their discussions with Charles and his advisers. A week before Kite and Berners had sent their first letters to Henry and Wolsey, Spinelly had already written to the king complaining of his treatment:

your sayd ambassadors kalled me with them when they made theyr oppin propoicion, shewing to me from hens furth I shulde not be present to any of theyr comunycacions and to have it so expressly in charge. And thow suche manere of proceding was unto me thow not conformable unto your highnes letters, and lyke wise not concurrent unto myn olde and loyal service, and that grettely it towched myn honor, I shall suffer it paciently⁴³

Despite the unquestionable damage such treatment did to Spinelly's credibility with Charles and his advisers,⁴⁴ Wolsey and the king persisted in sending special envoys to the newly elected emperor, with directions to sideline their resident ambassador. In September 1520 Tunstall was

⁴² BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fo.147, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4160), Kite and Berners to Henry, 12 May 1518. Although no instructions remain for the mission its general purpose can be inferred from this letter, the first dispatched after their arrival in Spain on 24 April. It was also probably by their hand that the long suffering Stile finally received his instructions to return to England.

⁴³ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fo.41, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4146), Spinelly to Henry, 4 May 1518.

⁴⁴ In September 1518 Lord Berners was unable to attend an interview with Charles due to an attack of gout prompting Kite to invite Spinelly along in his place. Spinelly assured his colleague, 'howbeit if his lordshipe thowght to leve me afterwarde in a corner or shew his charge apart, I wolde rather for your highnes' service and myn honor both, tarye at hom.....Shewing also if those with the whiche I am aquaynted shuld se me stande behynde, they myght groundly consyder that your highnes mystrusted me and consequently abstayne therin to commune with me of many occurrences wherby the knowlegge therof shoulde cease to your hyghnes preyidice.'

The following day Spinelly finally agreed to join Kite in his interview with Charles and the Cardinal of Tortosa and was duly left standing in the middle of the audience chamber with Windsor herald while the archbishop accompanied the king and his adviser into a 'corner' where the special envoy discussed the most recent instructions he had received from England. BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fo,197, (*L&P*, II ii no.4440), Spinelly to Wolsey, 18 September 1518.

commissioned to join Charles in the Low Countries and accompany him to Aachen where he would receive the Imperial crown.⁴⁵ Spynelly was soon complaining that once again he was being undermined by his fellow ambassador.⁴⁶ In response Wolsey wrote to Tunstall requesting him to include Spynelly in his regular dealings with Charles, but nevertheless to pursue all secret negotiations alone.⁴⁷ Even after Spynelly had died Wolsey was equipping yet another team of special envoys,⁴⁸ on this occasion Richard Sampson and Thomas Boleyn, with multiple sets of instructions, some of which were to be carried out in tandem with Spynelly, while others were to be kept hidden from him.⁴⁹

In fact throughout the first decade of the reign resident envoys were consistently superseded either by special ambassadors or new residents who at least at the time of their appointment were

⁴⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VI, fo.200, (*L&P*, III i, no.969), Commission for Tunstall dated 1 September 1520. For details of the mission see C.Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall, Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator*, (London, 1938), pp.61-68.

⁴⁶ In a remarkable piece of selective recall Spynelly lamented, 'that thow the Master of the Rolls is of olde my good master and that I have cordyall recwell of him and am dayly at his borde, yet publice [in public] I am not as well for my rome as otherwise entreated as I was by mylord of Amarkan [Kite] who, his charge lerned aparte, went never to the corte withoute thake me in his company.' BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VI, fo.247, (*L&P*, III ii, app.no.19), Spynelly to Wolsey, 20 October 1520.

⁴⁷ Although Wolsey's letter on the subject does not remain, Tunstall's reply to the cardinal is extant, 'And where your grace in your last letter advertised me the k[ing's] pleasure to be that in all comon occurrent maters not concernyng any secret charge I shulde make master Spynelly participant from tyme to tyme, as the kinges [resident] ambassador, I shalnot omitte so to do." BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XX fo.223, Tunstall to Wolsey, April 1521. Not in *L&P*.

⁴⁸ Spynelly died on 26 August 1522, but the news had not reached England when Boleyn and Sampson sailed from Portsmouth on the 30 September. BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C II, fo.28 (*L&P*, III ii no.2617), Boleyn and Sampson to Wolsey, 16 October 1522.

⁴⁹ A copy of the original instructions prepared for all three ambassadors can be found in the PRO, SP1/26, fos.28-56, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2567) those issued solely to the special envoys are at BL, Harleian MS 297, fo.135, (*Ibid*); Instructions for Sir Thomas Boleyn, Richard Sampson and Thomas Spynelly, 25 September 1522.

in favour with Wolsey and the king. In the months before he died Bainbridge saw his position at Rome usurped by Gigli who was himself six years later ignominiously thrust aside when John Clerk was sent on a special mission to the pope.⁵⁰ Throughout 1516 and 1517 when Maximilian played an integral part in Wolsey's plans to contain French ambitions in Italy, it was Henry's special envoy, Richard Pace, who was given first place in Switzerland and the Imperial court.⁵¹ Between May 1512 and his departure for Spain in August 1517 Spinelly spent less than a year at Charles' court as the sole representative of Henry. In four of the following five years spent with Charles in Spain, Germany and the Low Countries, the Italian was accompanied by special envoys.

There were several factors which contributed to the way in which Henry and Wolsey treated their early residents. On one level it probably had much to do with the novelty of resident diplomacy. The Italians may have been dispatching permanent envoys to the courts of northern Europe by the 1490s, but for the English the practice was still very much in embryo when Henry came to the throne. As we have seen the king's first advisers were aware of the advantages to be gained from the appointment of residents, and the very fact that their use was not discontinued by Wolsey suggests that he too appreciated their potential. Nevertheless, little was done in the first decade of the reign more than to consolidate the network rather tentatively established by Henry VII. This is made most clear by the failure of the king and Wolsey to dispatch a resident ambassador to the French court. It could be argued that it was the preference of Francis I which ensured that no English resident was accredited to France until 1518 rather than the inertia of the English government. In competition in Scotland, northern France, Switzerland and northern Italy, it would be reasonable to assume that the French king was reluctant to provide his English rival

⁵⁰ Wilkie, *op.cit.*, pp.46-52, 120-121.

⁵¹ Undreiner, G.J., 'Robert Wingfield: erster ständiger englischer Gesandter am deutschen Hofe', Ph.D, (Freiburg, 1932), pp.92-110.

with a source of information as potentially fertile as a resident ambassador. It does not explain why a permanent envoy was not appointed in the final months of Louis XII's reign when France and England were not only at peace but practically allies. It seems likely that the answer may be found as much in the attitude of the English to the practice of resident diplomacy as in their policy towards France. They were ready to exploit the network set up by Henry VII but insufficiently convinced of its value to make any effort towards expansion. Thus lacking the impetus of precedent, not to mention the convenience of simply confirming or upgrading the credentials of a representative already stationed in France, no resident was accredited to the court where one would have been most valuable. Similarly rather than seek to establish an effective working relationship with their residents in the Low Countries, Spain, Germany and Rome, Henry and Wolsey used them primarily as newsgatherers and relied upon special envoys for the transaction of nearly all diplomatic business.

Another facet of this early lack of commitment by Henry and Wolsey was the continuing use of men who were not personally close to the king or his chief adviser. It has already been noted that Stile and Spynelly began their diplomatic service under Henry VII. When Henry VIII came to the throne he continued to make use of them but neither man visited England until sometime later. Indeed as late 1518 Richard Pace was writing to Wolsey, 'the newys cumyn out off Spayne aswell frome [hys] owne orators as sir Thomas Spynelly doth [greatly] well content his grace.'⁵² Despite the fact that the Florentine had been an accredited representative of Henry's for nearly ten years the king still did not see him as one of *his* servants. Robert Wingfield, although a member of the royal council never appears to have got close to the king, and his prolonged absence abroad during the period of Wolsey's rise left him unable to form any kind of personal relationship with the future cardinal. This failure to appoint men close to Henry and Wolsey as permanent envoys

⁵² BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XX fo.89, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4257), Pace to Wolsey, 24 June 1518. The 'orators' to whom Pace was referring were John Kite, and John Bouchier mentioned above.

had a self-perpetuating impact on the confidence of the king and cardinal in the resident system. Since men like Stile, Wingfield and Spinelly were not close to Henry and Wolsey their involvement in sensitive diplomatic negotiations was usually small, the information with which they were entrusted by the government infrequent and sparse. This in turn undermined their credibility at their host courts and rendered them less effective as ambassadors, thus no doubt leading the king and his minister to question how important a network of resident ambassadors really was.

Undoubtedly the criticism of other ambassadors, including their fellow residents, did little to improve the lot of these early permanent envoys. Thomas Spinelly was always ready with a bad word for a colleague. On the eve of his voyage to Spain in August 1517 he wrote to Brian Tuke:

I have shyped all my stowff in the lorde steward's shyp where I am honorably logyd, certyfyng you that I am pourveyed of plate, hangings and all othere necessary for oon that shuld be the king's ambassador, remembering the rowme is grounded upon honnor and glory, the saying that hathe been spokynne of sir John Style, and that those that do not kepe themsylfs honorably be nothing estemyd.⁵³

In fairness to the Florentine, his opinion appears to have been shared by William Knight, one of Henry's most experienced diplomats and the only man to work with Stile prior to Spinelly's dispatch in 1517.⁵⁴ However, the Italian's criticism was not reserved for the much maligned Stile. With regard to Robert Wingfield he advised Wolsey, 'Also your grace must porvey to send oon to

⁵³ PRO, SP1/15, fo.251, (*L&P*, II ii, no.3605), Spinelly to Tuke, 19 August 1517.

⁵⁴ As tension grew between Archduke Charles' advisers in the Low Countries and Ferdinand over the government of Castile, Knight speculated that in exchange for his support Henry would be able to get any concession he wanted from the Spanish king. 'Wherfor in my mynde he that [speaketh] for the king's highnes with the king of Aragon at thes tyme had nede to see further in these matiers then peraventure John Stile dothe.' PRO, SP1/12, fo.139, (*L&P*, II i, no.1478), Knight to Wolsey, 4 February 1516. Obviously Knight, writing from the Low Countries, had not received news of Ferdinand's death twelve days earlier, G.Mattingly, *Katherine of Aragon*, (London, 1942), p.144.

sir Robert Wingfelde to encifre and helpe hym enquire of the newes, for he is in good favor with themperor, but demandeth no farther then is shewed unto hym.⁵⁵ As far as Richard Pace was concerned Wingfield was in far too good a favour with the emperor, 'Robert Wingfield doth take hym for a god, and thynks [th]att hys deades and thoghts do procede *ex [spirit]u sancto*.⁵⁶ It was Spinelly, however, of whom the most damning reports were made. His relationship with Wolsey had from the first been a poor one, damaged, irrevocably perhaps, by the latter's suspicion that the Italian agent had been poisoning the Archduchess Margaret's mind against him.⁵⁷ Robert Wingfield's fairly tame complaints that Spinelly never bothered to confirm receipt of his letters probably did him little harm.⁵⁸ Far more damning, however, was William Knight's suspicions reported to Wolsey in February 1517, that Spinelly may have been suborned by Chièvres and Sauvage.⁵⁹ Knight's report no doubt only added to Wolsey's suspicions about Spinelly expressed to Tunstall two months earlier, 'Ye must be ware that ye make nat Sir Thomas Spinell pryvie to your secrete maters for it is thought that he hath intelligence with Momsieur de Chievers and the chancelor and by hym partie it is butid that themperor hath concluded the said peax...'⁶⁰ In the

⁵⁵ PRO, SP1/12, fo.25, (*L&P*, II i, no.1317) Spinelly to Wolsey, 21 December 1515.

⁵⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XVIII fo.26, (*L&P*, II i, no.1517), Pace to William Burbank, 23 April 1516.

⁵⁷ PRO, SP1/7, fo.148, (*L&P*, I ii, no.2779), Spinelly to Wolsey, 1 April 1514.

⁵⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel. B XVIII, fo.157, (*L&P*, II i, no.684), Wingfield to Henry, 10 July 1515.

⁵⁹ Knight's suspicions had been aroused when Spinelly asked him about the content of two letters the ambassador had passed to Maximilian. The Florentine warned Knight that if they contained information relating to the emperor's 'descent' into the Low Countries and the planned deposition of Charles' advisers, Maximilian would certainly pass the letters on to Chièvres and Sauvage. Knight who had not read the letters warned Wolsey, 'And if they conteyne no suche thing then I lament he [Spinelly] was suborned to know of me whether any like thing was practised or no.' BL, Cotton MS, Galba B V, fos.97-100, esp.99v, (*L&P*, II ii, no.2930), Knight to Wolsey, 16 February 1517.

⁶⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VI, fos.90-92, (*L&P*, II i, no.2700), Wolsey to Tunstall, 25 December 1516.

event Spinelly's warnings proved to be true. Maximilian travelled to the Low Countries, funded by Henry, where in co-operation with Chièvres and Sauvage he signed a new treaty with Francis. For 10,000 florins Wolsey facilitated England's diplomatic isolation and bolstered the position of the men he had attempted to have removed from power.⁶¹

The fact that Spinelly and his colleagues were maintained at their posts for such a long time despite the unending criticism of other ambassadors, might be put forward as yet more evidence of Wolsey and Henry's indifference towards the resident system. No doubt in part it was. However, another factor which cannot be ignored is that almost in spite of the government Spinelly and his colleagues actually performed with reasonable competence.

Throughout this early period Gigli's efforts in Rome on behalf of both the king and his minister were unceasing. It is probably true that the success of the numerous petitions made by the Bishop of Worcester were more the result of the state of European politics at any given time than due to the competence of the resident ambassador. Yet it is also true that given the weight of business brought before the pope, that without an experienced navigator such as Gigli, Henry and Wolsey might have expected to wait far longer for a satisfactory resolution of their affairs.

If Robert Wingfield was criticized for his imperial sympathies, it should be remembered that at a time when Wolsey's plans depended more heavily on the friendship of the emperor than any other prince, the English ambassador enjoyed an especially close relationship with him. At the beginning of 1515 Henry had written to Maximilian requesting that Wingfield be given leave in order that he might replace Edward Poynings as ambassador in the Low Countries.⁶² Wingfield's readiness to leave the Imperial court throughout his long stay has already been touched upon,

⁶¹ Scarisbrick, *op.cit.*, pp.64-65; Behrens, 'Thomas Spinelly', *op.cit.*, pp.179-185.

⁶² PRO, SP1/10, fo.38, (*L&P*, II i no.83), Henry to Maximilian, early 1515.

certainly a royal directive to do so would have been received with the utmost enthusiasm. And yet he remained with Maximilian for almost three more years. The conclusion that one must draw is that the emperor wanted Wingfield to remain. In early 1518 when Wolsey was toying with new plans to place pressure on Francis in Italy with yet another English sponsored Swiss-Imperial effort against the Milanese, the emperor specifically requested that Wingfield be dispatched to represent Henry.⁶³ Three years later as Tudor and Habsburg once again prepared to join forces against the French, Maximilian's grandson, Charles, also requested Wingfield's dispatch, "for the knowledge they [Charles and Margaret] had aswell of hym as the affeccion he bore to theyr howsse."⁶⁴ It could quite plausibly be argued that Wingfield's popularity with the Habsburgs was a product of his conspicuous sympathy for their house. Yet even if such was the case he nevertheless remained an individual with whom Maximilian, Charles and Margaret wanted to do business, surely a useful qualification for one whose primary task was to liaise with the prince to whom he had been dispatched.⁶⁵

One of the best benchmarks for judging the performance of a resident ambassador was the frequency and quality of the information he sent back to his government - on this criterion few of the resident envoys employed by Henry throughout his reign could match Thomas Spinelly. The chief reason for Spinelly's effectiveness as a newsgatherer was the wide range of sources with

⁶³ This new scheme came to nothing, but even before it was rendered superfluous by successful Anglo-French negotiations, Pace had written to Wolsey on the king's behalf advising the cardinal that Henry did not want Wingfield to be sent to the emperor. PRO, SP1/16, fo.208-211, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4057), Pace to Wolsey, 3 April 1518.

⁶⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VII, fo.147, (*L&P*, III ii no.1777), Richard Wingfield to Wolsey, 16 November 1521.

⁶⁵ Richard Pace may well have sneered at the intimacy of his colleague's relationship with Maximilian, yet the success with which the king's secretary managed to antagonize the emperor and his expulsion from the Imperial court which this behaviour precipitated certainly did little to enhance the state of Anglo-Imperial relations, at a time when, unwisely or not, Henry and Wolsey still sought the emperor's favour.

which he had contact. Through his family he had business connections in some of Europe's most important cities.⁶⁶ Among other connections he had cultivated were the de Tassis family, postmasters to both Maximilian and Charles, and Jean de Berghes chamberlain to Margaret of Austria.⁶⁷ Through these and other sources Spinelly supplied Henry and Wolsey with an unending stream of information. Tunstall considered the Italian so well informed that he assured Wolsey:

[If I] tary here oonly to assertayne the king's grace off newys occ[urent I] shuld but spend the king's money in vayne seinge master Spinel [is] always resident which for his gret and long acquaintance in th[ese parts] and also by his grete diligence shal come by moo newys in oone da[y than] I can doo in a weke.⁶⁸

Years after Spinelly had died another English resident in the Low Countries, John Hackett, complained to Wolsey that he had received a letter from Brian Tuke instructing him to gather information on secret matters in the same manner that the Florentine had done. The merchant complained that if he was to do this he must be told what it was the cardinal wanted to know and whom he should ask in order to discover it.⁶⁹ Wolsey may not have liked Spinelly he would nevertheless have been ill-advised to deprive the king of the Italian's services.

Mattingly's assessment of Ferdinand of Aragon's early resident system would suggest that Wolsey and Henry were hardly alone in being slow to come to terms with the new practice. The Spanish king frequently undermined the credibility of his resident envoys by sending special ambassadors

⁶⁷ Behrens, 'Thomas Spinelly', *op.cit.*, pp.167-169.

⁶⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B IV, fo.159, (*L&P*, II i, no.2331), Tunstall to Wolsey, Bruges, 1 September 1516.

⁶⁹ F.Rogers, *The Letters of Sir John Hackett*, (Morgantown, 1956), p.110, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3928), Hackett to Wolsey, 14 February 1528.

with instructions from which they were excluded. Ferdinand starved his residents of both information and money and made clear his lack of faith in them by sending other ambassador on round-robin embassies to spy on them.⁷⁰ However, it would seem that at least some of the early difficulties in the Spanish system had been resolved by the time Henry started to experiment with resident diplomacy. Where Henry usually excluded his residents from such sensitive business as treaty negotiations, Ferdinand began in the final years of his reign to entrust sole responsibility for such tasks to his permanent envoys. Thus Pedro d'Urea, Ferdinand's ambassador resident with Maximilian from 1510 to 1516 was given sole authority to ratify the treaty renewing Spain's inclusion in the Holy League even before his master had seen the final draft of the agreement.⁷¹ Similarly, Luis Caroz de Villaragut, Spanish resident in England from 1509 to 1515, played a key role in all the negotiations concerned with the numerous treaties made between Spain and England during the period 1510 to 1514.⁷² Furthermore, Ferdinand's later resident envoys were often drawn from the ranks of most trusted servants. Pedro de Quintana was the king's secretary, and Juan de la Nuza, intermittently resident in the Low Countries until Ferdinand's death in January 1516, was a member of his privy council.

When Archduke Charles inherited his grandfather's Aragonese territories he also received his diplomatic network, a windfall which the young king's advisers wisely left for the most part unaltered. In Rome the apostolic prothonotary, Guillaume-Raimo de Vich continued as Spanish

⁷⁰ Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, pp.138-144.

⁷¹ In this case the latitude given to the Spanish ambassador by his master inflicted a considerable diplomatic setback on Ferdinand. Urea under great pressure from the emperor ratified a separate agreement specifying the exclusion of the Venetians from the new league, which not only left Maximilian free to continue his old war against the Republic at a time when the Spanish king had hoped to involve him in a new one against France, but also ensured that the diplomatic isolation which the Holy League's formation was supposed to impose upon Louis XII, would be compromised by the advent of a Franco-Venetian alliance. *CSPS*, II, pp.85-88, Ferdinand to Pedro d'Urea, 11 January 1513.

⁷² *Ibid*, pp. 33, 215, 225.

resident, while another member of the clergy Bernardino de Mesa, Bishop of Helna, dispatched to England by Ferdinand the previous year, was to remain at his post until April 1523. Pedro d'Urea continued to reside with Maximilian until August 1516, when somewhat curiously the emperor accredited the Spaniard as his own representative to the court of his grandson, still presumably the ambassador's titular master.⁷³ One crucial addition to the old Trastamara network was the appointment of Philibert Naturelli in 1517 as resident ambassador to the court of Francis I. Unlike his colleagues Naturelli had made his career serving Charles' Burgundian relatives, representing both Maximilian and Philip in Rome for much of the 1490s.⁷⁴ As a member of Charles' council in Burgundy and as chancellor of the order of the Golden Fleece,⁷⁵ Naturelli was certainly of no less importance than his Spanish counterparts, and would appear to reflect the genuine commitment of Charles' government to the running of an effective system of resident ambassadors.

Despite the fact that the first residents accredited to the Valois court had arrived in the reign of Louis XI, when Francis I came to the throne fifty years later the only French resident envoy was to be found in Rome.⁷⁶ As a result the use of residents by the French king lagged behind both his rivals. Although permanent embassies may have been dispatched to England, the Low Countries and the emperor as early as 1515,⁷⁷ the ambassadors were soon recalled without replacement. It

⁷³ Le Glay, *Correspondance*, II, p.329, Maximilian to Margaret, 26 September 1516.

⁷⁴ *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, art. 'Philibert Naturelli'.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ For an analysis of the French diplomatic corps in the early 16th century see the articles by C.Giry-Deloison, 'La naissance de la diplomatie moderne', *op.cit.*, pp.43-58, and 'Le personnel diplomatique au début du XVI^e siècle. L'exemple les relations franco-anglaises de l'avènement de Henry VII au Camp du Drap d'Or, (1485-1520)', *Journal des Savants*, (July-December 1987), 205-249.

⁷⁷ These were Pierre Cordier, Adrien Hangest, s.de Genlis and Robert de Bapaumes who were dispatched respectively to the emperor, the Low Countries and England in June 1515, *CAF*, IX, pp. 17,38,49. According to Barrillon, 'ledict seigneur [Francis] son charge ausdictz ambassadeurs

was to be several years before permanent envoys were once again dispatched to the emperor and England, and more than a decade before the Low Countries received another resident. Aside from Rome only Venice received a permanent envoy from the outset of Francis's reign. In contrast to Henry's early residents the men chosen by Francis and his advisers to serve in Venice were well known at court. Pierre de la Vernade was a *maître des requêtes*, and Jean de Pins was a protege of Antoine Du Prat on whose staff he served at Bologna in November and December 1515 before receiving his posting to the Republic in January the following year.⁷⁸

de demourer devers iceulx princes pendant sa voyage, affin de luy faire scavoir toutes nouvelles.", *Journal de Jean Barrillon*, ed. P.de Vaisierre, 2 vols., (Paris, 1897-1899), I, p.63. Given the absence of any letters of credence the *CAF* has used Barrillon's general description as the basis for according Cordier, Bapaumes and Genlis resident status. Glenn Richardson has, with some justification, disputed the assertion that Bapaumes at least enjoyed resident status; Richardson, 'Anglo-French relations', pp.117-118. Bapaumes remained in England for only nine months while Cordier's sojourn with Maximilian lasted only five, furthermore none of the three men were upon their recall replaced. On the other hand the general nature of their responsibilities as described by Barrillon, who as chancellor Duprat's secretary may surely be considered a reliable source, are consonant with those of a resident ambassador.

⁷⁸ The *CAF*, IX, p.67, again on the strength of Barrillon's memoirs, also lists Francis Rochechouart, s.de Champdenier among the French residents appointed to Venice. Yet according to Barrillon the purpose of Rochechouart's mission was, "affin de entretenir tousjours en bonne amytié et dire que ledict seigneur envoyeroit de brief une partie de son armée qui se joindroyt avec celle de la Seigneurie pour recouvrer les villes de Bresse et de Véronne que l'Empereur et le Roy d'Espagne occupoient sur icelle Seigneurie.", Barrillon, *op.cit.*, I, p.142. There is little in this description of Rochechouart's mission to suggest he was ever supposed to replace Trivulce as the French resident to Venice, and given that his stay in the city did not exceed two months it seems most unlikely that he ever was. For Pierre de la Vernade see Barrillon, pp.203-204. For Jean de Pins see, Jean de Pins, 'Un ambassadeur Français à Venise et Rome, 1516-1525', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, (January – June 1947), 215-246.

Growth and Consolidation

A considerably more far-reaching consequence of the Treaty of London than the brief Anglo-French entente to which it led, was the exchange by Henry and Francis of resident ambassadors. In terms of diplomatic history it was significant since it represented the true beginning of the institutionalization of Anglo-French diplomatic relations. It also marked the beginning of Henry and Wolsey's real commitment to the new diplomatic practice, represented in the man chosen to reside in France, Thomas Boleyn. Unlike the small number of residents who had served Henry up to this point Boleyn was rich, moved in the highest social circles and enjoyed the favour of Henry himself. Co-heir to the earldom of Ormond and son-in-law of the second duke of Norfolk,⁷⁹ Boleyn's position in society by right of birth and marriage was already well assured. More important than either of these connections, however, was his position at court. Already a squire of the body when Henry ascended the throne,⁸⁰ he soon succeeded in gaining access to the circle of favourites who joined the king in his daily pastimes.⁸¹ Although never one of Henry's closest companions, the father of the future queen nevertheless remained well known to the king throughout the first decade of his reign⁸² and was active in all aspects of government including administration, judicial work and most pertinently of all diplomatic service.⁸³ In company with John Yong and Edward Poyning it was Boleyn who travelled to the Low Countries in May 1512

⁷⁹ E.Ives, *Anne Boleyn*, (Oxford, 1986), pp.7-10.

⁸⁰ *L&P*, I i, no.20.

⁸¹ Thus in 1513 he took part in the royal christmas revels along with others of Henry's favourites such as Nicholas Carew and Henry Guildford. *L&P*, I ii, p.1501.

⁸² For example Boleyn took part in the christening of the Princess Mary as one of the four canopy bearers. BL, Harleian MS 3,504, fo.232, (*L&P*, II i no.1573).

⁸³ As well as being appointed a commissioner of the peace in Suffolk, Norfolk and Kent at various times between 1515 and 1518 Boleyn was also chosen as mayor of Kent in 1517. *Ibid*, nos.207, 677, 1152, 1302, 3783, 3748.

charged with the formidable task of extracting from Maximilian a binding commitment to an invasion of France.

The distinction between such a man and the likes of Spinelly, Stile, and even Wingfield was considerable. Here was someone both king and cardinal knew well and who had in the past been entrusted with the most delicate of diplomatic missions, being given a resident embassy - the appointment represented perhaps the most important development in the practice of English diplomacy throughout Henry VIII's reign. This statement can only be supported, however, if one rejects Eric Ives' speculation that Boleyn's appointment to Paris was nothing more than an effort on Wolsey's part to get one of Henry's favourites away from court. Such a speculation is not difficult to dismiss. Boleyn's diplomatic experience has already been touched upon and as Ives himself points out the new resident to France had no equal in his command of the French tongue among Henry's courtiers.⁸⁴ Given that for some years both his daughters had been ladies-in-waiting to Francis' queen, Boleyn's name, if not his person would have been known at the Valois court. Furthermore, although Boleyn enjoyed Henry's favour there were a number of other courtiers, among them all the members of the newly constituted privy chamber, who were still closer to the king. It is true that in due course several of these men would also perform resident embassies to France, yet for the present these closest of the king's companions were left at court while Boleyn was sent to Paris. One need not look for dark motives and signs of faction struggle to explain Boleyn's appointment, but rather simply acknowledge that Wolsey, *and the king*, chose a man with the requisite experience and skills to fill sensitive position.

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Boleyn's successors in France confirmed the new commitment of Henry and Wolsey to the resident system. Between March 1520 and the outbreak of war in July 1522 no less than three of the four other residents accredited to Francis' court were chosen from the king's privy chamber.

⁸⁴ PRO 31/18/2/2, fo.14, (*L&P*, VIII, no.189), Chapuys to Charles, 9 February 1535.

The role of the privy chamber in Henry's diplomacy will be explored in more detail elsewhere.⁸⁵ For the present it is sufficient to point out that Richard Wingfield, Richard Jerningham and Thomas Cheyne, drawn as they were from the king's most intimate circle of servants and confidants, could all expect to be called upon to take charge of extraordinary missions of the first importance, and thus their selection for resident postings lent the office an importance even greater than that given to it by Boleyn's appointment.

The use of resident envoys in Anglo-French diplomacy soon had an impact on the nature of the men chosen to reside at other European courts. In November 1521 upon learning that William Knight was to be appointed as co-resident to the imperial court with Thomas Spinelly, the emperor was quick to express his dissatisfaction. As Richard Wingfield explained to Wolsey:

at theyr [Thomas Boleyn and Thomas Docwra] congie takyng themperor shewyd them to be informyd that your grace ordeigned doctor Knight for to attende appon hym as the kyngs ambassador, sayenge further that he trustyd that the king's highnes nor your grace wolde not thynke convenient to have a more meane personage to be resident with hym than was with the Frensche kyng, namyng sir William Fitzwilliam.⁸⁶

According to Wingfield, Charles had been moved to make the complaint partly because of the status of his own ambassador in England, Bernardo de Mesa, Bishop of Helna. However, Helna had been resident in England since 1515, yet in August 1517 Charles had not complained when Spinelly was appointed English resident. Certainly in this case it would appear that the status of the resident *per se* was not the issue, but rather the importance of the proposed envoy in relation to another ambassador at a rival court.

⁸⁵ See below, pp.157-163.

⁸⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VII, fo.147, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1768), Richard Wingfield to Wolsey, 16 November 1521.

In response to Charles' request Robert Wingfield was dispatched to the Low Countries to act in tandem with Knight, while Spinelly returned to Spain with the emperor to be joined in 1522 by Sampson and Boleyn. When the Florentine died it was Sampson that took his place. Although superficially neither Sampson or Knight could equal the courtiers accredited to Francis, their use as resident envoys nevertheless demonstrated the English government's appreciation of the advantages to be reaped from the appointment of permanent ambassadors. Both men had spent the greater part of the previous decade on diplomatic missions for Henry, and had entered the service of Wolsey before he reached the height of his powers. Although Charles may not have appreciated it, in dispatching Sampson and Knight to Spain and the Low Countries the cardinal was assigning to the Habsburg courts two members of his staff who were every bit as valuable to him as the gentlemen of the privy chamber were to his master.

Once begun the practice of using key members of the royal entourage, the cardinal's staff, and other senior figures within the English administrative and judicial apparatus, did not falter. In the aftermath of Henry's second war with France John Taylor, master of the rolls, was accredited as resident to the Valois court. In between Taylor's two stints as English resident in France, John Clerk, bishop of Bath and Wells, dean of the king's chapel, and formerly one of the cardinal's chaplains, spent just over a year in the position.⁸⁷ While himself still master of the rolls, Clerk had spent nearly three years as permanent envoy in Rome, succeeding yet another of Henry's chief judges, Thomas Hannibal, in the post. After nearly three and a half years in Spain Richard Sampson was replaced by Edward Lee, a well known humanist scholar, and almoner to the king.

⁸⁷ Bell, *Handlist*, p.71, lists this embassy as special. However, Clerk's instructions make it clear that he was sent to the French court as a direct replacement for John Taylor, the current resident envoy to Francis. BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX, fos.237-244, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2416), Clerk to Wolsey, 21 August 1526.

As the quality of the men appointed to resident positions improved so did the manner in which they were treated, especially by Wolsey. Where their predecessors had been obliged to defer to special envoys this new generation of residents were often given sole responsibility for the performance of highly sensitive tasks. When extraordinary ambassadors were appointed they were usually instructed to include their resident colleagues in the negotiations they had been sent to conduct.

During the seventeen months in which Thomas Boleyn was posted to France⁸⁸ he was given sole responsibility for the transaction of all diplomatic business, much of which was of a decidedly sensitive nature. He was entrusted with the preparations for the meeting of Henry and Francis agreed upon in the Treaty of London. Upon the death of Maximilian he was given the responsibility of convincing Francis and his advisers that English policy with regard to the imperial election was entirely pro-French,⁸⁹ a particularly challenging commission given that Richard Pace had been dispatched to Germany with instructions to advance Henry's candidature and do all he could to harm that of the French king. On a more technical level Boleyn was called upon to represent the interests of English merchants and support the numerous claims for damages made to the French government.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Bell, *Handlist*, p.68, states that Boleyn's residency began in mid-January 1519, two months after its actual commencement. In BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VII, fo.85 (*L&P*, III i, no.57), Boleyn to Wolsey, 2 February 1519, the ambassador informed the cardinal that on 17 February the first 100 days of his diets would have been spent. Since diets were dated from the day an envoy left court, Boleyn's mission to France can be placed exactly as starting on 19 November 1518.

⁸⁹ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VII, fos. 88, 100, 112, (*L&P*, III i, nos. 70, 121, 210). Boleyn to Wolsey, 28 February, Boleyn to Henry, 9 February and 14 March 1519.

⁹⁰ 'And yesterday in the mornyng I reseived owt of England.....a pacquett of letters wherin was a letter from the king's highnesse to the king here with a copy of the same, a letter from your grace to the king here, a qwere of instrucion signed with the king's hand concernyng in the begynnyng the deliverance of the king's letter with recommendacions and certain credence of assured amytye and favour for the king's advauncement here to thempire. And the residue of the said instrucion concernyth what tyme, wher and how the meeting of both kings shalbe, and a

William Fitzwilliam, who followed Richard Jerningham as resident in December 1520, was treated by Wolsey in a fashion that many special envoys might well have envied. In answer to the young ambassador's concerns as to whether he was performing his duties correctly Wolsey not only sent him a reassuring reply, but even wrote to the king observing, 'very glad am I to se the towareness of this young man, wyche in myn oppynion and pore jugement falleth right well in the mater.'⁹¹ When Fitzwilliam sent a letter to Wolsey advising in the strongest terms against a truce with the Scots,⁹² rather than a curt rebuff the reply he received contained an account of the king's various commitments and a description of the difficulties which a war with Scotland might entail.⁹³

paper of the number of persons that be ordeyned to be with the king's grace at the meting. And a letter from your grace to me concernyng most the thorder to be takyn for the marchants spoyled in the sea in September and October last year.' BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VII, fos.96-98, esp.fo.96, (*L&P*, III i, no.118), Boleyn to Wolsey, 11 March 1519. See also, *ibid*, 85, 100, 125, 143, and Caligula E II, fo.24 (*ibid*, 57, 121, 275, 415, 531), Boleyn to Wolsey 2 February 1519, Boleyn to Henry, 14 March 1519, Wolsey to Boleyn, May, August and November 1519.

⁹¹ PRO, SP1/21, fo.215, (*L&P*, III i, no.1192), Wolsey to Henry, 7 March 1521.

⁹² 'Please it your grace I shall shew you my [poor mind.] If it be for the king my master's advantage t[o make a] trewse I wold he shuld grante it. But yf he hopes to get advantage of the Scotts for Goddes sake never [trust] theym, for Scotts will never doo good to England [while] the world standeth. Pleas your grace nature c[auseth] me speke thus rowndly agaynst theym be[cause they] slewe two of my broders. Howbeit I know well [the king's] highness and your grace can see furder a m^l tymes [than my] wit can comprehend.' BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.25, (*ibid*, no.1206), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, 29 March 1521.

⁹³ 'And to thintent the king's said ambassador may have perficte knowlege of the king's intent and mynde in this matier reservyng the same secrete to hym self. Soo it is that albeit the Scotts by this variaunt dealing have geven greate occasion to the king to make weare ageynst theym, and that regarding the division that is nowe in Scotlande he had never better oportunitie than nowe, yet his grace not oonely considereng that whan werre is oones commensed it must be contynued whiche wolbe costie without any gain or profit. But also regarding the manifolde quarells that be sett furthe betwixt themperor and the Frensche king whiche is like to grow to an invasion either on the oon parte or the other within brief tyme in whiche caas the king's highnes by vertue of the treaties heretofore passed betwixt hym and other princes shalbe required to geve ayde and assistance to the prince invaded agenst the invasour.....wherby his grace shuld be inforced not oonely to maigtene an armye against Scotlande and another in Irelande but also the third in geving assistance ayeinst the forsaid invasion whiche mought torne to mervelous greate businesse and importible charges, the derth and scacitie of vitayles specially considerid. His highnes

At the outset of his residency to Rome John Clerk was commissioned to negotiate with the pope in co-operation with the imperial ambassador, the duke of Sessa, for a three year truce between Francis, Charles, Henry and the Papacy.⁹⁴ Richard Wingfield and Cuthbert Tunstall, dispatched to Spain in March 1525 in order to seek the gratification of Henry's wildest ambitions, were instructed to include Sampson in the negotiations with the emperor for the partition of France.⁹⁵ Nine months later when English plans were no longer concerned with the dismemberment of their sorely wounded neighbour, but rather with her resuscitation, Edward Lee was accredited resident to Spain, his first task, to facilitate the French king's liberation at the lowest possible cost to England's new ally.⁹⁶ Gardiner and Foxe dispatched to Rome in February 1528 with orders to secure a decree from Clement authorising Wolsey to pass judgement on the legality of Henry's marriage, were instructed to take the king's resident in Rome, Sir Gregorio Casali, completely into their trust.⁹⁷ At the same time Lee, in company with Jerome de Ghinucci, Henry other resident in Spain,⁹⁸ was given the responsibility of liaising with Francis' special envoys, Gabriel

therefore wolde be loothe to enter the werre ayeinst Scotland till suche tyme as the variaunce betwixt themperor and the Frensche king were well appeised.', PRO, SP1/21, fos.247-259, esp.fo.251, (*ibid*, no.1212), draft copy of instructions from Henry to Fitzwilliam, corrections in Thomas Ruthal's hand, March 1521.

⁹⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B V fos.188-190, (*L&P*, III ii, no.3059), Commission for John Clerk, 31 May 1523.

⁹⁵ *St.P.*, p.412, (*L&P*, IV i,no.1212), Instructions to Wingfield and Tunstall, 26 March 1525.

⁹⁶ Cambridge MS, EE IV 27, no.4, fos.1-3 (*L&P*, IV i no.1798), Instructions for Edward Lee, December 1525. The marginal reference in *L&P* bears no relation to that of the manuscript stored in the Cambridge University Library.

⁹⁷ 'as your grace instructed us aswell to knowe of hym [Casali] at length the state and condicion of all things here as also to communicate unto the same our hole charge and to consulte with hym how to use and ordre ourselves at our accesse unto the pope's presence.' BL, Harliean 419, fo.71, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4119), Foxe and Gardiner to Wolsey, March 1528.

⁹⁸ Bell, *Handlist*, p.45, lists this embassy as special yet aside from the fact that Ghinucci spent almost three years at the Imperial court in Spain, the bishop's letter of credence to the Pope in October 1529, stated that he had been residing with the emperor. Additional MS, 15,387, fo.219 (*L&P*, IV, iii, no.5987).

de Gramont, Bishop of Tarbes, and Gilbert Bayard, dispatched to Spain in order to make a joint declaration of war against the emperor.⁹⁹ Lee's task on this occasion could hardly have been more arduous. Having repudiated his old ally and joined forces with the French, Henry had to demonstrate to Francis that he was a credible ally in the struggle against the emperor or else risk being sidelined by a Habsburg-Valois peace agreement which excluded the English. At the same time, war with Charles and more specifically with the Low Countries, and the negative economic and political ramifications which such a conflict would almost certainly have for the king,¹⁰⁰ ensured that Henry and Wolsey were eager to avoid an actual declaration of war if it were at all possible to do so. In the event, the intense pressure placed by the French envoys on Lee and Ghinucci denied them any room for manoeuvre, and much to the later irritation of their masters in London, the English ambassadors issued the joint declaration on 20 January 1528.¹⁰¹ However, regardless of the outcome of this particular diplomatic by-play, it does not alter the fact that Lee had been entrusted with the responsibility of pledging his country to war or peace.

⁹⁹ Although no copies of the instructions remain, the detailed letter from Lee and Ghinucci describing the last minute negotiations which led up to the 'intimation of war' gives not only a clear impression of the orders they had received, but also a useful insight into the intensely high pressured conditions under which renaissance diplomats, deprived as they were of all but long term contact with their governments, had to work. BL.Cotton MS, Titus B VI fos.1-4, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3826), Lee and Ghinucci to Wolsey, 22 January 1528.

¹⁰⁰ S.J.Gunn, 'Cardinal Wolsey's foreign policy and the domestic crisis of 1527-1528', in *Cardinal Wolsey*, ed.S.J.Gunn and R.G.Lindley, (Cambridge, 1991), pp.172-174.

¹⁰¹ As with the earlier instructions issued to the ambassadors, Wolsey's dissatisfaction with their declaration of war on the emperor, can only be inferred from their own letter to the cardinal in which the envoys wrote, 'Wher as by the king's and your grace's letters we perceyve that nother his highness nor your grace be content that we proceded to the intymacion and that it lyketh the same to chastise our [decision]...Forasmoche as although we folowed the tenor of our instructions yet his highness and your grace thynke that good desretion and wisdom wold that we shuld first have gevyn advertisement theroff of the state of things er ever we had proceded to the intimacion.' BL.Cotton MS, Vesp.C IV, fos.243-249, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4564), Lee and Ghinucci to Wolsey, 28 July 1528. With some justification they went on to defend themselves by pointing out that they had done everything in their power to avoid the declaration, and that had they held out any longer, they seriously risked jeopardizing Anglo-French relations which they had been specifically instructed not to do.

Maturity

In geographic terms the spread of England's resident ambassadors¹⁰² had reached its zenith by the time of Wolsey's fall. Aside from Ralph Sadler's troubled residency in Scotland in the early 1540s the network of English permanent embassies enjoyed no further expansion until the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Furthermore, with the breakdown of Anglo-Papal relations in the 1530s and consequent severing of diplomatic relations with the Vatican an important link in the chain of English resident ambassadors was lost.¹⁰³ Yet if Henry's resident network shrank somewhat in the 1530s its place in the king's diplomatic affairs became evermore important and appointments to permanent missions - at least in France - actually sought after.

In October 1529 George Boleyn and John Stokesley were appointed resident ambassadors to Paris.¹⁰⁴ Upon hearing the news Jean Du Bellay wrote from London to Anne de Montmorency:

D'icy a troys jours part maistre Bulans qui maine ledict docteur Stocles avec luy et va fort bien en ordre. Ceaulx qui l'envoyent ont grant envoye qu'on luy facze ung bien bon recueil et plus d'honneur que l'ordinaire ne requirent.....Mais je vous ay bien voulu advertir que le recueil qu'on luy fera sera fort poisé.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² To be distinguished from resident agents. See below, pp.48-56. .

¹⁰³ In September 1533 upon hearing news of Clement's threat of excommunication Henry recalled his resident envoy, William Benet, from Rome. In March 1534 Girolamo Ghinucci and Lorenzo Campeggio, England's now defunct cardinal protector, were deprived respectively of the bishoprics of Worcester and Salisbury by act of parliament, Wilkie, *op.cit.*, p.216.

¹⁰⁴ Although Bell, *Handlist*, p.74, lists Boleyn's embassy as special the instructions given to him and his colleague, John Stokesley, specify that, they had been dispatched to France as resident ambassadors. *St.P.* VII, p.219-224, (*L&P*, IV iii, no.6073), Instructions to Boleyn and Stokesley, October 1529. See above p.15.

¹⁰⁵ *Correspondence du Cardinal du Bellay*, ed.R.Scheurer, (2 vols., Paris, 1969-1973), I p.96, (*L&P*, IV iii, no.5983, Du Bellay to Montmorency), 4 October 1529.

The tone of Du Bellay's letter makes it clear that Boleyn's family at least expected him to be treated as an extraordinary personage - the manner of his welcome should reflect the prestigious position they now held at the English court. No doubt he would not have been dispatched to France had he and his family not wished him to be sent. The position of resident ambassador at the French court was obviously considered sufficiently honourable and potentially advantageous to place one of Anne's closet supporters there.

Other close adherents to the Boleyn family given resident postings included Francis Bryan, Anne's cousin, Thomas Cranmer and Nicholas Hawkins upon news of whose death she displayed great distress.¹⁰⁶ Bryan carried out two resident embassies to France, the first between July and December 1529, the second from October 1530 to December 1531. As a member of the king's privy chamber his appointment to Francis' court was by no means unusual. However, it is still noteworthy that Anne and her supporters saw the office of ambassador to France as sufficiently significant to warrant the sacrifice of one of their closest supporters with almost unrivalled access to the king.

Neither Cranmer or Hawkins, successive residents to the Imperial court between 1532 and 1534, were obvious candidates for diplomatic appointments. Hawkins, admittedly a doctor of civil law, nevertheless possessed no experience of diplomacy, making him a peculiar choice for the most sensitively placed residency in Europe. Although Cranmer had been included in two embassies prior to his appointment to the Imperial court - he took part in missions dispatched to Spain in 1527 and Italy in 1529 - the role he had played in them was of a largely advisory nature.¹⁰⁷ No

¹⁰⁶ According to Chapuys, 'Ledit ambassadeur de France ma affirme que la Dame Anne montre plus grand regret et deul du trespas du dit ambassadeur que ledit seigneur roy.' Castillon further claimed that Anne believed Hawkins had been killed by a dose of lethal medicine. PRO 31/18/3/1, fo.31 (*L&P*, VII, no.171), Chapuys to Charles, 11 February 1534.

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of Cranmer's role in these embassies see, D.MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer, A Life*, (London, 1996), pp.33-37, 48-53.

doubt his theological expertise would have been useful in pressing Henry's case at the imperial court. It would not, however, have prepared him for the various other diplomatic tasks which even at the time of Henry's divorce still had to be performed.¹⁰⁸ First and foremost Cranmer was an academic to whom the combination of aggressive negotiation and subtle deception which represented the diplomatic practice of the time must hardly have come naturally. Regardless of his intellectual skills, Cranmer's lack of worldly experience, not to mention his physical frailty,¹⁰⁹ made him a strange choice indeed for the post of resident ambassador to an unfriendly court whose size and complexity far exceeded that of its English counterpart. Furthermore, his dispatch to the Imperial court in January 1532 deprived Henry and Anne of one of their key theological advisers, another indication of the growing importance attached by the king and his council to the men selected for service as resident ambassadors.

¹⁰⁸ Some idea of Cranmer's other duties can be gained from his letter to Henry in September 1532, 'Pleaseth your highnes to understande that at my last sollicitation unto Monsieur Grandveile for an answere of the contracte of merchandise betwene the merchaunts of your grace's reaulme and the merchaunts of themperor's Low-Countries; the said Monsieur Grandveile shewed me that forasmoch as the diate concernynge the said contracte was lately held in Flaundres where the Quene of Hungary is governatrice, themperor thought good to do nothings therin without her advice, but to make answere by her rather than me.....

Morover, whan the said Monsieur Grandveile enquired of me if I had any answere of the aide and subsidy which the themperor desyred of your grace, I reported unto hym fully your grace's answere accordynge to myn instruccions.....

I have sent herewith unto your grace the copy of themperor's proclamacion concernynge a General Counsel and a Reformation to be had in Germany for the controvereyes of the faith. Also I have sent a copy of the taxe of al the stats of thempire, how many souldier every man is lymited unto for the aide agaynst the Turk.'

Memorials of Thomas Cranmer, ed.J.Strype, (2 vols., Oxford, 1840), (*L&P*, V, no.1290), Cranmer to Henry, 4 September 1532.

¹⁰⁹ As Henry's agent one of the early tasks given to Stephen Vaughan was the job of shepherding Cranmer across Germany. Although Vaughan was confident of getting the cleric home, his letter to Cromwell makes it clear that he did have misgivings, 'doubte ye not but I will conducte hym in safetie orells I will dye by the waye..... My trust is that by Cristmas we shalbe in England, although Master Cranmer is desposed to make small journeys, (as I am informed.)' PRO, SP1/72 fo.140, (*L&P*, V no.1620), Vaughan to Cromwell, 9 December 1532. Cranmer did not reach England till mid-January.

Increasingly not only the king and his advisers but also residents themselves came to appreciate the value of such postings. In 1538 Edmund Bonner wrote to Cromwell:

But where of your infinite and inestimable goodness it hath further liked you of late further to advance me to the office of legation from such a prince as my sovereign lord is unto the emperor and French king; and after to procure and obtain my advancement to so honorable a promotion as the Bishopric of Hereford, I must here acknowledge the exceeding greatness of your Lordships benefit.¹¹⁰

Although there can be little doubt that Bonner appreciated his bishopric rather more than his posting to France he nevertheless saw the latter office as a boon and further mark of Cromwell's favour. According to Charles de Marillac, Lord William Howard sought the intercession of both his half-brother, the Duke of Norfolk and his niece Queen Katherine Howard, in order to get the position as resident to the French court:

Le duc de Norford depuis ung an avoit procuré l'envoyer en ceste charge mais tant Cramwell vesquit il ne peult obtenir ce que depuis il a fait pas le moyen de ladicte damme, laquelle aux grands prieres de son oncle le duc a intercedé pour son dit cousin.¹¹¹

As the prestige of resident postings grew so did the government's appreciation of their potential usefulness. One aspect of this was the attempt by Henry and Cromwell in the mid-1530s to use the establishment of a resident embassy in Germany as a direct means of advancing Anglo-Schmalkaldic relations. In September 1533 Stephen Vaughan travelled to Saxony with a proposal from Henry that he become the king's resident envoy at Elector Frederick's court.¹¹² In the same

¹¹⁰ J.Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed.J.Pratt, (8 vols, London, 1853-1870), V, p.150, Bonner to Cromwell, 30 September 1538.

¹¹¹ Kaulek, pp.257-260, (*L&P*, XVI i no.449), Marillac to Francis, 12 January 1541.

¹¹² *St.P.*, VII, p.503, (*L&P*, VI, no.1079), Vaughan to Henry, 5 September 1533. The exact nature of the king's overture to the Elector of Saxony is not specified in Vaughan's letter, but rather in Fredrick's reply which accompanied it. See below, footnote 114.

year the king made a similar offer to the Duke of Bavaria suggesting that Christopher Mont should come to reside with him.¹¹³ Neither overture was successful but it is indicative of the growing importance of resident ambassadors that the Duke of Saxony in declining Henry's offer gave as one reason his concern that to receive Vaughan at his court as a permanent ambassador could well arouse the emperor's displeasure.¹¹⁴

Unable to use resident diplomacy directly to strengthen their links with the German princes Henry and Cromwell nevertheless decided to employ Christopher Mont as their permanent agent in Germany.¹¹⁵ Mont acted as the king's point of first contact with the protestant princes of the Schmalkaldic League and as an unofficial observer at the numerous diets called during the period. During the 1530s he took part in no less than seven special missions to the courts of Saxony, Hesse and Bavaria as well attending Imperial diets and evangelical assemblies at Frankfurt, Hagenau and Brunswick. However, his primary role seems to have been to assist his

¹¹³ McEntegart, *op.cit.*, pp.60-61. Mattingly's assertion that, 'no permanent embassy with the Lutheran powers was established or ever projected', Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, p.184, is incorrect.

¹¹⁴ 'Cum summa et scopus orationis in eo beseit ut Domini Regi visum fuerit in aula pricipis Electoris prefatum Stephanum aliquandiu versari, ut certa utrorumque status et rerum cognitio haberetur, et qui mentem Electoris Regi rursuque animum Regie Majestalis Ejus Celsitudini significare posset; que omnia Princeps mens siba non solum precipuo honori tribui, sed etiam ex bono et propenso animo Regie Dignitatis pricedere putat; pro qua benignitate et officio Regi gratias non immodicas refert: atqui princeps Elector ducit se imparena ut Regi Celsitudinis vel aliorum Regum oratares ea lege in aula sua degerent; vereturque ne ob id apud Cesaream Majestatem, unieam ejus Dominam, et alios male audiret, possetque sinistre tale institutum interpretari; maxime eum in Germania bucusque apud Electores Imperii non fuerit consuetum, ut in coram aulis hujusmodi oratores talimunere legationis continue fungereatur: este non alie cause adsunt, qua propter predictus Nuntius hic predicto pacto permanere vellet, quam ab eo sunt prolate; non est dubium quin tama inde exoriretur, et tamen nihil comodi hoc negotiam esset allataram : Unde Dux mens procatur amanter, ut detrectationem, vel potius deliberationem illam, Rex Serenissimus non relit egre ferre, sed potius ex causis pregnantibus honi consulere....' *St.P.* VII, p.503, Fredrick, Elector of Saxony to Henry VIII, 5 September 1533.

¹¹⁵ E.Hilderbrandt, 'Christopher Mont, Anglo-German diplomat', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol.15, (1984), 281-292, provides a sound narrative description of Mont's career.

colleagues dispatched from England in their dealings with his countrymen. On no less than five occasions English ambassadors were sent to Germany where they first made or at least attempted to make contact with Mont before continuing their missions.¹¹⁶ Certainly Stephen Vaughan was grateful for the support his German colleague could provide particularly where speaking German was concerned.¹¹⁷

To some extent Mont's status as an resident agent rather than ambassador probably reflected the very general nature of his credentials as an envoy at large. However, his position as a diplomatic agent also made him more useful to Henry's government. John Mason writing to William Paget from Germany in 1544 argued that his continued presence in Germany was pointless since, 'things can soner be compassed by the secrete means of an agent than by the pompous airs of an ambassador.'¹¹⁸ The remark would have had still more validity had Mason made it a decade earlier. English involvement with the German princes of the Schmalkaldic League was a sensitive issue for Henry on many levels. Politically he was aligning himself with the opponents of the emperor, to some degree at least the point of the exercise, but one which could rapidly become counter-productive were Henry to become too closely associated with the protestant princes.¹¹⁹ Closer ties to the League also meant supporting the protestant Reformation, a policy

¹¹⁶ These were: Stephen Vaughan July 1533; Nicholas Heath, January 1534, (the two men failed to make contact), BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XXI, fo.93, (*L&P*, VII i, no.395), Heath to Cromwell, 31 March 1534; Simon Heynes, August 1535, and Thomas Paynell twice, first in April 1539 and again in February 1540, see Appendix A.

¹¹⁷ On the eve of his departure from Nuremburg Vaughan observed, 'The lacke of the tonge muche comberithe me and wyll more when Cristofer is departed.'PRO, SP1/78, fos.192-193, (*L&P*, VI, no,1040), Vaughan to Cromwell, 27 August 1533.

¹¹⁸ PRO, SP1/218, fo.70, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.798), Mason to Paget, 11 April 1546.

¹¹⁹ In his recent re-assessment of Anglo-Schmalkaldic relations Rory McEntegart has rejected the commonly held position that the sole motive behind Cromwell and Henry's German policy was a desire to compensate for the loss of their traditional Habsburg ally. Linking Cromwell as closely as ever to the Schmalkaldic policy, McEntegart has demonstrated that the lord privy seal as well as a small group of evangelical supporters orchestrated the German alliance as much to

which at the very least the king felt somewhat squeamish about. Finally, Henry was associating himself with princes, dukes and margraves, or more generally speaking his inferiors, in such circumstances it was more than usually important that the king was not perceived to be overly eager in his pursuit of their friendship. It is unclear whether in his original overture to Frederick of Saxony Henry had suggested Vaughan reside at his court as an agent or full ambassador. In retrospect, however, the arrangement with Mont as a roving agent in Germany was altogether more satisfactory.

It was not only in Germany that Henry's government came to appreciate the great advantages of appointing resident agents. From the late 1530s a merchant named Edmund Harvel served as Henry's agent in Venice. Although Harvel wrote to Cromwell in March 1535 to thank him for putting him into the king's service,¹²⁰ he does not appear to have begun a regular correspondence with the lord privy seal until the end of 1536, and the first instructions issued to him are dated January 1539.¹²¹ After Henry's break with Rome in 1534 Italian affairs became increasingly peripheral in English foreign policy, the exception being the government's continuing interest in the activities of the pope. It was with regard to these that Harvel received his first commission in 1539. Paul III was embroiled in a dispute with the Duke of Urbino over the sovereignty of Camerino, Harvel was simply instructed to visit Urbino as well as Ferrara and Mantua and

strengthen their own position within government and that of the protestant faith within the country as to protect England from catholic retaliation. McEntegart, *op.cit.*, pp.1-10, 127-132, 195.

¹²⁰ PRO, SP1/91 fo.86, (*L&P*, VIII no.373), Harvel to Cromwell, 11 March 1535. See below, p. .

¹²¹ *St.P.*, VIII, p.130, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.104), Cromwell to Harvel, 21 January 1539. Although Barrington, p.904, states that Cromwell appointed Harvel ambassador at this time, the merchant was in fact not accredited this status until mid-1541. Between December 1539 and April 1541 the king's household payments list Harvel as Henry's agent for which he received diets of 20 shillings. Arundel MS. 97, fos.108, 116, 131, 155, (*L&P*, XVI, no.380.) By March 1541, however, Harvel appears to have been promoted to the position of full resident ambassador, *CSPV.*, p.112.

vouchsafe Henry's support - of an entirely moral nature - for their ongoing struggle against the tyranny of the bishop of Rome. He was further urged to root out protestant supporters make a note of their numbers and report his findings back to the king.¹²² This mission, a combination of petty mischief making and reconnaissance, represented the pinnacle of Harvel's active service; it was also probably the least productive manner in which he was employed during his diplomatic career. Throughout the 1540s the merchant remained in Venice. Yet despite his later promotion to ambassador the nature of the services performed by Harvel during the remainder of Henry's reign was more consistent with the duties of an agent than those of an ambassador. He maintained a continuous stream of information concerned with affairs within the mediterranean area, acted as a go-between for the king with certain condottiere, and performed consular duties, giving advice and occasionally money to English students and travellers who found themselves adrift in the peninsula.¹²³

It was in the Low Countries that the use of merchants as diplomatic agents was most commonplace. As early as 1523 William Knight was recommending to Wolsey that he recruit John Hackett, an Irish-born merchant who had been trading in Brussels for a number of years, into the king's service:

[Archduchess Margaret] sayith alwaiys vnto me that she wolde that the kinges grace had oon ther on his behalfe to see the disposition of his money. And yf your grace were content to have suche a oon to do vnto the king and your grace servyce, ther is inhabitant in Myddilboroughe a gentleman of Ireland called Jhon Hackett, which in my poure judgement is as mete and muche more mete to do syngular servyce then Sir Thomas Spynelly was.¹²⁴

¹²² *St.P.*, VIII, p.130, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.104), Cromwell to Harvel, 21 January 1539. L.Pastor, *History of the Popes*, trans. F.L.Anttrobous and R.F.Kerr, (23 vols., 1898-1933), xi, pp.320-323.

¹²³ See below, pp.203-208.

¹²⁴ BL Cotton MS, Galba B VIII, fo.69, (*L&P*, III ii no.3366), Knight to Wolsey, 28 September 1523. For the few biographical details relating to Hackett's early life, see, below, pp.192-193.

In 1526 Hackett replaced Robert Wingfield as Henry's resident representative at the court of the Archduchess Margaret, although it was not until 1527 or perhaps later that the merchant was appointed English ambassador to the Low Countries.¹²⁵

The use of members of the English business community in the Low Countries, and in particular the officers of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, as resident diplomatic representatives soon became common practice. Hackett served as the king's envoy in Brussels until his death in 1534.¹²⁶ Probably due to the glacial state of Anglo-Imperial relations at the time of Hackett's death, the government resolved not to replace him, maintaining diplomatic contact with the emperor solely through their resident at the imperial court, Richard Pate. However, the close economic ties which joined England to the Low Countries ensured that Henry's government retained an active interest in the affairs of its ex-patriate subjects and monitored closely the commercial policies of the regent, Queen Mary of Hungary's Burgundian council.¹²⁷ Henry and Cromwell's main contact in the Low Countries after Hackett's death was John Hutton, the governor of the Merchant Adventurers. For some time Hutton liaised between the English and Burgundian governments solely in his capacity as the chief official of an important trading organization, relaying to Cromwell the numerous difficulties encountered by English merchants

¹²⁵ See below, p. 142.

¹²⁶ In fact upon the death of the archduchess Margaret on 1 December 1530 Hackett was recalled from the Low Countries for a brief period. When he returned at the end of January 1531, it was to replace Sir Nicholas Harvey, as ambassador to the emperor who had recently arrived in Brussels. PRO, SP1/65, fo.144, (*L&P*, V, no.100). When Charles travelled into Germany the following spring Hackett remained behind, serving with William Knight and John Tregonwell in the trade discussions which took place in the Low Countries in April and May 1532. Probably during these talks Hackett was officially re-accredited as resident ambassador to the regent. Instructions given by the king to Knight, Tregonwell and Hackett, Rogers, *op.cit.*, pp.307-312.

¹²⁷ For the importance of economic factors in Anglo-Burgundian diplomatic relations see Gunn, 'Cardinal Wolsey's foreign policy', pp.172-174.

in the Low Countries,¹²⁸ and carrying out directives from London relating to commercial issues. Gradually, however, he began to supply Henry's chief minister with a wider range of information concerning political as well as economic issues,¹²⁹ and at the same time became more closely associated with the government's interests in the Low Countries. In November 1536 he was instructed to make an official complaint to Mary on Henry's behalf over the seizure by a Burgundian captain of a French ship from the port of Southampton.¹³⁰ A month later he requested an audience with the regent in an unofficial capacity seeking permission for Henry to export two hundred pairs of Almaine rivets.¹³¹ It was, however, only in April 1537, when the king was doing his utmost to sabotage the mission of Reginald Pole, that Hutton was finally accorded full official status, and even then he was only accredited as Henry's resident agent in the Low Countries.¹³²

Stephen Vaughan, Hutton's successor at Mary's court, saw his diplomatic service to Henry evolve in a very similar fashion. From the late 1520s he had worked as Cromwell's personal agent in the

¹²⁸ PRO, SP1/105 fos.250-251, (*L&P*, XI, no.239) Hutton to Cromwell, 6 August 1536; *St.P.*, VII, p.665, (*ibid*, no.295), Hutton to Cromwell, 12 August 1536.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p.667, (*ibid*, no.631), Hutton to Cromwell, 9 October 1536. In contrast to earlier letters largely dealing with commercial matters this dispatch was concerned with James V's arrival in Rouen in preparation for his forthcoming marriage to the French king's daughter, princess Madeleine, and the progress of the emperor's forces in northern Italy. Other correspondence later in the year described preparations by Mary's government for the war against France, Charles' itinerary and rumours of a Franco-Imperial truce. PRO, SP1/112 fos.192-193, 222-223, (*ibid*, nos.1275,1296), Hutton to Cromwell, 9 and 13 December 1536.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, fo.45, (*ibid*, no.1199), Henry to Hutton, November 1536.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, fos.222-223, (*ibid*, no.1296), Hutton to Cromwell, 13 December 1536. 'Almain rivets'= plate armour.

¹³² Bell, *Handlist*. p.176, incorrectly describes Hutton as a resident ambassador from 3 April 1537. The instructions of this date issued to the merchant required him to inform Queen Mary that Henry had, 'appointed hym to be his grace's agent in those parts.' PRO, SP1/115, fos.70-80, esp.fo.70, (*L&P*, XII i, no.866), Henry to Hutton 3 April 1537.

Low Countries, and it was through this link that he first came to the serve the king.¹³³ Throughout much of 1531 he was charged with the task of finding William Tyndale and persuading him to return to England, at the same time that he was expected to compliment the flow of information from the Low Countries, provided by the ambassador John Hackett.¹³⁴ Despite potentially offending Henry with his sympathetic treatment of Tyndale,¹³⁵ Vaughan was retained in English service. During the years between the deaths of Hackett and Hutton, he continued to provide Cromwell with information, even while his role as crown representative in the Low Countries was eclipsed by Hutton. With the death of the English resident in September 1538 Vaughan was not only appointed permanent envoy at Mary's court in his place but was also accredited as a full resident ambassador.¹³⁶ Finally, in January 1539 he succeeded Hutton as governor of the Merchant Adventurers.¹³⁷

The English government's employment of the leading commercial officers of the Company of Merchant Adventurers as diplomatic personnel displayed a practical approach to foreign policy administration which one might well associate with a professional diplomatic service. Quite

¹³³ W.C.Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan, Financial Agent of Henry VIII*, (Louisiana, 1953), pp.15-16.

¹³⁴ For Vaughan's efforts to persuade Tyndale to return to England see, BL, Cotton MS Galba B X, fo.40, (*L&P*, V no.65), Vaughan to Cromwell, 26 January 1531; PRO, SP1/65, fo.178, (*ibid*, no.153), Vaughan to Cromwell, 25 March 1531; BL, Cotton MS Titus B I, fo.67, (*ibid*, no.201), Vaughan to Henry, April 1531. Also, Richardson, *op.cit.*, pp.26-34.

¹³⁵ *L&P*, V, no.248, Cromwell to Vaughan, May 1531, R.B.Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, (2 vols., Oxford, 1902), I, pp.335-339.

¹³⁶ Bell, *Handlist*, p.176, lists Vaughan as an agent, but in the instructions given to him and his colleague, Thomas Wriothesley, for the negotiation of Henry's marriage to Christina, Duchess of Milan, it was specified that, 'the said Stephen Vaughan shall contynue as ambassadour there resident till further knolege of his mayeties pleasure.' *St.P.*, VIII, pp.43-46, p.46, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.419), Instructions for Thomas Wriothesley and Stephen Vaughan, September 1538.

¹³⁷ Richardson, 'Stephen Vaughan', *op.cit.*, p.19.

simply the men chosen to act as resident agents and ambassadors in the Low Countries throughout the 1530s were the best people that could have been chosen. Their great strength lay in the fact that instead of being first invested with royal authority and then introduced into a foreign court, the process was largely reversed. Hackett, Vaughan and Hutton were already prominent members of a foreign community and well known at court, the accretion of diplomatic credentials undoubtedly increased their importance both to their fellow merchants and the Burgundian government, it did not, however, render them any less familiar to the individuals with whom they had as agents and ambassadors to deal on a regular basis. William Knight's confidence in Hackett's suitability has already been noted.¹³⁸ If John Hutton is to be believed, Henry's decision to appoint him resident entirely reflected the preference of the queen regent.¹³⁹

The treatment of these merchant envoys could not have differed more from that given to the likes of Thomas Spinelly and John Stile twenty years earlier. Thomas Wriothesley, dispatched on a special embassy to the Low Countries in order to negotiate a possible marriage agreement between Henry and Christina of Milan was instructed, 'at his arrival there calling and joining unto him his grace's servant, Stephen Vaughan, and shall to the same communicate his whole charge, and jointly with the said Vaughan make his access to the presence of the said regent with his first opportunity.'¹⁴⁰ Few matters were of greater sensitivity to the king than those concerning his matrimonial affairs, and it is a clear mark of Vaughan's standing that Henry and Cromwell saw fit to include him in Wriothesley's mission.

¹³⁸ See above p.52.

¹³⁹ 'For as my lord of Barowe told me, the queen was lothe to have said me nay for as he said, she dothe favor me in so much that she wished it might please the king's grace to advance me in the same that master Hackett had.' PRO, SP1/112 fo.222, (*L&P*, XI no.1296), Hutton to Cromwell, 13 December 1536.

¹⁴⁰ *St.P.*, VI, p.43, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.419), Instructions to Thomas Wriothesley and Stephen Vaughan, September 1538.

Despite the defection of Richard Pate to Rome in December 1541¹⁴¹ and the subsequent witch hunt which led to the brief imprisonment of three earlier residents,¹⁴² the commitment of Henry's government to the resident system did not falter. In the years after Cromwell's fall the king and his chief advisers placed ever greater trust in the men chosen for permanent postings. Furthermore, the manner in which they were treated by those with responsibility for foreign policy reflected an increasing awareness of their importance in diplomatic affairs. William Paget in particular appears to have been anxious that the men chosen as resident ambassadors not be undermined by the arrival of special envoys. In October 1544 Edward Seymour and Stephen Gardiner were sent to meet the emperor in Brussels, their remit to point out to Charles that Francis by attacking Guisnes had invaded Henry's territory and that he was thus obliged to set aside the Peace of Crépy and re-enter the war against France.¹⁴³ However, upon reaching the Low Countries, the ambassadors made no effort to include Henry's resident, Nicholas Wotton, in the talks. Shortly after their arrival Paget wrote to William Petre, the king's other principal secretary, expressing his concern:

I feare moche that master Wootton, the kings majesties ambassador be not present at these conferences bycause I se not his hand to the letter, and moche the rather bycause my lord of Wynchestre before his departing hens sayd he shuld not be at the same for that he was not named in the instructions. Howbeit I excused it, saying it was only your fault he was not remembred, and I thought it more than necessary that beyng ambassador he shuld be made pryvy, for so we alwaies tell all ambassadors. And surely master Peter if my lordes have left hym out....the same wer not don wel. For by thes meanes he shal loose his credit and

¹⁴¹ The exact date of Pate's departure is not clear although given that news of flight was not generally known till the second week of January it seems likely that left towards the end of December. See PRO, PRO 31/3/11. (*L&P*, XVI, no.446), Montmorency to Marillac, 11 January 1541.

¹⁴² These were: Thomas Wyatt, John Wallop and John Mason. See *The Lisle Letters*, ed. M.St Clare Byrne, (6 vols., Chicago, 1981), VI pp.242-252 for a useful analysis of the motives behind the imprisonment and release of Wallop and Wyatt, also see below, p.263.

¹⁴³ Instructions inferred from *St.P.*, X, p.147, *L&P*, XIX ii, no.492), Gardiner and Hertford to Henry, 27 October 1544.

estimacion there and never more be able to serve in that place.¹⁴⁴

The following year when Paget himself was sent to the Low Countries to conduct yet another round of commercial negotiations he took the opportunity to practice what he had already preached. Despite the omission of Edward Carne's name from his instructions, he explained to Petre that, 'Bycause master Kerne is his majesties ambassador resident with the reagent and that al ovr conferences ar with her, I cannot but use him in my procedyngs.'¹⁴⁵

John Russell, another member of the privy council with considerable diplomatic experience also grasped the importance of exploiting the full potential of Henry's resident envoys. In August 1544 he wrote to Paget from the siege of Montreuil:

I desiered you in [my la]st letters to have in your remembrance [the] kinges [ambassador in] Venice, that some letter [may] be sent fr[om the] coun[seyle] unto hym of th[occurrents] here which shulde be a greate comforte unto the [ambassador]. For the French ambassador there maketh such bragges of the Frenche men of suche entreprises by theym ageinst the Englisshemen as the same are taken emong theym to be trewe.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ As the remainder of the letter demonstrates, Paget's style of personnel management differed considerably from that of his old patron, 'My lord of Wynchestre hath certayn affections in his hed many tymes towards such men as he gretly favoryth not, (emong whom I accompt master Wootton bycause the man sum tymes wryteth his mynd plainly of things as he fyndeth them ther) and when he seeth tyme can lay on load to nyppe a man, whiche facon I like not, and think it develish.' PRO, SP1/194, fo.200, (*L&P*, XIX ii, no.532), Paget to Petre, 1 November 1544. The letter soon bore fruit and within a week Wotton was taking an active part with Gardiner and Hertford in the negotiations, *St.P.*, X, pp.178-182, (*L&P*, XIV ii, no.568), Hertford, Gardiner and Wotton to the privy council, 7 November 1544.

¹⁴⁵ PRO, SP1/198 fo.239, (*L&P*, XX i no.322), Paget to Petre, 6 March 1545.

¹⁴⁶ PRO, SP1/191 fo.177, (*L&P*, XIX ii, no.142), Russell to Paget, 26 August 1544. It is unclear to which French ambassador Russell is referring in this letter. Between April 1543 and October 1546 there was no French resident ambassador in Venice, *CAF*, IX, p.67. It is possible that Harvel's complaints relate to Giovanni Salviati, Cardinal of Ferrara, Francis' special envoy in Venice between March and June 1544, *ibid.*, p.66; *St.P.* IX, pp.636, 696, (*L&P*, XIX, I, nos.151, 650), Harvel to Henry, 31 March and 6 June 1544. Alternatively Henry's ambassador may simply have been grumbling about the behaviour of Frenchmen in general which Russell misinterpreted as a direct criticism of a specific ambassador.

This appreciation of how important it was to maintain the credibility of resident ambassadors if they were to continue functioning effectively clearly demonstrates just how far Henry's government had come in their understanding of the importance of permanent envoys since the beginning of the reign. Furthermore, Henry and his privy council appear to have devoted similar consideration to the actual choice of those selected for resident positions. In appointing Ralph Sadler as the first English resident to Scotland Henry wrote:

And forasmuche as you, sir Rauf Sadleyr, have ben hertofore sundry tymes to Scotland, by reason therof you have there and of their maners good acquayntance, and also that you be privy, not only to the thinges that wer promised here, but also to all the procedings and advertisements sithens that tyme, we think no man shalbe soo well sent in this purpose as you. Therefore, we woll and desire youshal by post addresse yourself to Edinbourghe, and there to reside tyl we by our special letters revoque you unto us;¹⁴⁷

In choosing Sadler for the post of resident ambassador to the Scottish court Henry made a decision based entirely on the professional suitability of the individual in question. As his secretary Sadler possessed a thorough knowledge not only of the king's plans for Scotland, but rather an overall understanding of the foreign policy of which Anglo-Scottish relations were only a part. Furthermore, his earlier missions to Scotland had provided him with an understanding of the personalities and factions most prominent at the Stuart court, which probably no other of Henry's English servants possessed.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ *St.P.*, V, p.262, (*L&P*, XVIII i, no.270), Henry to Suffolk, Tunstall and Sadler, 13 March 1543. The king's faith in Sadler extended to his wife. In July he instructed the ambassador, 'by your letters and frends heer to take such order as your wief may be conveyed to yow assone as yow can conveneth, for whose placement about the said quene we shal cause such order to be taken as the treaty supporteth. And to thintent you may bothe furneshe that place and also advertise us from tyme to tyme of the state of thoccurrences ther.' BL, Additional MS, 32,651, fo.62-70, esp. fos.67v-68, (*ibid*, no.834) Henry to Sadler, 7 July 1543.

¹⁴⁸ Despite Sadler's suitability for the mission he signally failed to achieve it. The Earl of Arran, regent for the infant Queen Mary, ultimately sided with Cardinal Beaton and James V's widow, Mary of Guise, in repudiating the Treaty of Greenwich and rejecting a marriage with Prince Edward. Although Sadler's biographer apportioned the lion's share of this failure to the clumsy handling of the king, he nevertheless acknowledged that the

In putting forward Nicholas Wotton's name for the position of resident to France in 1546 Paget was similarly emphatic about his suitability for the task and the advantages which might stem from placing him in the French court:

Mr Wotton were mete at the begynning...both because he is a personage of peax and that for also beyng a sobur dyscrete man beaten now in thes matters, and not over hasty in practise, the French men who no doubt will strait be in hand with new devyces, may, with his demuereness and temprance, be put to the better.¹⁴⁹

Clearly Paget believed that whoever was chosen as the new resident to France they would have an integral role to play in safeguarding English interests on the continent.

The calibre of the men serving Henry as resident ambassadors at the close of his reign was such that upon the accession of his son in January 1547 none were recalled. Wotton remained in France till August 1549 and even then his recall was the result of renewed Anglo-French hostilities.¹⁵⁰ Thirlby remained with Charles until April 1548 when Philip Hoby, another man who begun his diplomatic service in the 1530s replaced him.¹⁵¹ In the Low Countries Carne was confirmed as English resident within two weeks of Henry's death, and continued at the court of the regent until July 1548.¹⁵² Harvel's diplomatic service in Venice came to end only with his

ambassador must take at least some of the blame for the rather simplistic and gullible manner in which he dealt with the Scottish court. A.J. Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966), p.131.

¹⁴⁹ PRO, SP1/219 fo.68, (*L&P*, XXI i no.906), Paget to Petre, 24 May 1546.

¹⁵⁰ *Calendar of State Papers Foreign in the Reign of Edward VI*, ed.W.Turnbull, (London 1861), hereafter cited as *Calendar, Edward VI*, no.13, Francis I to Edward VI, 14 February 1547. Also see, D.L.Potter, 'Diplomacy in the mid-16th century: England and France, 1536-1550', Ph.D, (Cambridge, 1973), pp.210-212.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, no.82, Instructions to Philip Hoby, 15 April 1548.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, no.8, Carne to Hertford, 8 February 1547; Bell, *Handlist*, p.178.

death in January 1550,¹⁵³ while Mont continued to act as an English agent in Germany until the early 1570s.¹⁵⁴ In the years that followed Henry's death the consequences of the old king's foreign policy, his determination to retain Boulogne and the forcible engagement of his son to the infant queen of Scots in the face of bitter opposition from the ruling Scottish nobles, ensured that England would enjoy little peace for much of Edward's short reign. In compensation, however, Henry also bequeathed his son a well organized network of resident ambassadors who if incapable of besieging enemy towns and overrunning foreign countries, were an invaluable resource for the execution of the diplomacy which first made such ill-advised enterprises possible, and then sort to reverse the damage they had caused.

Conclusion

Unquestionably it is in the reign of Henry VIII that resident ambassadors were first used on a consistent and organized basis by the English government. Under Henry VII a collection of individuals were loosely employed to provide the king with news and represent him occasionally at other courts, yet for the most part these men were simply agents, their status of a semi-official nature at best. Henry VIII took these men into his service, clarified their credentials and made use of them little more than his father had. Nor did the coming of Wolsey at first make an appreciable difference. Stile, Spinelly, Wingfield and Gigli were ignored and distrusted, repeatedly undermined by the arrival of special envoys with instructions to exclude them from negotiations. Yet the benefits which king and cardinal received from England's first residents as well as the continuing growth of other networks of permanent envoys, led Wolsey and Henry to reappraise their attitude to the new system. By the 1520s key members of both the king and cardinal's staff were being used as residents as well as being afforded far better treatment than

¹⁵³ For details of Harvel's funeral held on 7 January 1550 see, *CSPV*, V, p.291.

¹⁵⁴ For Mont's later career see, Hilderbrandt, *op.cit.*, pp.284-287.

ever their predecessors had received.

The 1530s saw the resident system of diplomacy fully adopted by the English government. Periods of service became both longer and more consistent, the men selected as resident ambassadors were usually well suited to the task, and resident agents were employed for the first time, not as second rate ambassadors, but as an affective and more flexible means of permanent diplomatic representation in areas of Europe where English involvement demanded fine tuning. By the time of Cromwell's fall the use of residents by the English had become standard diplomatic practice. Despite the brief crisis which accompanied Richard Pate's flight from the Low Countries in December 1541 Henry's government was now fully committed to the practice of resident diplomacy.

Did the use of resident diplomacy by Henry and his advisers conform with the paradigm put forward by Mattingly? Inevitably the wide scope of Mattingly's work caused him to make generalizations. The deployment of resident ambassadors by the English began in earnest somewhat later than the time suggested in *Renaissance Diplomacy*, nor was the development of their role as uncomplicated or linear as the author suggests. Yet I would argue that by the mid-1530s the use of resident ambassadors and agents was becoming increasingly systematic and that many of the characteristics of diplomacy first adopted in 15th century Italy were now thoroughly anchored in English practice.

Chapter Two

The Clergy

Introduction

The role of the clerical envoy in the period predating the reign of Henry VIII has been well established. Ferguson in his study of English diplomacy in the period 1422 to 1461 lists at least fifty clerical ambassadors out of the total of 184, 27% of those dispatched abroad.¹ Charles Giry-Deloison in his list of ambassadors exchanged between England and France during the period 1485 to 1520 states that 27.78% of all English envoys, that is fifteen out of 54, were drawn from the church.² My own assessment of Henry VII's diplomatic personnel showed that at least fourteen out of the forty ambassadors I have been able to identify were clergy.³ Furthermore, all the most active diplomats of Henry VII's reign were clerics. These included Christopher Urswick, Richard Foxe and William Warham who performed respectively eleven, six, and four missions each. Henry VII also relied heavily on his foreign churchmen to represent him abroad and especially in Rome. The uncle and nephew, Giovanni and Silvestro Gigli, performed many tasks of a diplomatic nature in the Vatican as did the mercurial Adrian Castellesi, who also journeyed

¹ J.Ferguson, *English Diplomacy 1422-1461*, (Oxford, 1972), pp.178-220. This is only a rough estimate based on the appendix provided by Ferguson listing all the ambassadors sent to Europe in the reign of Henry VI. Although in many cases the clerical status of the envoys in question has been specified this is not always so.

² C.Giry-Deloison, 'Le personnel diplomatique au début du XVI^e siècle. L'exemple les relations franco-anglaise de l'avènement de Henry VII au Camp du Drap d'Or, (1485-1520), *Journal des Savants*, (July-December 1987), 205-249, esp.pp.216-219.

³ The list was derived from: *Foedera Conventiones Litterae*, ed.T.Rymer, (20 vols, London, 1727-35), vols V-VI; W.Busch, *England Under the Tudors*, (3 vols., London, 1895), vol. I, pp. 40-82, 122-164, 199-240; A.F.Pollard, *Reign of Henry VII*, (3 vols., London, 1914); J.D.Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors, 1485-1588*, (Oxford, 1952), pp.46-110, 151-189, and R.B.Wernham, *England Before the Armada: the growth of English foreign policy, 1485-1588*, (Oxford, 1966), pp.1-50.

on Henry VII's behalf to the emperor Maximilian.⁴

That members of the church continued to play a significant part in the diplomacy of Henry VIII must already be apparent from the frequency with which names such as Sampson, Knight, Tunstall, Gardiner, Bonner, Thirlby and Wotton have recurred in the previous chapter. The aim of this chapter is to consider more closely the part such men played, to assess what made them so important to the king as diplomats and finally to determine if and when the king's dependence on his clerical ambassadors began to wane.

Certainly a statistical analysis of the role of the clergy in Henry's diplomacy would appear to confirm the impression of ubiquity already formed. Of the 112 men who took part in diplomatic missions, forty, 36% were clergy. Of the 48 men chosen by the king to act as resident ambassadors twenty of them, 42%, were priests. Finally, thirty of these men, that is 75% of all the clergy selected to serve abroad, were called upon with sufficient frequency to place them in the key group of Tudor ambassadors; that is men appointed to resident embassies, individuals who performed at least three missions, or were posted abroad for a year or more. As table one illustrates, even these figures do not fully convey the extent of the church's involvement in English diplomacy. In the first two decades of Henry's reign members of the clergy took part in more than half the embassies dispatched from England. Even after 1530, despite the fall of Wolsey, the advent of the Reformation in England and, perhaps most importantly, the severing of diplomatic relations with Rome, clerics nevertheless took part in 39% of all embassies dispatched between 1530 and 1539, and 42% of those sent between 1540 and Henry's death in January 1547. With regard to the appointment of resident envoys the clergy were hardly less prominent in the latter half of Henry's reign than they had been in the former. In France Gardiner performed two

⁴ M. Underwood, 'The Pope, the Queen and the king's mother, or the rise and fall of Adriano Castellesi,' in *The Reign of Henry VII*, ed. B. Thompson, (Stanford, 1995).

stints as English resident serving there for more than three years

Table One: Number of embassies carried out by the clergy in the reign of Henry VIII⁵

	1509-19	1520-29	1530-39	1540-47	Total
Conferences	0	2(2)	0	0	2(2)
Denmark	0(1)	0	3(3)	0(1)	3(5)
Emperor	2(5)	8(15)	5(13)	9(13)	24(46)
France	5(8)	6(23)	8(22)	2(9)	21(62)
Germany	1(1)	3(4)	5(14)	1(4)	10(23)
Italy	0	0(2)	1(1)	0	1(3)
Low Countries	4(9)	1(4)	1(8)	2(4)	8(25)
Papacy	2(2)	12(14)	2(3)	0	16(19)
Scotland	4(6)	1(2)	3(8)	0(2)	8(18)
Spain	2(4)	0	0	0	2(4)
Switzerland	1(1)	2(2)	0	0	3(3)
Venice	0(1)	3(3)	0(1)	0	3(5)
Total	21(38)	38(71)	28(73)	14(33)	101(214)

in the 1530s⁶. In April 1538 he was joined by Thomas Thirlby⁷ whose brief residency of four

⁵ The figures in brackets denote the total number of missions dispatched to a given place in a particular decade. As with earlier statistics these are based on my own analysis of the missions performed by Henry's ambassadors and differ considerably from those provided in Bell's *Handlist*.

⁶ He was first appointed resident to the French court between December 1530 and March 1531, instructions printed *in extenso* in *Records of the Reformation*, ed. N.Pocock, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1870), II, pp.157-165, (*L&P*, V, no.711), Henry to Gardiner, December 1530. His far longer second embassy began in October 1535 and concluded in September 1538, for Gardiner's instructions see, BL, Additional MS 25,114, fo.96-100, (*L&P*, IX no.443), Henry to Gardiner October 1535. For a full account of this embassy see G.Redworth, *In Defense of the Church Catholic: The Life of Stephen Gardiner*, (Oxford, 1990), pp.71-103.

⁷ Although, Bell, *Handlist*, p.79, lists Thirlby's mission as a special embassy, the Treasurer of the Chamber's accounts for May 1538, specify that diets were paid to him as a resident ambassador; BL, Arundel MS 97, fo.18, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.1280).

months was followed by that of Edmund Bonner who remained at the French court for more than a year and a half.⁸ Although the 1540s saw a bias in favour of secular residents in France, the final man to be appointed before Henry died, Nicholas Wotton, was of course a priest.

Similarly, the men chosen to reside with the emperor were more often drawn from the church than otherwise. The flurry of short residencies at the beginning of the 1530s included Thomas Cranmer and Nicholas Hawkins⁹, the latter being succeeded by Richard Pate who remained with Charles for almost four years.¹⁰ In the 1540s Pate, Bonner, Wotton and Thirlby spent between them five and a half years at the Imperial court, Thirlby being resident with Charles when Henry died. Clearly the king relied heavily on the diplomatic services of the clergy throughout his reign and would appear to have called upon them with greater regularity than his father, although such a point must be qualified by the observation that Henry VIII had greater need of ambassadors than ever his father had, particularly as the practice of resident diplomacy became more common.

Despite one historian's assertion that, 'Although churchmen had always served as diplomats Francis I used them more extensively than before,'¹¹ it would seem that the French king's dependence on clerical ambassadors was more limited, in relative terms, than that of his Tudor rival. Of the 314 ambassadors used by the French king only 40, 12.7%, were ecclesiastics. While the key group of French envoys numbered 119 men, 49 more than that from England, only 22,

⁸ For Bonner's embassy to France see, G.M.V.Alexander, "The Life and Career of Edmund Bonner until his deposition in 1549", Ph.D, (London, 1960), pp.195-275.

⁹ Cranmer resided with the emperor in Germany and Italy from January 1532 till January 1533, D,MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer, A Life*, (London, 1996), p.69, for his embassy in general see, *ibid*, pp.68-78.

¹⁰ Pate was appointed in November 1533 and returned to England in September 1537.

¹¹ F.J.Baumgartner, *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion, 1547-1610*, (Duke University Press, 1986), p.32.

18.5%, were clergy.¹² The number of clergy posted to resident embassies, eighteen out of 64, 28.1%, suggests a somewhat greater reliance by the crown on clerical diplomats, yet in comparison to the 45% employed by Henry it is still relatively small. Most significantly of all, the number of missions attended by at least one member of the clergy is barely larger in the case of France than of England, despite the fact that over the same period the French dispatched almost three times as many embassies. Out of 222 missions 102 were attended by members of the English clergy, that is 46.5% of the total, while only 108 of the 614 embassies dispatched by the French, 17%, possessed a clerical ambassador. While it must be acknowledged that Francis depended heavily on certain clerics such as Jean Du Bellay who performed thirteen embassies for his master, two of them as a resident ambassador,¹³ and Jean de Langeac, Bishop of Avranches, who attended nine missions, three of them resident in relative terms, overall the French king made far less use of the clergy on diplomatic missions than did his English counterparts.

Similarly the Imperial diplomatic service made much less use of ecclesiastical ambassadors than did the English. Of the 154 Imperial ambassadors I have managed to trace,¹⁴ only 22, 14%, were

¹² D.L.Potter, *A History of France 1460-1560: The Emergence of a Nation State*, (London, 1995), pp.256-7.

¹³ For du Bellay's missions to England see, *Ambassades en Angleterre*, ed. V. -L.Bourrilly, (Paris,1905), pp.i-iii, and for those in Italy, V. -L. Bourrilly, 'Le Cardinal Jean du Bellay en Italie'. *Revue des études rabelaisiennes*, (1907), 246-253 and 262-274.

¹⁴ This list is certainly not exhaustive. I have targeted all envoys used by Charles between 1519 and 1555. Although these dates vary somewhat from the period under consideration, the 36 year space with which they are concerned, relates to the period in which Charles was in receipt of all his hereditary and elective titles, and matches closely the duration of the reigns of both Henry and Francis.

CAF, vol.IX, pp.108-116 provides a conclusive list of Imperial envoys dispatched to France from 1519-1547, and a similarly complete record can be compiled for Charles' ambassadors sent to Henry's court from *L&P*. For residents dispatched to France see also, M.Lunitz, *Diplomatie und Diplomaten, studien zu den ständigen Gesandten Kaiser Karis V in Frankreich*, (Konstanz, 1987), p.24. By referring to *CSPS*, I have been able to fill in many gaps both with regard to the dispatch of envoys to other countries throughout Charles' reign, and to

clergy. Out of 32 men chosen as resident ambassadors, eight, 25%, were priests. Among their number were Bernardo de Mesa, Bishop of Helna, Inigo de Mendoza, Bishop of Burgos, and Eustace Chapuys, who between them spent 22 years in England. Another cleric, Johan von Weeze, Archbishop of Lund, performed numerous special missions to Germany liaising with Ferdinand as well as representing Charles at the innumerable Imperial diets called in the hope of resolving Germany's religious difficulties.¹⁵ Yet a profile of the diplomatic personnel dispatched to the French court provides us with a more accurate impression of the role played by the clergy in Imperial diplomacy. Of the resident envoys dispatched by Charles to Francis' court only two, Francois Bonvalot, Abbot of St.Vincent, appointed twice, and Philibert Naturelli, were drawn from the church, the remaining seven permanent embassies sent by the emperor were filled by laymen.¹⁶ Of the 56 special embassies sent to France, only seven, 12.5% were staffed by at least one priest.

Origins

The social status of those clergy chosen for diplomatic service had little or no bearing on their selection as ambassadors. As the later sections of this chapter will demonstrate it was their expertise in the technical fields of canon and civil law, and theology which made them irreplaceable. Since the great majority of Henry's most active ecclesiastical envoys would later join the episcopate, the social characteristics of the latter are very much reflected by the former.¹⁷

England and France from 1547 to 1555. I am at least confident that the lists of resident envoys I have made are both reliable and for the most part complete.

¹⁵ K.Brandi, *Charles V*, (1939), p.191.

¹⁶ *CAF*, vol.IX, pp.108-117.

¹⁷ See A.Chibi, 'The social and regional origins of the Henrician episcopacy', *SCJ*, 29, (winter 1998), 955-974. 'The Henrician church stands out in early modern Europe as a means of social mobility and for its recognition of merit.', p.961.

None of the English clerics who served abroad came from noble families, although among the Italian churchmen who performed diplomatic service for Henry the family of Gian Baptiste de Casali was drawn from the Luccese patriciate,¹⁸ and that of Girolamo Ghinucci, based in Siena, had risen to prominence through its banking activities and enjoyed close ties with the papacy.¹⁹ A number of clerical ambassadors did, however, come from the English gentry. Nicholas Wotton was the fourth son of Sir Robert Wotton and Agnes, daughter of the soldier and courtier Sir Edward Belknap.²⁰ Nicholas' great grandfather, Thomas, had been mayor of London, and was well known to both Henry IV and Henry V. Wotton's father was actively involved in the political and judicial affairs of Kent and through his administrative activities was an occasional associate of John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury. Edward Lee's family also belonged to the Kentish gentry, although by Henry's time they were probably less influential in the county than the Wottons.²¹ Edmund Bonner may have been distantly related to the Talbot Earls of Derby but in addition to the tenuousness of this connection his illegitimate birth was a certain bar from the lay aristocracy.²² Even so, his immediate relations, the Savages, with their considerable holdings in the northern and midland counties, associated him more closely with the gentry than many of his ecclesiastical colleagues. Sir Thomas Tunstall, a wealthy member of the Yorkshire gentry, fathered another of Henry's most eminent bishops and diplomats, Cuthbert Tunstall, who like Bonner, was illegitimate.²³

¹⁸ *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, eds.P.M.Ghislaberti, et.al., (52 vols.,Rome, 1960-), art. Gian Baptiste Casali.

¹⁹ B.McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals, Reform and the Church as Property*, (University of California, 1985), p.136.

²⁰ B.Ficaro, 'Nicholas Wotton: Dean and Diplomat', Ph.D, (Kent, 1981), pp.6-16.

²¹ R.H.Manley, 'Edward Lee's genealogy', *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review*, (July-December 1863), p.337.

²² For an extremely thorough analysis of Bonner's heritage see, Alexander, *op.cit.*, pp.13-36.

²³ C.Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall, Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator*, (London,

Apart from these few members of the gentry the other clerical envoys whose backgrounds we know anything about might best be described as reasonably prosperous commoners. Stephen Gardiner's father, John, was a clothmaker in Bury St Edmunds and at least moderately well off. In his will he made monetary bequests of £90 as well as leaving business equipment and quantities of silver and jewellery.²⁴ Thomas Thirlby's father was a scrivener and town clerk at Cambridge and described in his will as a burgess of the city.²⁵ Several ambassadors whose origins were very modest nevertheless possessed influential relatives. Christopher Bainbridge, the son of a tenant smallholder, was also the nephew of Thomas Langton, respectively Bishop of Gloucester and Winchester, and briefly Archbishop of Canterbury.²⁶ Nicholas Hawkins was the nephew of another active Henrician ambassador, Nicholas West. West was the son of a London baker who had begun his public career in the reign of Henry VII.²⁷ Throughout the first decade of Henry's VIII's reign he was an active ambassador and royal councillor in recognition of which he was promoted to the bishopric of Ely in 1515. The younger Nicholas undoubtedly benefited from the generosity of his influential uncle. Finally, Richard Pate, Henry's resident at the Imperial court for much of the 1530s, was the nephew of John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, who like West took a part in the advancement of his nephew's career.²⁸

1938), pp.7-9.

²⁴ J.A.Muller, *Stephen Gardiner and the Tudor Reaction*, (London, 1926), p.2.

²⁵ T.F.Shirley, *Thomas Thirlby, Tudor Bishop*, (London, 1964), pp.3-4. See also, J.C.Whitebrook, 'Thomas Thirlby, his forbears and relatives', *Notes and Queries*, 186, (1944), pp.172-175, 199-201.

²⁶ D.S.Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge at the Court of Rome, 1509-1514*, (Oxford, 1965), p.14-15.

²⁷ Venn, art.'Nicholas West'.

²⁸ See below, p.94.

The contrast with French ecclesiastical ambassadors could not have been greater. At their very pinnacle was Jean, Cardinal de Lorraine younger son of Duke René of Lorraine and scion of the illustrious dynasty of Guise²⁹ who represented Francis on three occasions as special ambassador to the pope in 1536 and to the emperor in 1537 and 1538.³⁰ Although no other ecclesiastical envoy used by Francis matched Lorraine's pedigree most were drawn from the French nobility. Gabriel de Gramont performed seven missions for Francis, twice as resident ambassador in Rome.³¹ On his father's side Gramont was related to the counts of Foix and through his mother, Eleonore, to the dynasty from which he derived his name. In 1534 Gramont transferred his bishopric of Tarbes to his sister Suzanne's son, Antoine de Castelnau. In addition to his links with the Gramont family Castelnau's father, Louis, was well known to the French king having served as Francis' chamberlain before he ascended the throne.³² Born to Louis and Marguerite De La Tour Landry in 1498, Jean Du Bellay no less than Gramont and Castelnau, could trace his ancestors back over centuries and in doing so find many individuals who had achieved prosperity through successful service to the crown.³³ To those names already listed one might add Cardinal Georges d'Armagnac younger son of Pierre, Baron de Coussade,³⁴ François de Tournon, son of Jacques II s.de Tournon, whose ancestors pledged fealty to Philip Augustus at the close of the 12th century,³⁵ and Jean de Pins, Bishop of Pamiers and descended from a line of Languedoc

²⁹ H.O.Evennett, *The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Council of Trent*, (Cambridge, 1930), p.2.

³⁰ *CAF*, IX, pp.

³¹ *DBF*, art. 'Gabriel de Gramont'.

³² *Ibid*, 'Antoine de Castelnau'.

³³ *Ambassades en Angleterre, op.cit*, pp.i-iii.

³⁴ For Armagnac's ancestry see C.Samaran, *La maison d'Armagnac au XV^e siècle*, (1907).

³⁵ M.François, *Le Cardinal François de Tournon*, (Paris, 1951), pp.3-9.

aristocrats.³⁶ If one adds the Italian prelates of which Francis made use, men such as Ludavico Canossa, Bishop of Bayeux, the son of Count Bartolomeo Uberti, Giovanni Salviati, Cardinal of Ferrara, and Cardinal Scarramuche Trivulce,³⁷ it becomes quite apparent that the clerical component of the French diplomatic corps was derived almost exclusively from the nobility.

This domination by the nobility of the French diplomatic service was merely an aspect of their overall control of the great majority of governmental and episcopal offices.³⁸ By appointing nobles to the royal council, the judiciary, the episcopate, and of course the diplomatic service, the crown sought to secure their allegiance. Furthermore, their entrenchment was self-perpetuating. Already in positions of influence, fathers, uncles and brothers were excellently placed to obtain appointments for their relatives. As David Potter observed, Georges de Selve's promotion as bishop and ambassador, 'was largely the result of the esteem in which Jean de Selve [Georges' father] was held by Francis I.'³⁹ Many of Francis' clerical envoys received their first episcopal appointments through the efforts of their families, amongst them the Briçonnet brothers, Gabriel

³⁶ Jean de Pins, "Un ambassadeur française à Venise et à Rome, 1515-1525, Jean de Pins, évêque de Rieux", *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, (January-June 1947), 215-246, esp.p.217.

³⁷ Although F.J.Baumgartner, 'Henry II's Italian bishops', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol.XI, (1980), 49-58, is primarily concerned with the connection between Francis' son and the significant number of foreigners, especially Florentines granted French bishoprics, he does discuss, albeit briefly, the similar use made by Henry's father of these men.

³⁸ Of 129 French bishops nominated to sees between 1516 and 1547, 123, 95%, were either nobles of the sword or robe. M.M.Edelstein, "The social origins of the episcopate in the reign of Francis I", *French Historical Studies* vol.8, (1973-4), 377-392, p.379.

³⁹ Potter, *op.cit.*, p.127. See also M.Harsgor, 'Maitres d'un royaume: Le groupe dirigeant français à la fin du XVe siècle', in *La France à la fin du XVe siècle*, eds. P.Contamine and B.Chevalier, (Paris, 1985), pp.135-146. Harsgor qualifies the pre-eminence of the aristocracy and old nobility at least in the reigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII, by demonstrating that although the members of the king's council used their positions to amass offices in church and state and to amass personal fortunes, these 'maitres d'un royaume' were by no means all drawn from the feudal nobility.

de Gramont, Thomas Du Prat and Antoine Castelnau.⁴⁰ It is surely reasonable to assume that their earliest diplomatic appointments might have been similarly obtained.

As befitted the cosmopolitan nature of Charles' dominions his envoys, both clerical and lay, came from all over Europe. Of his clerical diplomats six were born in his Burgundian territories, both the Low Countries and Franche-Comté, five in Germany, one in Savoy, four in Italy and six in Spain. Their social origins reflected a similar diversity. Inigo Lopez Mendoza, the Imperial resident in England from 1526 to 1528, was the son of Pedro Zuñiga y Valesco, 2nd Count of Miranda,⁴¹ while his countryman, Francesco de Quínonés, was a younger son of Fernando, Count of Luna.⁴² Domizio Caracciolo, father of Marino, held the lordship of Ruoli in Naples, and was for a time governor of Calabria.⁴³ Both Gatinara and Carondolet came from noble backgrounds. Yet some of Charles' most useful diplomats came from relatively humble beginnings. François Bonvalot came from a bourgeois background as did Philibert Naturelli,⁴⁴ and while Eustace Chapuys' mother, Guignan Du Puy, was of noble birth, his father, Pierre, bore no title and rose no higher than the position of local notary.⁴⁵ The absence of any genealogical details for a number

⁴⁰ The transference of bishoprics between family members was a well established tradition in certain areas of France. In 1516 80 sees were held by 72 bishops who had succeeded either brothers or uncles. After the Concordat of Bologna the French crown gained more control over the nomination of candidates to the episcopate however, thus underlining the importance for even the most noble families of royal favour. F.J.Baumgartner, *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion, 1547-1610*, (Duke University, 1986), pp.20-21.

⁴¹ *Contemporaries*, vol.II, p.346.

⁴² *Dictionnaire des Cardinaux*, p.1430.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.622.

⁴⁴ *Contemporaries*, vol.I, p.170, vol.III, p

⁴⁵ G.Mattingly, "A humanist ambassador", *Journal of Modern History*, 4, (1932), 175-185, esp.pp.175-178. *DBF*, vol.VIII, p.441.

of imperial diplomats leads one to speculate that men such as Balthasar Merklin, Gabriel Estaban Marino and Leonard de Gruyères, were more likely to have come from middle or lower class families than from aristocratic or noble ranks.

Education and Training

Undoubtedly it was the technical skills of Henry's clerical ambassadors which made them so invaluable. Their expertise in civil and canon law and theology, as well as the fluency in Latin which the pursuit of such studies demanded, ensured their centre stage position in the practice of early Tudor diplomacy. Above all the instrument used to give solid form to the elusive subtleties of renaissance diplomacy was civil law. It was this international code in which alliances of every type were set down, all treaties agreed, and the inevitable violations which followed justified.⁴⁶ The Duke of Somerset writing to Nicholas Ridley in 1549, observed, "We are sure ye are not ignorant how important a study that study of civil law is to all treaties with foreign princes."⁴⁷ Thomas Smith seeking to rekindle interest in the study of civil law drew his students' attention to its importance as a tool of diplomacy and proffered the examples of Stephen Gardiner and Thomas Thirlby, civilian lawyers who through the performance of diplomatic service had risen high in the king's favour.⁴⁸

Given the church's position as the only supranational institution in Europe as well as the great influence it enjoyed in the constituent countries of Christendom, its own code of laws, the *corpus*

⁴⁶ L.Martines, *Lawyers and Statecraft in Renaissance Florence*, (Princeton, 1968), pp.78-91..

⁴⁷ G.Burnet, *The History of the Reformation*, (7 vols., Oxford, 1865), V, p.352, Somerset to Ridley, 1 June 1549.

⁴⁸ J.B.Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge: Vol. II, From the Royal Injunctions of 1535 to the Accession of Charles II*, (Cambridge, 1884), pp.129-132.

juris canonici, often featured strongly in diplomatic negotiations. On numerous occasions prior to the break with Rome Henry's ambassadors were obliged to make use of canon law in order to further their master's interests. Most commonly the role of the canon lawyer within diplomacy centred on the day-to-day business of securing papal approval for royal appointments to bishoprics and abbeys.⁴⁹ Although such tasks were usually routine in nature when controversy arose over issues such as rights of jurisdiction a thorough understanding of both civil and canon law was essential. In the early decades of the reign Wolsey's unflagging pursuit of ecclesiastical preferment and papal tax concessions created considerable need for ambassadors with canon law expertise. Henry's divorce from Katherine only served to increase that demand after the cardinal's fall.⁵⁰

Henry's struggles with Rome brought to the fore yet another area of expertise less frequently associated with diplomacy, that of theology. As the legalistic approach adopted by the king became increasingly bogged down in the minutiae of scriptural dispute the theologians came into their own, while in the aftermath of the break with Rome, which inevitably saw the repudiation of canon law in tandem with that of papal authority, theology remained important. Guided by Cromwell, Henry turned to the Lutheran princes of the Schmalkaldic League, a *volte face* which required the dispatch of the most highly trained theologians, who were given the unenviable task of brokering an ideological agreement between a group of heretics and their religiously conservative master.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the routine work performed in Rome both by the English Cardinal Protectors and Henry's resident ambassadors see, Wilkie, *op.cit.*, pp.53-81 and 150-176. For the private services performed for Cardinal Wolsey by the king's ambassadors see, D.S.Chambers, 'Cardinal Wolsey and the Papal Tiara', *BIHR*, 28, (1965), 20-30.

⁵⁰ See below, p.95-110.

Unsurprisingly canon law and theology were fields in which clerics or those intending to join the clergy enjoyed a near monopoly. In theory at least one did not have to be a cleric in order to study the most important of these subjects, civil law. However, as Dr McConica has observed, 'By tradition the faculty of civil law had been as clerical a faculty as that of canon law, and though it was not strictly necessary that a civilian who proposed to serve the king should be in orders, it had been both customary and desirable.'⁵¹

The preponderance of the clergy amongst pre-reformation civilian lawyers was further reinforced by the lack of opportunity for career development faced by laymen in the profession. The great majority of civil law was concerned with areas of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, notably all matters dealing with church property and income, appeals to Rome, issues of marriage and illegitimacy and certain aspects of probate.⁵² However, canon law specified that all matters of law relating to the church were the sole province of the clergy and as such could only be argued by clerical advocates and tried by clerical judges. In such circumstances laymen had little incentive to practice civil law, and thus in nearly all cases chose to make their careers in English common law.

In contrast the legal system favoured by England's continental neighbours largely lacked this duality. Civil law was the instrument of church and laity alike and as such was practised by both. Thus where Henry, in need of a civil law specialist had little choice but to appoint a member of the clergy, both Francis and Charles were constrained by no such distinction. Undoubtedly ecclesiastical lawyers like François de Tournon, Jean du Bellay, Eustace Chapuys and Anthoine

⁵¹ J.McConica, *The History of the University of Oxford, vol. III, The Collegiate University*, (Oxford, 1986), p.257.

⁵² G.D.Squibb, *Doctors' Commons: A History of the College of Advocates and Doctors of Law*, (Oxford, 1977), p.25.

Perrenot played a crucial part in the diplomatic affairs of Francis and Charles. However, lay civilian lawyers such as Jean de Selve, Nicholas de Neufville and Gilbert Bayard for the French, and Jean Hesdin, Cornelius Scepper and Simon Renard for the Imperialists, were often called upon to serve abroad in part at least because of their expertise in civil law.

This institutional peculiarity was very much reflected in the educational profile of Henry's ambassadors. All of the 34 English clerical ambassadors for whom details remain attended university and obtained at least a master's degree. Furthermore, as table two illustrates, no less than 29 of the 34 obtained doctorates in either civil law, canon law, or divinity. In contrast only nineteen of Henry's 72 lay envoys attended university of whom eight obtained degrees, and three gained doctorates in civil law. If Henry's rivals were less dependent on their clergy to provide legal expertise, those churchmen chosen by Francis and Charles to perform diplomatic service appear for the most part to have been just as highly trained as their English counterparts. By the Concordat of Bologna it was stipulated that although Francis was free to nominate candidates for most French bishoprics they should be at least 27, and qualified as doctors or licentiates of canon or civil law, or as masters of theology.⁵³ Since 73% of the men dispatched to foreign courts had been raised to the episcopate prior to their first diplomatic mission,⁵⁴ a strict adherence to the 1516 agreement would have ensured a cadre of ecclesiastical ambassadors trained to the highest standards. However, the Concordat also contained a clause permitting requirements for nominees born of noble houses, a *caveat* which the French king took full advantage of; between

⁵³ R.J.Knecht, 'The Concordat of 1516: A Reassessment' in *Government in Reformation Europe*, ed.H.J.Cohn, (London, 1971), pp.91-112, esp.p.97.

⁵⁴ *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, ed.C.Eubel, (8 vols.,Munster, 1910), vol III, pp.91-339, provides a comprehensive list of all European bishops during the period.

Table Two: Educational Profile of English Clerical Ambassadors⁵⁵

Namw	University	DCL	DcanL	LLD	DD
Bainbridge	Oxford	/	/		
Barlow	Oxford				/
Barnes	Cambridge				/
Benet	Oxford		/		
Bonner	Oxford		/		
Casali		/			
Clerk	Cambridge		/		
Cranmer	Cambridge				/
Darius					
Foxe	Cambridge				/
Gardiner	Cambridge	/	/		
Ghinucci					
Hannibal	Cambridge+Oxford	/	/		
Hawkins	Cambridge			/	
Heath	Cambridge+Oxford				/
Heynes	Cambridge				/
Kite	Cambridge				
Knight	Oxford	/	/		
Layton	Cambridge			/	
Lee	Cambridge+Oxford				/
Magnus	Oxford	/			
Pace	Oxford				
Pate	Oxford				
Paynell	Oxford				
Sampson	Cambridge	/			
Standish	Cambridge+Oxford				/
Stokesley	Oxford				/
Taylor		/	/		
Thirlby	Cambridge	/	/		
Tunstall	Cambridge+Oxford			/	
Vannes	Cambridge				
West	Cambridge			/	
Wolsey	Oxford				
Wotton	Oxford	/	/		/
Yong	Oxford	/			
Total	31	11	10	4	10

⁵⁵ A.Wood, *Athenea Oxonienses*, ed.P.Bliss, (4 vols., London, 1813-1820), J.Venn and J.A.Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*,(pt.I, 4 vols., Cambridge,1922).

1516 and 1547 27% of French bishops appointed by the king lacked a university education.⁵⁶

Even so, a considerable number of Francis' clerical ambassadors were qualified to the highest level. Charles de Marillac, described as, 'avancé aux lettres dès son jeune age.' was by the age of 22 an advocate in the parlement of Paris.⁵⁷ Lazare de Baïf, French resident in Venice from 1529 to 1534 studied law in Paris and later received tuition in Rome under the humanist Jonas Lascaris.⁵⁸ Like de Baïf, François II de Dinteville gained a degree in civil law from the College de Navare in Paris, before travelling to Italy to study further at the University of Padua.⁵⁹ Others with degrees in law included Jean Du Bellay, Etienne Poncher and Jean Caluau.

Charles' ecclesiastical ambassadors were of no lesser calibre than their English and French rivals. Chapuys, Bonvalot, Merklin and Gruyères all held doctorates in civil or canon law. Antoine Perrenot had studied law at Padua and theology at Louvain and is said to have been fluent in seven languages.⁶⁰ Caracciolo, Quínonos and Loaysa all contributed to the theological debates which arose with the advent of the Reformation.

* * * *

⁵⁶ Baumgartner, *op.cit.*, p.32. It is unclear how many of this number were used by the king on diplomatic missions.

⁵⁷ J.Vaissière, *Charles de Marillac, ambassadeur et homme politique sous le règne de François I^{er}, Henri II et François II, (1510-1560)*, (Paris, 1896), p.8.

⁵⁸ For de Baïf's studies in Italy see, L.Pinvert, *Lazare de Baïf*, (Paris, 1900), pp.8-12.

⁵⁹ *DBF*, art., 'François de Dinteville'.

⁶⁰ *Biographie Universelle*, (52 vols., Paris, 1811-1828), vol.XVIII, p.448.

An invaluable by-product of the legal and theological training from which so many of Henry's clerical ambassadors benefited was the fluency in Latin which such studies led to. In order to obtain a doctorate in either law or theology all students had to achieve a high level of proficiency in Latin. Obligated to present courses of lectures in the language and take part in disputations on material such as Gratian's *Decretum* and *The Institutes of Justinian*,⁶¹ these men not only came to understand Latin but acquired a level of expertise invaluable in the practice of renaissance diplomacy. Although the primary function of Latin within diplomacy was in the use of civil and canon law, proficiency in the language afforded other advantages. At a time when English was unknown beyond the Channel Latin permitted ambassadors to communicate with foreign princes and their advisers even when an envoy remained ignorant of his host's native language.⁶² Thus Richard Pace, active on Henry's behalf in the Imperial elections of 1519, relied heavily on Latin during many of his negotiations with the German electors.⁶³ During his audiences with the young king of Spain John Kite used Latin which translated for Charles into French.⁶⁴ Edward Lee freely admitted to Wolsey in 1526 that, 'I can speak no French, nor well understand it', a failing which due to the emperor's poor grasp of Latin made royal audiences somewhat heavy going.⁶⁵

Latin also remained the language of ceremonial diplomacy. Many letters of credence continued to be written in the language and formal orations made at the beginning and conclusion of embassies and in celebration of new treaties and marriage alliances were done so in Latin and in

⁶¹ Martines, *op.cit.*; Alexander, *op.cit.*, p.49.

⁶² J.G.Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies*, (Stroud, 1992), pp.4-23.

⁶³ J.Wegg, *Richard Pace, a Tudor Diplomatist*, (London, 1932), pp.48-52.

⁶⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp. C I, fo.194, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4436), Kite and Berners to Henry. 17 September 1518.

⁶⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C III, fo.238, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2097), Lee to Wolsey, 13 April 1526.

most cases by clerics.⁶⁶ In October 1518 in celebration of the Treaty of London Richard Pace delivered a Latin oration at St.Pauls,⁶⁷ and the following Sunday Cuthbert Tunstall performed another in praise of the engagement of Princess Mary to the Dauphin.⁶⁸ Thomas Hannibal, dispatched to Spain in March 1522, received generous praise for his opening oration to the new pope, Adrian VI. Not only was it well written, but despite being delivered in open court surrounded by innumerable distractions, Hannibal's oratory was audible throughout and he did not pause or falter during its delivery.⁶⁹ In such cases presentation might be considered just as important as content.

In addition to Latin a number of Henry's clergy were more or less fluent in the most widely spoken European languages, Italian and French. At least nine of the clerical envoys had a reasonable grasp of Italian. As natives of Italy, Vannes, Gigli, Ghinucci, Darius and Casali were of course fluent in the language. Christopher Bainbridge, Richard Pace, Cuthbert Tunstall and John Clerk all studied in Italy for a number of years and one might reasonably assume gained a good grounding in Italian.⁷⁰ Nicholas Hawkins, Henry's envoy to the Imperial court in 1533,

⁶⁶ 'In the diplomacy of the Renaissance the solemn oration, usually delivered in Latin, was intended to set the tone for the embassy and the subsequent negotiations. Consequently, humanist training in polished classical latin was becoming increasingly important for such occasions.' J.Currin, 'Persuasions to peace: The Luxemburg-Marigny-Gaguin embassy and the state of Anglo-French relations, 1489-1492', 113, *EHR*, (1998), 882-904, esp.p.890.

⁶⁷ G.J.Richardson, 'Anglo-French cultural and political relations in the reign of Henry VIII', Ph.D, (London, 1995), pp.89-93.

⁶⁸ *CSPV*, II, p.459, Sebastian Giustinian to the Senate, 24 September 1518.

⁶⁹ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel. B V fo.62, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2243), Ghinucci to Wolsey, 9 May 1522.

⁷⁰ Bainbridge studied at Ferrara in 1487-1488 and also attended the University of Bologna from whom he received his doctorate in civil law in October 1492. The following two years he lived in the English hospice of St.Thomas in Rome. Chambers, *op.cit.*, pp.14-15. Pace studied at Padua and Bologna from the late 1490s for almost a decade before joining the staff of Bainbridge in September 1509; Wegg, *op.cit.*, pp.8-17. Tunstall was resident in Italy between 1499 and 1505. Sturge, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-11.

could certainly translate both written Italian and French and would have found a grasp of the former language especially useful during the four months he accompanied Charles in his tour of Northern Italy.⁷¹ Finally, although it is difficult to assess what level of proficiency he achieved, Edmund Bonner was certainly interested in Italian, and at one point borrowed books in the language from his patron, Thomas Cromwell.⁷²

Bonner was certainly fluent in French. In February 1540, prior to an audience with Francis, the Duke of Norfolk requested that the bishop, by then *persona non grata* at the French court, might join him in the king's chamber. As he explained to Henry:

as I had matyers of secrecye to declare to him on your heighnes' behalf, and that I dyd not here well, and also that I dyd not so perfectly speak the language.....it might please him.....that I might have the busshopp of London present at the declareng of my chardge.⁷³

According to Muller, Stephen Gardiner 'spoke French and Latin with the fluency of his mother tongue'.⁷⁴ In 1551 when he was called to trial Gardiner tried to demonstrate that he retained Henry's favour until the very end of his reign. To support this claim he pointed to the fact that it

⁷¹ *St.P.* VII, p.487, (*L&P*, VI, no.903), Hawkins to Henry, 27 July 1533. Charles reached Bologna in mid-November 1532 and remained there until 28 February 1533. He sailed from Genoa for Spain 9 April. Bradford, *Correspondence of Charles V*, pp.500-501.

⁷² 'And wher ye willing to make me a good Ytallion and promised unto me longe agon the Triumphes of Petrache in the Ytalion tonge.I hartely pray you at this tyme by this beyrer, Mr Augustine his servant, to send me the said boke with some other at your devotion; and especially if it please you the boke called Cortigiano in Ytalion', *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*. ed.H.Ellis, (4 vols., Camden Society, 1846, 3rd series), vol.II, p.178, Bonner to Cromwell, summer 1530. See also, Alexander, *op.cit.*, pp.53-54.

⁷³ *St.P.* VIII, p.254, (*L&P*, XV, no.222) Norfolk to Henry, 17 February 1540. In the event Francis decided that Norfolk's somewhat convenient deafness and linguistic shortcomings were still preferable to the company of Bonner who was excluded from the interview.

⁷⁴ Muller, *op.cit.*, p.296.

was he more than any other, even in the king's last weeks, who most frequently liaised with the French, Imperial and Scottish ambassadors.⁷⁵ In answer to this argument it was observed by his judges that, 'none other in the said council who sat above him were so well languaged as he in the French tongue.'⁷⁶

It seems quite likely that greater numbers of Henry's clerical envoys were proficient in French yet solid evidence to identify them is lacking. The years Richard Sampson spent at the universities of Paris and Sens studying law would probably have made him fluent in French.⁷⁷ Certainly the five years he spent pursuing Wolsey's claim to the bishopric of Tournai in both France and the Low Countries would have given him a considerable incentive to master the language. Nicholas Wotton had also spent time abroad studying at both the Sorbonne and the University of Louvain.⁷⁸ Abundant evidence of his grasp of written French can be found in his papers which contain studies on French history, genealogy and heraldry.⁷⁹ It would be tempting to speculate that such practical men as Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell would only have put forward candidates for diplomatic service in French-speaking courts who could speak the language. Yet certainly this was not always the case. It has already been noted that John Kite and Edward Lee had to rely on Latin in their dealings with the emperor due to the paucity of their French. Thomas Thirlby's linguistic difficulties were no less acute. In 1538 in an anxious letter to Thomas Wriothesley the ambassador was quite open about the problems he was encountering at the French court:

⁷⁵ Foxe, J., *Acts and Monuments*, ed. J. Pratt, (8 vols, London, 1870), VI, p.181.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.165. See also, pp.168, 171, 177, 181.

⁷⁷ D.G.Lerpiniere, 'Some aspects of the life and work of a reformation bishop, as revealed in the writings of Richard Sampson, Bishop of Chichester', MA, (London, 1954), pp.7-8.

⁷⁸ Ficaro, *op.cit.*, pp.28-37.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pp.271-280.

In the mornynge, abought viii of the clocke, my Lorde of Winchester, Mr Bryan and I spake with the Constable of Fraunce, and such Frenche as my Lorde and Mr Brian spake I didde meanley perceyve. But what the great Constable answerid I knewe not certenly but by gessynge at here onn worde and there oon after. After dynner we had audyence of the Frenche kinge and lykewyse what my Lorde and Mr Brian sayde I perceyved meatly weall, but of the Frenche kynges communycacion I bore away never oon worde but 'l'emperor', 'l'emperor', often rehersyd.⁸⁰

More than six years later Thirlby was still having difficulties with his French. During in 1545 whilst involved in negotiations at the Imperial court members of the emperor's council apparently observed that Thirlby's sympathy for continued Anglo-Imperial friendship, 'maketh myn yvall Frenche make a good tale.'⁸¹

To a great extent the ambassadors of Charles and Francis were spared the linguistic challenges thrust upon their English counterparts. English was no more a common European language than German or Flemish and few envoys dispatched to Henry's court were either expected or able to speak it.⁸² In most cases an ignorance of English would probably not have caused foreign envoys too many problems. Henry could speak good French, tolerable Latin and some Italian.⁸³ Wolsey, while apparently less linguistically gifted than many of the men he chose for diplomatic service, nevertheless spoke Latin fluently.⁸⁴ Chapuys remarked of Cromwell, 'Il soit home bien parlaut en sa langue et mediocrement en la Latyne, Francayse et Italyenne.'⁸⁵ Throughout the reign Henry's

⁸⁰ PRO, SP1/132, fos.92-93, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.977), Thirlby to Wriothesley, 11 May 1538.

⁸¹ PRO, SP1/209, fo.22, (*L&P*, XX ii, no.593), Thirlby to Paget, 15 November 1545.

⁸² J.G.Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies*, (Stroud, 1992), pp.1-41

⁸³ Scarisbrick, *op.cit.*, p.14.

⁸⁴ Russell, *Diplomats at Work*, *op.cit.*, p.18.

⁸⁵ PRO 31/18/2/2, fo.226-227, (*CSPS*, V i, pp.568-9) Chapuys to Granvelle, 31 November 1535. Misdated in both *CSPS* and *L&P*, IX no.862, as 21 November 1535.

inner council always contained several clerics, for the most part men like Gardiner, Foxe Tunstall and Sampson, who as we have seen, in addition to fluent Latin were also strong French speakers. Finally, as the following chapter will show, at least reasonable numbers of the king's personal attendants and leading courtiers were fluent French speakers. Outside England language would have been still less of a problem. Since the French and Burgundian courts shared a common language Francis' envoys to the Low Countries were probably less troubled with linguistic difficulties than English ambassadors dispatched to Scotland. Even when journeying to the emperor in Spain or Germany, French envoys could be confident that they would be dealing in the main with fluent French speakers such as Mercurino de Gatinnara, Nicholas and Antoine Perrenot and Charles himself.

As Table Three demonstrates the emperor, making use of men from Italy, Spain and the Low Countries, minimized the problem of language by usually dispatching ambassadors to courts where their native tongue would be most familiar.

Table Three: The origins of Imperial Resident Ambassadors at the French and English Courts, 1519-1555⁸⁶

Residents at the French Court		Residents at the English Court	
Name	Nationality	Name	Nationality
Philibert Naturelli	Franche Comté	Bernardo de Mesa	Castile
Jean de Praet	Flanders	Jean de Praet	Flanders
Nicolas Perrenot	Franche Comté	Jean de la Sauch	Flanders
Charles de Laliang	Flanders	Jean Jonglet	Flanders
François Bonvalot	Franche Comté	Georges de Themseke	Hennegau
Jean Hannart	Brabant	Bernardino de Mendoza	Castile
Corn.de Scepper	Flanders	Eustace Chapuys	Savoy
Jean de Marnoz	Franche Comté	Phillipe de Majoris	Brabant
Philippe St Mauris	Franche Comté	François van der Delft	Flanders
Simon Renard	Franche Comté	Jean Scheyfre	Flanders
		Simon Renard	Franche Comté

⁸⁶ Details taken from Lunitz, *op.cit.*, p.24.

In every case the men dispatched to reside in France by the emperor spoke French as their first language, and of the residents accredited to England only the Castilian envoys, Bernardo de Mesa, inherited by Charles from his grandfather, Ferdinand, and Bernardino de Mendoza were not natural francophones. Furthermore, Charles relied on Spaniards like Luis Sarmiento de Mendoza, Rodrigo Niño, and Juan Lara de Manrique to represent him at the southern courts in Portugal and Italy, countries where the gap between Spanish and the vernacular tongue would be less pronounced.⁸⁷

Recruitment

For roughly fifteen years Cardinal Wolsey dominated the government of both church and state in England. As the country's leading churchman and Henry's chief minister it has largely been taken for granted that it was he who found and nurtured those clerics who served the king as ambassadors.⁸⁸ Unquestionably, at least between 1515 and 1529, it was Wolsey, subject to Henry's approval, who chose both the clerics and laymen who served abroad.⁸⁹ However, those churchmen chosen as ambassadors were not, in the majority of cases, found or 'talent spotted' by

⁸⁷ Brandi, *op.cit.*, p.395.

⁸⁸ This is very much the thrust of L.B.Smith's argument in, *Tudor Prelates and Politics, 1536-1558*, (Princeton, 1953), pp.27-44. See also, D MacCulloch, *op.cit.*, p.34, who says of Cranmer, "by 1527 he had already joined the flock of Cambridge dons talent spotted by cardinal Wolsey for diplomatic purposes."

⁸⁹ A useful if rare example of the decision making process behind the selection of ambassadors came in April 1518, 'Forasmuche as the sayde emperor doth desyre that oon off the kingis counsayle maybe sende unto hym....hys grace doth well consydere that the sayde emperor will in nowyse be contentidde wyth me, and therfore [practices] to have syr Ro. Wyngfelde sende unto hym agayne whyche his grace will in nowyse do. Wherfor hys grace's plesor is that yff your grace shal thynke it necessarie.....to sende oon unto the sayde emperor that then ye shall sende Mr doctor Knyght thydre aswell for that he is well forwarde in that Jorneye as that he shallbe well acceptidde bi the sayde emperor.' PRO, SP1/16, fo.20, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4057), Pace to Wolsey, 3 April 1518.

Wolsey. Certainly the Cardinal became responsible for the development of their careers, he did not as has generally been assumed create them.

In only a few cases does one really encounter clerical ambassadors who came to diplomatic service solely as a result of the cardinal's sponsorship. Stephen Gardiner and Edward Foxe began their public careers as members of Wolsey's household. Quite how the Cardinal became aware of them and what talents they had to offer is unclear. Richard Sampson had been Gardiner's tutor at Trinity College Cambridge and might therefore have brought his name to the cardinal's attention.⁹⁰ However, since more than ten years elapsed between Sampson's departure from academia and Gardiner's arrival in Wolsey's household, the importance of this connection is questionable. More likely it was Gardiner's appearance at court in 1523 as his university's representative that provided Wolsey with the opportunity to assess the younger man's abilities. It is surely no coincidence that not long afterwards Edward Foxe, a close friend of Gardiner's, also joined Wolsey's household.⁹¹ It is reasonable to assume that Gardiner, having earned the Cardinal's favour would have been in a strong position to obtain advancement for close associates such as Foxe.

William Knight and Richard Sampson were also closely connected to Wolsey. Both men joined his service sometime before he reached the height of his power, and at least in the case of Sampson were well aware of the debt owed to him.⁹² Yet despite their close association with

⁹⁰ L.B.Smith, *op.cit.*, p.28.

⁹¹ *St.P.*, vol.VII, p.69, Wolsey to Gregorio de Casali, 21 February 1527.

⁹² Writing to Wolsey in 1523 Sampson acknowledged his debt to the Cardinal, "Pleas it your grace I am her now the kings ambassador [in Spain] be the syngular goodnesse and setting forth off your grace," PRO, SP1/27, fs.1-2, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2774), Sampson to Wolsey, 14 January 1523.

Wolsey, neither man was entirely dependent upon his influence. Long before Sampson was appointed Wolsey's vicar in Tournai he had enjoyed the patronage of the Howard family.⁹³ From the mid-1490s Knight had been a member of Henry VII's secretarial staff⁹⁴ and had been appointed a royal chaplain sometime before March 1513.⁹⁵ His first diplomatic assignment came in May 1512, and although his link with the future cardinal is clearly demonstrated in his dispatches from Spain,⁹⁶ it is unlikely that at this early stage Wolsey was choosing the king's ambassadors.

Like Knight, most of the clergy who served as ambassadors in the first decade of Henry's reign began their service before Wolsey rose to power. Christopher Bainbridge was already Archbishop of York when he was dispatched to Rome in 1509 and would no doubt have joined Foxe and Warham as a leading member of the king's council had he not been sent abroad. Nicholas West, one of Henry's most frequent ambassadors to Scotland and France between 1511 and 1520 had already carried out several diplomatic missions in the reign of his father.⁹⁷ Thomas Magnus, a protege of Thomas Savage and a chaplain of Henry VII's, had also performed his first diplomatic missions for the old king.⁹⁸ Silvestro Gigli, Henry's resident in Rome between 1514 and 1521,

⁹³ Lerpiniere, *op.cit.*, p.1.

⁹⁴ A.Wood, *Athenea Oxonienses*, ed.P.Bliss, (2 vols.,Oxford, 1813), II, p.752.

⁹⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fo.50, (*L&P*, I i, no.1689), Stile to Henry, 19 March 1513.

⁹⁶ Most of Knight's surviving correspondence from this first embassy are in fact addressed to Wolsey. Nevertheless as frequent remarks in the letters make clear the ambassador was also writing to Richard Foxe and Thomas Ruthal. PRO, SP1/2, fo.117; BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C I, fos, 79, 81, (*L&P*, I i, nos.1239, 1327, 1422), Knight to Wolsey, 14 June, 5 August and 4 October 1512.

⁹⁷ These included embassies to Maximilian in 1503 and to his son Philip in 1506. *CSPV*, I, pp.297, 324, Alvise Mocenigo to the senate, 31 January 1503 and Vincenzo Quirini to the senate, 11 July 1506.

⁹⁸ *The Clifford Letters of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. A.G.Dickens, (London, 1962), pp.42-44.

had succeeded his uncle, Giovanni, as Bishop of Worcester in 1498 and for seven years acted as one of Henry VII's agents in Rome before coming to England in 1505 as papal nuncio.⁹⁹ Both Richard Pace and John Clerk began their careers in the household of Christopher Bainbridge and received their first experience of diplomacy as members of the Archbishop's staff in Rome. Their association with Wolsey began on somewhat acrimonious terms as a result of their efforts to prosecute Silvestro Gigli for the murder of Bainbridge, and it was only after they ceased their pursuit of the Italian bishop that Wolsey relented.¹⁰⁰ Although John Kite's one and only diplomatic mission was performed in 1518 nearly three years after Wolsey's rise to power, he had by then been Archbishop of Armagh for five years,¹⁰¹ and was thus hardly a discovery of the Cardinal's. Cuthbert Tunstall, whose long period of diplomatic service did match closely the time Wolsey served as the king's chief adviser, was far more closely associated with William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury. From 1511 Tunstall served as Warham's chancellor in the diocese of Canterbury, and was still in receipt of the Archbishop's patronage in 1522, seven years after his retirement from Henry's council.¹⁰²

Of these men Pace, Knight, Tunstall, Magnus and Clerk continued throughout much of the 1520s to be some of Henry's most frequently appointed envoys. The upsurge in diplomatic activity, particularly with regard to Rome, caused by the king's divorce campaign, led to the accreditation

⁹⁹ W.E.Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1974), pp.24, 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ Wegg, *op.cit.*, pp.56-60.

¹⁰¹ Eubel, *op.cit.*, III, p.132.

¹⁰² Upon receiving news of Tunstall's appointment to the bishopric of London, Warham wrote to Wolsey, 'And in my pouer opinion, your grace could not have shewed yor favour in that behalf more honorably and lawdably than to the said master Tunstall, being a man of good lernyng, vertue and sadnes.' PRO, SP1/23, fo.271, (*L&P*, III i, no.1972), Warham to Wolsey, 19 January 1522.

of more clerical ambassadors; again, however, these were not for the most part servants or close associates of Wolsey. Edward Lee, Henry's resident ambassador in Spain between 1524 and 1529 had been a royal chaplain since 1520, leading Lacey Baldwin Smith to conclude that Wolsey must have been grooming him for diplomatic service.¹⁰³ Yet there is no evidence of any especially close link between the Cardinal and the chaplain or that any effort was made by Wolsey to train Lee for diplomatic work. What we do know is that he was a humanist scholar of some note¹⁰⁴ who counted among his friends Cuthbert Tunstall, Richard Pace and Thomas More. Although it is not possible to say with any certainty that one or all of these men played a part in Lee's promotion to the chaplaincy or his dispatch abroad, they were all close to the king and could quite plausibly have advanced the younger man's name either to Henry, Wolsey or both.

Another man drawn into diplomatic service by the advent of the divorce was John Stokesley but again one must question Wolsey's role in his selection. His first patron had been Richard Foxe in whose household he had served as chaplain, although the lion's share of his career prior to his service as an ambassador had been devoted to the study of theology and university administration.¹⁰⁵ Certainly Stokesley was well known to the Cardinal who included him among the judges chosen to man the new commission set up by Wolsey in 1518 to reduce the burden of work placed on the king's council by the growing numbers of litigants seeking justice from it.¹⁰⁶ However, Stokesley quickly ran into difficulties over the judgements he was handing down and

¹⁰³ Baldwin Smith, *op.cit.*, p.38.

¹⁰⁴ Lee had already gained some notoriety in humanist circles by 1519 as a result of his bitter dispute with Erasmus over the latter's failure to acknowledge the contributions made by the young scholar to his translation of the New Testament; F.A.Gasquet, *The Eve of the Reformation*, (London, 1900), pp.154-155.

¹⁰⁵ A.Chibi, *Henry VIII's Conservative Scholar: Bishop John Stokesley and the Divorce, Royal Supremacy and Doctrinal Reform*, (Bern, 1997), pp.11-12.

¹⁰⁶ J.A.Guy, *The Cardinal's Court*, (Trowbridge, 1977), pp.40-44.

in response to the unfavourable report made to Wolsey by a commission of common lawyers was removed from the council in 1523.¹⁰⁷ It was only six years later and four days before praemunire proceedings were instituted against Wolsey that Stokesley was first accredited as an ambassador. By this time the Cardinal's control of state affairs was tenuous in the extreme and one must question whether he had anything whatsoever to do with Stokesley's appointment.

It cannot be doubted that for almost fifteen years Wolsey dominated the administration of England's diplomatic affairs and that he more than any other was responsible for the selection of Henry's ambassadors. Nor would I argue that those clergy chosen for diplomatic service did not quickly come to identify their own interests with those of the cardinal. Wolsey, however, was not responsible for some farsighted training program, nor did he make a point of recruiting young Oxbridge lawyers in the expectation that they would form the next generation of Tudor diplomats. One must acknowledge his commonsense and man management skills. The men he chose to serve abroad often already had diplomatic experience or a proven track record of good service either to the king or his leading advisers, men such as Bainbridge and Warham. Furthermore, Henry's ambassadors, clerical or otherwise, no doubt benefited from the cardinal's advice on how best to carry out their diplomatic duties. The fact remains that whatever they later became the great majority of clerical envoys who served Henry in the early decades of his reign did not begin their diplomatic careers as the cardinal's men.

Wolsey's fall made little impact on the use of clerics as ambassadors. Several diplomatic stalwarts, notably Cuthbert Tunstall, John Clerk and Richard Sampson stopped carrying out missions at the close of the 1520s. In part this might be attributed to their close association with the cardinal. However, it should be noted that Clerk's last mission came to an end in September

¹⁰⁷ P.Gwyn, *The king's Cardinal*, (London, 1990), p.128..

1528 a year before Wolsey's fall, and Sampson's final diplomatic appointment occurred in October 1529 and was therefore probably not made by the cardinal. William Knight, like Sampson one of Wolsey's oldest associates, received his final diplomatic appointment in April 1532.

At no other point in the reign was Henry's need of ambassadors with expertise in civil law, canon law and theology, greater than in the years between 1529 and 1534. Furthermore, the almost Hermean swiftness with which men like Gardiner and Foxe distanced themselves from Wolsey ensured that they retained not only the confidence of the king, but avoided the enmity of Norfolk and the Boleyns. Henry's Italian envoys Girolamo Ghinucci and Gian Baptista de Casali were no less dispensable than Gardiner and Foxe and would remain acceptable as English ambassadors until the king's final break with Rome.¹⁰⁸

The continuing need for technical specialists in diplomacy during the remainder of Henry's reign ensured that, particularly in the 1530s, there was no lapse in the appointment of new ecclesiastical ambassadors. Between 1530 and 1539 eleven clerics received their first diplomatic appointment, exactly the same number as were accredited for the first time in the decades 1509 to 1518 and 1519 to 1529. As Wolsey had at least partially controlled the selection of ambassadors in the earlier decades of the reign, Thomas Cromwell was primarily responsible for influencing the king's choice of diplomatic personnel at least between 1532 and 1540.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁸ Only in 1534 when Henry had unequivocally failed to secure papal approval for his annulment did he dispense with the services of his Italian clergy. In March 1534 Ghinucci along with Lorenzo Campeggio, England's now defunct cardinal protector, were deprived respectively of the bishoprics of Worcester and Salisbury by act of parliament, Wilkie, *op.cit.*, p.216. Gian Baptiste de Casali continued to serve Henry until at least 1535 when his incarceration by Ferdinand whilst *en route* to the court of John Zapolyai and Henry's subsequent lack of interest in his plight, probably led to a parting of the ways. *St.P.*, VII, p.599, (*L&P*, VIII, no.713), Gregorio Casali to Cromwell, 14 May 1535; (*ibid*, no.1018), Chapuys to Charles, 11 July, 1535.

¹⁰⁹ For Cromwell's influence of foreign policy and the role he played in the selection of

number of clerical envoys with close links to Cromwell prior to their first diplomatic appointment was not great. Although Edmund Bonner had begun his career as a lawyer with Wolsey, it was under Cromwell's guidance that he became an important member of both the episcopate and Henry's diplomatic staff.¹¹⁰ Another of Cromwell's close associates, Robert Barnes, attended two missions to Germany in the 1530s in an effort to forge closer links with both princes and protestant theologians. For much of the 1520s Barnes had lived in Saxony, exiled from England in consequence of his much publicised sympathy for the ideas of Luther. During the years he spent in Germany, he formed friendships with many of the foremost protestant theologians amongst them, Justus Jonas, Jasper Cruciger, John Bugenhagen and Luther himself.¹¹¹

Yet for the most part those clerics who became ambassadors in the 1530s certainly began their careers with patrons other than Cromwell. By the time of his appointment to the Imperial court in 1532 Thomas Cranmer not only enjoyed the patronage of the Boleyn family but was high in the favour of the king himself. Cranmer's successor at the emperor's court, Nicholas Hawkins, was the nephew of Nicholas West, Bishop of Ely, to whom presumably he already owed his appointment as archdeacon of that diocese.¹¹² Richard Pate was another of Henry's envoys who

personnel see, R.McEntegart, 'England and the League of Schmalkalden, 1531-1547', Ph.D, (London, 1992), pp. 56-68, 71-73, 80-84, and 92-93.

¹¹⁰ In a letter to Cromwell written in 1538, Bonner made quite clear the extent of his debt, 'But where of your infinite and inestimable goodness it hath further liked you of late further to advance me to the office of legation from such a prince as my sovereign lord is unto the emperor and French king; and after to procure and obtain my advancement to so honorable a promotion as the Bishopric of Hereford, I must here acknowledge the exceeding greatness of your Lordships benefit.' Bonner to Cromwell, 30 Sept. 1538, in Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, V, p.150.

¹¹¹ J.P.Lusardi, 'The career of Robert Barnes', in *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of Sir Thomas More*, (15 vols., Yale, 1963-1986) eds.R Schuster et.al, vol.VIII, pp.1367-1415. For Barnes' early conflicts with Wolsey see Smith, *Tudor Prelates*, pp.35-37.

¹¹² According to Chapuys Hawkins' early relations with his uncle had not been entirely

could expect the patronage of a successful relative, in this case John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln. In 1535 Longland wrote to Cromwell, "I beseche you to remember your beadsman, the archdeacon off Lincoln, att this tyme. He is att grete charges, muche more then his livelode is abull to beare onles he hadde helpe of other."¹¹³ Lacking influential relatives, others of the new generation of Henry's clerical ambassadors were almost certainly brought to the attention of Cromwell and the king by the efforts of other powerful patrons. According to Hook, Nicholas Heath was helped at university by the Earl of Wiltshire, Anne Boleyn and Lord Rochford, to whom he certainly owed his appointment in 1532 to the vicarage of Hever, the ancestral home of the Boleyns.¹¹⁴ Although the story that Thomas Thirlby also received help from the Boleyn family has never been substantiated,¹¹⁵ the future Bishop of Westminster certainly never lacked for patrons. A student of Trinity College, he received tuition from Gardiner before the older man joined Wolsey's household. His first patron at court may well have been Dr Butts the king's physician, but without question his most important sponsor was Thomas Cranmer.¹¹⁶

smooth, 'Il a este detenu longuement prisonnier pour Lutherien et a la fin convaincu et par son oncle propre, levesque de yly, condempne a porter sur les espaules publicquement en procession ung faggot...' PRO 31/18/2/1, fos.763-767, esp.766v, (*L&P*, VI, no.17), Chapuys to Charles, 1 October 1532.

¹¹³ SP1/97, fo.33, (*L&P*, IX, no.454), Lincoln to Cromwell, 27 September 1535.

¹¹⁴ W.F.Hook, *An Ecclesiastical Biography*, (8 vols., London, 1842-1852), vol.V, p.561. According to Chapuys Heath was, 'ung qui estoit prestre de l'archevesque de Canterbury pendant quil fust ambassadeurs devers vostre maieste,' PRO 31/18/3/1, fos.9-17, esp.14, (*CSPS*, vol V, p.25), Chapuys to Charles, 28 January 1534, so it is also possible that Cranmer with knowledge of the younger man's abilities brought his name to Cromwell's notice.

¹¹⁵ Shelley, *op.cit.*, p.4.

¹¹⁶ Several decades later Cranmer's old chaplain, Ralph Morice, wrote to one Mr Day, 'Dr Butts was the firste motioner of his [Thirlby's] preferment to the kyngs service, but specially grown into the kynges favor by my Lorde Cranmers commendacion. And besides his speciall favour to hym borne that wey, there was no man lyvying could more frendelie esteme any man of hymself as my Lorde Cranmer did this doctor Thirlby.' *Original Letters of Literary Men of the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Century*, ed. H.Ellis, (Camden Society, 1843), XXIII, p.26.

Despite the fact that members of the clergy played a no less active role in diplomacy in the 1540s, only one man, Richard Layton, joined the key group of Henry's ecclesiastical ambassadors after Cromwell's fall. Layton appointed as resident ambassador to the court of Queen Mary in the Low Countries in November 1543, had been one of Cromwell's most prominent agents in the suppression of the monasteries, and it was doubtless his zealous performance of this highly sensitive task as well as his training in civil law which persuaded Henry of his suitability for the post despite the fact he had no previous diplomatic experience. That the church supplied the king with no other new ambassadors in the 1540s should not be taken as evidence of a decline in ecclesiastical involvement in English diplomacy, but rather a reflection on the quality of those clerics employed in earlier decades. The number of priests recruited to diplomatic service between 1525 and 1535 ensured that in the final years of the reign Henry possessed a strong group of technical experts with a broad experience of diplomacy to draw upon.

Diplomatic Service

As established earlier the main reason for the dominant role played by the clergy in the practice of early Tudor diplomacy was their near monopoly of the study of civil law, the key stone of international relations. Between 1509 and 1547 every mission entrusted with the negotiation, renewal or ratification of a treaty counted amongst its number a member of the clergy, in most cases with a doctorate in civil law. Thus in March 1510, August 1514 and November 1518 Nicholas West, a doctor of civil and canon law, attended the three embassies sent from England to France to renew and ratify the agreements negotiated between the houses of Tudor and Valois. In the aftermath of Henry's second war with France it was John Taylor, Master of the Rolls and another civil law expert who was dispatched to France. Taylor in company with Fitzwilliam was entrusted with securing the French ratification of the Treaty of the More in October 1525.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX, fos.187-192, (*L&P*, IV i, no.1705), instructions to
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When Francis was released from captivity the following year it was also Taylor who was instructed to explain to the French king the legal loophole which would permit him to repudiate the Treaty of Madrid.¹¹⁸ Two decades later when it was once again necessary to make peace with France, Nicholas Wotton accompanied William Paget and John Dudley, Viscount Lisle, on the embassy dispatched for the purpose. With regard to the role he played in that mission it has been observed, 'It would in fact appear that [Wotton] was summoned to join the English peace negotiation primarily for the service which he could render as a legal expert and the only remaining trace of his work is in the preparation of the Latin draft of the treaty articles.'¹¹⁹

Members of the clergy were no less prominent in the sporadic negotiations centred about England's commercial affairs, and in particular her economic relations with the Low Countries. In the succession of trade agreements hammered out between England and the Low Countries in 1515, 1520, 1532 and 1546 clerical lawyers sat on every commission. Prior to the negotiations held at Bourbourg in 1532 Stephen Vaughan advised Cromwell:

It wer therof good that yow cownsaylled the kynges grace [to send here a] wise, discrete and men of gret lernyng for the [settlement] therof. For I promyse yow thimportance of the matter..... requyreth it. Master Hackett is a discrete [gentleman but] is no man profoundly to reason a mater of gret weight ne [are] any other except Dr Knight.¹²⁰

In the event the commission was given not only to Knight, both an experienced diplomat and a doctor of civil law, but also Hackett the current resident ambassador in the Low Countries, and John Tregonwell one of only three lay civilian lawyers employed on diplomatic work throughout

Fitzwilliam and Taylor, October 1525.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, fos.164-170, (*ibid*, 2039), Thomas Cheyne's instructions, March 1526.

¹¹⁹ Ficaro, *op.cit.*, p.114. See also Potter, 'Anglo-French relations', p.143.

¹²⁰ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.306, (*L&P*, V, no.843), Vaughan to Cromwell, 1 March 1532.

the reign.¹²¹ The various skills and knowledge possessed by the three men complemented one another well. It seems likely that Hackett in possession of a wealth of commercial experience, particularly with regard to Anglo-Dutch trade, would have played an important role in hammering out the material details of the treaty. These included discussions about the rates at which exports were to be levied, responsibility for wharf repairs and the rate at which scavage - a special toll paid by merchants selling goods in foreign markets - was to be set.¹²²

However, these issues as well as various others were all disputed in the context of earlier treaties, and most crucially the *Intercursus Malus* of 1506, and it was in this area that Knight's expertise in civil law was so important. The 1506 agreement had been highly favourable to the English who were understandably reluctant to relinquish it.¹²³ However, Archduke Philip's failure to ratify the treaty before his death in September 1506 provided the government of the Low Countries with the excuse it needed to renege. In an effort to maintain good relations subsequent negotiations including the diets at Brussels and London in 1515 and 1520 had suspended the 1506 agreement. As a compromise a succession of temporary treaties were agreed, culminating in that of 1520 which specified that until either the Low Countries accepted the 1506 settlement or a new permanent agreement could be made, the current treaty would be renewed every five years.¹²⁴

The Burgundian commissioners at Bourbourg in 1532 sought to overturn this arrangement by

¹²¹ PRO SP1/69, fos.255-260, (*L&P*, V no.946), Instructions for Knight, Hackett and Tregonwell 17 April 1532.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ The main points of the treaty permitted English merchants to sell their cloths throughout Burgundy excluding Flanders; an exception from nearly all tariffs in the Low Countries, and the obligation to pay only one toll for navigation of the Scheldt. D.R.Bisson, *The Merchant Adventurers of England: The Company and the Crown, 1474-1564*, (Newark, 1993), pp.79-80.

¹²⁴ Bisson, *op.cit.*, pp.83-91.

arguing that given the inequitable nature of the *Intercursus Malus*, the dual option provided by the 1520 agreement was not in fact binding on the emperor. Either the English should be prepared to negotiate an entirely new treaty or the Low Countries would be free to abrogate all previous trade agreements and set customs at whatever rates they chose.¹²⁵ In response Knight, referring to the earlier treaties, pointed out that they had been signed by both parties, and gave neither Charles or Henry an advantage. Any unilateral action taken by the emperor would not only be illegal but permit the English king equal freedom. Furthermore, the 1520 agreement specified a review of the treaty every five years, since the current period had not elapsed the Burgundian commissioners had no right to be insisting on revisions at that time; the meeting at Bourbourg had been arranged for the sole purpose of resolving outstanding issues within the current framework.¹²⁶ If a sparsity of later documents makes it unclear what the Bourbourg meeting actually achieved, it certainly did not bring about any significant change in the Anglo-Burgundian commercial treaties - Stephen Vaughan's faith in Knight was well placed.

Henry was no less dependent on the clergy's expertise in civil law in his dealings with foreign ambassadors in England. When in 1540 it became necessary to appoint commissioners to discuss with Charles de Marillac a range of issues including trade subsidies, extradition questions and boundary disputes on the Calais border, a team of four men were chosen. Their instructions clearly identified their respective responsibilities:

And forasmuche as ye, my lordes of Duresme and Wynchestre, are well lernyd in the lawes cyvile and canon, and well experte in the treaties, and ye, Mr Chauncellour of thAugmentacions and Mr Chauncelour of Tenths and First Fructes, well lernyd in the lawes and statutes of the realme, the kingis maiesties pleasour is therfore that yeshall peruse and conferre the treaties and statutes together, and so procede to the consultacion and debatement of the same amongst yourselves in such sorte as yow may be ripe and well

¹²⁵ *St.P.*, VII, p.374, (*L&P*, V, no.1090), Knight and Tregonwell to Hackett, June 1532.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

armed in all poyntes to aunswer the saide ambassadour.¹²⁷

The division was clear. While Henry might depend on lay members of his council to defend the interests of his subjects and himself within the context of English law, it was still the clergy to whom he had to look where matters of international litigation were concerned.

If civil law was dominated by the clergy then canon law was all but monopolized by them and its role within English diplomacy attained an importance in Henry's reign rarely seen before. The court for which expertise in canon law was essential was of course the Vatican. In the early decades of Henry's reign responsibility for the more technical aspects of the king's business, in particular obtaining papal approval for royal nominations to bishoprics and abbeys, was largely entrusted to England's cardinal protectors.¹²⁸ However, where difficulties arose over the choice of the royal candidate, or where a papal dispensation was sought in order to hold a bishopric *in commendam* then it was quite common for the king's ambassador to take a hand in expediting the business. In particular ambassadors would devote considerable amounts of their time and effort to curial affairs especially when, as so often was the case, Cardinal Wolsey happened to be the supplicant. Between 1514 and 1518 Silvestro Gigli, the king's ambassador in Rome, and Richard Sampson although strictly royal were largely preoccupied with securing Wolsey's temporal and spiritual rights over the see of Tournai.¹²⁹ Gigli's successors in Rome, particularly John Clerk and Thomas Hannibal, also joined their efforts to those of the cardinal protector, Lorenzo Campeggio, to further the interests of Wolsey. During the two periods Clerk resided in Rome between 1521

¹²⁷ *St.P.*, I, pp.655-656, (*L&P*, XVI i, no.168), Council with the king to the Council at London, 16 October 1540.

¹²⁸ Wilkie, *op.cit.*, pp.150-176.

¹²⁹ Wolsey's ultimately fruitless struggle for the bishopric is described in detail in C.G. Cruickshank, *The English Occupation of Tournai*, (Oxford, 1971), pp.143-148.

and 1525 he petitioned the pope on Wolsey's behalf for permission to hold the rich abbey of St. Albans *in commendam*; to reduce the amount of first fruits the cardinal would be obliged to pay on the bishopric of Durham, and to secure a permanent extension of his legatine authority.¹³⁰

Much of the work performed directly on Henry's behalf by his envoys to Rome was of a more typically secular nature. In December 1515 Gigli was required to throw up a smoke screen in order to conceal Pace's mission to the Swiss cantons from the French.¹³¹ A year later he was given responsibility for securing Leo X's commitment to the formation of an international fund with which to finance yet another attack against the French in northern Italy.¹³² During Henry's second war with France Clerk, Pace and Hannibal remained with the Pope, stiffening his resolve against the French and putting pressure on him to make greater material contributions towards Imperial efforts in Italy.¹³³

However, on occasion Henry was able to put the expertise of his envoys in Rome to the same kind of personal use as his chancellor so often did. In 1521 the king completed his polemic against the preachings of Luther, *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* and promptly dispatched 28 copies to Rome, amongst their number was, 'a boke covered withe a clothe of gold subscribed with the kyng's hande, wherin hys grace hath dyvised and made two verses insertyd in the said

¹³⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel. B IV, fo. 207, (*L&P*, III ii, no. 1760), Wolsey to Clerk, November 1521; Vitel. B V, fo. 169, (*ibid*, no. 2891), Hannibal to Wolsey, 14 March 1523; Vitel. B VI, fo. 9, (*L&P*, IV i, no. 14), Clerk, Hannibal and Pace to Wolsey, 9 January 1524. See also, D.S. Chambers, 'Cardinal Wolsey and the Papal Tiara', *BIHR*, 28, (1965), 20-30.

¹³¹ PRO, SP1/12, fos. 13-14, (*L&P*, II i, no. 1280), Wolsey to Gigli, 13 December 1515.

¹³² BL, Cotton MS, Vitel. B III, fo. 78, (*ibid*, no. 2420), Gigli to Wolsey, 4 October 1516.

¹³³ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel. B VI, fos. 19-21, 25-31, 42-45, 48, 64, (*L&P*, IV ii, nos. 170, 276, 320, 358, 376), Clerk, Hannibal, and Pace to Wolsey, 21 March, 25 April, 9, 25 and 28 May 1524.

boke by the king's owne hand' which Clerk was to present privately to the pope.¹³⁴ Having gained Leo's approval Clerk was further instructed:

ye shall desire the pope's holinesse to prefixe a daie unto you where ye [shall] present the said booke in open consistorye whiche, graunted it is the pope's mynde and pleasor ye shall prepare your selfe to present the same [with a] solempne proposition to be devised conformyng your words and mynde to the king's epistle and prolyeme putt in the begynnyng of the said booke with such other addicions as ye shall think good for the king's honor.¹³⁵

Due to Leo's concern over the spread of Lutheran ideas he refused Clerk's request that Henry's book be presented to him in a public audience, permitting only those bishops and cardinals present in the papal palace on the day of the presentation to attend.¹³⁶ Even so the ambassador had an audience which included twenty bishops and the full compliment of consistorial cardinals. Furthermore, throughout the length of his oration he was obliged to remain kneeling at the Pope's feet.¹³⁷ In addition to the praise of his master's work Clerk's oration contained its own criticisms of Luther's beliefs about the sacraments and drew on historical comparisons with the Hussites of

¹³⁴ BL Cotton MS, Vitel.B IV, fos.145-6, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1510), Wolsey to Clerk, 25 August 1521.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ H.Ellis, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*. (Camden Society, 1846), 3rd series, vol.II, pp.262-268, (*L&P*, III i, no.1654), Clerk to Wolsey, October 1521.

¹³⁷ 'Apon Wednesday next.....[as] sone as his Holynes had hard masse he callyd for me [and bid] me be in a redynes for he wold straight to the consistorye.....and within a litill whyle callyd in soche prelattis as was taryng with owt, busshoppis to [the] nomber off xx. And immediatly after the master off the cermonyes came unto me and informyd me somewha[t of] the ceremonyes, and amongst all other that I shold kneel apon my knees all the tyme of myn oracion. Wherat I was somewhat abashyd for my thought I shold nott have my harte ne my spiritis so moche att my libertye.' *Ibid.* See also, E.Doernberg, *Henry VIII and Luther, an Account of their Personal Relations*, (London, 1961), pp.16-19, and N.S.Tjernagel, *Henry VIII and the Lutherans: A Study in Anglo-Lutheran Politics from 1521-1547*, (Saint Louis, 1963), pp.8-9.



15th century Bohemia to highlight the grave dangers of heresy.¹³⁸

It was, however, Henry's efforts to obtain papal consent for his divorce from Katherine of Aragon that led the king to rely most heavily upon the expertise of his canon lawyers. Between 1527 and 1534 Henry dispatched six ambassadors to Rome with doctorates in both civil and canon law. Only one, Sir Edward Carne, was a layman. What did working on Henry's divorce case actually entail? One can gain an excellent impression of the type of work involved from the letters dispatched by Gardiner and Foxe on their first embassy to Rome. The objective of their mission was to persuade Clement VII to issue a decretal commission which would not only authorize Wolsey and another papal legate to try Henry's case in England but would also validate in advance whatever decision the legatine court reached.¹³⁹ If the envoys could not persuade Clement to issue such a document they were to press for a general commission empowering Wolsey and his colleague to try the case in England, their judgement to be ratified by the pope after the conclusion of the trial.

The attempt to get Clement to issue the full decretal commission began the Friday before Palm Sunday:

The Friday before Palme Sunday the pope's holines appointed *solemnem consessum* of the cardinals De Monte and Sanctorum Quatuorum, Staphileus, us and the dean of the Rota, to dispute and reason the king's matier. At which tyme we convened in the poope's litel chambre, being thenne present at the same disputation an auditor of the Rota called Paulus and the prothonotary Gambara. After every man was placed the bishop Staphileus had a long oration, conteyning his hol boke and the reasons of the same; which lasted two howres. When he had spoken the Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuorum began, and somewhat contraryed Staphileus, repeting sumaryly what he had said and infering such reasons as semed to the contrary. Wherunto Staphyleus answered.....After they had reasoned a good while I desired

¹³⁸ L&P, III ii, no.1656, Clerk's oration to the pope, October 1521.

¹³⁹ Scarisbrick, *op.cit*, pp.207-208.

of the poppe's holynes that I might be herde to saye sumwhat to such reasons as the Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuorum had spoken which wer very frivolous.....His holynes willed me to speak and soo did reple to the Cardinale Sanctorum Quatuorum , who then remitted his reasons to the deane of the Rota from whom he had them. And soo the deane of the Rota and I examined certain of these reasons and tryed of what strength they wer soo playnly as the pope's holynes well perceyved it and howe they wayed.¹⁴⁰

It rapidly became apparent that Clement was not prepared to issue the decretal commission leaving the English envoys little choice but to fall back on the request for a general commission. At Clement's instruction Gardiner prepared a draft copy of this document based on the instructions he and Foxe had been given in England¹⁴¹ and presented it to the cardinals Sst.Quatour, Simonetta and Del Monte on Palm Sunday. When the commission was returned to the ambassadors the following Tuesday it had been so radically altered that Gardiner claimed it was useless. The following day the English envoys met once again met with the pope and his advisers, and, armed with the relevant books of law, spent at least six hours arguing over the exact wording of each clause in the commission.¹⁴² Once again the cardinals retired to revise the disputed document and upon returning it the English ambassadors renewed their complaints to the pope about the changes which had been made. A final meeting with Cardinal Simonetta on Wednesday night led to agreement on all but the wording of two clauses, which Clement at last conceded to the English the next day.

¹⁴⁰ PRO, SP1/47, fos.95-107, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4167), Gardiner, Foxe and Campeggio to Wolsey, 9 April 1528.

¹⁴¹ 'I, Steven Gardiner, entended to the devising of a general commission for a legate with such clauses as be conteyned in our instructions.....with annotacions in the margins conteyning the considerations of every clause.' *Ibid*, fos.201-202, (*ibid*), Gardiner, Foxe and Casali to Wolsey, 9 April 1528.

¹⁴² 'That day folowing whiche was Wednesday two howres befor dyner tyme and befor the pope's holynes had herde his masse we repared to his presnce bringing with us books of the lawe for justifying such places of our commission as they had noted and added sumwhat unto them', *Ibid*, fos. 197v-198, (*ibid*), Gardiner, Foxe and Casali to Wolsey, 9 April 1528.

What becomes immediately apparent as one traces the course of these interminable negotiations is just how essential not only a knowledge but a mastery of canon law was in order to bring the mission to a successful conclusion. It was no doubt a recognition of this which led Gardiner and Foxe to write to Wolsey:

Forasmuch as in this jorney and message we be both the king's servants having equal charge and burden in the matier, we ar betwen us agreed, resolved and determyned, that the pre-eminence both of place, speech and utterance be always geven to me, Steven Gardynere, without alteracion or varyance.¹⁴³

Although Gardiner was probably the more dominant of the two men it seems likely that the real reason for the decision lay in the ambassadors' awareness of just how important a strong grasp of canon law would be to the forthcoming negotiations.

In the years that followed, Henry's efforts to secure his annulment gradually altered. Until his disappointment at Blackfriars the king remained committed to obtaining his goal with the co-operation of the papacy. Soon after that point he ceased to be a supplicant to the Vatican and became its challenger. Yet for at least another four years canon law continued to be a vital weapon in the king's arsenal. Where before his envoys had used their expertise to convince the pope that a particular course of action was justifiable, later ambassadors to Rome increasingly sought to demonstrate the immunity of England and her prince from papal jurisdiction. First they were instructed to question retrospectively the papacy's authority. This entailed demonstrating that Julius II, in granting Henry VII a dispensation for his son to marry his brother's widow had acted *ultra vires*.¹⁴⁴ In the aftermath of the advocacy of the case to Rome, years were devoted to

¹⁴³ PRO, SP1/46, fo.249, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3925), Gardiner and Foxe to Wolsey, 13 February 1528.

¹⁴⁴ Scarisbrick, *op.cit.*, pp.180-182.

argument in both Rota and Consistory defending Henry's right to be judged in England.¹⁴⁵ In addition, the king attempted to use Roman canon law against its progenitor, instructing his ambassadors to find legal precedents which supported the independence of England and English princes from papal jurisdiction.¹⁴⁶

The application of this ever more belligerent policy towards Rome placed an extraordinary burden of work on the shoulders of Henry's ambassadors, and in particular two men, Edward Carne, the only lay canon lawyer accredited to Rome, and William Benet, Archdeacon of Dorset. At the king's instruction these men spent uncountable hours trawling the Vatican library searching for records of conciliar decisions and papal bulls which would support Henry's cause. In the first instance they were ordered to search for two specific decrees issued by Innocent III, *Cum Olim* and *Inter Divinas* which, it was hoped, would provide precedents for the derogation of papal authority in matrimonial cases to English ecclesiastics.¹⁴⁷ Despite the uncooperative behaviour of the library's custodians, Carne located the relevant decrees but they offered Henry little in the way of ammunition for his battle against pope and emperor. Undaunted, the king instructed his ambassadors to search all the papal registers from the time of Innocent III to that of Clement VII. They were to look for four things: confirmation of Henry's imperial authority; whether that authority left him subject to papal judgements in any area other than heresy; whether the role of the papacy in the judgement of matrimonial cases was a relatively new thing or of long

¹⁴⁵ For the Latin text *in extenso* see S.Ehse, *Römische Dokumente zur Geschichte der Ehescheidung Heinrichs VIII von England, 1527-1534*, (Paderborn, 1893), pp.170-174. For an English translation see, G.Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, ed.Pocock, (7 vols.Oxford, 1865), IV, p.41, (*L&P*. IV iii, no.6759), Henry to Clement, 6 December 1530.

¹⁴⁶ *St.P.*, VII, pp.261, 269, (*L&P*, IV iii, nos.6667, 6760), Henry to Ghinucci, Benet and Carne, 7 October 1530, Henry to Benet and Carne, 6 December 1530.

¹⁴⁷ J.J.Scarisbrick, 'Henry VIII and the Vatican library', *Bibliothèque de Humanisme et Renaissance*, (1962), 211-216, esp.p.212.

established tradition, and finally to discover how earlier popes had dealt with English princes who had petitioned them for annulments.¹⁴⁸ Despite the envoys' assurances to Henry that: 'we have with all diligence that was possible, considering the infinite number of the registres, made serche to have obteyned a knowlege of such things comprised in your letters',¹⁴⁹ their investigations provided the king with little new material to support his arguments. Despite their lack of success such activity nevertheless demanded the highest levels of scholarship and expertise in canon law. Instructed to perform a blanket search of a labyrinthine archive guarded by antagonist librarians, it was up to the ambassadors not only to find the required literature, but to grasp its intent and apply it to the case in question. In such circumstances even clarifying that the Vatican library was a barren resource represented a considerable achievement.

In addition to their legal researches Carne and Benet were also given the task of defending Henry's interests in the Rota and Consistory. Primarily this involved arguing that not only was the king not obliged to appear in person at Rome, but did not even have to provide a proctor to defend him since the rightful location for the case was England.¹⁵⁰ For nearly two years the advocates dragged out the hearings, raising a multitude of procedural technicalities further to postpone any final decision on the case. Ultimately they could not win, diplomatic and quite possibly legal considerations ensured that the pope would rule against Henry, but for three years Carne and Benet thwarted the combined efforts of Imperial and papal lawyers alike, and gave their master valuable time to prepare both psychologically and politically for the break with Rome.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ BL, Add.MS 40,844, fos.30-31, Benet and Carne to Henry, c.September 1530. Not in *L&P*.

¹⁵⁰ Ehses, *op.cit.* pp.176, 187, 190, 194-195; *St.P.*, VII, p.297, (*L&P*, V, no.206), Henry to Benet, 24 April 1531.

The use of theological experts in English diplomacy also came to the fore as a result of Henry's divorce campaign, but in contrast to canon law, the breach with the papacy by no means rendered it redundant. Apparently triggered by Thomas Cranmer's suggestion to Foxe and Gardiner that Henry might find the solution to his marital problems in Europe's universities,¹⁵¹ from 1529 to 1533 English ambassadors and agents crisscrossed the continent gathering scholarly support for Henry's case. Their efforts were neatly summarized by Professor Scarisbrick, 'Reginald Pole, John Stokesley...Richard Croke and Cranmer himself, to name but a few, not only visited faculties of law and theology to secure support for the king's cause, but scoured libraries and bookshops of all sorts and sizes in search of anything that might be of aid: scriptures, manuscripts, patristic writings, conciliar decrees, scholastic commentaries and the like which were not available in England. They argued with scripture scholars, Hebrew scholars, canonists, doctors of medicine, rabbis, friars, laymen. They held formal sessions at universities, and where successful dispatched homewards the so-called 'determinations' thereof. They gathered lists of signatories, collected rare letters of Fathers and rabbinical writings.....Rarely has learning been more hungrily interrogated....'¹⁵² In total no less than 23 universities and 160 scholars were approached throughout the king's divorce campaign.¹⁵³

The role of the theologians employed by Cromwell and Henry in the mid and later 1530s, however, was quite different from that played by the likes of Cranmer and Stokesley during the king's divorce. The men dispatched abroad in the early 1530s were scholars given diplomatic credentials primarily to remove obstacles and facilitate their search for the knowledge Henry needed to justify his annulment. The greater part of their time was spent in libraries or in dispute

¹⁵¹ MacCulloch, *op.cit.*, pp.44-46.

¹⁵² Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII, op.cit.*, p.256.

¹⁵³ McCulloch, *op.cit.*, p.41.

with other academics, their contact with foreign governments mainly limited to requests for access to archives. For the men sent to Germany to negotiate with the princes of the Schmalkaldic League theology and diplomacy were inextricably combined. Despite the fact that probably the most important aim of the Anglo-Schmalkaldic discussions was the formation of a defensive alliance against the emperor, doctrinal agreement was nevertheless a crucial aspect of the negotiations. Before concrete commitments could be made concerning how many soldiers each side would contribute to a future war, or the financial obligations of the respective parties could be agreed, it was essential to establish common ideological ground.¹⁵⁴

Perhaps the best example of this marriage of doctrine and diplomacy was the mission led by Edward Foxe to Hesse and Saxony in August 1535. Although an important part of the bishop's mission concerned the discussion of various political issues,¹⁵⁵ it was the search for a theological consensus which figured most prominently.¹⁵⁶ As Rory McEntegart observed: 'A principal reason for sending Foxe's mission to Germany was that it would allow for an Anglo-Schmalkaldic discussion of Protestant doctrine.'¹⁵⁷ The ambassador was instructed to explain Henry's opposition to papal authority, and justify his position with reference to the scriptures, in particular Leviticus.¹⁵⁸ He was to continue by discussing the doctrinal position of the German princes and where possible attempt to establish a consensus between them, and the more conservative Henry. Such discussions demanded a thorough grasp of theology and a wide knowledge of the bible. It was not simply a case of setting out Henry's ideological stall Foxe and his colleagues had to be

¹⁵⁴ McEntegart, *passim*.

¹⁵⁵ McEntegart, *op.cit.*, pp.89-103.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp.123-152.

¹⁵⁷ McEntegart, *op.cit.*, p.123.

¹⁵⁸ PRO, SP1/98, fos.12-31, (*L&P*, IX, no.213), Foxe's instructions, August 1535.

able to justify the choice of stock. Henry may have repudiated Rome's authority, but he had by no means abandoned Catholic teachings. On key issues such as the marriage of priests, communion in both kinds and the renunciation of monastic vows Henry's traditional standpoint differed greatly from the position of the Lutheran princes as prescribed in the Confession of Augsburg. The ambassadors dispatched to Germany were obliged to demonstrate that Henry more or less shared the German princes' beliefs without committing him to religious reform before he was ready for it.¹⁵⁹ If ever a task called for theological slight of hand and diplomatic finesse it was this one.

Although Foxe's embassy, the only major mission accredited by Henry to the German princes, was the most conspicuous, the king, no doubt at Cromwell's urging, dispatched several other missions primarily manned by theologians. In the same year that the Bishop of Hereford travelled to Hesse and Saxony Simon Heynes and Robert Barnes were dispatched to France and Germany respectively with directions to locate and recruit Philip Melancthon to Henry's cause. In 1539 and 1540, Thomas Paynell, the ex-Augustinian friar, accompanied Christopher Mont, firstly to Saxony and Hesse, and latterly to Frankfurt and the Diet of Hagenau. All three men were theological specialists and in the case of Barnes and probably Heynes, committed to the evangelical movement. Furthermore, both Barnes and Paynell had spent time on the continent and in the case of the former, established a solid range of connections with the leading lights of the protestant movement including Luther himself.¹⁶⁰ Despite their lack of diplomatic

¹⁵⁹ McEntegart, pp.129-165, argues that Henry's interest in reform was genuine and not merely a bluff designed to tempt the German princes into a military alliance. Having broken with Rome and taken the Pope's position as head of the Church in England, the king needed a new religious system to replace that which he had rejected. An essential part of Foxe's mission was to explore the systems established in the Lutheran principalities of Germany with a view to providing an adapted model for the English church.

¹⁶⁰ Lusardi, *op.cit.*, pp.1387-1392.

experience, their grasp of the protestant doctrine and continental connections made men such as Barnes and Paynell potentially just as useful to the king, as envoys like Gigli and Ghinucci had been in the earlier decades of the reign.

Eclipse?

More than either his immediate predecessors on the English throne or his Habsburg and Valois contemporaries, Henry VIII made use of the clergy as ambassadors. The range of their expertise, spanning as it did, civil and canon law, and theology, made them indispensable to a prince whose reign was dominated by his struggle to break free from a European community regulated by religious and secular codes deriving from Rome. Even when Henry rejected root and branch the traditional authority of the Papacy the need for legal and theological specialists did not decline. Civil law remained the basis of all international agreements and its practice in England overwhelmingly remained in the hands of the clergy. Furthermore, the rejection of the Roman Catholic church ultimately led Henry towards involvement with its rival, the protestant Schmalkaldic League. While much of the Anglo-German negotiations revolved around the sums of money and the numbers of troops one side was prepared to pledge to the other in the event of an attack by Charles V, they had at their heart fundamental questions of theology, questions which only members of the English clergy were entirely competent to deal with.

Nor can one say that even in the later years of Henry's reign the king came to rely more upon the services of laymen to perform the more technical aspects of diplomacy. Certainly the later 1530s and 1540s saw the growing use of bureaucrats as ambassadors, among them Ralph Sadler in Scotland,¹⁶¹ Thomas Wriothesley in the Low Countries and William Paget in France.¹⁶² Although

¹⁶¹ A.J.Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966), pp.80-110.

in particular Sadler and Paget became specialists in terms of the knowledge they possessed of the Scottish and French courts, neither man was qualified to practise civil law. Only two men sent abroad by Henry in the 1540s were both laymen and civilian lawyers. Sir Edward Carne, Richard Layton's replacement in the Low Countries in June 1544, had begun his diplomatic service to the king fifteen years earlier as one of the plethora of technical experts dispatched to Rome. The other, Sir William Petre, performed a single two month embassy to the Diet of Bourbourg in April 1545, a mission on which he was accompanied by Thomas Thirlby, Bishop of Westminster, another civil law specialist with a wealth of diplomatic experience.¹⁶³

Indeed such was Henry's dependence on the skills and experience of his clerical ambassadors, even in the final years of his reign, that he not only continued to make use of the men who had come to the fore in the late 1520s and 1530s, but called back to service envoys who had retired from diplomatic duties before the fall of Cardinal Wolsey. Thus John Clerk, Bishop of Bath and Wells, aged 61, accompanied Nicholas Wotton to Cleves in June 1541¹⁶⁴. Cuthbert Tunstall, at no less than 72 years of age joined William Paget in France in July 1546 to give the younger man the benefit of his experience in the final negotiations which culminated in the Treaty of Boulogne.

Undoubtedly after Henry's death the role of the clergy in English diplomacy diminished, but it did so only gradually. Nicholas Wotton remained resident in France until 1549 and returned to the

¹⁶² S.R.Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer, William First Lord Paget - Tudor Minister*, (Oxford, 1974), pp.35-55.

¹⁶³ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B X, fo.210, (*L&P*, XX i, no.761), Instructions from the Privy Council to Petre, Thirlby, Chamberlain and Vaughan, 16 April 1545.

¹⁶⁴ *St.P.*, VIII, p.417, (*L&P*, XV, no.970), Clerk and Wotton to Henry, 11 August 1540.

French court for a further four years between April 1553 and June 1557.¹⁶⁵ He also performed two special embassies, one to Charles V in 1553 and another to the Scottish court in 1560, as well as acting as Queen Elizabeth's chief commissioner at Cateau Cambresis in 1559.¹⁶⁶ His junior colleague there was Nicholas Thirlby. After Henry's death Thirlby continued as resident ambassador with Charles until July 1548 and was again appointed to the position by Queen Mary in April 1553. When Edmund Harvel, an ex-patriate merchant who had served as English resident in Venice for nearly ten years, died in January 1550, his post was filled by another cleric, Peter Vannes, Henry VIII's old Latin secretary.¹⁶⁷ Other churchmen who continued to serve as ambassadors after Henry's death included Thomas Goodrich and Nicholas Heath.

Two key factors combined to bring about the secularisation of the English diplomatic corps in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Firstly there was the sheer impracticality of sending protestant clergy to catholic courts at a time when religious differences represented the greatest source of conflict in Europe. Yet this point alone does not entirely explain the disappearance of clerical ambassadors which took place after 1560. A number of states, among them the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, various North German principalities, the Dutch Netherlands and Scotland after the flight of Mary Stuart, would hardly have been offended by the presence of a protestant cleric in their midst yet none were dispatched. In part this was a reflection of the changing role of the clergy in English society. For the successors of Gardiner, Thirlby and Wotton a career in the church came to mean exactly that. As Patrick Collinson has remarked, 'If the early Tudor episcopate was often to be found in the great offices of state and diplomacy their Elizabethan successors were confined to a lowlier sphere of service on the local

¹⁶⁵ Ficaró, *op.cit.*, pp.114-152, 175-217.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp.218-252.

¹⁶⁷ *CSPV*, IV, p.326, the Senate to Daniel Babaro, 9 August 1550.

bench.¹⁶⁸ The prime and often sole responsibility of the Elizabethan clergy was the performance of their religious duties. The queen neither needed or wanted her clergy involved in diplomatic affairs.

However, what allowed the queen to dispense with the services of clerical envoys altogether were the changes wrought by the advent of the Reformation upon the traditional pursuits of canon and civil law. Within a year of England's break from Rome, the study of canon law at Oxford and Cambridge was abolished.¹⁶⁹ In the years which followed the number of students choosing to sit civil law dropped considerably. In the period 1535 to 1544 only eight doctorates in civil law were awarded by the University of Cambridge, twelve less than had been granted in the previous nine years.¹⁷⁰ Not only did Henry's rejection of papal authority make an immediate inroad into the amount of work available for civil lawyers, it made membership of the profession altogether less respectable. As one historian has put it, 'In an increasingly nationalistic era civil lawyers were suspect as malign alien influences, whether political, (continental-style absolute monarchy), religious, (popery), or both.'¹⁷¹ For the remainder of Henry's reign the government could afford to ignore the consequences of these changes furnished as it was with a talented cadre of clerical civilian lawyers. Yet even before the old king's death the decline in numbers of civil lawyers was sufficiently acute to prompt the government to act. In 1545 an act was passed permitting lay lawyers to practise in all courts previously restricted to ecclesiastical advocates.¹⁷² Three years

¹⁶⁸ P.Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, (Oxford, 1982), p.54.

¹⁶⁹ D.R.Leader. *A History of the University of Cambridge, Vol 1, The University to 1546*, (Cambridge, 1994), p.333.

¹⁷⁰ B.P.Levack, 'The English Civilians, 1500-1750', in *Lawyers in Early Modern Europe and America*, ed. W.Prest, (London, 1981), p.127.

¹⁷¹ W.Prest, 'Lawyers', in *The Professions in Early Modern Europe*, ed. W.Prest, (Beckenham, 1987), p.65.

¹⁷² Act of Parliament, Henry VIII, c.37, Leader, *op.cit.*, p.338.

later Edward VI's government attempted to establish a college at Cambridge devoted solely to the study of civil law by merging two older colleges, Clare and Trinity Hall.¹⁷³ Although the project met with little success largely due to the opposition of Stephen Gardiner, it reflected the government's awareness of the continuing need for civil lawyers. Gradually numbers did begin to rise to an extent which permitted Elizabeth in the early years of her reign to replace the old stalwarts of her father's time with younger legal experts, with the difference that all were drawn from outside the church. One historian has estimated that between 1559 and 1585 21 of the 63 ambassadors employed by the Queen possessed some level of training in civil or canon law.¹⁷⁴ In the final assessment developments in education largely triggered by religious reform were responsible for the separation of the English church from its country's diplomacy, an association which in the reign of Henry VIII could hardly have been closer.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p.338.

¹⁷⁴ G.M.Bell, "The men and their rewards in the Elizabethan diplomatic service, 1558-1585", Ph.D.(UCLA, 1970), pp.15-21.

Chapter Three

The Nobility and Gentry

Introduction

The role of the English titled aristocracy and gentry within the diplomatic affairs of Henry VIII was a dominant one. In all 51 out of 112 ambassadors took part in 101 out of the 215 missions dispatched abroad during the reign.¹ At one level this degree of activity can merely be seen as one of numerous duties performed by the gentry and nobility for their master, in return for which they expected to receive land, financial rewards and most importantly a role in their country's government. However, like the other groups of men considered in this work, those of the aristocracy and gentry chosen for foreign service possessed specific characteristics which suited them for particular assignments. Their social status and close association with the king imbued any embassy in which they were included with greater ceremonial and political significance. Their background as courtiers enabled them to interact effectively with foreign nobles and most importantly of all with the host prince. Finally, their martial training and knowledge of warfare made them especially useful as military attaches and specialized intelligence gatherers. Recent historians have also attributed their growing importance as ambassadors to the spread of humanist education which it is claimed better prepared them for the demands of diplomatic service.² Additionally it has been argued that reforms in the royal household permitted further

¹ For my definition of gentry see below, p.113-114. For a list of the men I have classified as noble ambassadors see Appendix B. For a list of the embassies performed by Henry's envoys see Appendix A.

² D.S.Campbell, "English foreign policy, 1509-1521", Ph.D, (Cambridge,1980), pp.250-251. More generally see, D.E.Queller, *The Office of the Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1967), pp.150-153.

advantages to be reaped from the accreditation of the king's personal attendants, particularly to the court of Francis I.³ The aim of this chapter will be to assess what attributes those of the gentry and aristocracy dispatched on diplomatic missions possessed, and to evaluate what as ambassadors they actually did and how effectively it was achieved.

Origins

While a definition of the aristocracy used by Henry in his diplomacy is quite straightforward - namely those who held seats in the House of Lords at the time of their dispatch abroad⁴ - classification of the king's gentry ambassadors is somewhat more problematic.⁵ In most cases there need be little confusion concerning which of the Henry's ambassadors did and did not belong to the gentry. As the more detailed profile which follows will demonstrate the great majority of the gentry sent abroad met every obvious criteria for membership of the class. In short, they hailed from landowning families, pursued careers which revolved about the court, served as officers in the army and navy, sat in parliament, and represented the crown as local sheriffs and commissioners of the peace. In a few cases, however, the men in this category do not conform to the above criteria. For the most part their families had only joined the ranks of the gentry in the previous two generations and had achieved their advancement largely through professional success in the law. Yet one factor which does unite them with the much larger group of more readily recognisable noble ambassadors is their birth into armigerous families

³ G.J.Richardson, 'Anglo-French political and cultural relations during the reign of Henry VIII', Ph.D thesis, (London, 1995), pp.117-127; D.R.Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547", *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. D.R.Starkey, (London, 1987), pp.71-119, esp.pp.71-80.

⁴ H.Miller, *Henry VIII and the English Nobility*, (Oxford, 1986), p.2.

⁵ See L.Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*, (Oxford, 1965), pp.55-65, 66-71; F.Heal and C.Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700*, (London, 1994), pp.6-19; G.E.Mingey, *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class*, (London, 1976), pp.6-19

outside the peerage, and it is this criterion which has led me to include them in the current section.⁶

Unsurprisingly, the number of nobles dispatched abroad during the reign was not great.⁷ From 1509 to 1547 only fourteen members of the aristocracy were appointed as ambassadors, representing Henry on 24 missions. Their number consisted of three dukes, one marquis, three earls, three viscounts, three barons and one younger son of a duke.⁸ Although few of Henry's

⁶ The gentry and aristocracy of other European countries were usually grouped together simply as 'the nobility'. As one historian has noted, 'For the most part all nobles enjoyed official titles and few legal barriers separated the greatest dukes from the least significant village squires.' J.Dewald, *The European Nobility*, (Cambridge, 1996), p.2. See also, M.Bush, *Noble Privilege*, (London, 1983), pp.vi-viii. Of course in real terms the nobilities of Francis and Charles possessed quite distinct hierarchies and where comparisons between them and the aristocratic and gentle ambassadors of Henry have been made account has been taken of the different degrees of European nobility.

⁷ G.M.Bell in 'Elizabethan diplomacy, the subtle revolution', *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy*, eds.M.A.Thorpe and A.J.Slavin, (Missouri, 1994), pp.267-286, esp.274, states that in contrast to her father, Elizabeth made little use of the aristocracy in diplomacy. Furthermore, where Henry's noble envoys were diplomatic workhorses those of Elizabeth were largely involved in ceremony diplomacy. In part he arrives at the conclusion by somewhat strangely classifying 'doctors of the church' as aristocrats. However, if one does not include clerics with postgraduate degrees among peers of the realm and acknowledges that the majority of Henrician nobles were used primarily for ceremonial diplomacy, as I shall demonstrate below, Bell's assertion appears somewhat ill-founded.

⁸ Several points concerning this list require clarification. Firstly, Thomas Boleyn, for the most part counted as a member of the lesser nobility, was nevertheless created Viscount Rochford in 1525 and then made Earl of Wiltshire in 1529, the title under which he performed his last embassy to the emperor in 1529-30. His son, George Boleyn, although technically only raised to the peerage in February 1533 after being summoned to parliament, Miller, *op.cit.*, p.25, nevertheless held the courtesy title of Rochford from the time of his father's promotion, I have therefore included him in the list of aristocratic envoys from the outset of his diplomatic service in 1529. Most problematically, Lord William Howard, half brother of Thomas Howard, third Duke of Norfolk, did not take his seat in the House of Lords as Baron Howard of Effingham until the reign of Queen Mary in March 1554. However, as the scion of an aristocratic house, enjoying the courtesy title of 'lord', his inclusion amongst the aristocracy would nevertheless seem appropriate. Furthermore, during his resident embassy to France he received diets of 53s 4d, the rate of pay given to barons. *L&P*, XVI, no.745. See chapter five.

aristocratic envoys came from families long associated with the peerage, in the majority of cases they had at least been born into it. The Howard family, important landowners in East Anglia centuries before their entry into the House of Lords, received the ducal title of Norfolk, from Richard III upon the death of his nephew, Richard of York in 1483.⁹ Of the remaining senior aristocracy, that is dukes, marquises and earls, only Thomas Grey directly inherited his title, becoming the second Marquis of Dorset upon his father's death in 1501.¹⁰ Three other men, John Lord Morley, Thomas Lord Dacre and John Lord Berners owed their presence in the peerage to birth rather than promotion, but of all Henry's aristocratic envoys only Morley, the eighth of his name to hold the title, could lay claim to both legitimate and ancient aristocratic lineage.¹¹ Two other men, Charles Somerset and Arthur Plantagenet, although promoted rather than born into the peerage, were, as illegitimate sons respectively of Henry Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset and Edward IV, related to the royal lineage.¹² Somerset summoned to parliament in 1508 as Lord Herbert and promoted to the earldom of Worcester in 1514 as reward for his leadership of Henry's first expedition to France,¹³ was to perform four diplomatic missions for the king. Plantagenet, created Viscount Lisle in 1523, although only accredited to a single mission, nevertheless spent many years on the continent as Henry's Deputy of Calais.¹⁴

⁹ E.M.Head, *Ebbs and Flows of Fortune: The Life of Thomas Howard Third Duke of Norfolk*, (Georgia, 1995), pp.12-17.

¹⁰ G.E.C., *The Complete Peerage*, ed.H.A.Doubleday *et al.*. (14 vols., London, 1910-1940), cited hereafter as G.E.C. vol.4, p.419.

¹¹ *Ibid*, vol.2. p.153, vol.4, p.21 and vol.9. pp.211-221.

¹² *Ibid*, vol.XII ii, p.846; *The Lisle Letters*, ed. M.St.Clare Byrne, (6 vols. Chicago, 1981), vol.1, p.4.

¹³ Created Earl of Worcester, 2 February 1514, *L&P*, I ii, no.2620.

¹⁴ Byrne, *passim* vol.I.

Despite the considerable number of peers created by Henry throughout his reign¹⁵, the role of the *parvenu* aristocracy in the king's diplomacy was extremely small. Only five men, Charles Brandon, Thomas and George Boleyn, Edward Seymour and John Dudley, Viscount Lisle, upon being raised to the peerage went on to perform diplomatic missions. Of these five it would be safe to say that the Boleyns, of whom the first performed the larger part of his diplomatic service before receiving his titles, were dispatched abroad for the same reason they were dispatched to the House of Lords, their relationship with the king's mistress Anne. If one is prepared to ascribe more importance to the titles of Brandon and Seymour in their selection for diplomatic service - no matter how recently created a duke is after all a duke - then it should be remembered that between October 1514 and January 1547 they managed between them to rack up four embassies serving a total of nine months abroad.¹⁶

In contrast to the peerage the English gentry played an altogether more active role in the king's diplomacy. Of the 214 embassies which left England during Henry's reign, 89, almost 42%, contained at least one member of the gentry. The seventeen men appointed as resident ambassadors from this group performed a greater number of such missions than the rest of Henry's lay ambassadors combined. For the most part those men chosen for diplomatic service were descended from land owning families of highly respectable pedigree. The Wingfield brothers, Robert and Richard, who over more than fifteen years performed thirteen embassies, were descended from a family well established in Suffolk by the close of the 14th century.¹⁷

¹⁵ At the time of Henry's death, of the 34 barons seated in the House of Lords seventeen had been created by the king, while of the more senior peers only seven had not been either promoted or created by Henry. Miller, *op.cit.*, p.35.

¹⁶ Although he performed several embassies for Henry the lion's share of Suffolk's diplomatic service was carried out in 1514 and 1515 for which see, S.J.Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, 1485-1545*, (Oxford, 1988), pp.32-38.

¹⁷ G.J.Undreiner, 'Robert Wingfield: erster ständiger englischer gesandter am deutschen hofe', Ph.D, (Freiburg, 1932), pp.3-7.

Richard Jerningham the second son of Sir John Jerningham of Somerleyton, Suffolk, could trace his ancestry back at least as far as the beginning of the 13th century to one Sir Robert FitzJernegan.¹⁸ The ancestors of John Russell, Henry's roving ambassador in Italy and southern France for much of the 1520s, had by the late 14th century established a modest fortune through trade. By the mid-15th century through the purchase of land in Dorset and Somerset and the formation of advantageous marriages, the Russells were firmly placed amongst the ranks of West Country gentry.¹⁹ The ancestors of Francis Poyntz, Henry's envoy to Spain in 1528, had fought with Edward I in Scotland and Wales, and Edward III in France.²⁰ Although the ambassador belonged to a cadet branch of the family his father, Sir Robert Poyntz, had nevertheless been able to secure the hand in marriage of Margaret Woodville an illegitimate daughter of Earl Rivers.²¹ The half-brothers, Anthony Browne and William Fitzwilliam, frequent ambassadors to the court of Francis I in the 1520s and 30s, were related on their mother's side to Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick.²² Other ambassadors drawn from well established gentry families included Nicholas Carew, able to trace his ancestors back to the Norman conquest,²³ John Welsborne whose Buckinghamshire family had risen from the yeomanry in the 15th century,²⁴ and Philip Hoby

¹⁸ A.Suckling, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Suffolk*, (3 vols., London, 1846), II, p.45.

¹⁹ D.Willen, *John Russell, First Earl of Bedford: One of the king's Men*, (London, 1981), pp.1-2.

²⁰ J.Mclean, *Historical and Genealogical Memoir of the Family of Poyntz*, (Exeter, 1886), pp.6-10.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp.69-71.

²² R.E.Brock, "The courtier in early Tudor society, illustrated from select examples", Ph.D thesis, (London, 1963), pp.336-339.

²³ *HP*, art.'Nicholas Carew'.

²⁴ P.J.Begert, *The Heraldry of the Hoby Memorials in the Parish Church of All Saints Bisham in the Royal County of Berkshire*, (Maidenhead, 1979), p.2. Despite the reasonable vintage of their ancestry John Welsborne's Elizabethan descendants attempted to embellish upon it by manufacturing a lineage which established the family in the 13th century and connected it to

whose ancient Welsh lineage went back to Rice ap Tudur.²⁵

Yet if the great majority of the ambassadors drawn from the gentry came from well established landed backgrounds, a small number of newcomers owed their knightly status to the success of their immediate forbears in the legal profession. Francis Bryan, one of Henry's most frequently accredited ambassadors, owed much of his good fortune to the hard work of his grandfather, Thomas. Trained as a barrister in Grey's Inn, Thomas Bryan rose to the position of Chief Justice of Common Pleas, the most lucrative office in English common law.²⁶ Before his death he succeeded in placing his son, another Thomas, in the household of Henry VII, as well as securing for him a highly advantageous match with Margaret, step daughter of Thomas Howard, the future third Duke of Norfolk. Before Francis was born his father had already been chosen as a knight of the body to Henry VII and at the advent of the new reign he was appointed vice-chamberlain to Katherine of Aragon.²⁷ As the son of a prominent and successful courtier, Francis Bryan had every opportunity to secure his own position at court, which of course he did extremely well. Nevertheless, Bryan's position as royal favourite and courtier *par excellence* owed much to the hard work and ambition of a low-born grandfather whose efforts raised his family from obscurity to the pinnacle of English society.

Another still more recent recipient of knightly status was the family of Thomas Elyot. Elyot's father, Richard, acquired his knighthood in 1503 when he was appointed serjeant-at-law. His

Simon de Monfort. A 13th century tomb was built at Hughenden church and attributed to one Welsborne de Monfort. A genuine 14th century tomb belonging to the Welsborne family was decorated with the de Monfort arms and a mason hired to decorate it with knightly figures - albeit accoutred in armour which did not exist at the time of the tomb's supposed construction! *Ibid.*

²⁵ *HP*, art. 'Philip Hoby'.

²⁶ E.W.Ives, *The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England*, (Cambridge, 1983), p.376.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p.377.

successive marriages to the daughters of three wealthy West country landowning families which the wealth and status his success in the legal profession made possible, further advanced the family's position.²⁸ The family of Robert Drury who performed three embassies to Scotland in the first decade of Henry's reign, belonged to the Suffolk gentry. Yet it was in fact the ambassador's own career, begun in Lincoln's Inn in 1473 which did most to advance the family's fortunes.²⁹ However, men like Thomas Elyot and Robert Drury were even less typical of the gentry chosen to serve abroad than were those of the peerage. In most cases Henry's noble envoys were taken from well established gentry families, well known at court with long records of service to the crown.

Like Henry both Francis and Charles relied heavily on their nobility for diplomatic service. In many cases the men dispatched from the Imperial and French courts came, like their English counterparts, from well established families with respectable pedigrees. Although placed outside the peerage they were nevertheless often drawn from the ranks of the senior nobility. Many of Francis I's most active ambassadors were drawn from the *noblesse d'épée*. The Gouffier brothers, Artus and Guillaume, could trace their lineage back to the 13th century.³⁰ Both great favourites of the French king throughout the first decade of his reign, they led numerous missions to England, Germany and the emperor which included Guillaume's embassy to the Imperial elections at Frankfurt in April 1519 to persuade the German electors to choose his master over the young Habsburg king of Spain.³¹ Of still more ancient lineage, the great rivals Anne de Montmorency

²⁸ S.E.Lehmberg, *Sir Thomas Elyot, Tudor Humanist*.(Austin, 1960), pp.5-9.

²⁹ In addition to his diplomatic duties, Drury sat as an MP in 1495 and 1510 becoming Speaker of the House in 1511. *HP*, art' 'Robert Drury',

³⁰ E.Fournial, *Monsieur de Boisy, Grand Maître de France sans François Ier*, (Lyons, 1996), p.9.

³¹ R.Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I*, (Cambridge, 1994), pp.165-184.

and Philippe Chabot s.de Brion took an even more active role in French foreign affairs.³² As well as the executive responsibility for the formation of foreign policy which both men enjoyed they also attended or led respectively seven and nine embassies each. Another scion of a well established noble house was Guillaume Du Bellay. Du Bellay, who served almost continuously as a French ambassador from 1526 until his death in 1543, hailed from a family who were already well established in the county of Anjou by the close of the 14th century.³³

Similarly Charles made frequent use of his nobility. Cornelius Scepper, came from a noble family based in Ghent, his grandfather had been vice-admiral of the Burgundian fleet. Scepper was one of the emperor's most active envoys, over a twenty year period carrying out missions to Scotland, England, France, Poland and Hungary.³⁴ Gerard de Plaine, s.de la Roche, was the son of Thomas, s.de Maigny, Philip of Burgundy's chancellor. De la Roche was one of Charles' leading representatives at the Imperial elections of 1519, preceded the emperor to England in 1520 and died whilst performing an embassy to Clement VII in 1524.³⁵ Charles de Lannoy, a favourite of the emperor's until his death in 1526 hailed from a rich and influential noble family based in Valenciennes already well established in the fifteenth century.³⁶

³² Montmorency's lineage can be traced back to the beginning of the 11th century and included four constables, one marshal of France and a grand chamberlain. M.Desormeux, *Histoire de la Maison de Montmorenci*, (5 vols., Paris, 1764), pp.1-23; F.Decrue, *Anne de Montmorency, grand maître et connétable de France à la cour, aux armées et au conseil du roi François I^{er}*, (Paris, 1885), pp.1-7. Anselme described the house of Chabot as, 'sans contredit l'une des plus anciennes et des plus illustres du Poitou.' V.M.de la Anselme, *Histoire généalogique et chronologique de la maison royale de France*, (9 vols, Paris, 1726-1733), vol. IV, p.556.

³³ V -L.Bourrilly, *Guillaume Du Bellay seigneur de Langey*, (Paris, 1900). pp.3-6.

³⁴ *BNB*, art.'Cornelius de Scepper', vol.VII, pp.709-716..

³⁵ *Contemporaries*, art.,'Gerard de Plaine',vol.III, p.98-99.

³⁶ L.E.Halkin and G.Dansaert, *Charles de Lannoy, vice-roi de Naples*, (Brussels, 1930), pp.23-25.

However, if there are certain similarities between the nobles employed by Henry, Charles and Francis there are also considerable differences. Where Henry made use of his aristocracy only sparingly, the emperor frequently appointed the very highest ranking of his nobles to both special and resident embassies. Louis de Flandres, s.de Praet, one of Charles' most senior advisers and generals in the Low Countries, and directly descended from the counts of Flanders often served as the emperor's ambassador. From 1522 to 1525 he was resident ambassador at the English court before being appointed in the same capacity to France until November 1526. In addition to these resident embassies he performed at least three special missions to France. Another Burgundian aristocrat, Jean Hannaert, Vicomte de Lombeek, spent in excess of four years with Francis between January 1532 and June 1536.³⁷ Other illustrious members of the Burgundian aristocracy dispatched by Charles to France included Henri III, Comte de Nassau-Dillenburg, Antoine de Lalaing, Comte de Hoogstraten and Laurent Gorrevod, from 1521 Comte de Vaux.

The emperor's Spanish aristocracy was, if anything, still more active in Imperial diplomacy. The Mendozas, one of the richest and most numerous of Spain's grandee families provided Charles with several of his most active diplomats, among them Don Luis Sarmiento de Mendoza and Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza.³⁸ Sarmiento de Mendoza spent more than twenty years as Charles' resident to Portugal, while Don Diego Mendoza performed special missions to England and Trent where he was the emperor's senior representative at the recently convoked council, and resident embassies to Venice and Rome. With respect to this latter embassy he was by no means the first Spanish aristocrat to hold the post. Prior to Mendoza's dispatch in July 1547, no less than

³⁷ *BNB*, art., 'Jean Hannaert', vol.VIII, pp.698-698.

³⁸ For a detailed account of the Mendozas' genealogy see, E.Spivakovsky, *Son of the Alhambra, Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, 1504-1575*, (London, 1970), pp.3-17. For Mendoza's early career see, *Algunas Cartas de Don Hurtado de Mendoza, escritos, 1538-1552*, eds. A.Vasquez and R.Seldon Rose, (Yale, 1935). pp.vi-x.

three other Spanish grandees had been appointed as resident envoys to the Holy See.³⁹ Among other Spanish aristocrats given diplomatic missions were Don Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, long time resident in Genoa; Fernando de Velasco, Duke of Feria, and Onorato Caetani d'Aragon, Duke of Traetto, both special envoys to the French court in the 1530s. Finally, Alfonso d'Avalos, Marquis del Vasto, one of Charles' leading generals and his viceroy in Naples, also served as a special envoy to Venice in 1542.⁴⁰ Perhaps Charles felt that his Imperial dignity could best be represented by the most illustrious of his subjects. From a more logistical perspective, however, he may well have made such frequent use of his aristocracy, simply because he had so many to hand! In Spain alone in 1520 there were twenty families counted as members of the grandee class and a further sixty belonging to the lesser aristocracy known as the *titulos*.⁴¹

In contrast, Francis used members of his aristocracy, that is nobles drawn from the *duc et pairs de France*, even less frequently than did Henry. In all nine peers performed twelve embassies and only René, Bastard of Savoy was dispatched more than twice.⁴² In part this poor showing by the French upper aristocracy can simply be attributed to their reluctance to perform diplomatic service. Another suggestion recently advanced is that the French king was reluctant to use his most powerful subjects, concerned that they might exploit the opportunity of attendance at a foreign court to further their own interests at the expense of those of the crown.⁴³

³⁹ These were: Luis de Cordoba, Duke of Sesa, September 1522 to August 1526; Fernando da Silva, Count of Cifuentes, April 1533 to July 1537, and Luis Fernandez, 2nd Marquis of Aguilar, November 1536 to June 1543. Details taken from *CSPS*, *passim*.

⁴⁰ For an assessment of the grandee families of early Habsburg Spain see, J.R.L.Highfield, 'The Catholic kings and the titled nobility of Castile', in *Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J.R.Hale, (London, 1970), pp.358-385, and J.Lynch, *Spain, 1516-1598: From Nation State to World Empire*, (Oxford, 1991), pp.16-22.

⁴¹ R.L.Kagan, *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain*, (London, 1974), p.182.

⁴² *CAF*, IX, pp.6-87.

⁴³ C.Giry-Deloison, 'Le personnel diplomatique au début du XVI^E siècle. L'exemple les relations franco-anglaises de l'avènement de Henry VII au Camp du Drap d'Or, (1485-1520)',

A more significant difference between those ambassadors drawn from the English gentry and aristocracy and French nobility concerned the far greater role played by those of Francis' subjects coming from recently ennobled families. These men, the forerunners of the *noblesse de robe*, although members of the French nobility not only lacked pedigree, but in complete contrast to their English counterparts pursued bureaucratic careers in their country's government and judiciary. Thus Gilbert Bayard, from 1528 both a *secrétaire de la chambre du Roi* and Francis' *secrétaire des finances*, also performed frequent diplomatic service. In total he carried out eight missions for the king, playing a central role in the negotiation of the Peace of Cambrai and an active part in the agreement of the 1538 truce and the Peace of Crépy.⁴⁴ Jean Brinon, sr.de Villaines, began his career in the parlement of Rouen to which he was first appointed councillor in 1511 and then president in 1516, the same year in which he became chancellor to the duc d'Alencon.⁴⁵ In the crucial years after Pavia as Francis sought to forge a cohesive opposition against the Habsburgs, it was Brinon in the company of the Genoese merchant, Jean Joachim de Passano, that the king relied upon to gain the support of the English.⁴⁶

Another French diplomat who first rose to prominence in first the provincial parlements and later that of Paris, to which he was appointed premier president in 1520, was Jean de Selve.⁴⁷ A key representative of Louis XII during the Anglo-French marriage negotiations of August 1514,⁴⁸ he

Journal des Savants, (July-December 1987), 205-249, esp.pp.212-213.

⁴⁴ *DBF*, art., Gilbert Bayard; *CAF*, vol.IX, pp. 43-45.

⁴⁵ H.de Frondeville, *Les Présidents du Parlement de Normandie, 1499-1790*, (Rouen, 1953), pp.30-32.

⁴⁶ *CAF*, vol.IX, pp.23-25; G.Jacqueton, *LA politique exterieure de Louise de Savoie*, (Paris, 1892), pp.90-120.

⁴⁷ R.J.Kalas, 'The Selve family of Limousin: Members of a new elite in early-modern France.' *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol.18, (1987), 147-173.

⁴⁸ Richardson, 'Anglo-French relations', pp.40-45.

went on to perform diplomatic missions for Francis in both England and Italy. Of de Selve's three sons it was the youngest, Odet, who emulated his father's career when in 1540 he was appointed a councillor of the parlement of Paris, and like his father he performed diplomatic missions for two kings, the first as Francis' last resident ambassador to the rapidly failing Henry VIII.⁴⁹ These men were by no means the only ambassadors drawn from the French judiciary and government administration, merely some of the most prominent. Nicholas de Neufville, sr. de Villeroy, one of the *secrétaires et notaires du roi*, and later Francis' *secrétaire des finances*, carried out three missions to England and one to Italy, and Charles Guillart, whose position as president of the parlement of Paris proved so useful to his son Louis in the struggle with Wolsey for the bishopric of Tournai,⁵⁰ accompanied Bonnivet to the Imperial elections in 1519.

Although Henry, Charles and Francis all relied heavily upon the nobility to perform diplomatic service, there were nevertheless considerable differences between the men appointed by the three princes. Only the emperor made any significant use of his higher nobility in diplomacy, whereas more than either Charles or Henry Francis appointed new members of his nobility to serve abroad. One might say that Henry's use of his gentry and aristocracy within diplomacy was the most conservative. The higher nobility were largely reserved as they had been in the past either for ceremonial embassies or missions of the greatest importance, while the lion's share of embassies were dominated by gentry belonging to well established families with suitably ancient pedigrees. Quite why Henry and his advisers appointed the men they did and the effectiveness of their choices will be considered in the sections that follow.

⁴⁹ G.Lefèvre-Pontalis *Correspondance politique de Odet de Selve*, (Paris, 1888), pp.xiii-xvii. Another of Jean de Selve's sons, Georges, having first achieved a successful career in the church, was also extremely active in the diplomatic sphere. Kalas, *op.cit.*, pp.160-164.

⁵⁰ C.G.Cruickshank, *The English Occupation of Tournai, 1513-1519*, (Oxford, 1971), pp.152-162.

Education and Training

One explanation for the growing importance of the English gentry's role in early Tudor diplomacy is the higher standard of education which many of the class received during the period.⁵¹ Certainly the importance attached to education under the influence of humanist philosophy began to grow as the sixteenth century unfolded.⁵² Scholarly activities ceased to be the preserve of the clergy and at a lower level access to basic education, at least in England's cities, increased with the spread of grammar schools.⁵³

What impact such developments had on the basic literacy of the gentry and nobility is questionable. In most cases the children of gentle and noble families either continued to receive tuition at home, or were dispatched to the households of relatives, local magnates, or the wealthier of England's prelates.⁵⁴ Usually therefore, the educational environment of the gentry and nobility growing up in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII was not especially different from that of their recent ancestors. Almost certainly all of Henry's noble ambassadors could read and write, but this hardly distinguishes them from their predecessors. The issue therefore is not the breadth of education received by these men but its depth. How many of Henry's future ambassadors benefited from a university education or came to court qualified to practice law or deliver polished orations in Latin?

⁵¹ Queller, *Ambassador*, *op.cit.*, pp.150-153; Campbell, "English foreign policy," *op.cit.*, pp.250-251.

⁵² M.Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII*, (London,1986), pp.190-210, argues that growing numbers of the English gentry and aristocracy were benefiting from a classical education. However, amongst those which she identifies only a very few were used by Henry in diplomatic affairs..

⁵³ See Heal and Holmes, *op.cit.*, 243-275; N.Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England*, (London, 1989), pp.153-177.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

The answer is very few. Thomas Elyot obtained a BA from Oxford, and spent three further years studying for a bachelor's degree in civil law which, however, he never received.⁵⁵ Afterwards he trained as a barrister under the tutelage of his father Richard at Temple Inn. Although Thomas Wyatt attended university - he was a student at St.John's College Cambridge - he did not as the *DNB* suggests obtain a BA or MA.⁵⁶ Robert Drury probably also spent time at Cambridge but like Wyatt failed to matriculate, choosing instead a career in common law.⁵⁷ Two other men may have spent time at university. Wood rather vaguely claims that Francis Bryan 'was educated at Oxford'⁵⁸, and the *DNB* suggests that Richard Wingfield may have spent time as a student in Ferrara, as well as undertaking legal studies at Grey's Inn.⁵⁹

We can therefore state with confidence that three out of the 50 men chosen from the gentry and nobility to perform diplomatic duties spent time at university of whom one gained a degree, and that another two may have spent some time in further education. Beyond this one can draw certain conclusions about the scholarly abilities of Henry's noble ambassadors from their later

⁵⁵ Lehmborg, *op.cit.*, p.20.

⁵⁶ *DNB*, art.'Thomas Wyatt', vol.63, pp.183-187. It was in fact one John Wyatt who gained these qualifications, Venn, art. 'Thomas Wyatt'.

⁵⁷ Venn, art.' Robert Drury'.

⁵⁸ A.Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, ed.P.Bliss, (4 vols., London, 1813-1820), p.169,

⁵⁹ *DNB*, art. 'Richard Wingfield', vol.62, pp.187-190. This statement is based on a remark made by Wingfield in a letter to Wolsey, concerning the generosity of the Duke of Ferrara: 'I am asmuche bounden to doo hym plesor and service for the grete honnor and curteysye whiche I found in hym, beyng ther a powre straunger as any gentilman may be.' PRO, SP1/13, fo.246, (*L&P*, II i, no.2149), Wingfield to Wolsey, 10 July 1516. However, it seems more likely that the remark refers to the time that Wingfield and his brother Robert undertook a pilgrimage to Rome in the process of which they would quite plausibly have spent time in Ferrara. G.Hay, "Pilgrims and the Hospice", in *The English Hospice in Rome. The Venerabile Sexcentenary Issue*, XXI, 1962, p129. The remarks concerning Wingfield's involvement in the legal profession are based on the appearance of his coat of arms above two windows. Since the Register of Admissions for Grey's Inn only dates back to 1521 it is impossible to prove or disprove the assertion.

works. Thomas Elyot earned recognition as both a political and educational theorist and a lexicographer with the publication of *The Boke of the Governor* in 1531 and a Latin-English dictionary in 1536-7.⁶⁰ The first English translation of Froissart's *Chronicles* was written by John Lord Berners, Henry's envoy to Spain in 1518 and 1519.⁶¹ Another ambassador to the Spanish court, Francis Poyntz, produced an English edition of "The Table of Cebes the Philosopher", translated from Latin. Francis Bryan was also involved in literary translation although he is more often associated with the composition of poetry. Although no poems which can definitely be identified as Bryan's work remain, it is likely he contributed to an anthology which also contained material by Henry, Earl of Surrey and another Tudor ambassador, Thomas Wyatt.⁶² Unlike Bryan, at least part of Wyatt's work remains and is generally considered to be some of the best poetry of the early Tudor period.⁶³

It is apparent that in a few cases those of Henry's gentry and nobility chosen to serve abroad were very highly educated. However, the scholarly abilities of men like Berners, Bryan and Wyatt were

⁶⁰ T.Elyot, *The boke named the Governor*, ed.H.H.S. Croft, (2 vols., London, 1880). For further reading see P.Hogrefe, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Elyot, Englishman*, (Iowa, 1967), pp.36-95. *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Elyot*, (1537-8), revised and reprinted by Berthelet in 2 vols. as *Bibliotheca Eliotae: Eliotis Librarie*, (1542 and 1545). For further reading see, Lehmborg, *op.cit.*, pp.276-295.

⁶¹ Jean Froissart, *The Chronicles of Jean Froissart*, translated by John Lord Berners, (1523), eds. Gillian and William Anderson, (London, 1963).

⁶² Wood, *Athena Oxonienses*, I, p.169, claimed that Bryan was, 'much respected.....for his fine poetical fancy and knowledge in some of the poetical languages, and as his name became famous for certain martial exploits beyond the sea, so he deserves the particular fame of learning, wit and fancy which he was thought once to have made sufficiently appear in his published poems which are now in a manner forgotten.' Also see *Tottel's Miscellany, Songes and Sonettes by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, Nicholas Grimald and Uncertain Authors*, (1557), ed. E.Arber, (London, 1870).

⁶³ See, *Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century*, ed.D.Brooks Davis, (London, 1992); W.A.Sessions, *Henry Howard the Poet Earl of Surrey: A Life*, (Oxford, 1999), pp.94-95, 134-136.

far from typical.

Undoubtedly literate though they were, there is little evidence to suggest that the majority of Henry's noble ambassadors were the beneficiaries of a humanist education or possessed any expertise in those fields such as civil and canon law or theology so ubiquitous in Henry's diplomacy. The one exception to this lay in the area of linguistic skills. As table one shows at least fifteen of the men in this group could definitely speak one or more foreign languages. The evidence for the linguistic abilities of the men listed below was derived from various sources. I have assumed that those of Henry's envoys responsible for producing translations of French and Latin works would have been

Table One: Linguistic skills of the gentry and aristocracy sent on diplomatic service

Name	Language(s)	Reference
Thomas Boleyn	French	<i>L&P</i> , VIII, no.189.
John Bourchier	French	Translation
Francis Bryan	French	Translation
Nicholas Carew	French	<i>L&P</i> , addenda I, no.196.
Thomas Cheyne	French	<i>L&P</i> , IV i, no.2039.
Thomas Docwra	Italian	<i>CSPV</i> , II, p.301.
Thomas Elyot	Latin	Translation
William Fitzwilliam	French	<i>L&P</i> , IV i, no.1901.
Nicholas Harvey	French, Flemish	<i>CSPS</i> , IV i, p.586. <i>Ibid</i> .
Henry Knyvett	Spanish, French	<i>CSPS</i> , VIII, p.125, Kaulek, p.241.
John Lisle	French	<i>L&P</i> , XXI i, no.1365
Francis Poyntz	Latin	Translation
John Wallop	French, Spanish	<i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no.2960, <i>ibid</i> , IV ii, no.3987.
Richard Wingfield	French, Italian	<i>L&P</i> , IV i, no. 1520. <i>Ibid</i>
Robert Wingfield	Latin, Italian French	Translation, <i>CSPV</i> , I, p.455. <i>L&P</i> , II i, no.83.

reasonably qualified to speak those languages. Such an assumption is not without risk since writing and speaking in a foreign language are by no means the same. However, it still seems likely that a man who could compose an English-Latin dictionary or translate a history of the Hundred Years War in excess of 100,000 words in length, would have some facility to speak the language in which they were working. In other cases the evidence has been derived from comments made about envoys in contemporary documents. Thus John Taylor writing to Wolsey about William Fitzwilliam's departure from the French court, noted that, 'he hath the language of the Frenche tonge with the experyence of ther maners.'⁶⁴ Richard Sampson and Cuthbert Tunstall describing Richard Wingfield's death to the king wrote:

He made suche a declaracion of the goodnes and mercy of God, and so humble a summision of hymself unto the same whiche he did both in Frenche and in Italyan that the curate and those of other nacions ther being present were movyd all to teris.⁶⁵

Notifying the emperor of Nicholas Harvey's imminent dispatch to the Low Countries, Chapuys observed, 'il a la langue Francayse et Flamenque'.⁶⁶ Thomas Cheyne sent to France in 1526 to congratulate Francis on his release was instructed to deliver his message, 'wel cowched, spoken and uttered in the Frenche tonge....not as an oracion but as a famyliar, fre[ndly] and kynde message.'⁶⁷ John Wallop visiting the French king two years later wrote, 'To be playn with your grace I had moche care to understond hym by reason of the impediment of his sikness for he hath loste the moste part of his over tethe.'⁶⁸ Nicholas Carew, nominated by Wolsey in August

⁶⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX, fo.138, (*L&P*, IV i, no.1901), Taylor to Wolsey, 17 January 1526.

⁶⁵ Ellis, 3rd series, vol.2, pp.20-29, esp.pp.22-23, (*L&P*, IV i, no.1520), Sampson and Tunstall to Henry, 28 July 1525.

⁶⁶ PRO 31/18/2/1, fo.603v, (*CSPS*, IV i, p.586), Chapuys to Charles, 14 June 1530.

⁶⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX, fos.164-170, esp.of.164v, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2039), Thomas Cheyne's instructions, March 1526.

⁶⁸ *St.P.*, VII, p.57, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3987), Wallop to Henry, 29 February 1528.

1517 for the post of Master of the HENCHMEN, was chosen in part because of his fluency in the French tongue.⁶⁹

Establishing a more detailed picture of who amongst Henry's ambassadors could speak which languages is extremely difficult.⁷⁰ Yet it seems highly likely that a far larger number than that for which I have been able to find specific evidence, had some knowledge of foreign languages. Diane Willen states that John Russell was fluent in French and Italian, but provides no contemporary reference to support the statement.⁷¹ The Imperial envoy to England, François van der Delft, informed Charles that the new resident being sent to the Low Countries, Philip Hoby, had first found favour with the king due to his wide knowledge of foreign languages, but failed to specify which they were.⁷² In addition to his knowledge of French, Italian and Latin, the *DNB* states without a source that Robert Wingfield was also fluent in German,⁷³ but it has been impossible to coordinate the statement with any contemporary evidence. Yet where documentation is lacking a certain degree of speculation based on common sense is surely permissible. Richard Jerningham, resident in Tournai for almost five years, had ample opportunity to learn French. Both Edward Poyning and Charles Somerset, Earl of Worcester, had spent prolonged periods of time on the continent, serving the king and his father in both military and diplomatic capacities, giving them every chance to become reasonably strong French speakers. The letters of Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, contain occasional references to the long and extremely informal conversations he enjoyed with Francis' sister, Margerite

⁶⁹ PRO, SP1/232, fo.41, (*L&P*, addenda, vol.I, no.196), Wolsey to Henry, August 1517.

⁷⁰ For a broader analysis of the linguistic skills of renaissance statesmen and diplomats, see, J.G.Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies*, (Stroud, 1992), pp.1-41.

⁷¹ Willen, *op.cit.*, pp.3-4.

⁷² *CSPS*, VIII, p.254, van der Delft to Charles, 23 February 1548.

⁷³ *DNB*, art. 'Robert Wingfield', vol.62, 191-193.

d'Angouleme. One such discussion held in the Queen of Navarre's privy chamber lasted five hours, and touched upon among other things, the marital difficulties which Francis was currently experiencing with the emperor's sister, Eleanore. It seems quite improbable that a conversation of such length and intimacy would have taken place through an interpreter!⁷⁴

We can at least say therefore that a considerable number of the gentry and nobility sent on diplomatic missions were able to speak a foreign language, in most cases French. In some circumstances, however, there is clear evidence that envoys and commissioners did find languages a problem. In 1516, Thomas Benolt, Clarencieux king of Arms, was sent to the Duke of Albany with a safe conduct for his journey to France, subject to his first ratifying the latest truce between England and Scotland.⁷⁵ Despite the fact that Thomas Lord Dacre was actually entrusted with receiving Albany's ratification, the herald was instructed to be present due to the baron's poor grasp of the French language.⁷⁶ Four years later Dacre himself apologised to Robert Stuart D'Aubigny and Jean de Plains, the newly arrived French envoys in Scotland, 'I cannot so well answer your letter as I shuld do because I am no gude Frencheman.'⁷⁷

Edward Foxe, special envoy to Francis I between May and November 1531 was instructed to accompany Henry's resident ambassador, Francis Bryan on a hunting expedition planned by the king from Compiègne towards the border of Hainnault.⁷⁸ Originally Bryan was to have attended

⁷⁴ PRO, SP1/77, fos.82-85, (*L&P*, VI, no.692), Norfolk to Henry, March 1533.

⁷⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula B VI, fo.188, (*L&P*, II i, no.2253), Instructions for Clarencieux king of Arms going into Scotland, August 1516.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Rymer, XIII, 731, (*L&P*, III, no.1077), Dacre to Robert Stuart D'Aubigny and Jean de Plains, 30 November 1520. See also PRO, SP 49/1, fos.90-91, (*L&P*, II, no.3138), Dacre to Wolsey, 17 April 1519.

⁷⁸ BL, Add MS, 25,114, fo.49, (*L&P*, V, no.548), Henry to Bryan, Foxe and Taylor, November 1531. Pocock, vol.II, p.120, dates this letter as March 1531 based on the date written in a modern

Francis alone but as the king explained to the ambassadors:

our pleasure was that you, Syr Fraunces Bryan, shuld in any wise folowe the Frenche king's person in the said country, and you the Master of our Rolles and master almoner lye nowe close and abide in the place where the said quene shuld be left..... Nowe having diverse maters of importance to be declared to our derest [sic] and his counsail by you, wherin is knowlege of the Laten tonge which wanteth in you Syr Fraunces. We therfor will and require that you our almoner bycause ye be yonger thenne ye, Master of our Rolles and may take more paynes to joyne yourself with Syr Fraunces for espedition of this charge.⁷⁹

An incident which took place in a later embassy to France provides us with a more general insight into the linguistic skills of the English gentry. Towards the end of Stephen Gardiner's residency at the Valois court, complaints were made, presumably to Cromwell, about the hostile behaviour and outspoken language of a number of the bishop's entourage.⁸⁰ In his defense of the young men singled out for criticism, Gardiner's nephew and secretary, Germaine Gardiner, wrote to Thomas Wriothesley:

My lorde hath here yong gentlemen of XIX yeres and under thisse: Edwarde Hungerforde, Edwarde Wingfelde, Robert Gage, Robert Parys and John Brom; a lytel above that age: Thomas Thwaytes, Thomas Hungerforde, Olyver Vachel, John Temple, Robert Preston, Richarde Hampden and Walter Hals. If they wold saye that all thisse doo rayle upon them, (for theyr wordes bee of me and all my Lordes yong gentlemen), then wold I axe them to whom thisse gentlemen doo rayle upon them? For besyde Wingfelde, Vachel and Preston, none that are of the rest speak eyther to Frenche men or other straungiers withoute it bee to demande such things as they lacke. All the Frenche men in Fraunce and other straungiers may goo by them thisse vii yeres and but fewe of them can call for that they wolde have, withoute a truchman.⁸¹

hand on the original manuscript. However the itinerary of Francis I for 1531 places him in Compiègne in November, *CAF*, VIII, p.477.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ The original complaints and Cromwell's reaction to them are no longer extant, but a considerable amount can be inferred from Germaine Gardiner's response. PRO, SP1/129, fos.95v-96, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.327), Germaine Gardiner to Wriothesley, 21 February 1538.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 'Truchman' = interpreter.

Of course the individuals to which Gardiner is referring are considerably younger than most of Henry's envoys at the time of their first embassy. Furthermore, it is quite possible that Wolsey, Cromwell and Henry's later councillors suggested potential ambassadors to the king in the knowledge that they had a reasonable command of the relevant foreign language. On the other hand Gardiner's letter highlights the fact that for many of the gentry French was a closed book, and that simply being the recipient of a privileged upbringing in the renaissance did not make one a polyglot.

A thorough assessment of the educational level attained by the noble envoys of Francis and Charles is beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet a few readily identifiable distinctions between French and Imperial ambassadors and their English counterparts can be made. With regard to the language barrier the points raised in the previous chapter are just as valid here. As has been pointed out English was no more a common European language than German or Dutch and few envoys dispatched to Henry's court were either expected or able to speak it.⁸² Sufficient numbers of Henry's councillors and courtiers spoke French and Latin well enough to permit the king and his closest advisers to deal directly with all of Francis' ambassadors and the great majority of those sent by the emperor.

Given the prominent role of the *noblesse parlementaire* in French diplomacy it is almost certain that fair numbers of Francis' noble envoys possessed a reasonable grasp of Latin and a thorough knowledge of civil law.⁸³ In order to practise in the parlement of Rouen one first needed to

⁸² J.G.Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies*, (Stroud, 1992), pp.1-41. See also, G.Ascoli, *La Grande Bretagne devant l'opinion, française depuis la guerre de cent ans jusqu'à la fin du XVI^e siècle*, (Paris, 1927), pp.176-180.

⁸³ The *première, deuxième, troisième* and *quatrième présidents* of the seven parlements alone provided Francis with at least twelve ambassadors, most hard working diplomats, such as Jean de Selve, Jean Brinon and Denis Poillot. Figures taken from a comparison of the lists of ambassadors and *parlementaire* officials in *CAF*, IX, pp.6-87 and 151-190.

acquire a licence from a recognised law school, obtained after eight to nine years of study in both arts and law. Having entered the parlement most advocates continued to pursue their study of civil law for several more years before starting to practice.⁸⁴ Working on the assumption that the entry requirements for the other parlements were similarly rigorous, those of the lesser nobility who served as both magistrates and ambassadors should have possessed a sound knowledge of civil law and by inference, Latin. Of Charles' nobility some at least had enjoyed a university education. Cornelius Scepper was trained in civil law and both Gerard de Plaine and Louis de Praet had matriculated from the University of Louvain although it is unknown in what disciplines.⁸⁵ Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza gained recognition as a humanist scholar of some eminence and was appointed as Charles' ambassador to the Council of Trent at least in part due to his theological expertise.⁸⁶

* * * * *

If Henry's gentle and noble envoys did not represent a new generation of aristocratic scholars, many aspects of their early careers did much to prepare them for diplomatic service. The average statistical age of the gentry and nobility sent abroad was almost forty.⁸⁷ This figure should, however, be treated with considerable caution. Frequently no birth records exist for the men in question, where references to age are made they are as often as not rough approximations. Furthermore, a number of Henry's envoys, notably those who began diplomatic service under his father, were quite old at the time of their first embassy for the new king. Thus Edward Poyning and Charles Somerset were 54 when they undertook their first missions for Henry VIII, John

⁸⁴ J.Dewald, *The Formation of a Provincial Nobility: The Magistrates of the Parlement of Rouen, 1499-1610*, (Princeton, 1980), pp.22-31.

⁸⁵ *BNB*, arts., 'Gerard de Plaine' and 'Louis de Praet'.

⁸⁶ Spivalovsky, *op.cit.*, pp.28, 139-143 and 405.

⁸⁷ See Appendix B.

Bourchier was 56 and the second Duke of Norfolk was 71. The impact of these elder statesman on the overall average age must be taken into account.

The obvious advantage of employing men, who by Tudor standards had entered middle age, was the far greater likelihood that they were sufficiently mature to deal with the responsibilities and possible temptations which a posting to a foreign court would entail. Before being dispatched on their first embassy most of Henry's noble envoys had spent decades at court, captained ships in the king's navy, led battalions of soldiers, served as county sheriffs and justices of the peace, and in many cases begun managing their own estates. From at least the age of ten William Fitzwilliam had been brought up in the royal household, joining Prince Henry in his daily school lessons.⁸⁸ He joined Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset, in his unsuccessful expedition against Guienne in 1512 and took part in Edmund Howard's raid on Brest the following year.⁸⁹ By 1520 he was vice-Admiral of England and as such took much of the responsibility for the conveyance of the multitudes of men and horses which composed Henry's retinue at the Field of Cloth of Gold.⁹⁰

Eleven years before his first embassy Nicholas Carew had already joined the king's household as a groom of the Privy Chamber.⁹¹ In 1513 he was appointed lieutenant of Calais castle,⁹² and in

⁸⁸ PRO, SP1/21, fo.204, (*L&P*, II i, no.1160), Fitzwilliam to Henry, February 1520.

⁸⁹ See *L&P*, I, no.1176, for the list of captains who accompanied Dorset to Fuenterrabia in June 1512.

⁹⁰ J.G.Russell, *The Field of the Cloth of Gold: Men and Manners in 1520*, (London, 1969), p.61.

⁹¹ *L&P*, I, no.772.

⁹² *L&P*, I ii, no.2484 (29), grant for Richard and Nicholas Carew to be lieutenants of Calais Castle from October 1513.

1518 and 1519 he was sheriff of both Surrey and Sussex.⁹³ Thomas Cheyne was already a henchman of the royal household at the accession of Henry VIII⁹⁴ and soon became a squire of the body and in 1515 a knight of the body. He served in the navy between 1512 and 1514 and was appointed constable of Queensborough castle in 1512.

The early careers of men such as Fitzwilliam, Carew and Cheyne were by no means extraordinary, or irrelevant to their future work as ambassadors.⁹⁵ However, in addition to the invaluable experience such men gained through domestic and military service to the king, a considerable number of the gentry were given the opportunity of travelling in the entourages of outgoing ambassadors to courts which they in turn were later accredited. During his second embassy to France between January and May 1515 Charles Brandon included in his entourage his cousin William Sidney.⁹⁶ Almost directly after the Duke's penitential return to England it was Sidney who was accredited as the next special ambassador to the French court. Among those included in the Earl of Worcester's lavish embassy in November 1518 were Francis Bryan, Nicholas Carew and Anthony Browne.⁹⁷ After the main body of the embassy returned to England, Browne in company with a number of other young gentleman remained at the French court with the new resident, Thomas Boleyn. Although his boisterous behaviour earned him

⁹³ *L&P*, II ii, no.4562,

⁹⁴ Cheyne was listed among the squires of the body at the funeral of Henry VII on 9 May 1509, *L&P*, I, no.20.

⁹⁵ See below, pp.165-176.

⁹⁶ It was Sidney who travelled to England in April with Brandon's plea to the king for clemency in the aftermath of his marriage to Henry's sister. BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.F XIII, fo.80, (*L&P*, II i, no,367), Suffolk to Henry, 22 April 1515.

⁹⁷ For this embassy see, BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VII, fos.38, 40, 48, (*L&P*, II, nos.4617, 4638, 4652), Worcester, West, Docwra and Vaux to Wolsey, 30 November, 8 and 15 December 1518.

Boleyn's censure,⁹⁸ Browne was nevertheless popular with Francis who included him in his pastimes and at his departure made him a *gentilhomme de la chambre du roi*.⁹⁹ Although his official visits to France would later sour the ambassador's relationship with the Valois court, Browne himself admitted that he had made many good friends during his earlier stay.¹⁰⁰

Other future ambassadors to attend earlier embassies included John Welsborne, Henry's resident envoy to the French court during much of 1530. Welsborne conveyed several horses from Henry to Louise of Savoy in October 1526. Upon his arrival the current resident in France, John Clerk, presented the young courtier to Francis' mother,¹⁰¹ and kept him with him for a brief time before sending him home with reports for Wolsey and the king.¹⁰² Thomas Wyatt's early forays into diplomacy were somewhat more eventful. First chosen by Thomas Cheyne to act as a courier during his 1526 embassy to France,¹⁰³ he apparently invited himself along on John Russell's

⁹⁸ BL.Cotton MS, Caligula D VII, fo.95, (*L&P*, III i no.111), Boleyn to Wolsey, 5 March 1519.

⁹⁹ PRO, SP1 13, fo.179, (*L&P*, III, no.273), Boleyn to Wolsey, 30 May 1519.

¹⁰⁰ PRO SP1 137, fos.227-228, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.641), Browne to Cromwell, 17 October 1538. Although this manuscript is badly faded and in places mutilated, an earlier letter written by Browne's colleague, Edmund Bonner, to Cromwell gives some idea of the reception given to the envoys on this later mission, 'this is to adertise the same that even as heretofor moche strangenes ye and great unkyndnes hath been sondrye wayes here shewn to my companyon, Master Browne, and me sythens his arryvall, so the same still contynueth, and is not like to amende so far forthe as we can by any means perceyve. Men hear are of a very strange fashion with us, and of a very ingrate nature, unkynde the mor kyndlier and gently they be used, and the lesse estemyng ther pride the mor kyndnes they conceyve, of whiche ther doinge, for good respect, we take in good worthe, though it be not mosst pleasaunt to us,' *Ibid*, fo.224, (*ibid*, no.639), Bonner to Cromwell. 17 October 1538.

^{1 1} BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D X, fo.256, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2587), Clerk to Wolsey, 24 October 1526.

^{1 2} *Ibid*, fo.262, (*ibid*, no.2651), Clerk to Wolsey, 23 November 1526.

¹⁰³ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX fo.187, (*L&P*, IV i no.2135), Cheyne and Taylor to Wolsey, 1 May 1526

special mission to Rome and Venice the following year.¹⁰⁴ Whilst travelling towards Venice Russell fell from his horse and broke his leg, leaving Wyatt the responsibility of journeying on to the Republic alone to present the king's proposals.¹⁰⁵ Having completed his task, Wyatt decided to travel on to Ferrara. During the journey he was apparently captured by Spanish soldiers, but escaped before Russell could raise the ransom for his release.¹⁰⁶

Although few men began their diplomatic careers in such a dramatic fashion, a number of others were given opportunities to attend diplomatic missions before themselves being appointed ambassador. In addition to his inclusion in the Worcester embassy of 1518, Francis Bryan joined Wolsey in both his later embassies; firstly to the Calais conference of August to November 1521 and later as part of the cardinal's mammoth entourage travelling to Amiens in the summer of 1527.¹⁰⁷ In turn Bryan included in his own staff young gentleman who in due course were themselves appointed ambassadors. Among his suite during his 1530-1531 embassy to France was one Richard Tate, a future resident ambassador to the court of Charles V.¹⁰⁸ Thomas Seymour, joint resident with Nicholas Wotton to the Low Countries during 1543, also served on Bryan's staff,¹⁰⁹ as well as acting as a special courier for Edmund Bonner and Anthony Browne during in their 1538 embassy to Francis.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ K.Muir, *The Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, (Liverpool, 1967), p.7.

¹⁰⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B IX, fo.71, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2931), Gregorio de Casali to Gian Baptiste de Casali, 2 March 1527.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, fo.85, (*ibid*, no.3011), Wyatt and Gregorio de Casali to Wolsey, 1 April 1527.

¹⁰⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D X, fo.103, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3216).

¹⁰⁸ In the chamber accounts of April 1531 Tate is listed among the gentlemen, 'sent in societie with the said sir Fraunces.' PRO, E101/420/11, fo.164, (*L&P*, V, p.325).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p.326.

¹¹⁰ PRO, SP1/137, fos.227-228, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.641), Browne to Cromwell, 17 October 1538.

By the time most members of the gentry and nobility were chosen either to lead or play an active part in a diplomatic mission they already had a broad range of skills and experience under their belt. In possession of the innate advantage of being well born, the great majority of Henry's noble envoys had attained a reasonable educational standard and at least some fluency in a foreign language. Trained at court, with experience of military affairs and in some cases knowledge of what diplomatic work actually entailed, the fifty or so members of the gentry and nobility who served abroad had the potential to be extremely useful to Henry and his advisers. The following sections will explore just what use they were put to and how effective their service actually was.

Status

One of the most important aspects particularly of the aristocracy's role within diplomacy was the dignity and lustre which their social status could lend to a mission. In certain cases the significance of an embassy demanded the inclusion of the most illustrious of the king's subjects. This was typified by the mission which accompanied Henry's sister to France for her marriage to Louis XII in October 1514. As well as a retinue of over five hundred horses and at least seventy knights, Mary's entourage was led by five of the most senior English peers; the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Marquis of Dorset and the Earls of Surrey and Worcester.¹¹¹ Of course some of these envoys, specifically Suffolk, Worcester and Dorset, were involved in highly sensitive behind the scenes negotiations.¹¹² However, this does not alter the fact that a key element of their

¹¹¹ For details on the size of the entourage see, *L&P*, I ii, no.3348. Also, W.C.Richardson, *Mary Tudor, the White Queen* (Washington, 1970), pp.87-97.

¹¹² For these negotiations see, PRO, SP1/9 fo.149, (*L&P*, I ii, no.3378), Wolsey to Worcester, October 1514. *L&P*, I ii, no.3416, Worcester to Wolsey, 1 November 1514. Also see, J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, (London, 1997), pp.55-6. Bell, *Handlist*, p.65, gives the impression that Dorset left with the Earl of Surrey in mid-October, but as S.J.Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c.1482-1545*, (Oxford, 1988), pp.34-5, makes clear, Dorset not only remained in France with Worcester, Suffolk, West and Docwra until the negotiations were concluded in November, but also took an active part in them.

mission was to emphasize the significance of an event as portentous as a royal wedding. Henry's honour required that his sister be escorted to France by none less than the flower of England's nobility, whose presence also served to augment the majesty of the occasion. Not only was a royal marriage taking place, but the ruling houses of two age-old antagonists were tying a bond of supposedly insoluble friendship. By dispatching the most important of his subjects Henry was underlining his commitment to the new peace, already made clear by the avowal of his sister to the French king.

Although infrequent, the practice of appointing high ranking nobles to ceremonial embassies, primarily to highlight the dignity and importance of a given event, did continue throughout the reign. On the three occasions that foreign princes were elected to the Order of the Garter, it was members of the peerage who were chosen to lead the embassies entrusted with the task of investment.¹¹³ In 1523 Henry Parker, 8th Baron Morley led the mission to Germany which presented the order to Charles' brother Ferdinand.¹¹⁴ Four years later Arthur Plantagenet in company with Nicholas Carew, Anthony Browne, John Taylor and Thomas Wriothesley invested Francis I.¹¹⁵ Finally, Lord William Howard began his diplomatic service to Henry by travelling to Scotland in January 1535 to bring James V his collar and mantle.¹¹⁶

Certainly these missions were not restricted to purely ceremonial activities. The ambassadors dispatched to Ferdinand in 1523 were instructed to assure the archduke of Henry's whole-hearted

¹¹³ See *G.E.C.*, vol.II, pp.527-534.

¹¹⁴ The instructions for Parker's embassy are printed *in extenso* in J.Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, (3 vols., Oxford, 1820-40), vol.I, pt.i, pp.69-75, (*L&P*, III ii, no.3275).

¹¹⁵ BL, Add.MS. 5,712, fo.30, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3508), Commission to Plantagenet, Taylor, Browne, Carew and Wriothesley, 22 October 1527.

¹¹⁶ PRO 31/18/2/2, fos.4-11, (*L&P*, VIII, no.48), Chapuys to Charles 14 January 1535.

support for his opposition to the growth of the Lutheran heresy in Germany. Furthermore, they were to congratulate the prince on his endorsement of the decision by Venice to join the alliance against France.¹¹⁷ Plantagenet's embassy to France in October 1527 must be seen in the overall context of the period of *entente* through which the two countries were currently passing, embodied in the treaties of Westminster and Amiens ratified earlier in the year.¹¹⁸ Anthony Browne was already in France continuing discussions relating to the Treaty of Amiens, while John Taylor although part of the commission charged with presenting the garter, was primarily in the country to replace Clerk as resident at the French court. According to Chapuys, William Howard's remit included an offer of 40,000 crowns to the Scottish king in return for the restoration of the Earl of Angus to his estates; a request to place a ban on any of James' subjects seeking passage to Ireland to take up arms against the English, and a proposal for a meeting between the two kings, the expense of which Henry was apparently prepared to meet.¹¹⁹

Yet for all the diplomatic matters raised by Henry's ambassadors the investiture of Ferdinand, Francis and James with the Order of the Garter was by no means a side issue. To be awarded the oldest order of chivalry in Europe was a great honour, a fact underlined by the selection of a high ranking member of the nobility to perform the investiture ceremony. Indeed with regard to the Garter missions of the 1520s it is quite possible that the aristocrats chosen to lead them served no other purpose than to further aggrandise the embassies. Both Parker and Plantagenet spent the briefest possible periods with the princes to which they had been accredited, returning to England within days of the investiture ceremony and in both cases performing no further diplomatic duties. Furthermore, in the 1523 embassy to Ferdinand it was Edward Lee, the king's almoner,

¹¹⁷ Strype, *op.cit.*, pp.69-75, (*L&P*, III ii, no.3275).

¹¹⁸ See C.Giry-Deloison, 'A diplomatic revolution, Anglo-French relations and the treaties of 1527', in *Henry VIII: A European Court in England*, ed.D.R.Starkey, (London, 1991), pp.77-87.

¹¹⁹ PRO 31/18/2/2, fos.4-11, 53-61, (*L&P*, VIII, nos.48, 429), Chapuys to Charles, 14 January and 20 March 1535.

who was given sole responsibility for the discussion of diplomatic affairs.¹²⁰

However, if the social status of the nobility could be a useful tool in the settlement of ceremonial affairs, it was of still greater importance to the exercise of practical diplomacy. Long before letters of credence were produced or instructions declared, the decision to appoint or not appoint a noble ambassador to a mission sent a clear message to participants and onlookers alike. In particular the Imperialists put great store by the status of the envoys sent to negotiate with them. In the latter months of 1516 Cuthbert Tunstall had been negotiating with Maximilian to secure his support against Charles' advisers, Chièvres and Sauvage, deemed by Wolsey to be sympathetic to France.¹²¹ Despite Tunstall's experience, knowledge of Low Countries affairs and the position of trust which he evidently enjoyed with king and cardinal, Maximilian requested that a 'substantial person' be dispatched to conclude the negotiations.¹²² In response Henry sent the Earl of Worcester who came furnished with secret instructions from which the Master of the Rolls was to be excluded.¹²³ Worcester was of course an extremely experienced diplomat with decades of service to the Tudors behind him. Furthermore, as Great Chamberlain he was one of the most important of Henry's household officers, Above all, however, he was a peer of the realm, a man of sufficient status to demonstrate to the emperor that Henry valued his friendship and was fully committed to the current negotiations.

As we saw in an earlier chapter Charles was no less sensitive than his grandfather where the

¹²⁰ *Strype, op.cit.*, pp.69-75, (*L&P*, III ii, no.3275).

¹²¹ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B fo.159, (*L&P*, II i, no.2706), Commission for the Earl of Worcester and Cuthbert Tunstall to treat with the Emperor Maximilian, 28 December 1516.

¹²² BL, Cotton MS. Vitel.B XX, fo.90, (*L&P*, II i, no.2714), Henry to Sir Robert Wingfield, December 1516.

¹²³ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B V, fos.40-41, (*L&P*, II, no.2863), Worcester to Wolsey, 2 February 1517.

status of ambassadors was concerned.¹²⁴ The knowledge that while a member of the gentry had been appointed to reside with Francis, English representation at the Imperial court was to consist of a foreign-born merchant, Thomas Spinelly, and a junior cleric, William Knight, was quite unacceptable to Charles.¹²⁵ For the emperor to have to deal with anyone less than a member of the English gentry would impugn his honour. Admittedly the complaint was just a run-up to a request for one of the Wingfield brothers to be appointed, largely because of the excellent working relationship which the Habsburg rulers enjoyed with both men.¹²⁶ Yet one of the reasons why Maximilian, Margaret and Charles were able to form such a relationship with men like Robert and Richard Wingfield was exactly because they deemed them sufficiently well born to converse with princes and be involved in affairs of state. Practical necessity might demand that Charles deal with commoners such as Spinelly and Knight, it did not require that he should enjoy doing so.

Repeatedly one reads in the dispatches of foreign ambassadors speculations about Henry's commitment to a particular diplomatic overture based on the status of the envoys dispatched to discuss it. In 1534 Chapuys wrote to Charles advising him of an embassy the king had just sent into Germany. He went on to reassure the emperor that the mission could not be of any great importance since the men chosen to perform it were, 'gens de petite qualité,'¹²⁷ and 'personnaiges pour demener telle chose et sont plutost pour gaster les affaires que de les avancer.'¹²⁸ One of

¹²⁴ See above, pp.39-40.

¹²⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VII, fo.147, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1768), Richard Wingfield to Wolsey, 16 November 1521.

¹²⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VIII, fo.2, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1943), Charles to Henry, 9 January 1522.

¹²⁷ PRO, SP31/18/3/1, fos.18-23, (*L&P*, VII i, no.114), Chapuys to Charles, 28 January 1534.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, fos.24-27, (*CSPS*, V i, no.121), Chapuys to Charles, 29 January 1534.

the envoys from this embassy, William Paget, was again dismissed by Chapuys when he was chosen by Henry to reside at the French court seven years later. Informing Queen Mary of the appointment, the Imperial ambassador explained that the French envoy, Charles de Marillac, was most disappointed to see the incumbent ambassador, Lord William Howard, replaced by Paget, 'ung homme de petite estoffe et moindre qualité, n'ayant aultre tiltre ne estat que cleric de conseil, qu'est ung peu de mauvaise apparence de vouloir ceulx cy demener chose d'importance.'¹²⁹ Another Imperial envoy, Don Diego Hertardo de Mendoza, reporting the death of John Hutton, Henry's resident in the Low Countries, observed that if the king wished to demonstrate his commitment to better relations with Charles, he could do so by appointing a new resident 'of quality and parts.'¹³⁰

In the event Hutton's successor was Stephen Vaughan, another merchant of undistinguished birth. The first assignment entrusted to Vaughan in his role as a fully accredited ambassador was to open discussions concerning the possible marriage of his master to the emperor's niece, Christina, Duchess of Milan. His colleague during the negotiations was Cromwell's secretary, Thomas Wriothesley, who himself encountered considerable prejudice as a result of his rather humble antecedents. Shortly before his departure he complained to Cromwell:

some of them begynne folishly to talk of me as marveling that his maiesty wold send so meane a man as I am to mayne soo greate a mater. Sayeng it had rather been thaffair of oon of the noblest men of the realme thenne of a man of no estimacion, a secretary of your lordships.¹³¹

One has to be careful, however, not to rely too heavily on the prejudices of Chapuys and his

¹²⁹ PRO 31/18/3/1, fos.452-453, (CSPS, VI i, p.375), Chapuys to Mary, 26 October 1541.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p.43, Mendoza to Charles, 14 September 1538.

¹³¹ PRO, SP1/142, fos.224-229, esp.fo.24, (L&P, XIV i, no.209) Wriothesley to Cromwell, 2 February 1538.

colleagues when relating social status to diplomatic responsibility. Wriothesley and Paget may have been unimportant in terms of their social rank, but by the close of the 1530s both men were high in Cromwell's favour and would go on to share their former master's office as joint secretaries to the king and members of his privy council. Although their inclusion in an embassy might lend little glamour to the mission, as high ranking bureaucrats extremely close to Henry they were as likely to be entrusted with broad negotiating powers as any of their noble colleagues.

Yet as a rule it was rare that serious diplomatic negotiations lacked a member of the gentry. During much of the time that Vaughan and Wriothesley were holding talks with Christina and Mary about the possible marriage of the former to Henry they were accompanied by Anthony Browne. Paget may have been primarily responsible for the talks which led to the peace agreement signed at Ardres in July 1546, but it was John Dudley, Viscount Lisle, who was given leadership of the embassy.¹³² Henry himself was very much aware of the importance of status in the conduct of diplomacy, most particularly where it touched his honour. The 1533 embassy led by the Duke of Norfolk and Viscount Rochford to Francis and the pope was instructed firstly to seek an audience with the French king.¹³³ They were to urge him to greater efforts in pressurizing the pope to annul Henry's marriage, and seek to dissuade him from giving his son, Henri duc d'Orleans, in marriage to Clement's niece, Catherine de Medici. If they were unsuccessful in this latter task Norfolk and Rochford were to withdraw from the embassy and were under no circumstances to attend the meeting between Francis and the Pope at Marseilles to which only Bryan and Wallop were to go.¹³⁴ Henry's concern was that he should not appear as a supplicant to the Pope. Were men of Norfolk and Rochford's status present at the Marseilles meeting, it might

¹³² *St.P.*, XI, p.102, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.610), Instructions to Lisle, Dudley and Wotton, 17 April 1546.

¹³³ *St.P.*, VII, p.493, (*L&P*, VI no.954), Henry to Norfolk, Rochford ect., 8 August 1533.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

seem as though the king were honouring Clement at a time when he was making every effort to show the world that he was beyond the Pope's authority and indifferent to any judgement he might make.

The reason given to William Howard for his recall from France in September 1541 was that, 'he, [Henry] must considere what personage yowe ar and of howe smal estormacion Monsieur Marillac is'.¹³⁵ Writing to Francis, Marillac stated that the real reason for Howard's recall was that:

ledit milord Guillem avoir esté peu diligent de leur faire entendre toutes nouvelles et que souvent ses advis sont icy venuz aprèz qu'on avoit esté adverty de toutes pars de ce qu'il escripvoit de quoy ils ne restoiest guères satisfaitz comme ceulx qui sont curieux àentendre les premiers tout ce qu'il ce faict par le monde.¹³⁶

It does not alter the fact that in seeking to justify the replacement of an ambassador drawn from the aristocracy with one of common birth, Henry could plausibly argue that it was Howard's noble status which rendered him inappropriate for the position.

During the negotiations between Francis and Charles and Francis and Henry which culminated in the Peace of Crépy for the former, and continued hostility and isolation for the latter, the English king displayed great sensitivity about the status of the ambassadors sent to treat with him. In an audience with Chapuys held by Henry at his camp before Boulogne, the king was visibly irritated to discover that Francis had accredited such exalted ambassadors as the Admiral of France, Claude d'Annebault, and Jean, Cardinal de Lorraine, to negotiate with Charles.¹³⁷ He apparently comforted himself by pointing out that Annebault was a poor negotiator and that Lorraine was currently low in Francis' favour. Several days later meeting Chapuys on the road, the king

¹³⁵ PRO SP1/167, fo.63, (*L&P*, XVI, no.1197), Privy Council to Howard, 24 September 1541.

¹³⁶ Kaulek, *op.cit.*, pp.348-9, (*L&P*, XVI, no.1253), Marillac to Francis, 12 October 1541.

¹³⁷ *CSPS*, VII, p.193, Chapuys and de Courrière to Charles, 3 September 1544.

informed the ambassador with evident pleasure, that he was soon to receive an embassy consisting of Cardinal Jean Du Bellay, Pierre Rémon, the president of the parlement of Rouen, Claude d'Annebault and a *gentilhomme de la chambre du Roi*.¹³⁸ According to the ambassador the king could not hide his satisfaction that he was being honoured with a more prestigious embassy than the emperor. In this case the prestige was not derived solely from the presence of members of the French nobility, nevertheless it is clear that Henry cared almost as much about who was in the embassy as the fact that it was being dispatched at all!¹³⁹

Courtier

Despite the frequent appointment of the gentry in particular to diplomatic missions, their involvement in England's international relations was far from evenly spread. As table two illustrates, while Henry made frequent use of them in his dealings with France, the gentry and aristocracy were deployed far less often elsewhere. In some cases this relative inactivity requires little explanation. The unique nature of the Vatican made members of the clergy the obvious choice for missions to the pope. The flurry of embassies to the German princes in the 1530s often centred on doctrinal issues, largely the

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* The actual embassy consisted of du Bellay, Rémon, Oudart de Biez, marshal of France and the man responsible for Boulogne's defence, and Claude l'Aubespine, the premier *secrétaire du roi*. *CAF*, IX, p.31.

¹³⁹ It is unclear who Henry nominated to negotiate with du Bellay and his colleagues since in their reports to Francis the ambassadors merely referred to the king's council. PRO, SP1/192, fos.146-147, (*L&P*, XIX ii, no.277), du Bellay to Francis, 22 September 1544. It seems likely that the key negotiators were Stephen Gardiner, William Paget, Edward Seymour and possibly Charles Brandon, the most diplomatically experienced and senior members of the council present with the king at Boulogne.

Table Two: Embassies attended by members of the aristocracy and gentry.¹⁴⁰

	1509-1519		1520-1529		1530-1539		1540-1547		Total	
	R	S	R	S	R	S	R	S	R	S
Conferences	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Denmark	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	5
Emperor	1	2	0	9	5	3	2	1	9	15
	2	3	3	12	8	5	6	7	19	26
France	1	6	7	9	4	11	2	4	14	30
	1	7	10	13	7	15	4	5	22	40
Germany	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
	0	1	0	4	1	13	1	3	2	21
Italy	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
Low Countries	0	6	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	8
	1	8	3	1	5	3	1	3	10	15
Papacy	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
	2	0	5	9	2	1	0	0	9	10
Scotland	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	8
	0	6	0	2	0	8	1	1	1	17
Spain	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Venice	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	3
Total	2	20	9	30	11	19	4	6	26	75
	8	30	22	49	24	49	13	20	67	148

preserve of theological experts. Furthermore, the awkward business of negotiating with heretics ensured that Henry and Cromwell were eager to keep the missions to Germany low key; in such circumstances the appointment of high-ranking ambassadors would have been counter-productive. The small number of gentry dispatched to the Low Countries was partly the result of its status as a cadet court and partly due to the unique commercial relationship which existed between the two countries. Whereas key decisions on foreign policy ultimately

¹⁴⁰ The first line of figures on each row represent embassies containing a noble envoy, Figures derived from Appendix A.

lay with the emperor, the maintenance of Flanders' vital commercial relationship with England was primarily the responsibility of the regency government at Brussels and Malines. Where commerce and politics were so closely entwined there was little point in accrediting members of the gentry and nobility as ambassadors, so day to day business and much of the preliminary negotiation leading to new treaties were entrusted to the governors of the Company of Merchant Adventurers. What is far less clear is the considerable disparity in the appointment of gentry and nobles to the French and Imperial courts. Whereas 75% of all embassies dispatched to France contained a member of either the gentry or aristocracy, only 49% of those sent to the emperor were similarly endowed. Although less marked, a considerable difference also exists in the number of gentry appointed to resident embassies. Where they took part in 64% of the resident missions sent to France, only 42% of those dispatched to the Imperial court were filled by gentleman. Overall, 25 more embassies sent to France in the period were led or contained an ambassador chosen from the gentry or nobility. Furthermore, the lion's share of missions led by members of the aristocracy were also accredited to France. In total sixteen embassies to Francis I were led by a peer, eleven more than were dispatched to all the Habsburg courts combined. Given the importance attached by Maximilian and Charles to ambassadorial status the considerably smaller role played by the English gentry and nobility in Henry's dealings with the Habsburgs is quite surprising.

In part the explanation for this disparity lies in the quite different diplomatic relations which England enjoyed with the houses of Valois and Habsburg. The three conflicts between England and France as well as the intermittent periods of cold war, were all brought to a close with conspicuous displays of renewed friendship in which members of the nobility played a prominent part. The 1514 embassy to Louis XII has already been touched upon.

The central issue unresolved by that short-lived *rapprochement*, England's retention of Tournai, was settled by the Treaty of London signed in October 1518, and ratified by the 600 strong

embassy led to Paris by the Earl of Worcester the following month. In May 1527 Thomas Boleyn, by then Viscount Rochford, was sent to France to ratify the Treaty of Westminster, a new pact of eternal friendship. Five months later Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, led the mission entrusted with presenting the French king with the Order of the Garter, another mark of the renewed amity enjoyed by Henry and Francis. When in the summer of 1546 the final Anglo-French war was brought to a close, another Viscount Lisle, this time John Dudley, attended both the mission which negotiated the peace and the later embassy dispatched to celebrate its completion. Sandwiched between these two embassies, Thomas Cheyne led a lavish mission to Paris to participate in the christening of the Dauphin's daughter, Elizabeth.

By contrast Anglo-Imperial relations were notably lacking in such ceremonial displays. The treaties signed between Henry and Charles were of two kinds: firstly, commercial agreements regulating trade between England and the Low Countries, the province of merchants and civilian lawyers; secondly the offensive alliances formed against France in 1512, 1521 and 1542. In every case discretion was the key word, and if it was applied in different ways, witness the Cardinal's shuttle mission to Bruges in August 1521 in his guise as honest broker, there was nevertheless no part for aristocratic ambassadors in such covert activities.

However, the peace agreements and offensive alliances signed by the English king represent only a fraction of the embassies performed by members of the gentry. Of far greater significance in explaining the parts played, in particular by the gentry, in Anglo-French and Anglo-Imperial diplomacy is the quite different natures of the Habsburg and Valois courts and the styles of kingship practised by Charles and Francis. The court of Charles V, whether in the Low Countries, Germany or Spain, owed much of its nature to the highly formalized protocol developed by the emperor's Burgundian ancestors in the 15th century. The Habsburg court, as with any other of the time, revolved about the prince. However, to an unrivalled degree Charles was distanced from his

subjects, his royal dignity deliberately magnified by his isolation.¹⁴¹ This inaccessibility was exacerbated by the emperor's naturally reserved character. Thomas Elyot defending his work as Henry's resident ambassador to Charles in 1531, drew particular attention to his success in drawing the emperor into conversation: 'he used with me more abundance of words than (as some of his counsail confessed) any ambassador before me had found in him.'¹⁴² Of course it was in Elyot's best interests to describe his embassy in the best light possible, it is nevertheless instructive that he considered one of his most salient achievements to have been actually getting Charles to talk.

In comparison Francis I and the court over which he ruled were considerably more relaxed. This is not to suggest that the Valois court lacked ceremony; the French king's routine was carefully ordered and access to his person strictly limited.¹⁴³ However, the most favoured of the king's subjects enjoyed an intimacy with him quite at odds with that permitted to even the inner circle of Charles or Henry's courtiers.¹⁴⁴ In 1526 John Clerk remarked with surprise on the unusually familiarity of Francis' courtiers:

he [Francis]....was mery all dyner tyme and had moche comunyc[ation] with the legatt, with us and with dyvers other lords which stode about hym, som lenyng on his ch[air], som upon hys table, all moche more famylyarly [than] is agreable to owr Englishe maners.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ For the influence of the Burgundian tradition on Charles' court see, W.Paravicini, 'The court of the Dukes of Burgundy: A model for Europe?', in *Prince, Patronage and the Nobility*, eds.R.G.Asch and A.M.Birke, (Oxford, 1991), pp.69-102, esp.98-100.

¹⁴² PRO, SP1/72, fos.36-37, (*L&P*, V, no.1554), Elyot to Cromwell, 18 November 1532.

¹⁴³ R.J.Knecht, 'Francis I, prince and patron of the northern Renaissance', in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400-1800*, ed. A.G.Dickens, (London, 1977), pp.99-119.

¹⁴⁴ Richardson, 'Anglo-French politics', *op.cit.*, pp.180-182.

¹⁴⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D X, fo.51v, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3173), Clerk to Wolsey, c.June 1526.

Furthermore, Francis' personal style was considerably more open and tactile than that of Charles. On numerous occasions ambassadorial dispatches to England recounted how the French king had personally greeted envoys, taking them by the hand and even embracing them. When in February 1519 Thomas Boleyn asked the French king whether in the event of his being elected emperor he would lead a crusade against the Turks, Francis grasped the ambassador's wrist in one hand and placed the other on his heart and swore solemnly that he would.¹⁴⁶ Thomas Cheyne attending his first audience with Francis in April 1526, was met by the French king in the middle of his chamber and taken in a firm embrace.¹⁴⁷ As part of a guided tour of Fontainebleau Francis showed John Wallop the recently decorated gallery. When the envoy found it difficult to climb up on a bench to examine the material used for the borders the French king gave him his hand and personally hauled him up, afterwards helping him dismount in a similar fashion.¹⁴⁸

Most importantly of all, however, Francis was prepared to integrate ambassadors into court life and his personal entourage. Richard Wingfield writing in April 1520 assured Henry, 'that I where hys naturall subiecte and of hys Pryve Chambre,.... he cowde no more familierlye use me then he doythe contenually; commaundyng me not to forbere to resorte to hym at my plesor at all tymes'.¹⁴⁹ In September 1520 Richard Jerningham reported that while other envoys kicked their heels he was invited to attend the king in his Privy Chamber morning and night.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, William Fitzwilliam found himself invited to lodge in Francis' house, and was apparently treated

¹⁴⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VII, fo.91, (*L&P*, III i, no.101), Boleyn to Wolsey, 28 February 1519.

¹⁴⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX, fo.179, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2087), Cheyne to Henry, 12 April 1526.

¹⁴⁸ *St.P.*, VIII, pp.484-485, (*L&P*, XVI, no.276), Wallop to Henry, 17 November 1540.

¹⁴⁹ *St.P.*, VI, p.57, (*L&P*, III i, no.749), Wingfield to Henry, 18 April 1520. Richardson, *op.cit.*, pp.124-129.

¹⁵⁰ PRO, SP1/21, fos.53-54, (*ibid*, no.987), Jerningham to Henry, 21 September 1520.

less like an envoy than one of the king's chamber.¹⁵¹

Very often the opportunities which such open behaviour created were best exploited by members of the gentry. It was they who were most suited to participate in Francis' daily pastimes and talk to the king about those subjects which most interested him. As William Fitzwilliam observed in a letter to Wolsey, 'And if it were not that I had some skylle of huntynge wherin he, [Francis] hath a grete appetite, and by reason thereof I come [near to hym] I shuld know litle or nothing.'¹⁵² Francis' seemingly insatiable passion for hunting resulted in invitations to a succession of envoys to join the king in his favourite pastime. While still dauphin Francis was eager to involve ambassadors in his hunting expeditions, including the Duke of Suffolk and the Marquis of Dorset in a particularly successful chase in which both men speared boars.¹⁵³ Shortly after his arrival in France Fitzwilliam received a visit from Francis' huntmaster, who gave him some helpful pointers in the French style of the sport.¹⁵⁴ Apparently the French king spoke to the ambassador regularly about hunting, inviting him to take part in nearly every expedition that he organized.¹⁵⁵ Other men urged to join the French king when he took to the field included Richard Wingfield and Anthony Browne, although both were less impressed than Fitzwilliam by the French style of hunting.¹⁵⁶ Francis also often engaged Henry's envoys in conversation about military developments. He

¹⁵¹ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.23, (*ibid*, no.1212), Fitzwilliam to Henry, 27 February 1521.

¹⁵² BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.36, (*L&P*, III i, no.1278), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, 14 May 1521.

¹⁵³ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VI, fo.188, (*L&P*, I ii, no.3430), Dorset to Wolsey, 9 November 1514.

¹⁵⁴ PRO, SP1/21, fo.204, (*L&P*, III i, no.1160), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, December 1520.

¹⁵⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.21, (*ibid*, no.1198), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, March 1521,

¹⁵⁶ *St.P.*, VI, p.57, (*ibid*, no.748), Wingfield to Henry, 18 April 1520; *ibid*, p.598, (*L&P*, IV i, no.3368), Browne to Henry, 21 August 1527.

boasted to both Wingfield and Fitzwilliam about the new additions to his fleet which included three galleons capable of coming so close into shore that both infantry and cavalry could disembark via special bridges built into the ships.¹⁵⁷ On another occasion Wingfield presented Francis with a sword from Henry, and talked for some time with both the king and Admiral Bonnivet about new designs in armour which permitted the use of heavier weapons as well as greater ease of movement.¹⁵⁸

Of course it did not follow that simply because Francis was prepared to talk to Henry's envoys about his hobbies he would also divulge state secrets. Nevertheless, the greater the access an ambassador, particularly a resident one, could have to a prince, the better his chances of finding out up-to-date information of a reliable nature. Furthermore, the opportunity of speaking directly to the king about whatever issues were currently pressing was surely invaluable. Henry and his advisers were no doubt well aware of the potential advantages to be gained from such a situation and through the accreditation of primarily noble ambassadors sought to profit as much as possible from the situation.

An extension of this approach was the appointment of Henry's personal attendants, the gentlemen of the privy chamber, to the French court. Richard Wingfield, the first ambassador to draw attention to Francis' unusually generous treatment, was also the first envoy dispatched from the king's newly reconstituted privy chamber.¹⁵⁹ At his first interview with the French king Wingfield explained that although Henry was quite content with Boleyn's service he nevertheless wished to display his affection to Francis by accrediting one of his 'here and trusty familiars' as

¹⁵⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.21, (*L&P*, III i, no.1198), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, March 1521.

¹⁵⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.181, (*L&P*, III i, no. 685), Wingfield to Henry, 16 March 1520.

¹⁵⁹ D.R.Starkey, 'Intimacy', *op.cit.*, pp.71-80.

resident ambassador.¹⁶⁰ Wingfield's appointment marked the beginning of a succession of both resident and special embassies sent to the Valois court manned by the king's personal attendants. In each case the ambassadors' instructions underlined the point made by Wingfield in 1520. Thus Thomas Cheyne, Henry's last resident in France before the outbreak of war in May 1522, informed Francis:

in consideracon of the perfect love and amytie that is established betwyxt theym, hys grace coud not be satisfyed onlesse he [sent] oon of hys own good and famylyar servitors to hys hyghnesse for perfect knowledge of the same.¹⁶¹

With the return of peace between England and France in the autumn of 1525, the privy chamber once again became actively involved in Henry's diplomacy, albeit in a different way. From 1525 the role of the privy chamber in the king's resident diplomacy became far less dominant. A few of the king's personal attendants were posted to permanent embassies, notably Francis Bryan, George Boleyn and William Howard, though the missions these men performed were brief and infrequent. One explanation for this diminished role is Wolsey's concern that by entrusting diplomatic tasks to men so close to Henry he gave his political opponents at court the opportunity to play a greater part in the conduct of foreign affairs. While clerics like Clerk and Taylor were likely to be loyal to Wolsey, courtiers such as Cheyne and Bryan were in direct competition with the cardinal and would be eager to offer Henry advice often contradictory to that proffered by Wolsey.¹⁶²

The argument is not entirely convincing. Assuming Wolsey did perceive the gentlemen of the

¹⁶⁰ PRO. SP1/19 fos.200-210, (*L&P*, III i, no.629), instructions to Richard Wingfield, February 1520.

¹⁶¹ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.201, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1991), instructions for Thomas Cheyne, January 1522.

¹⁶² Richardson, *op.cit.*, pp.157-159.

privy chamber as rivals would it not have been in his interest to distance them from the king as often and for as long as possible? How better than by appointment to a resident embassy. As Gardiner was to discover in the next decade, appointment as permanent ambassador, even to the French court, could easily come to feel like exile. On the other hand if the cardinal wished to exclude Henry's attendants from foreign policy issues the best way of doing so was to keep them as far away from diplomacy as possible. By supporting the dispatch of men like Cheyne and Browne on special missions Wolsey achieved the worst of both worlds. He ensured that the king was not separated from his favourites for long and that when they returned to England they were in an excellent position to advise Henry on his foreign policy, at least where it concerned France. Furthermore, although in the three years after the cardinal's fall a number of residents dispatched to France were drawn from Henry's privy chamber, between 1532 and 1547 only two men, Francis Bryan and Lord William Howard, enjoyed both distinctions. Therefore, in addition to the fact that Wolsey had little reason to discontinue the practice begun in the early 1520s, his fall did not, certainly in the long term, lead to its resumption. It seems far more likely that the main reason for the withdrawal of Henry's personal attendants from permanent diplomacy was the king's own reluctance to be separated from those of his inner circle for long periods of time. As early as 1521 Pace forwarded a request on the king's behalf to Wolsey:

Ples itt your grace, the king's grace advertise the same that he nowe haith verraye fewe to geve attendence uppon hys person in hys pryveye chambre because that he haith geven licence to Sir Wylliam Kyngston, and Sir William Tyler lyeth syke. Wherfor he desyrith your grace to sende home Sir Henry Guyldforde and Fraunces Brian unto hym wyth sum letters off your occurrences there or other erandis as ye shall thynke meate.¹⁶³

Given the relatively small number of Henry's personal attendants, certainly in comparison to those of Francis, the prolonged absence of two or three at any given time would undoubtedly have irked the king, never a man to whom sacrifice came easily - if at all!

¹⁶³ PRO, SP1/23, fo.62, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1597), Pace to Wolsey, 21 September 1521.

Furthermore, one must question how great a difference the appointment of a gentleman of the privy chamber really made to the outcome of an embassy. Certainly the presence of one of the king's attendants on a diplomatic mission could give it a greater degree of significance. Thus Castillon wrote to Montmorency in 1538:

Davantaige je vous supplie, monseigneur, qu'on face tousjours bonne chère audict Bryant....Et si vous avez rien à débatre ou des mariages ou des conditions de la paix, faictes les y trouver bonnes car le roy son maistre s'arreste fort à ce qu'il en escript.¹⁶⁴

The French ambassador's identification of Bryan as the most important of Henry's envoys in France is made all the more interesting when one considers that amongst his colleagues was Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, whose counsel, even throughout his exile as Henry's resident ambassador to Francis, could not be lightly discarded. It is worth noting, however, that on other occasions foreign observers seem to have put greater store by the rank of an ambassador than his status as a royal attendant. Upon receiving news of William Howard's appointment to the French court in 1541 Chapuys informed Mary that, 'ledit sr roy [Francis] monstroist avoir plaisir tant pour le respect dudict millort que pour avoir toujours tenee le duc de Norfocq pour son amy'.¹⁶⁵ In this case it was not so much Howard's status as one of the king's personal attendants which made his appointment significant as his position within the nobility and connection to Norfolk.

One must even question the sincerity of the repeated expressions of gratitude made by Francis to Henry for the appointment of gentlemen of his privy chamber. Although it was true that the French king invited Wingfield, Jerningham and Cheyne to come to his personal apartments when and as they chose, he also extended the offer to Fitzwilliam; a well born courtier and friend of the

¹⁶⁴ Kaulek, p.54, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.1102), Castillon to Montmorency, 31 May 1538.

¹⁶⁵ PRO 31/18/3/1, fos.410-411, (*L&P*, XVI i, no.554), Chapuys to Mary, 22 February 1541.

king, but not yet one of his close personal attendants. Conscious of his position Fitzwilliam did not initially exploit the offer to the full, and in so doing caused considerable surprise at the French court.¹⁶⁶ Francis knew full well that the ambassador was not one of Henry's personal attendants and clearly did not care. A strong testimony to Fitzwilliam's popularity at court was provided by his colleague, Richard Jerningham:

I assure your grace the said Mr Fitzwilliam hath ordered hym self soo here that he hath the king's favour, my ladies and the Admyrall's, and is in as good credence as well with thym and with the counsaill as any man of his degree that hath been here of a great space.¹⁶⁷

The French were keen to maintain good relations with England for as long as possible, therefore the envoy was extended the same five star treatment as his predecessors. Contrast this with the experience of Anthony Browne sent to France as a special envoy in September 1538. Browne, a gentleman of the privy chamber for nearly twenty years and well known at the French court, was housed three miles from Francis, refused interviews with the king and snubbed by his advisers and courtiers.¹⁶⁸ His status made no difference, what determined his treatment was the current state of Franco-Imperial relations, at that time on the road to recovery, thus leading to a cooling

¹⁶⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.15, D.F.Vodden, 'The correspondence of William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton', M.Phil, (2 vols., London, 1972). vol.II, pp.265-268, (*L&P*, III i, no.1176), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, 22 March 1521.

¹⁶⁷ PRO, SP1/22, fos.191-192, (*L&P*, III i, no.1337), Jerningham to Wolsey, 9 June 1521.

¹⁶⁸ PRO SP1/137, fos.227-228, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.641), Browne to Cromwell, 17 October 1538. Unfortunately the original manuscript has faded to the point where much of it is now illegible, we can nevertheless gain a clear impression of how Browne and Bonner were treated from Henry's reaction to their report, 'And wheras we perceve, not only by your letters and of your college allsoo, but by sundry other most creadable reaportes and relations made unto us, that ye have had very slender receul at your arryvaile and worse entreteignment sythens the same, as well in appointment of lodging as other your necessaries to be hadd ther, and much under that heigh and most honorable estate you beare, being our ambassadour ther, and representing in maner our personne, to our no little mervaille that in a cuntrey called of so much civilitie, and amonge personnes taken of so gentle and curtoyse entreteignment, ye find so little gentylnes and curtoyse, being veray displeasaunt of such proceding with you by them whom we have so much esteemed and loved: ' *St.P.*, VIII, p.73, (*ibid*, no.642), Henry to Browne, October 1538.

of Francis' friendship for Henry.

One should not overstate the point. Just as the accreditation of high ranking nobles to any prince could be a signal honour and indicate a genuine commitment to whatever proposals might currently be under discussion, so the arrival of one of Henry's royal attendants, did not go unmarked. One only has to look at the poor track record of ecclesiastical ambassadors accredited to Francis I to appreciate that the king worked better with lay ambassadors of noble birth. Nevertheless, what determined how these men were treated was not their status as gentlemen of Henry's privy chamber, but rather the distinctive nature of the French court and its prince; the current state of Anglo-French relations, and the personal skills and sociability of the individual ambassadors.

Finally one must question just how innovative Henry's use of his personal attendants in his dealings with France actually was. Of course he was the first English prince to appoint gentlemen of the privy chamber as resident ambassadors since it was in his reign that the privy chamber officially came into existence and the system of resident diplomacy was properly established. Yet Henry VII had also made frequent use of his courtiers in diplomacy including his personal attendants and members of his 'secret chamber'. The two men who accompanied John Stile on his 1505 mission to Spain - a highly sensitive embassy concerned with evaluating the personal suitability of Joanna of Naples as a possible bride for the king - were Francis Marzin and Thomas Braybrooke, both members of Henry's secret chamber.¹⁶⁹ Another of the king's personal attendants, Matthew Baker, travelled to France in 1506 entrusted with a highly sensitive mission.¹⁷⁰ Three years before Henry VIII dispatched the first of his gentlemen of the privy chamber to Francis I, the Earl of Worcester, Great Chamberlain of the Royal Household, had

¹⁶⁹ D.R.Starkey, 'The king's privy chamber, 1485-1547', D.Phil, (Cambridge, 1973), p.38.

¹⁷⁰ S.J.Gunn, 'The Courtiers of Henry VII', *EHR*, 108, (1993), 23-49, esp.pp.40-41.

made a request to the emperor Maximilian that he might come to him frequently as one of his familiar servants.¹⁷¹ In the event the request was declined, it does not alter the fact that Worcester sought to gain diplomatic advantage by integrating himself into the royal household of the prince to whom he had been accredited. Members of Henry's household appointed to the Valois court in the 1520s may have possessed different titles to which attention was deliberately drawn in a manner it had not been before, but the role of the king's personal attendants in English diplomacy was established years before the arrival of Richard Wingfield in France in February 1520.

Outside Anglo-French relations the role of the privy chamber was negligible. Both the institutional and personal differences of the Valois and Habsburg courts and their princes, ensured that whatever advantages Henry might gain from sending his attendants to the former court would not be forthcoming in the latter. As a result little or no effort was made to exploit the status of the king's personal attendants with the Habsburgs. Only two resident ambassadors, Nicholas Harvey and Henry Knyvett, came from the privy chamber. Although neither the letters of credence or instructions for these missions are extant, those of another of Henry's personal attendants, Richard Wingfield, do remain. In April 1525 Wingfield accompanied Cuthbert Tunstall to Spain replete with plans for the conquest of France. Their letters of credence explained that they had been chosen because they were, 'in his [Henry's] special confidence.....being as largely and amply informed of the kinges veray intencion, hert, and mynde as can be.'¹⁷² In this case it was Wingfield's position on Henry's council and not his place in the king's privy chamber which was brought to the emperor's notice.

¹⁷¹ 'I, the Lorde Chamberlain, spoke to thEmpror at my first comyng, desiring that I might come unto hym familiarly as one of his servants at all tymes...But after he sent me worde by Louis Maraton that I shuld not come to hym unto he sent for us and when he wold have us he wold send for us, for else hys besynesse was to be soo grete he might not atende us,' BL, Cotton MS, Galba B V fo.91, (*L&P*, II, no.2940), Worcester and Tunstall to Wolsey, 18 February 1517.

¹⁷² *St.P.*, VI, p.412, (*L&P*, IV i, no.1212), Instructions for Cuthbert Tunstall and Richard Wingfield, March 1525.

Little is known about the role of the privy chamber at the court of Charles V, but its role in Imperial diplomacy does not appear to have been great. Certainly none of the men sent to reside at the French or English courts were chosen from the ranks of the emperor's personal attendants, dominated as they were by clerics like Mendoza, Chapuys and Bonvalot. Before any idea about the overall prominence of Charles' privy chamber in his diplomacy can be gained much more work needs to be done on the subject.

The *gentilhommes de la chambre du roi* of Francis I were certainly no less active as ambassadors than their English counterparts. In all Francis accredited 28 of his *gentilhommes de la chambre* as ambassadors, nine more than Henry.¹⁷³ Undoubtedly, a significant proportion of the diplomatic missions carried out by these men were accredited to the English court. Four ambassadors, Antoine des Préz, s.de Lettes, sr.de Montpezat, Gabriel de la Guiche, Guillaume Du Bellay and Louis de Perreau, sr.de Castillon, performed seven resident embassies to England between 1519 and 1547, nearly twice the number carried out by their fellow *gentilhommes* to other courts during the period.¹⁷⁴ The role of Francis' attendants was no less evident in the frequent special missions dispatched by the king to Henry. Charles du Soliers, sr.de Morette journeyed to the English court on five occasions, Du Bellay and Pierre de Warty three times, and Castillon twice. Yet a note of caution should be sounded before these statistics are held up as evidence for the existence of a special relationship between the courts of England and France. If Francis most often employed his *gentilhommes de la chambre du roi* as ambassadors to Henry, he nevertheless appears to have been quite prepared to dispatch them elsewhere. If du Soliers was a frequent visitor to London, his only resident embassy was to the Imperial court to which he was accredited in 1529.¹⁷⁵ Guillaume Du Bellay may have spent much time in England, but he spent still more in

¹⁷³ Potter, *France*, p.78.

¹⁷⁴ *CAF*, IX, pp.17-33.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.41.

the courts of the German princes throughout the 1530s.¹⁷⁶ Other active ambassadors drawn from the *chambre du roi* played no role in Anglo-French diplomacy whatsoever. Charles Du Plessis, sr.de Liancourt and Adrien Hangest, sr.de Genlis served as residents to Switzerland and the Low Countries respectively.¹⁷⁷ Charles de Cossé, sr.de Brissac carried out no less than six embassies to the emperor,¹⁷⁸ while Etienne de Laigue, sr.de Beauvais was appointed special envoy to Germany four times and to Scotland twice.¹⁷⁹ If one concedes that the dispatch of a prince's personal attendants was intended to display a mark of special affection to the individual receiving them, then it must also be acknowledged that Francis was a good deal more generous with his favours than Henry.

Soldier

Of all the tasks Henry's gentry and nobility were periodically obliged to perform, for most the least onerous was service in the king's army and navy. Very few of the gentry and aristocracy chosen to serve abroad as ambassadors had not first travelled either to France or Scotland as part of an invading army or punitive amphibious operation. Of the aristocracy the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk had led armies in every one of Henry's major campaigns.¹⁸⁰ As Lord Herbert, Charles

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp.6-17.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.48,75.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, pp.37-46.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pp.10-17, 35.

¹⁸⁰ For Norfolk's campaigns see, Head, *op.cit.*, pp.33-39, 59-61, 212-215. For Suffolk see S.J.Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c.1484-1545*, (London, 1988), pp.14-18, 73-76, 191-196. For a more detailed account of Suffolk's 1522 campaign see, Gunn, 'The Duke of Suffolk's march on Paris, 1523', *EHR*, 101, (1986), 596-634. For the part played by both men in Henry's final campaign see, L.MacMahon, 'The English invasion of France, 1544', MA, (Warwick, 1993), pp.60-80.

Somerset commanded the rear battle in Henry's 1513 invasion of France,¹⁸¹ while Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset had led the decidedly less successful invasion of Guienne the previous year.¹⁸² At the close of the reign it was the Earl of Hertford who was given responsibility for the rather more physical aspects of the rough wooing. The gentry were no less conspicuous. Edward Poynings had fought with Henry VII at Bosworth and led the English expedition into Ireland in the mid-1490s.¹⁸³ John Wallop's long military career was already well under way when he accompanied Thomas Howard on his raid on the Breton coast in April 1513.¹⁸⁴ Other captains in the fleet included William Sidney and Thomas Cheyne.¹⁸⁵ Later in the year William Fitzwilliam, Nicholas Carew and Richard Jerningham all accompanied the king on his first invasion of France.¹⁸⁶ Among those gentlemen knighted by the Earl of Surrey after his raid on Brittany in 1522 were Anthony Browne, Francis Bryan and John Russell.¹⁸⁷

Many of the nobility and gentry later accredited in particular to the French court had first served as officers in either the Calais Pale or Tournai. Richard Wingfield had served both as Deputy and High Marshal of Calais before his appointment as resident to France in 1520.¹⁸⁸ John Wallop,

¹⁸¹ Cruickshank, *Army Royal*, *op.cit.*, p.27.

¹⁸² Hall, *Chronicles*, pp.527-532.

¹⁸³ W.Palmer, *The Problem of Ireland in Tudor Foreign Policy, 1485-1603*, (New York), pp.15-26.

¹⁸⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VI, fo.107, (*L&P*, I ii, no.1881), Edward Echingham to Wolsey, 5 May 1513.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ The accounts dealing with expenses entailed during the siege of Tournai included an expenditure of £1 for six coats of green velvet, for the king's companions three of whom were Fitzwilliam, Cheyne and Jerningham. *L&P*, I ii, no.2562.

¹⁸⁷ Hall, *Chronicles*, p.643.

¹⁸⁸ For a complete list of officers in Calais between 1485 and 1547 see, D.Grummy, 'Calais, 1485-1547: A study in early Tudor government and politics', Ph.D, (London, 1997), pp.219-228.

who would spend much of the 1530s in France was High Marshal from 1524 to 1530 and lieutenant of Calais castle from 1529 until his appointment to the French residency in 1532. William Fitzwilliam, already vice-admiral of the English fleet at the time of his first embassy to France in 1521, was respectively lieutenant of Guisnes and Calais castles from 1523 to 1526 and 1526 to 1529. Another English resident at the French court, Richard Jerningham, had been prominent in the government of Tournai during its brief period of occupation by the English, serving first as treasurer before being appointed governor of the city in January 1517.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, on the Scottish border it was not unusual for military governors or garrison officers to be involved in diplomatic affairs. Lord Thomas Dacre, Warden General of all three marches from 1511 until his death in 1525, not only accompanied Nicholas West on his embassy to the Scottish court in 1512, but also regularly took part in the negotiation of truces as well as sitting on numerous commissions called to resolve outstanding border disputes.¹⁹⁰ Sir Thomas Clifford, captain of Berwick for part of the 1530s also performed several missions to Scotland.

The use of garrison officers on diplomatic missions had definite advantages most notably the range of contacts such men were able to make use of while abroad. As governors of Calais or Tournai, men such as Wingfield and Jerningham were expected to maintain networks of informants to give the government early warning of any possible encroachments planned by the French. Frequent letters from Wingfield to Wolsey during those periods he was actually resident at Calais deal with the payment and disposition of spies.¹⁹¹ On other occasions the cardinal

¹⁸⁹ C.G.Cruickshank, *The English Occupation of Tournai*, (Oxford, 1973), pp.44, 46, 54, 96-97 and 100.

¹⁹⁰ For Dacre's activities as Warden see, S.G.Ellis, *Tudor Frontiers and Noble Power: The Making of the British State*, (Oxford, 1995), pp. 81-107, 147-163.

¹⁹¹ PRO, SP1/11, fos.12, 97-98, BL, Cotton Caligula E I, fo.103, (*L&P*, II i, nos.665, 953, II ii, no.2761), Wingfield to Wolsey, 6 July, 27 September 1516 and 9 January 1517. See also Wingfield's accounts for the payment of spies, from 1 July 1515 to 1 August 1518, PRO, SP1/17, fos.46-49, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4406).

issued Jerningham with specific instructions for the deployment of his informers, primarily with regard to gaining information about the movements of Richard de la Pole.¹⁹² On the Scottish border Thomas Dacre was no less active. In June 1515 he wrote to Wolsey from Morpeth complaining that he had maintained a network of spies in Scotland for the previous three years and was now owed £132 7s 4¹/₂d.¹⁹³ Although references to sources of information made by Henry's envoys whilst posted at other courts are invariably vague often coming from, 'a servant', 'a priest' or even just, 'my man here', it is surely a reasonable assumption to make that at least in some cases these were contacts they had already developed in their capacities as military governors and garrison officers.

Of still greater value to the government was the personal experience and knowledge of military affairs which many of the ambassadors drawn from the gentry and nobility were able to make use of while on diplomatic service. Particularly useful was the technical information they could supply to Henry and his advisers. During his first embassy to the French court, William Fitzwilliam sent a stream of military intelligence back to Wolsey. This included warnings of increased naval preparations at both Brest and New Haven which the ambassador believed were being made in anticipation of war with England, and reports on the strength of French fortifications and troop dispositions.¹⁹⁴ This latter information passed to Wolsey during his

¹⁹² 'Master Jernygham....it is the king's pleasure that ye with al diligence do sende some discrete, wise and sure felowe being a Burgonyon unto Meyse in Lorayn to understonde and bring you perfect report of Richard de la Pole; where he is, and what he dothe with al other things concernyng hym and his affaires....And in likewise that ye sende an other in to the corte of Fraunce by whom ye may be ascertayned what preparacions or other occurants be there; taking suche ordre that ye may be dailly advertised aswel from thise places as from al other parties aboute you where any good knowlege may be had.' PRO, SP1/14, fo.223, (*L&P*, II ii, no.2846), Wolsey to Jerningham, 29 January 1517. See also SP1/15, fo.11, (*ibid*, no.2967), Jerningham to Henry 14 February 1517.

¹⁹³ PRO, SP1/11, fos.4-6, (*L&P*, II i, no.596), Dacre to Wolsey, June 1515.

¹⁹⁴ BL.Cotton MS. Caligula D VIII, fos.71, 82, 87, Vodden, *op.cit.*, pp.358-360, 382-385, 386-389, (*L&P*, III i, nos.1441, 1501, 1521), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, 28 July, 24 and 30 August 1521.

embassy to Calais and Bruges between August and November 1521 would no doubt have been especially welcome. In late August Fitzwilliam wrote to the Cardinal detailing the numbers of French troops Francis had told him he would be committing to his invasion of Hainnault. The Duke of Bourbon was bringing 12,000 foot and 2,000 horse, the Duke of Vendôme would soon be arriving with a further 10,000 infantry and 400 'spears', and Francis had also hired 6,000 landsnechts as well as some thousands of Swiss mercenaries.¹⁹⁵ Although Fitzwilliam could not be certain as to the real number of soldiers available to Francis he was extremely doubtful with regard to the French king's claims. He had only counted 3,000 soldiers in Troyes, yet the French king was boasting that in less than two weeks he would march with more than ten times that number. One thing the ambassador did assure Wolsey was that Francis' efforts to gather an army for the relief of Picardy and invasion of Hainnault were denuding the country of troops. Whatever the French king's battlefield strength he ran the very real risk of over-extending himself, and was certainly in a far more vulnerable position than he would have the king and cardinal believe.¹⁹⁶

When Fitzwilliam finally accompanied Francis on his campaign to relieve Mézières and Tournai some at least of his doubts were confirmed. By October Francis was claiming he had 12,000 Swiss under his command, far more than the ambassador had been able to count.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, the French king had informed Fitzwilliam that his artillery train would include 16 great canons, 12 culverins and 12 demi-culverins, yet his own survey of the French ordinance had revealed only four great canons, six culverins and ten smaller guns of assorted calibre.¹⁹⁸ For Wolsey still

¹⁹⁵ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fos.89-91, (*L&P*, III ii, 1521), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, Troyes, 30 August 1521. The number of Swiss soldiers is illegible.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII fo.102, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1643), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, 7 October 1521.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

seeking to arbitrate between the French and Imperial commissioners at Calais such information would have been most useful. Given the repeated claims made by both parties with regard to the respective strengths of their armies, even a partially accurate report from a trusted source which indicated that the French at least were exaggerating would have served to reassure the cardinal. Not only did such knowledge put him in a stronger position when negotiating with Duprat and his colleagues, it would also have been comforting to know of French military limitations given the increasing likelihood that England would be at war with her the following year.¹⁹⁹

Even when the prospect of war with France appeared distant, however, the government was quite prepared to use ambassadors with military experience to obtain better intelligence about French troop numbers and fortifications. Thus in 1536, as Francis and Charles returned to war Henry instructed Sir John Wallop, joint resident ambassador in France to:

devise to reasort to the Frenche king's campe and suche principal fortresses as ye may have recourse vnto without danger and diligently to vue and peruse the force and strengthe of the same, conveyyng such lykelihoods therupon as ye wold gather if ye shuld be an actor in the same playe yourself.²⁰⁰

Given the ostensibly cordial state of Anglo-French relations at this time one might fairly question the ethics of Henry's instructions, yet the opportunism which lay behind them is understandable. In the only war between the houses of Habsburg and Valois which did not include the Tudors, one of Henry's most experienced officers had access, albeit limited, to the defences which might one day be used to repulse England's own armies. In such circumstances the most important

¹⁹⁹ See Pace's letter to Wolsey, 'His grace sayth he percevyth by the sayde extractes off Sir Wylliam Fitzwylliam's letters that there is boyth fere and scarcytie of moneye in Fraunce whiche 2 thyngis ar mete muche for hys intenydye purpose.' *St.P.*, I, p.45, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1519), Pace to Wolsey, 29 August 1521.

²⁰⁰ BL, Add MS, 25,114, fos.201-205, (*L&P*, XI, no.445), Henry to Wallop, 12 September 1536.

aspect of Wallop's diplomatic status was the slight freedom it gave him to practise his trade as a soldier.

On various occasions Henry's envoys were called upon to make more active use of their military expertise. In May 1513 at the conclusion of the negotiations with Margaret and Maximilian for the joint attack on France, the English embassy dispatched to the Low Countries split in two. Thomas Boleyn and John Yong returned to England while Edward Poyning and Richard Wingfield remained behind to hire mercenaries and organize their transportation to Calais.²⁰¹ Although the older man stayed for only a short period, Wingfield continued in Flanders for another six weeks, marshalling soldiers and ensuring that they liaised successfully with the main body of the king's army in Calais.²⁰²

Just over a year later Henry dispatched a far more lavish embassy to France in order to celebrate the marriage of his sister Mary to Louis XII. Even before the celebrations had finished certain of the envoys had begun discussions with Louis and his advisers for a joint attack on Aragon. Among their number were Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Charles Somerset, Earl of Worcester, and Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset. The military credentials of both Worcester and Suffolk as the leading generals of Henry's 1513 campaign were well established. However, is it surely no coincidence that while Norfolk and Surrey returned home after Mary's wedding, Dorset, the leader of the unsuccessful 1512 expedition against Guienne, remained. As the man who *suffered most humiliation at the hands of Ferdinand*, Thomas Grey's inclusion in the 1514 talks might well have been taken as a signal of the king's commitment to an invasion of Aragon. On a more practical level, however, Grey knew more about the logistical and tactical difficulties of

²⁰¹ PRO, SP1/4, fo.71, (*L&P*, I ii, no.1918), Accounts of Poyning and Wingfield in Flanders.

²⁰² For the dates of this embassy see Appendix A. Wingfield's activities are briefly outlined in PRO, SP1/4, fo.71 and SP1/229, fo.179, (*L&P*, I ii, nos.1930, 1950).

launching an expeditionary force into Spain than any other of Henry's generals.²⁰³ Given his lack of diplomatic experience and the fact that among others the embassy already contained a duke and an earl, it seems quite plausible to assume that at least in the latter stages of the mission, the Marquis's continued presence in France was primarily due to his military expertise.

More than a decade later when England found herself once again co-operating with France military experience as much as diplomatic finesse was the order of the day. In December 1527 Jean Du Bellay wrote to Montmorency outlining Wolsey's plan to free the pope of Imperial pressure by providing him with a 'presidy' of 2,000 men. The force would consist of two groups of 1,000 soldiers, the first to be raised by Francis and led by the Vicomte de Turenne, the second to be provided by Henry and led by his ambassador in Rome, Sir Gregorio de Casali.²⁰⁴ To discuss the plan with Francis Henry intended to dispatch two of his most useful ambassadors, John Clerk, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Sir William Fitzwilliam, who, the French envoy explained, had been specifically chosen to discuss all matters of war. In the event the embassy was never sent but the following summer as the war between Francis and Charles was drawing to a close, another embassy, this time consisting of the Duke of Suffolk and Fitzwilliam was dispatched. Its aim was to discuss with Francis possible peace overtures to be made to the emperor, and in the event of his refusal, the most effective means by which such terms might be imposed upon him.²⁰⁵ As before Fitzwilliam had been chosen for the mission primarily because he was a man of skill and valour versed in the arts of war.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ For this campaign see, Hall, *Chronicles*, pp.527-533.

²⁰⁴ Bourrilly, *Ambassades*, p.489, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.5028), du Bellay to Montmorency, 13 December 1528.

²⁰⁵ *L&P*, IV iii, no.5535, Campeggio to Salviati, 12 May 1529.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

In preparation for his final war with Francis, Henry dispatched several embassies largely devoted to military affairs. In July 1542 Thomas Seymour was sent to Germany to liaise with Ferdinand during his forthcoming campaign against the Turks in Hungary. A crucial part of his mission, however, involved contacting two mercenary leaders, Barons von Heideck and von Fegelstein, with whom he was to discuss the possibility of raising soldiers for the king.²⁰⁷ Instructed to meet the captains in Nuremberg, Seymour was given a detailed list of questions to put to them.²⁰⁸ How many soldiers could they raise and of what type? Where would they be raised from and by what routes would they come to Calais and the Low Countries? How long would they take to arrive, and what would be their transportation costs? What type and quality of weapons would they have, and who would be their captains? How large would their individual companies be? What wages would they demand?²⁰⁹ Of course it hardly required an experienced soldier to read out such a list, but one would think that military experience would have been invaluable in interpreting the answers and where necessary eliciting further information. As the following years would demonstrate mercenary leaders could be every bit as difficult to pin down as the most experienced diplomats, and a sound grasp of military affairs would certainly have been a great advantage when dealing with them.

At roughly the same time that Seymour was travelling towards Hungary, John Wallop received instructions to arrange a clandestine meeting with one of the emperor's leading generals, Adrien de Croy, s.du Roelx.²¹⁰ Eustace Chapuys had reported to Henry that during his recent return to the Low Countries he had spoken with de Roelx who urged him to suggest to the English king a

²⁰⁷ *St.P.*, IX, p.201, (*L&P*, XVII, 941), Thomas Seymour to Henry, 12 October 1542.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.231, (*ibid*, no.1192), Henry to Seymour, 12 December 1542.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*.

²¹⁰ *St.P.*, IX, p.90, (*L&P*, XVII, no.496), Henry to Wallop, 15 July 1542.

joint Anglo-Burgundian attack on the border town of Montreuil.²¹¹ In the process of being refortified, du Roeulx argued that Montreuil was still extremely vulnerable to attack and might easily be taken with six or seven thousand men. That Wallop and du Roeulx had been comrades in Henry's last war with France no doubt influenced the king's choice of envoy,²¹² yet as his instructions make clear it was primarily the military experience of the veteran soldier which led to his dispatch:

in the discoursing wherof you shall diligently serche what he is hable to furnishe of horsmen and fotemen sodainly within two or thre dayes warnyng or lesse, what waye and ordre he wolde think mete to be devised and kept, if suche an entreprise shuld in dede be put in ure, what furniture of ordinaunce and munition they culd spare by waye of lone to remayne in the same, tyl we might from hens fully furnishe it, and generally what he thinkethe in every branche mete to be remembred in suche an entreprise, wherin as your oune experience knowethe sonwhat, soo we wold you shuld of youself make all suche objections as you shall think mete uppon the pointes of your conference, and cast all perilles that may in your judgment ensue of it;²¹³

Wallop duly met du Roeulx and forwarded to the king a positive assessment of the Burgundian general's plan. In the event various military and diplomatic exigencies ensured that no assault on Montreuil was attempted that year, it is, however, worth noting that two years later the same time town became a key target of Henry's last invasion of France.

Of course not all the men who attended the type of diplomatic missions discussed above had military backgrounds. It was the humanist scholar Richard Pace who was entrusted with the 1516

²¹¹ *St.P.*, IX, p.90, (*L&P*, XVII, no.496), Henry to Wallop, 15 July 1542.

²¹² Reporting on his meeting with de Roeulx, Wallop told the council, 'Of long tyme I have byn acquayneted with hym, lyving in garnison togethers at St.Omers when I was left there by my Lord of Norffolk, at whiche tyme he praictised with me for the taking of the said towne of Mountrell to be don upon a market day; and in my opinion thenterprise of the same wil never owt of his hed.' *St.P.*, IX, p.92, (*L&P*, XVII no.519), Wallop to the Privy Council, 20 July 1542.

²¹³ *St.P.*, IX, p.90, (*L&P*, XVII, no.496), Henry to Wallop, 15 July 1542.

embassy to the emperor and the Swiss, and Pace again who was jointly accredited with Russell to liaise with Bourbon throughout 1524 and 1525.²¹⁴ Undoubtedly the long diplomatic experience of the king's secretary as well as his thorough knowledge of Italian affairs were invaluable to Wolsey and Henry. Nevertheless, the demands placed on an ambassador performing embassies within war zones or to frontier outposts, both by his government and the environment within which he had to operate were best met by those men for whom such conditions were not entirely alien. Their military experience enabled them to supply the king with technical reports concerned with troop movements and fortification strengths, as well as balanced assessments of the strategic positions of allied and enemy forces alike. Indeed upon occasion the failure by the English government to dispatch an envoy with military experience could be the cause of diplomatic friction. In May 1544 Mary of Hungary wrote to Chapuys rather insensitively complaining that the English ambassador, Richard Layton, was 'malade jusques à la mort qui ne puelit negocier'.²¹⁵ She went on to observe, 'quant il seroit en santé n'est qualiffié pour traicter les affaires de la guerre,...ceulx qu'ilz envoent sont si petitment instructz que, si on ne faisoient autre diligence pardecha en ce qu'ilz apportent d'Engleterre ilz en seroient trez mal serviz...!'

Had she chosen, Mary could have underlined her complaint by drawing attention to the presence of Charles' special envoy, Bertrand de la Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque, at the English court. Albuquerque had come to England in January 1544 on a private visit to the king. He was compelled to extend his stay when both contrary weather and shortage of shipping made his passage across the Channel impossible.²¹⁶ In the mean time Henry formed a liking for the duke and instructed Chapuys to request his master to give Albuquerque permission to join the English

²¹⁴ J.Wegg, *Richard Pace: A Tudor Diplomatist*, (London, 1932), pp.65-95, 217-249.

²¹⁵ PRO 31/18/3/2, fo.79v, (*L&P*, XIX i, no.606), Mary of Hungary to Chapuys, 31 May 1544.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, no.263.

king's army in the forthcoming invasion of northern France.²¹⁷ In fact the Spaniard had grown increasingly less fond of England and was most eager to leave the country at the earliest opportunity. In spite of this Charles ordered him to remain with Henry,²¹⁸ almost certainly due to the advice of Chapuys, who had assured the emperor that the English were sorely in need of the military experience and expertise Albuquerque could bring to the expedition, and that his services would be particularly valuable should Henry fail to take personal charge of the expedition.²¹⁹

Albuquerque was only one of many aristocrats both Spanish and Burgundian called upon by the emperor to serve as both generals and ambassadors. Louis de Praet, one of the emperor's leading Burgundian commanders, was appointed resident to England in May 1522 and remained with Henry throughout his second war with France. Luis de Cordoba, Duke of Sessa and son-in-law to Gonzalo de Cordoba, served Charles as both soldier and diplomat in Italy. In January 1523 in response to the duke's request that he be relieved of his post as resident ambassador in Rome in order to fight for Charles, the emperor begged him to be patient observing that good captains were easier to replace than good diplomats.²²⁰ At least three of Charles' most prominent generals, Charles de Lannoy, Ferdinand Gonzaga and Alfonso d'Avalos, Marquis del Guasto, combined

²¹⁷ Concerning Albuquerque's popularity with Henry Chapuys wrote to the emperor, 'Sire, apres toutes ces devises pour la bonne bouche led. sr roy monstrast en propos du duc d'Albuquerque le louant si trestant qu'il n'estoit possible de plus, et disant entre aultres choses qu'il n'avoit oncques congneust ne vue personnaige duquel les conditions luy agreassent plus ne aussi à tous ses gens qu'avoient hanter led. duc dont plusieurs qui l'avoient congneust au camp de Landressy luy en avoient pieca faict si bon rapport qu'il desiroit de le congnoistre, et que maintenant l'ayant congneu et aulcunement experimenté, il desiroit merueilleusement le pouvoir avoir avec luy en ce voyage de France.' PRO,31/18/3/2, fos.79v, 311, (*L&P*, XIX i, no.324), Chapuys to Charles, 13 April 1544.

²¹⁸ *L&P*, XIX i, no.400, Charles to Chapuys, 25 April 1544.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, no.324, Chapuys to Charles 13 April 1544.

²²⁰ *CSPS*, II, p.522, Charles to Duke of Sessa, 10 January 1523.

their duties as viceroy of Naples with diplomatic missions to the courts of Italy, England and France

Conclusion

It is obvious that the aristocracy and gentry played a central role in English diplomacy throughout Henry's reign and were accredited in greater numbers with more frequency than ever before. However, the reasons for this increased activity had little to do with the changing nature of the nobility or the re-organization of the royal household. Certainly most of the gentry and aristocracy dispatched abroad were literate and in a few cases scholars of note. Furthermore, we can speculate with reasonable confidence that most had some knowledge of a foreign language, in most cases French. Yet only a tiny number knew Latin and none possessed expertise in the fields of civil law, canon law or theology. For a brief time Anglo-French diplomacy at least was dominated by members of Henry's newly organized privy chamber. Yet while the king's personal attendants never disappeared from Tudor diplomacy their role quickly diminished, and their status as gentlemen of the privy chamber became less important.

For the most part the contribution which Henry's gentry and nobility could make to diplomacy remained similar in nature at the close of his reign to what it had been at the outset of his father's. Their social status, courtly manners, political importance and military experience were the not inconsiderable assets they could bring to their master's diplomacy. What had changed was the environment in which such strengths could be exploited. The growth of resident diplomacy favoured the abilities and characteristics of ambassadors chosen from the gentry far more than those selected from the clergy. Irreplaceable as the technical skills of Henry's clerics remained their necessity was also limited. There was only a finite number of treaties which needed negotiating, Latin orations to be made, legal complaints to be lodged, and the advent of permanent embassies did not in itself greatly increase their number. In contrast the flattery

implicit in the appointment of a noble ambassador to an embassy was reiterative. The advantages to be gained from his ingratiating with a foreign prince and successful integration into a host court were cumulative. The potential benefits to be reaped from the specialized military intelligence he could glean were only limited by his powers of observation and the inclination or capacity of his hosts to hide the truth. In short the more diplomatic contact there was between England and her neighbours - particularly France - the more effective intelligent and resourceful noble-born ambassadors became. While a further decade would see the complete removal of clerical ambassadors from England's international affairs, their *raison d'être* usurped by a new generation of lay scholars, the role of the gentry in particular in English diplomacy would long be assured.²²¹

²²¹ It has been estimated that roughly 95% of all envoys dispatched abroad between 1558 and 1589 were drawn either from the gentry or aristocracy. G.M.Bell, 'The men and their rewards in the Elizabethan diplomatic service', Ph.D, (UCLA, 1974), p.40.

Chapter Four

Merchants

Introduction

In several respects the merchants who served the king abroad differed widely from their ecclesiastical and noble counterparts. Far fewer in number than the other groups, most of the agents and ambassadors drawn from the world of trade have left little or no mark before joining the king's service. Furthermore, the manner in which many of these men were employed by the English government varied considerably from that of a typical renaissance ambassador. Much of the time their status was unclear, shifting from unofficial informant, factor, solicitor or agent, to ambassador, before returning to some less specific classification. To some extent this haziness might be attributed to the generally flexible approach to diplomatic terminology which had not yet entirely disappeared. However, for the most part it is a reflection of the far broader range of duties carried out by the merchants in English service, many of which might be described as quasi-diplomatic and for which full accreditation was unnecessary. In many cases the men considered here never became full diplomatic representatives of the crown, since what made them so useful to Henry and his advisers was the connections and expertise which their continuing involvement in trade made available. Yet whether gathering news, acting on behalf of private individuals, representing the crown or providing financial and commercial services, their activities were never entirely divorced from wider diplomatic issues.

The merchants employed by Henry for diplomatic duties were also distinctive in so much as they seem to have lacked equivalents in the French and Imperial diplomatic services. Certainly neither Francis or Charles accredited ambassadors with commercial backgrounds to any of the major

European courts. The main reason for this difference was the varying geographical and economic conditions which prevailed within the territories of Charles and Francis. Quite simply many of the commodities and services which Henry was obliged to import could be found within the Imperial and French territories. As a result Charles and Francis were not compelled to rely on the services of merchants outside their lands to anywhere near the same degree as the English king.

Background

In contrast to what we know about the clergy or nobility, our knowledge of Henry's merchant envoys begins and ends with their diplomatic service to the king. There is almost nothing to be found concerning their parentage, upbringing, education and early careers, and since the great majority died while still in Henry's service, the scope for comment about their lives after diplomacy is also strictly limited. As a result any effort to establish who these men were as a prelude to considering how it was they served the king will at best be tentative.

Geographically the origins of Henry's merchant envoys were certainly widespread. Stephen Vaughan, John Hutton and John Stile hailed from London,¹ John Hackett came from Waterford² and Thomas Spinelly belonged to a well established merchant family originally based in Florence.³ Edmund Harvel had a brother who lived and traded in London so it is possible that Henry's future envoy to Venice spent his early life in the capital as well.⁴ In most cases these men

¹ For Vaughan see, W.C.Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan, Financial Agent of Henry VIII*, (Louisiana, 1953), p.14. For Hutton see, BL, Harleian 6,148, fo.31, (*L&P*, VI, no.1093), Cranmer to Tregonwell, September 1533. For Stile see, *L&P*, I i, nos.784, 833, May and July 1511.

² *The Letters of Sir John Hackett*, ed E.F.Rogers, (Morgantown, 1971), p.6, (*L&P*, III ii, no.3366), Knight to Wolsey, 28 September, 1523.

³ B.Behrens, 'The office of English resident ambassador: Its evolution as illustrated by the career of Sir Thomas Spinelly, 1509-1522', *TRHS*, 4th series, (1933), 161-195.

⁴ In 1538 the French resident Castillon wrote to Montmorency, 'Au surplus monseigneur j'ay

appear to have spent extended periods abroad establishing their businesses either within a commercial community, like the Company of Merchant Adventurers and the English Company of Andalusia, or as individual traders like Edmund Harvel in Venice, and, probably, John Stile in Spain. In addition to working as agent for the Italian banking house of Frescobaldi, John Hackett was active in the wool trade of Middleburg by 1516, ten years before Henry employed him as his diplomatic agent with Margaret of Austria.⁵ John Hewster, John Clifford, John Hutton and Thomas Chamberlain were all accredited as ambassadors after first being appointed Governor of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, a position held only by the foremost of England's merchants in the Low Countries.⁶ John Stile came to Spain in 1505 and Edmund Harvel was trading from Venice no later than 1524.⁷

One consequence of so many years spent abroad was a familiarity with foreign languages which few of Henry's clerical or noble envoys could match. As well as his native Italian, Thomas Spinelly knew French and could certainly write English.⁸ In a commendatory letter to Wolsey,

este adverty que parle moiien d'ung marchant de Londres nomme arvel, qui a ung frere a Venysee nomme Gismondo', Add.MS, 33,514, fo.13, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.144), Castillon to Montmorency, 26 January 1539.

⁵ Rogers, *Hackett*, pp.xi-xii.

⁶ For a complete list of the governors of the Merchant Adventurers see, O de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen in de 16e Eeuw, 1496-1582*, (2 vols.Antwerp, 1950), vol.II, pp.88-91.

⁷ R.Barrington, 'Two houses both alike in dignity: Reginald Pole and Edmund Harvel', *HJ*, 39, (1996), 895-913, p.902.

⁸ Between June 1509 and March 1513 nearly all Spinelly's extant letters are addressed to Henry and written in French. *St.P.* VI, p.19, BL, Cotton Galba B III, fos.102, 10, 18, 96, 66a., Galba B VI, fo.13, (*L&P*, I i, nos.83, 1101, 1309, 1469, I ii, nos.1566, 1670, 1699), Spinelly to Henry, 26 June 1509, 17 March and 3 Novemeber 1512, 12 January, 9 and 22 March 1513. After this the Florentine's correspondence with the king and Wolsey is all in English. First letter in English, BL, Cotton Galba B III, fo.105, (*ibid*, no.1895), Spinelly to Henry, 18 May 1513. For other examples see, BL Cotton Galba B III-VI, (*L&P*, vols. II and III *passim*). Quite why Spinelly changed languages is unclear. His surviving correspondence with Wolsey did not begin until April 1514,

William Knight stated that Hackett: 'hath langages, Latyne, Frensche, Spanyshe, Dowche and Italian, and good Englishe.'⁹ Stephen Vaughan could speak Spanish well enough to be trusted by the king with the task of monitoring Chapuys' conversations with Katherine of Aragon.¹⁰ The future ambassador was also intent upon teaching himself French. In April 1531 he wrote to Cromwell:

Right worshipful sir, I humblye commend me unto youe and pray youe that whereas I am muche desirous t'atteyne the knowlage of the Frenche tonge which is to me so much the more difficulte as neyther by any sufficient instructor ne by any treatise hertofore made, I maye be easily led to the knowlage of the same. And at my beyng at London I made not a letle labour to Mr Palsgrave to have one of his books which he made concernyng the same which in no wise he wolde graunt for no price. That ye wilbe so good master to me as to healpe me to have one of them, not doubtyng but though he unkyndly denyed me one he will not youe one.¹¹

first letter, PRO SP1/7 fo.148, (*L&P*, I ii, no.2777), Spinelly to Wolsey, 1 April 1514, nor did Wolsey begin to dominate the conduct of foreign affairs until 1514 to 1515. Therefore it seems unlikely that the Italian switched languages in deference to Wolsey's ignorance of French. More probably it took Spinelly four years of practice before he felt sufficiently comfortable with English to write official dispatches in the language.

⁹ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.6, (*L&P*, III, no.3366), Knight to Wolsey, 28 September, 1523.

¹⁰ Edward Bedingfield describing Chapuys' final interview with Catherine wrote, 'he saluted her in the Speynesh tong the whic[h I] doo not understande but Mr Vaughan who was pr[esent] also canne declare unto your Mastership the effect [of] theyr convercacyon as that tyme', BL, Cotton MS, Otho C X, fo.215, (*L&P*, X, no.28), Edward Bedingfield to Cromwell, 5 January 1536. Certainly Chapuys was in no doubt as to why Vaughan was present at his interview with the queen, 'Cromwel que ce roy mavait donner pour m'accompagner ou a mieulx dire, pour espier et notter tout ce que je ferait et dirait.' PRO 31/18/2/2, fos.1-7, esp.fo.1, (*CSPS* VII, pp.2-6), Chapuys to Charles, 9 January 1536.

¹¹ *Original Letters of Literary Men of the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Century*, ed. Henry Ellis, (4 vols., Camden Society, 1843), 3rd series, vol.II, pp.214-215, Vaughan to Cromwell, 13 April 1531. This letter is misdated in *L&P*, IV iii, no.5459, as 13 April 1529. Since Palsgrave only produced his French grammar, *L'esclairissement de la langue françoise* in July 1530, P.Hambey, *The Teaching and Cultivation of the French Language in England during Tudor and Stuart Times*, (1920), pp.86-101, Vaughan's request to Cromwell could not have been made any earlier than 1531. By his own admission Vaughan's efforts to learn French were only partially successful, 'I am well assayed here and my rude setting forth of things in the Frenche tongue, wherin I have scant any understanding, well exercised as your lordshipp maye apperceyve by these ii translacions whiche we send with king's majesties letters.' BL, Cotton MS, Galba B X,

In 1545 Thomas Chamberlain wrote to Paget from Bourbourg, informing him that he was aiding Thirlby and Petre in their negotiations with the Imperialists by translating documents from sundry languages, presumably into English.¹² Given that Edmund Harvel had lived in Italy for at least fifteen years before officially entering the king's service it would be reasonable to assume that he could speak Italian. His letters to various correspondents, among them the scholar Thomas Starkey and propagandist Richard Morrison contain frequent remarks in Latin.

Only John Stile was reputedly a poor linguist. According to Mattingly the ambassador could speak no Spanish and only 'hog' Latin.¹³ With regard to Stile's Latin I have found no evidence to either support or refute Mattingly's assertion and since the author provides no reference the issues must remain in doubt. However, Stile could almost certainly speak Spanish. In the instructions given by Henry VII to Stile, Marsin and Braybroke in 1505 for their meeting with Ferdinand, he ordered that his overtures to the king of Aragon be translated into Spanish, 'and uttered by John Stile unto the said king of Aragon in the same tong'.¹⁴ Furthermore, it was only Stile of the three ambassadors sent to Spain who spoke directly to Ferdinand's councillors.¹⁵

Even more than their linguistic skills, what made these men so potentially useful as agents and ambassadors were their well established positions both within local communities and in the wider world of international trade. Simply because they had lived in the cities and countries to which they were later accredited, in some cases for more than a decade, it was unavoidable that they would be familiar with their surroundings and have a wide range of contacts. In addition to

fo.337v, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.882), Vaughan to Cromwell, 20 November 1538.

¹² PRO, SP1/201, fo.192, (*L&P*, XX i, no.851), Chamberlain to Paget, 1 June 1545.

¹³ Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, p.152.

¹⁴ *Memorials of Henry VII*, ed.J.Gairdner, (London, 1858), p.242.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.270.

this their trading activities ensured that they possessed an often extremely large circle of acquaintances and business associates. Although almost nothing is known about the career of Thomas Spinelly before he came to serve Henry VIII one can confidently speculate that one of the Italian's strongest qualifications was the range of commercial contacts he possessed throughout Europe. Among his relations were two brothers, Leonard and Lorenzo, the former had been chamberlain to Julius II the latter managed the Lyons branch of the Medici bank. His uncle, Philip Gualterotti was head of one of the largest banks in the Low Countries and had provided financial services to Henry VII. Among other connections he had cultivated were the de Tassis family, postmasters to both Maximilian and Charles, and Jean de Berghes chamberlain to Margaret of Austria.¹⁶

Those businessmen employed by Henry from the Company of Merchant Adventurers were at the very heart of economic activity in the Low Countries, and appear to have been acquainted with all ranks of its society from their trading rivals to the regents and their councils. The reason that William Knight wrote to Wolsey in 1523 to recommend the appointment of an agent to handle the king's business affairs was because Archduchess Margaret urged that he do so. As well as recommending Hackett for the job based on his own observations, Knight put forward the merchant's name at the specific direction of the regent.¹⁷ Although he had been a denizen of the Low Countries for some time, in 1523 Hackett's position within the Merchant Adventurers was not particularly important and yet he was already known to, and respected by, its ruler.¹⁸ When John Hutton became Governor of the Merchant Adventurers the burghers of Antwerp gave him the life-time lease of a house sufficiently imposing that he claimed he was ruining himself simply

¹⁶ Behrens, *op.cit.*, pp.167-169.

¹⁷ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.7, (*L&P*, III, no.3366), Knight to Wolsey, 28 September, 1523.

¹⁸ Hackett became head of the English nation in Middleburg in 1523, and Governor of the Merchant Adventurers in 1529.

furnishing it.¹⁹ As leaders of the English merchant community in the Low Countries it is clear that Hutton and his colleagues were not only known by its leading citizens but held in some esteem.

The advantages open to Henry through the use of leading merchants as diplomatic representatives in the Low Countries were not available to the French king. Unlike not only the English, but the Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians the French merchants trading with the Low Countries were never organized into a guild or 'nation'. In part their failure to establish a trading community in Antwerp was the result of France's geographic proximity to the Low Countries. For many merchants it was possible to travel to Antwerp, transact their business and depart within a day or two. In such circumstances there was little need to maintain premises in which to live and store their goods.²⁰ Furthermore, there was lingering resentment amongst French merchants that Charles and his ancestors had repeatedly failed to reciprocate the trading concessions made by Louix XI to Flemish merchants in 1462.²¹ No doubt the most important reason for the absence of a French nation at Antwerp, however, was the bitter rivalry and intermittent warfare that characterized the reigns of Charles and Francis, which simply made it too risky to leave goods, money or ships in Flanders on a long term basis. For all these reasons Francis lacked men like John Hutton, John Hackett and Stephen Vaughan to represent him in the Low Countries. Furthermore, with the absence of a permanent trading community and no equivalent to the Anglo-Flemish trade in wool, Francis and his subjects had far less need of the services which Hutton and the rest provided to their English counterparts.

¹⁹ *St.P.*, VIII p.29, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.1018), Hutton to Wriothesley, 17 May 1538.

²⁰ E.Coornaert, *Les Français et le commerce Internationale à Anvers, fin du XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, (2 vols.,Paris, 1961), vol.I, p.132.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Yet if as merchants and ex-patriates Hutton and his colleagues enjoyed a familiarity with the places to which they were later accredited that few of Henry's other envoys could boast, then their position in England was quite the opposite. Where those of the clergy and nobility chosen to serve abroad were in the great majority of cases well known to the king - his chaplains, almoners, secretaries, personal attendants and leading courtiers - it is quite possible that Henry had never met any of the merchants who served him before they were appointed as envoys. Certainly the number of occasions on which they met the king was minimal and the amount of time they spent in England, let alone at court, was small indeed. How then did they become sufficiently well known to the king and his advisers for them to be appointed to such sensitive positions as ambassador to the Spanish, Burgundian, Imperial and Venetian courts?

As noted in the first chapter, both Spinelly and Stile were already known to the English government when Henry came to the throne.²² More than the fact that Spinelly had worked as an agent for Henry VII in the Low Countries nothing is known about how the Florentine entered English service. Upon his accession Henry accepted Spinelly's offer of renewed service and throughout the next decade the Italian slowly and painfully advanced his position from agent to ambassador. It is possible that John Stile was included in the special embassy dispatched to Spain in 1505 because of previously established trade links he may have had with the country. England's trade with the Iberian peninsula grew steadily during this period and considerable numbers of merchants from Southampton, Bristol and Plymouth had commercial interests primarily centred in Andalusia.²³ It may well be that Stile remained in Spain after his colleagues Francis Marsin and Thomas Braybroke left because the king requested him to do so. Alternatively he may have elected to stay, as were growing numbers of English merchants, to

²² See above, pp.16-17.

²³ C.G.Connell-Smith, *Forerunners of Drake: A Study of English Trade with Spain in the Early-Tudor period*, (London, 1954),pp.4-5.

foster his business interests in the country. Given that his name was already known to Henry VII it is quite plausible that the king took advantage of Stile's self-imposed residence, at first to provide him with a regular flow of information from Spain, and latterly to re-accredit him as his resident agent at Ferdinand's court.

We can with considerably more confidence trace the association of Henry's government with those merchants from the Low Countries ultimately chosen for diplomatic service. Primarily it sprang from the relationship between the crown and the Company of Merchant Adventurers. Based in London and Antwerp, the Company, which received its charter in 1407, held the staple for the cloth trade between the Low Countries and England, and by the time of Henry's accession had overtaken the Merchant Staplers of Calais as the richest economic organisation in the country.²⁴ As a valuable source of income to the government both in terms of taxation and loans, the Company represented perhaps the most powerful interest group in Tudor London.²⁵ Undoubtedly when the king's personal concerns jeopardized England's trade with the Low Countries, the dissatisfaction of the Merchant Adventurers was taken very seriously by the government.²⁶ It was inevitable therefore, that the king's advisers, if not Henry himself would have been well acquainted with the leadership of such a powerful organization.

Furthermore, given the prominence of commercial affairs within England's diplomatic relations

²⁴ D.R.Bisson, *The Merchant Adventurers of England: The Company and the Crown, 1474-1564*, (Newark, 1993).

²⁵ As G.D.Ramsay has observed, 'no government could afford to be indifferent to the needs of the City, if only because of the essential and varied financial services it offered.' Furthermore, 'The richest men in the City were in overwhelming majority the Merchant Adventurers.' G.D.Ramsay, *The City of London in International Politics at the Accession of Elizabeth Tudor*, (Manchester, 1975), pp.50, 41.

²⁶ S.J.Gunn, 'Cardinal Wolsey's foreign policy and the domestic crisis of 1527-1528', in *Cardinal Wolsey, Church, State and Art*, eds.S.J.Gunn and R.G.Lindley, (Cambridge, 1991).

with the Low Countries it was almost unavoidable that a leading member of the Company, usually the governor, be included in the periodic discussions which regulated Anglo-Burgundian trade. Thus in 1515 John Clifford took part in the talks at Bruges and in 1532 and 1545 John Hackett and Thomas Chamberlain attended the two conferences held at Bourbourg. Through association with the government on a purely economic level it was a small step to call on men such as Hackett, Hutton and Vaughan to act firstly as official correspondents and later as the king's political representatives at the regency court in the Low Countries.

As well as the official relationship with the government which these merchants enjoyed, their position as prominent ex-patriates often brought them in to contact with Henry's current ambassadors and with men who would later become key advisers to the king. The correspondence of various envoys makes clear the degree to which they relied on English merchants for support whilst abroad. During his long embassy to the emperor in Spain Richard Sampson seems to have had regular recourse to merchants in order to subsidise his diets. After acquiring one such loan he wrote to Wolsey:

Most humbly I besech your grace that this money may be covenentyd be your graces comandment to such off any parties as shold sew to your grace for the same, that a nothir tyme I may the more easly be relevyd by marchands in my nede.²⁷

In December 1520 Cuthbert Tunstall wrote to Wolsey, explaining that he had overestimated the size of the train he would need and now no longer possessed the means to support it, 'I wot not whether to resorte where I need but the king's grace and yowrs, for in al Almayn ther is not oon Englishe marchant to make shyfft with for a seaso.²⁸ The letter seems to imply that in other

²⁷ PRO SP1/32, fos.157-9, (*L&P*, IV i, no. 827), Sampson to Wolsey, 12 November 1524.

²⁸ BL. Cotton MS. Vitel.B XX, fo.180, (*L&P*, III i, no.1098), Tunstall to Wolsey, 17 December 1520.

countries or in different circumstances Tunstall's first port of call for financial aid would indeed have been the English merchant community.

It seems highly probable that much of the support later given by Henry's advisers to individual merchants sprang from a debt of gratitude gained when they themselves had been serving abroad. Edmund Harvel, made several useful connections at court by helping the king's ambassadors and agents in their missions to Italy. One of the earliest letters from Harvel is addressed to John Russell, Henry's roving ambassador to Italy for much of the 1520s.²⁹ Although it is unclear what services Harvel performed for Russell the two men remained in contact throughout the reign. In 1535 Harvel wrote to Thomas Starkey:

Sir, I have sens my last from you of the 20 and 21 passed, for my grete content of the good favor whiche I perceived toward me both of Master Secretarye as also of Master Russell whome I have ever lovid and observed meritefully and so wil continew my liff's dias his pore servant. And beyond myne expectacions the Lord Master Russell hath declared himselff my most assured frend in my matter with Master secretarye, for the wiche I awght to give him most grateful thanks whiche I desire you to do in my home³⁰

and ten years later, Russell, now the Lord Privy Seal, was still taking an active interest in the ambassadors activities.³¹ During the campaign to obtain Henry's annulment Harvel gave frequent

²⁹ PRO, SP1/38, fo.196, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2244), Harvel to Russell, 12 June 1526.

³⁰ BL Cotton MS, Nero B VII, fo.93, (*L&P*, VIII, no.874) Harvel to Starkey, 15 June 1535.

³¹ That the two men remained in contact is shown by a letter of Harvel's to Russell in 1545 acknowledging receipt of his letters dated 22 March and 4 April. PRO, SP1/201, fo.71, (*L&P*, XX i, no.752), Harvel to Russell, 16 May 1545. Furthermore, the previous year Russell wrote to Paget advising that he keep Harvel well informed in order to ensure that he would be able to rebut any outrageous claims made by the French envoys in Venice. PRO, SP1/191, fo.177, (*L&P*, XIX, ii, no.142), Russell to Paget, 28 August 1544. Although the advice was of an entirely practical nature, of the type one might expect royal councillors to exchange, it is also the only example of Russell's involvement in foreign affairs. It is possible that he volunteered it on the basis of his own knowledge of Italian affairs, alternatively it may well represent his concern that Harvel should not be placed in a difficult position as a result of the government's failure to keep him informed.

assistance to the English agents and ambassador's dispatched to Italy. He allowed John Stokesley to store his belongings in his home and he lent Richard Croke money on several occasions³² as well as facilitating the dispatch of his reports to England.³³ Although Croke was personally of little importance, the men to whom he wrote praising Harvel's efforts included, Stokesley, Girolamo Ghinucci, Edward Foxe and even the king himself.³⁴ As noted earlier Harvel also possessed various contacts in England, among them Thomas Starkey, one of Cromwell's close associates.³⁵ Whether it was upon Starkey's recommendation or the advice of one the various envoys whom he had helped, Harvel's connections paid dividends when in 1535 the lord privy seal took him into his service.³⁶

On one occasion John Hackett wrote to Tuke stating that he had travelled from Bergen op Zoom to Bruges for the specific purpose of lending John Wallop any assistance he might need at the outset of his embassy to John Zapolyai in Hungary.³⁷ Almost certainly it was such attentiveness that won the future ambassador the warm support of another frequent visitor to the Burgundian

³² BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XIII, fos.35, 40, 73, (*L&P*, IV iii, nos.6192, 6235, 6328), Croke to Ghinucci, 2 February 1530, and Foxe, 22 February and April 1530.

³³ PRO, SP1/57, fo.279, (*ibid*, no.6540).

³⁴ *Ibid*, and BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XIII, fo.127, (*ibid*, no.6694), Croke to Henry, 19 October 1530.

³⁵ Harvel and Starkey maintained a correspondence throughout the 1530s. BL, Cotton MS, Nero B VI, fo.162; VII fos.82, 93, 105, 107, *L&P*, V, no.301, VIII, nos.232, 579, 874; X, no.264), Harvel to Starkey, 18 June 1531; 30 January, 21 April, 15 June 1535, and 5 February 1536.

³⁶ 'I understande by the relation of divers of my frends, and namely by the worshipful Mr Farmer ,of your singulier good favor towards me. For I am certified in you name that if I will retorne to Inglande you wilbe unto me moche beneficial in putting me to the kinges service with hope of an honest lyving by his grace's liberalite.' PRO, SP1/91 fos.86-87, (*L&P*, VIII, no.373), Harvel to Cromwell, 11 March 1535.

³⁷ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.22, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2495), Hackett to Tuke, 14 September 1526.

court, Robert Wingfield. As early as 1521 Wingfield had written to Wolsey urging Hackett's appointment as Henry's 'solicitor' in the Low Countries, a suggestion he repeated in February 1522, 'For I doubt not but he shall doo as goode servyce as the meyttest man I knowe for such apo[intment]'.³⁸ In later letters, Wingfield, repeatedly describing the merchant as his 'fryende', congratulated Wolsey on appointing him as Henry's resident at Margaret's court, and afterwards asked Gardiner, then the cardinal's secretary, to make good the shortfall in the envoy's diets.³⁹

Hackett's successor as governor of the Merchant Adventurers, John Hutton received frequent support from Thomas Cranmer. In 1533 the archbishop wrote to John Tregonwell, instructing him to urge the Lord Chancellor to, 'favour Hutton, a grocer of London in his matter'.⁴⁰ The following year Cranmer gave Hutton a letter of commendation, stating that he owed, 'as special favour to him as to any man of like state or degree'.⁴¹ Even after the ambassador's death Cranmer exerted himself on his behalf. In October 1538 he wrote to Stephen Vaughan to urge him to secure the safe departure of Hutton's wife from the Low Countries and to shield her from the proceedings been taken against the ambassador's estate by his creditors.⁴² Quite why the archbishop felt such a debt of gratitude to Hutton is not clear, but the most likely explanation is that he gave Cranmer assistance during his sojourn as ambassador to the Imperial court, possibly lending him money or forwarding his letters. Certainly Cranmer, by all accounts an indifferent traveller, owed a debt of gratitude to Stephen Vaughan, who in December 1532 travelled across

³⁸ *Ibid*, p.5, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2833), Wingfield to Wolsey, 18 February 1522.

³⁹ *Ibid*, pp.8-9, 106-107, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2161, IV ii, no. 3611), Wingfield to Wolsey, 7 May 1526, Wingfield to Gardiner, 27 November 1527.

⁴⁰ BL, Harleian MS 6,148, fo.31, (*L&P*, VI, no.1093), Cranmer to Tregonwell, September 1533.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, fo.43, (*L&P*, VII i no.568), Cranmer to ?, April 1534.

⁴² PRO, SP1/137, fos.72-73, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.512), Cranmer to Cromwell, 2 October 1538.

France to assist the archbishop elect in his journey back to England. Given that Vaughan's main connection at court was none less than Thomas Cromwell, the merchant hardly lacked for sponsors. Equally forging a friendly relationship with the new primate of England through the hardships of winter travel could have done the merchant no harm at all.⁴³

What is striking about the way in which men like Harvel, Hutton and Vaughan came to serve Henry is the drawn-out nature of their progression from private citizen to fully accredited ambassador. Where it was by no means uncommon for a cleric or noble to begin his diplomatic service at the head of a special embassy or as a fully accredited resident envoy, a merchant might well have to perform years of foreign service before gaining the title of ambassador. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact date when Spinelly was promoted from agent to ambassador it was certainly no earlier than 1515 and may well have not taken place until September 1517, more than eight years after the king accepted the Florentine's service.⁴⁴ John Hackett may have been employed as Henry's 'solicitor' from 1522 or 1523, but accreditation as the king's ambassador was not to come for some years afterwards. Certainly when the merchant replaced Wingfield as Henry's resident with Margaret in May 1526 it was as the king's agent and not as his predecessor had been, his ambassador.⁴⁵ As with Spinelly the exact date of Hackett's promotion

⁴³ In the early years of his service to Cromwell Vaughan made friends with Ralph Sadler a another connection which no doubt proved invaluable as the latter man rose in Henry's favour in the last decade of the reign. Sadler and Vaughan became acquaintances as early as 1526 when they worked together on a survey of the king's jewels. In his will Vaughan acknowledged his old colleague as, 'my lovyng friende Ralp Sadler'. A.J.Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966), p.24.

⁴⁴ See Appendix A, LC 1.

⁴⁵ The king writing to Archduchess Margaret about various commercial difficulties which had arisen, noted, 'Lesquelles matiers nous avons plus amplement instrué et escript a nostre bien amé servitour, Mess[ire] Jehan Hacket resident pour nous devers vous'. Lille MS, B 18,903, no.34 ,637, Rogers, *Hackett*, p.13, Henry to Margaret, 22 May 1526 - not in *L&P*. See also, *ibid*, pp.8-9, (*L&P*, IV i, no.2161), Wingfield to Wolsey, 7 May 1526.

is unclear, but in August 1527, at least six years after the merchant joined Henry's service, he was still accredited as an agent to Margaret's court.⁴⁶

Both Stephen Vaughan and John Hutton were similarly treated. Although Vaughan performed several special missions to Germany in the early 1530s his status was usually that of an agent, the rank he was also given when he became Henry's resident in the Low Countries in 1538. Hutton, Vaughan's predecessor at Mary's court, despite providing regular information to Cromwell from 1536 was only officially accredited in April 1537, once again as the king's agent.⁴⁷ What lay behind this often tortuous progression? Much of the answer to this question has already been given in Chapter One. Thomas Spinelly, one of the first men to fill the office of resident envoy, along with all his colleagues, was a victim of the system's growing pains. Henry and Wolsey initially placed little faith in the use of permanent ambassadors and treated the first men deployed to such offices with indifference and neglect. Furthermore, Wolsey's early suspicions about Spinelly did much to retard his progression in Henry's service.

The continued use of agents in the Low Countries after the English government became properly committed to the resident system may well have reflected its status as a cadet court. Since Henry always had a resident ambassador with Charles through whom all the most important issues touching Tudor-Habsburg relations would pass, the king and his advisers may well have deemed it unnecessary to accredit another such envoy to the court in the Low Countries. Edmund Harvel's

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp.91-92, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3340), Wolsey to Henry, 11 August 1527. Hackett had been appointed full ambassador to the Low Countries by February 1528, *ibid*, p.111, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3966), Margaret to Hackett, 28 February, 1528.

⁴⁷ Bell, *Handlist*. p.176, incorrectly describes Hutton as a resident ambassador from 3 April 1537. The instructions of this date issued to the merchant required him to inform queen Mary that Henry had, 'appointed hym to be his grace's agent in those parts.' PRO, SP1/115 fos.70-80, f.70, (*L&P*, XII i, no.866), Henry to Hutton 3 April 1537. Instructions of the same date issued to Gardiner in France directed the bishop to liaise with, 'our servant John Hutton, ovr agent resident in Flanders.' BL, Add, MS, 25,114, fo.253, (*ibid*, no.817), Henry to Gardiner, 3 April 1537.

prolonged semi-official status in Venice almost certainly reflected the withdrawal of English involvement in the peninsula in the aftermath of the break with Rome. Another factor may have been the relatively low social status of the men in question. The office of ambassador was one of considerable dignity, it may well have been that the king would only with reluctance accredit to such positions men of low birth and no rank. In such circumstances their use as agents might have been a useful compromise. Perhaps just as important as these concerns, however, was the absence of a direct relationship between these merchants and the king. No matter how glowing the references Henry received from men like Cromwell, Russell and Cranmer, the merchants to whom they related remained unfamiliar to the king; subjects to be sure, but men he did not know, and thus individuals in whom he was reluctant to invest the full dignity of a royal ambassador.

Newsgatherers

Most commonly the association between individual merchants and the English government began with the periodic transmission of information to Henry's chief advisers and in particular Cromwell. The desire of Henry and his advisers to be kept well informed was unflagging throughout the king's reign. However, from the late 1520s and England's growing estrangement from the catholic community, the value of regular intelligence became ever greater. Additionally the diplomatic apparatus available to the king for the acquisition of information shrank. Firstly, the unification of the Spanish, Burgundian and Imperial titles in 1519 automatically limited the effectiveness of the English diplomatic system as an intelligence network. Where before the king had ambassadors in Germany, Spain and the Low Countries, it was now possible for England to maintain diplomatic relations with the emperor, king of Spain and Duke of Burgundy by the dispatch of one envoy to a single court. Thus if Charles was in the Low Countries Henry had no excuse to dispatch envoys to Spain and Germany and therefore no official resource for the collection of information in those areas. Furthermore, the king's break with Rome saw the

removal of his ambassador to the Holy See in 1533 and a general withdrawal of envoys from Italy in the years that followed, limiting still further the effectiveness of his diplomatic service as an intelligence network. Yet despite this contraction of England's diplomatic network the French resident in London, Charles de Marillac, remained impressed at just how well informed the king was:

car il n'y a ung seul bruyct en lieu que soit, que des premiers il n'en ayt le vent, soit nouvelle faulce ou vraye jusques aux petites particularités que princes désirent peu entendre et en parle comme s'il congnoissoit non-seulement les roys et seigneurs mais aussi les ministres, la puissance et forces, les lieux, les dessaings et les occasions et aussi bien des plus estrangiers que de ses voisins, pour avoir hommes siens à gaiges dispersez par tout le monde que je croy ne font aultre mestier que luy escripre.⁴⁸

A significant number of those who so ceaselessly provided the English government and Cromwell in particular with intelligence came from the merchant community. The spread of England's commercial activities offered an excellent substitute for the contraction of her diplomatic network. In addition to the thriving merchant community in the Low Countries, English traders were also well established in Spain, primarily in Andalusia, with their headquarters at the port town of St Luca de Barrameda.⁴⁹ Smaller numbers of merchants were also to be found in France, mainly involved in the export of wine from Bordeaux,⁵⁰ Italy, trading in luxury goods and spices exported from the Levant, and the Baltic, an important supplier of grain as well as the cordage, canvas, tar and timber so crucial for the construction of new warships.⁵¹ From all these areas Cromwell received information from merchants eager to establish themselves in his favour. From the Low Countries regular news arrived from the various

⁴⁸ Kaulek, pp.127-128, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.169), Marillac to Montmorency, 15 September 1539.

⁴⁹ C.G.Connell-Smith, *op.cit.*, pp.4-5.

⁵⁰ J.A.Williamson, *Maritime Enterprise, 1455-1558*, (Oxford, 1913), p.49.

⁵¹ C.S.L.Davies, "Supply Services of the English Armed Forces, 1509-1550", Ph.D, (Oxford, 1963), pp.21-30.

officers of the Merchant Adventurers. As well as John Hackett, John Hutton and Stephen Vaughan, other correspondents included John Coke and William Lok, secretaries of the Company, and Walter Marshe, another future governor.⁵² Amongst English merchants living in Spain William Popperwell, and Roger Batcock sent Cromwell news letters.⁵³ Other correspondents included Laurence Stauber from Nuremburg,⁵⁴ William Sackford from Danzig,⁵⁵ Edmund Harvel from Venice and Roger Basing from St Luca de Barrameda as well as Lyons and Bordeaux⁵⁶

Of these men, those who went on to become fully accredited envoys utilised the same contacts as their clerical and noble counterparts. Hackett's rich correspondence between 1528 and 1529 rarely omits a mention of an audience with the regent Margaret or a discussion with members of her council.⁵⁷ Similarly Hutton during the short period between April 1537 and September 1538 spoke often with Mary and her advisers, the infrequent lacunae in these interviews coming about only when the agent was called away to Bergen op Zoom or Antwerp to fulfil his duties as

⁵² For Coke see, PRO, SP1/78, fo.39, SP1/79, fo.6, SP1/84, fos.18-19, SP1/89, (*L&P*, VI, nos.900, 1066; VII i, no.650), Croke to Cromwell, 26 July and 2 September 1533 and 12 May 1534. For Lok see, PRO SP1/89, fos.62-63, SP1/96, fo.72, SP1/124, fos. 4, 5, (*L&P*, VIII, no.198; XI, no.254; XII ii, no.483), Lok to Cromwell, 11 February 1535, 9 August 1536 and 8 August 1537. For Marshe see, SP1/93, fo.233, (*L&P*, VIII, no.982), Marshe to Cromwell, 2 July 1535.

⁵³ For Popperwell see, BL, Cotton MS, Vesp. C XIII, fo.257, Vesp. C VII, fos.62, (*L&P*, VI, no.1430; VII ii, no.1457). Popperwell to Cromwell, 15 November 1533 and 31 November 1534. For Batcock see, BL, Cotton MS, Otho E IX, fo.51, Vesp. C VII, fos 64. 69 (*L&P*, VIII, nos.354, 744; XII i, no.873), Batcock to Cromwell 6 March, 21 May 1535 and 8 April 1537.

⁵⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XXI, fos.91-92; PRO SP1/97, fo.157; Vit B XII, fo.168, (*L&P*, VI, no.1083; IX, no.581; XII i, no.986), Stauber to Cromwell, 6 September 1533 and 10 October 1535, and Stauber to Henry, 20 April 1537.

⁵⁵ PRO, SP1/95, fos.114-115, (*L&P*, IX, no.113), Sackford to Cromwell, 17 August 1535.

⁵⁶ *St.P.*, VIII, p.352, (*L&P*, XV, no.787), Basing to Cromwell, 15 June 1540.

⁵⁷ Rogers, *Hackett*, pp.108-296.

Governor of the Merchant Adventurers.⁵⁸ Both men also adopted the practice of employing spies to augment the information they gained from the court. Hackett, in answer to Wolsey's complaint that he was not as forthcoming with news as his predecessor Spinelly had been, remarked that he already had 'watchmen' in his service reporting whatever news they could find, and that if the Cardinal wanted more secret information he would have to specify its nature.⁵⁹ Nearly a decade later when Reginald Pole's shuttle embassy to the Catholic powers so unnerved the king, John Hutton kept Cromwell and Henry abreast of the Cardinal's movements through his spies in the Low Countries.⁶⁰

However, both those merchants who came to serve the king as full ambassadors and those who worked for the government in a less formal capacity had access to resources often unavailable to Henry's other envoys. It has already been noted that one of the most distinctive features of those merchants chosen for foreign service was their pre-established position within both the local and international communities. As much as any recommendation by a royal councillor it was this expatriate status and the great opportunities it created for the collection of news which brought these private citizens into public service.

By the early sixteenth century Antwerp had taken over from Bruges as the leading commercial city of the Low Countries and was indeed the richest and most active centre of trade in Europe. The merchant community was divided into six separate 'nations': the Portuguese, Germans, Baltic states, English, Spanish and Italians, which, with the exception of the English and Portuguese, were further divided into groups representing individual countries and cities. Each day these

⁵⁸ See for example, PRO, SP1/121, fos.130-141, (*L&P*, XII ii, no.108), Hutton to Cromwell, 17 June 1537.

⁵⁹ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.110, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3928), Hackett to Wolsey, 14 February 1528.

⁶⁰ PRO, SP1 121, fos 42-45, *St.P.*, VII, p.707, (*L&P*, XII ii, no.26, 598), Hutton to Cromwell, 3 March 1537, Hutton to Henry 30 August 1537.

merchants gathered at the city's bourse - the place designated not only for financial transaction but all forms of commerce - in part to carry out business but equally to gather the latest news from throughout Europe.⁶¹ Among others, there would have been found factors from the great banks, the Fuggers, the Welsers, the Hockstetters, the Medici, all businesses with branches and agents spread throughout Europe, constantly gathering and disseminating news across the continent. In addition the majority of German and Italian city states retained consuls in Antwerp, a primary function of which was to keep their governments abreast of current news and who were no doubt in turn well advised by their masters at home. The Elizabethan diplomat, Daniel Rogers, summed up the cosmopolitan nature of the Antwerp bourse : 'A confused sound of all languages was heard there, and you saw a parti-coloured medley of all styles of dress. In short the Antwerp bourse seemed a small world wherein all parts of the great world were united.'⁶²

For the officers of the Company of Merchant Adventurers reporting to Cromwell, the bourse was clearly a mine of information. Despite his advice to the Privy Seal that, 'he who will believe every nue blasted out in Flanders amongst merchants will have a mad head',⁶³ Stephen Vaughan was a frequent visitor to the Antwerp market, assiduously reporting on the, 'worlde of rumors the burse and her pellets brethe out.'⁶⁴ John Hutton, explaining to Cromwell why he had left Brussels to travel to Antwerp, partially justified his journey by pointing out that he could gain more information by attending the quarterly mart at the bourse than he could at the regent's court.⁶⁵ In

⁶¹ R.Ehrenberg, *Capital and Finance in the Age of the Renaissance: A Study of the Fuggers and their Connections*, trans.H.M.Lucas, (New York, 1963), pp.236-239.

⁶² Quoted from Ehrenberg, *op.cit.*, p.237.

⁶³ BL, Cotton MS, Titus B I, fo.340, (*L&P*, IX, no.330), Vaughan to Cromwell, 10 September, 1535.

⁶⁴ *St.P.*, VIII, p.148, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.337), Vaughan to Cromwell, 21 February 1539.

⁶⁵ PRO, SP1/124, fos.126-129, (*L&P*, XII ii, no.598), Hutton to Cromwell, 30 March 1537.

addition to the news these men might collect from foreign merchants they could also rely on their own countrymen to volunteer information. Men like Hackett, Vaughan, Hutton, Coke and Lok as "minister[s] and serveant[s] to a multitude,"⁶⁶ were at the centre of the English merchant community and a focal point for the gossip which abounded there.

On occasion the merchants trading in Antwerp were certainly better informed than the Burgundian government. In September 1526 Hackett wrote to Brian Tuke, Henry's Master of the Posts, informing him that the Fugger's agent had just told him about the battle of Mohaçs and the death of Charles' brother-in-law, king Louis of Hungary.⁶⁷ Four days later during an interview with Margaret the ambassador discovered that she and her advisers had still not received official confirmation of the battle's outcome.⁶⁸ No doubt Margaret had received the same news as Hackett and probably before him, but not as the result of an ambassadorial dispatch or as information passed to the Low Countries from a Habsburg official in Germany or Central Europe, but from the courier service of an international bank.

In addition to the political and diplomatic news that Hackett and his colleagues relayed they were also provided the government with useful information specifically relating to trade and economic affairs. In April 1529 Hackett wrote to Tuke warning of an imminent rise in the price of grain, the result of poor harvests in Italy and Spain.⁶⁹ He advised that the government place strict controls on exports and that if they anticipated a shortage in the coming season they would be wiser to import from the Baltic than from southern Europe. At the government's request close watch was kept on English shipping entering Antwerp and a careful note taken of exactly where ships had

⁶⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B X, fo.67,(*L&P*, V, no.247), Vaughan to Cromwell, 20 May 1531.

⁶⁷ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.35, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2485), Hackett to Tuke, 14 September 1526.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp.25-27, (*ibid*, no.2492), Hackett to Tuke, 18 September 1526.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p.249, (*L&P*, IV iii, no.5493), Hackett to Tuke, 25 April 1529.

sailed from, to whom they belonged and with what they were laden.⁷⁰ Reports were made on the success or otherwise of the quarterly markets and the quantities of money flowing into and out of England,⁷¹ and activity in the arms trade was monitored, particularly where Scottish merchants were concerned.⁷²

After Antwerp, the bourse at Lyons was the most important commercial centre in Europe.⁷³ Here the French government came to raise the massive loans it needed for its wars with Charles. In addition to the large numbers of Italian merchants gathered in the city a regular stream of Swiss and German mercenary captains were to be found there, present to collect their wages from Francis' paymasters.⁷⁴ Nearly every 'nation' with consuls at Antwerp possessed them in Lyons as well, the rather pointed exception being England.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, English merchants like Roger Basing and foreigners with close ties to London such as Antonio Bonivisi, did trade in the city, sometimes forwarding information to Cromwell.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B X, fo.338, (*L&P*, V, no.248), Cromwell to Vaughan c.May 1531. PRO, SP1/112, fos.222-223, (*L&P*, XI, no.1296), Hutton to Cromwell, 13 December 1536.

⁷¹ PRO, SP1/89, fos.62-63, (*L&P*, VIII, no.198), Lok to Cromwell, 11 February 1535.

⁷² PRO, SP1/78, fo.39, (*L&P*, VI, no.900), Coke to Cromwell, 26 July 1533.

⁷³ For the organization and operation of the bourse in Lyons see, R.Gascon, *Commerce et vie urbaine au XVI^e siècle: Lyons et ses marchands environs 1520 de environs 1580*, (2 vols., Paris, 1971), pp.237-279.

⁷⁴ Ehrenberg, *op.cit.*, pp.281-286.

⁷⁵ It was however the Italians who dominated business in the city and in particular the Florentines, Luccese and Genoese, Gascon, *op.cit.*, 210-220. See also, J-F.Dubost, *La France italienne, XVI^e-XVII^e siècle*, (Paris, 1997),pp. 164-174.

⁷⁶ In fact the Bonivisi were for much of the 16th century the leading family amongst Luccese merchants and bankers trading in Lyons. Although they certainly transacted considerable business with Henry's government in London, playing a prominent role in the raising of loans on the Antwerp bourse in the 1540s, their main centre of activity was Lyons from where they organized and financed the purchase of luxury commodities in Italy and their export, primarily to Spain. Gascon, *op.cit.*, 214-216. For an example of Antonio Bonivisi forwarding news to

Albeit to a lesser extent, members of the English merchant community in Andalusia, were, like their counterparts in Antwerp, in a good position to gather intelligence for their government. Again much of this might come from foreign merchants, primarily Portuguese and Italians, yet they also exploited other sources not readily available to official envoys. In the case of merchants long established in foreign countries it was possible that they might have friends or relatives in minor positions at court. Thus in 1537 John Batcock informed Cromwell that he had received news of a proposed meeting between Francis and Suleiman being arranged by the Venetians.⁷⁷ The reliability of such information is not here the issue, what is deserving of note is that the news was brought to the merchant by his nephew, a secretary of one of Charles' councillors at the Spanish court.⁷⁸ On another occasion Batcock received news of the emperor's departure from Sardinia for his Tunis expedition against Barbarossa from a niece resident at the Empress' court.⁷⁹

Merchants could also play an active part in gathering information for themselves. In June 1540 when concerns over an Imperial invasion of England had by no means vanished, Roger Basing was able to offer the government some reassuring news. He informed Cromwell that he had personally carried out a reconnaissance of the Spanish coast around the Bay of Biscay, apparently the most likely area for the gathering of an armada, and discovered little evidence of naval preparations being made.⁸⁰ Basing further observed that Spain was currently so poor that her

Cromwell see, PRO, SP1/102, fos.190-192, (*L&P*, X no.437), Bonivisi to Cromwell, 7 March 1536.

⁷⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp C VII, fo.69, (*L&P*, XII i no.873), Batcock to Cromwell, 8 April 1537.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ PRO, SP1/95, fos.30-33, (*L&P*, IX, no.33), Batcock to Cromwell, 5 August 1535.

⁸⁰ *St.P.*, VIII, p.352, (*L&P*, XV, no.787), Basing to Cromwell, 15 June 1540.

contribution to any war effort planned by Charles need cause the king little anxiety. Whether through professional connections, personal ties or the fruits of their own efforts, the wide scattering of English merchants throughout Europe provided their government with a regular source of information, undoubtedly a useful addition to that proffered by England's fully accredited diplomatic staff.

Although no doubt the various seats of Charles V's government benefited from information passed on by merchants, Charles, unlike Henry, had the advantage of a European postal system run throughout his reign by the de Tassis family. François de Tassis had been appointed *capitaine et maître des postes*, by Charles' father, Philip, in March 1502.⁸¹ In 1505 Ferdinand of Aragon began to make use of de Tassis, paying him 12,000 *lt* a year for the conveyance of the Spanish government's dispatches from Brussels to points in Germany, France and Spain. In 1515 Jean Baptiste de Tassis replaced François and with the agglomeration of Charles' titles, had by 1519 become *maître des postes* for the emperor, king of Spain, and archduke of Burgundy, providing a similar service for Charles' brother Ferdinand in Austria.⁸² Of course the central role of the de Tassis family was to organize the emperor's posts and to ensure that dispatches to and from Charles were delivered as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Yet the network created throughout Europe to achieve this objective was also ideally suited to the collection and dissemination of news and intelligence, ensuring that the role of merchants as newsgathers in the emperor's service was less prominent than it was for Henry.

⁸¹ B.Delepinne, *Histoire de la poste internationale en Belgique sous les grand maitre des postes de la famille de Tassis*, (Brussels, 1952), p.23.

⁸² E.J.B.,Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early-Modern Europe*, (The Hague, 1972), p.10.

Consuls

With the development of the system of resident diplomacy the duties of those envoys dispatched to permanent postings gradually expanded beyond the purely diplomatic functions fulfilled by extraordinary ambassadors. Although it was by no means only merchants appointed to diplomatic service who performed what might best be described as consular duties, they were undoubtedly more active in this area than other English envoys. The very fact that they primarily represented Henry in the Low Countries where by far the largest number of ex-patriate Englishmen were gathered, ensured that they would be most frequently called upon to defend the interests of private individuals and the English merchant community as a whole. Indeed as officers of the Company of the Merchant Adventurers the duties of men like Hackett, Hutton, Vaughan and Chamberlain already included liaising with the authorities at both a local and central government level. Their employment by the English government as agents and ambassadors offered the potential for mutual satisfaction. Henry and his advisers could be sure that the interests of the merchant community would be aggressively defended by those men most qualified for the task. Not only would this serve to quieten the complaints of the vociferous and influential London traders, it also helped to ensure that the government's tariff revenues from the Flanders cloth trade were protected from both the encroachments of the Burgundian authorities and the evasions of the profit hungry merchants. For the Merchant Adventurers the benefits of having their governor appointed ambassador were equally tangible. Firstly it permitted him more frequent access to the Regent and her council. Of course the first order of the day was to discuss what ever political and diplomatic affairs were currently pressing, nevertheless there would still have been abundant opportunities to raise commercial issues. Furthermore, whether he was dealing with the Regent or simply the civil authorities of Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom, the Governor's diplomatic credentials considerably strengthened his hand. Even if he chose to present himself purely in his capacity as the spokesman of the English merchant community he nevertheless retained his

diplomatic status with all the attendant prestige which such an office carried.

Much of the non-diplomatic work performed by Henry's envoys in the Low Countries was concerned with the restoration of merchandise and ships seized by the government and on occasion by private individuals. So John Hackett wrote to Brian Tuke in June 1528,

And as touchyng my daily occorent byssenys here, I may sertefy your good mastership of trowth that synnys myd lentten past hyddyrward ther has beyn but fyawe days but that I hawe had som doleanys or complaynts from the kyng ovr sowrayn lordes soggetts and marchand men. And for to redrss and help them to owt drawe and recovyr ther shippis and goods out of the myschewous handes of the vntrysty see men of this contres, tackyng al for Frenche men goods, I haue don and daely doys my duytee for ther awantage, assistance and delywerance.⁸³

That Hackett had been petitioning for the return of merchants' ships and goods, with the exception of five days, from the middle of Lent until the 13 June, suggests that at certain times at least, he devoted more effort to what might be described as consular activities than those more often associated with diplomacy.

Placed in the more general context of distrust and antagonism which inevitably existed between juxtaposed communities from different countries, conflict between English merchants and the commercial organisations of key trading towns such as Antwerp were unavoidable. In such circumstances an ambassador might be called upon, or feel compelled, either to mediate or to protest. In 1537, Hackett's successor in the Low Countries, John Hutton, found it necessary to explain to Cromwell why he had been absent from Queen Mary's court:

And wher I ame infurmyd that my brother dean sertified your lordship off serteyn defferenceis that hathe byne betwixt the nacion and this towne of Andwarpe, it shall pleas your lorshipe to understand that I haue brought it to aconclucion after suche asort as I

⁸³ Rogers, *Hckett*, p.145.

thynke therin to haue done the nacion great servyce. My absentyng from the court hathe byne for that purpos only. Trusting your lordship therin will take no disspleasur.⁸⁴

It is unclear as to what disagreement Hutton is referring, what is apparent is that he thought it sufficiently important to leave his post at court in order to bring it to a successful resolution and did so without the knowledge of his masters in England.

Stephen Vaughan appears to have been equally prepared to use ambassadorial authority on behalf of the merchants trading in the Low Countries. In a letter to Paget he described the hostile treatment English mariners were receiving at the hands of the populace of Bergen op Zoom, and one incident in particular in which two mariners were chased by an angry crowd who abused and threw stones at them. When they attempted to escape by boarding their ship the crowd tried to follow them and were only dissuaded after other members of the crew began shooting arrows, seriously injuring several of the mob.⁸⁵ He went on to explain:

Of this outrageous dealyng of thes rude peple with ar maryners, because the merchants haue not theyr governor here, nor no man to care for theyr things, I compleyned bothe to the Margrave and to the Barrow Master of this town,⁸⁶ and desyered them to se an order taken that suche lewd people as thus outrageously quarrellyed and delt with ar maryners myght be punyshed.⁸⁷

The officers of the merchant community in Spain representing a much smaller and more recently established organization were never entrusted by the government with the responsibilities given to their counterparts in the Low Countries. Furthermore, some of the leading merchants trading in Spain, men such as Robert Thorne and Roger Barlow, tended to remain aloof from the

⁸⁴ PRO SP1/121, fos.138-141, (*L&P*, XII ii, no.108), Hutton to Cromwell, 17 June 1537.

⁸⁵ PRO SP1/221, fo.206, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.1284), Vaughan to Paget, Antwerp, 15 July 1546.

⁸⁶ Bergen op Zoom.

⁸⁷ PRO SP1/221, fo.206, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.1284), Vaughan to Paget, Antwerp, 15 July 1546.

Andalusian Company, relying instead upon the connections they had already established in the country.⁸⁸ In consequence one does not find the same coincidence of consular and diplomatic functions, merchants relying instead upon the intervention of the resident envoys who accompanied the emperor when he travelled to Spain.⁸⁹ Even so, on occasion one does discover merchants interceding on the part of their colleagues at the direction of the government. In 1540 Roger Basing, a prominent figure in both Anglo-Spanish commerce and the Bordeaux wine trade, travelled to Spain to investigate the persecution being suffered by English merchants at the hands of the inquisition.⁹⁰ By the time he reached Bilbao most of the merchants who had encountered difficulties with the inquisition had already returned to England. He nevertheless compiled a report on the affair which he forwarded to the Council.⁹¹

Edmund Harvel as Henry's sole representative in Italy in the final decade of the reign, found himself called upon to lend support not so much to merchants as the scions of noble houses travelling to the peninsula usually to complete their education. On several occasions he applied to the senate for licences to permit Englishmen resident in Venetian territory to arm themselves and their servants.⁹² When, in September 1543, the senate refused to issue a warrant to Lord

⁸⁸ Connell-Smith, *op.cit.*, p.91.

⁸⁹ Thus in 1527 Edward Lee, the king's resident in Spain, intervened to assist the English merchant community, 'I also devisid to sue to the emperor for his letters to all his officers that they in no wise shold troble our merchants or take anye of their goods from them, but suffer them peaxible hear to live that wold live, so that his subgectts culd like wise contynue in England.....And in thinking hereon I thought that the emperor peradventure wold shewe hym self the more partial in our sute yf we doo so mutche for hym as to conveye his letters wher he hathe no menes and thus he wold thinke that we shewed our selfs unto hym and to those that moved us to the contrarie.' BL, Cotton MS. Vesp.C IV fo.126, (*L&P*, IV, ii, no.3152); Lee to Wolsey, 5 June 1527. See also, *ibid* fo.74, (*ibid*, no.2987), Lee to Wolsey, 25 March 1527.

⁹⁰ *St.P.*, VIII, p.352, (*L&P*, XV, no.787), Basing to Cromwell, 15 June 1540, Bilbao.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.426, (*ibid*, no.977), Basing to Fitzwilliam, 15 August 1540, Seville.

⁹² *CSPV*, V, p.119, *L&P*, XXI ii, no.559.

Cobham's son William, and his friend John Schier to wear arms in Padua, Harvel continued for several months to press their suit until the boys received permission to wear arms in the town's precincts for two years.⁹³ He continued to take an interest in Cobham's offspring and in 1546 wrote to him about another son, George who was staying in Venice.⁹⁴ George had elected to stay in the city, "withowt any other order for his costes and charges.....being left her withowt mony, rayment, bokes, or anything besides. " Harvel reassured his father however, that he was in the care of, 'aman of singuler honestie and lerning, and that taketh grate care to see him profet aswel in the tonges both Latin and Greke and Italian, as also in civile and vertuous costoms.'⁹⁵ He went on to suggest that if Cobham wished he might send money to George through the ambassador's factors in Antwerp, Daniel and Anthony Bombridge, which Harvel would then pass on to the boy's master. He further promised to ensure that Cobham's son send regular accounts back to England.⁹⁶

A few months later Harvel wrote to Paget to promise his help to Thomas Speake's son, 'for respect of the comone contre and of Mr Speake, (doteid as I understand with manny grete qualites)⁹⁷ not of course to mention the respect he bore Paget himself. He promised the king's secretary:

⁹³ *CSPV*, pp.119-120.

⁹⁴ BL.Harleian MS, 283, fo.343, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.47) Harvel to Cobham, 10 January 1546.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ In 1548 Thomas Hoby reported that when he stayed with Harvel the ambassador's guests included George Speake, Thomas Fitzwilliam, Thomas Strange and, 'dyvers other Englishemen', T.Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, kt, of Bisham Abbey: Written by himself, 1547-1564*, (Royal Historical Society, London, 1902), p.3. In part the extent of Harvel's generosity no doubt reflected his own humanist sympathies and a desire to gather about himself a coterie of young scholars. Nevertheless, he did use influence as the king's ambassador to help English travellers arriving in Venice. For Harvel's interest in scholarship see P.J.Laven, 'The life and writings of William Thomas', M.A., (London, 1954), pp.333-338.

⁹⁷ PRO, SP1/219, fo.55, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.896), Harvel to Paget, 23 May 1546.

he shal lacke no pleasure of comfert with any other officious worke that I may do in the furtherance of the gentilman, both in lerning and vertuous maners. And at any sens nedeful of money, I wil gladly suplye after soche maner that he shal lacke nothing as therof I haue already signified unto the young gentilman."⁹⁸

If Harvel was prepared to act as chaperon and protector he was equally effective functioning as the long hand of English law. In 1545 he received a letter from the Council in London advising him that a servant of Sir Anthony Browne's, William Thomas, had absconded with certain bonds.⁹⁹ On the day he received the letter he also got news of Thomas' arrival in Venice and acted promptly. Having interviewed the youth, he put him off his guard, "entretynnyng the young man with goode words", whilst sending instructions to the Vivaldi who had possession of the stolen bills, not to issue any payment on them. At the same time he applied to the Signory to imprison Thomas, which they promptly did. Had other of Henry's envoys been able to so swiftly capture the more illustrious of his renegade subjects, no doubt the king would have enjoyed a considerably greater peace of mind.

Commissaries

An increasingly important aspect of the activities performed by merchants for the English government centred about the acquisition of foodstuffs, munitions and towards the close of the reign, foreign loans. Most commonly one finds merchants acting on behalf of important individuals, both buying and facilitating the export of small quantities of luxury goods. Unsurprisingly the most frequent beneficiary of these services was the king. On occasion the

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ PRO SP1/200, fo.3, (*L&P*, XX i, no.515), Harvel to the council, 13 April 1545. Also see, Laven,*op.cit.*, pp.24-26. After spending an unspecified period in jail, Thomas continued his travels before returning to England in 1548 where he was later appointed a clerk of the privy council. In 1554 he took part in Wyatt's rebellion and met the same fate as its leader.

items destined for the royal household were bought without instruction, either as gifts or as samples which it was anticipated would attract the king's interest and lead to larger orders. Thus in 1538 William Lok took advantage of the Bishop of Liege's fiscal difficulties to buy twelve pieces of gold and silver plate. In a letter to Cromwell the merchant explained that should the king be interested he was confident that he would be able to buy more at a very reasonable price.¹⁰⁰ At other times merchants were given specific commissions to make purchases on the king's behalf. One element of Roger Basing's mission to Spain in 1540 was to buy horses for Henry. Despite being largely unimpressed with what he was shown, Basing nevertheless bought the king six stallions and four mares.¹⁰¹

A number of the king's councillors also took advantage of their links with merchants, particularly in the Low Countries, to facilitate the purchase and export of various goods. Cromwell, whose association with Stephen Vaughan almost certainly began with the merchant acting as his personal agent in the Low Countries, continued to rely on him after he entered Henry's service to handle the purchase, shipment and sale of his merchandise.¹⁰² John Hutton also assisted Cromwell, shipping a lion and a spaniel to the lord privy seal in 1537 as well as acquiring for his secretary, Thomas Wriothesley, two sable skins.¹⁰³ William Paget also made use of his links with the Low Countries merchants, when in 1546 he instructed the governor of the Merchant Adventurers, Thomas Chamberlain, to buy and export for him a quantity of silver plate.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B X, fo.83, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.49), Lok to Cromwell, 7 August 1538.

¹⁰¹ *St.P.*, VIII, p.426, (*L&P*, XV, no.977), Basing to Fitzwilliam, 15 August 1540.

¹⁰² See for example Vaughan's protracted involvement in the disposal of a large quantity of spices owned by the royal secretary. PRO, SP1/68, fos.61-62, BL, Cotton MS, Galba B X fo.21, (*L&P*, V, nos.311, 542, 574), Vaughan to Cromwell, 28 June, 20 November, and 9 December 1531.

¹⁰³ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B XIII, fo.340, (*L&P*, XII i, no.388), Hutton to Wriothesley, 6 February 1537.

¹⁰⁴ PRO, SP1/213, fos.2, 36, 193, (*L&P*, XXI i, nos.5, 27, 145), Chamberlain to Paget, 1, 7 and

Another merchant, John Dymmock, proved extremely useful to the Duke of Suffolk, when plans to dispose of the lead from the roofs of monastic buildings he had acquired during the dissolution fell through.¹⁰⁵ Dymmock acted as the Duke's factor in Antwerp, disposing of the excess lead for an extremely competitive price at a time when the English government itself was glutting the market and forcing prices down.¹⁰⁶

On a far larger scale Henry and his advisers began to make use of the king's merchant envoys to organize the importation of munitions, ordinance and bulk quantities of key foodstuffs such as wheat and barley. With regard to munitions, artillery and armour as well as the materials from which they were made, primarily iron and bronze, the reign saw a gradual increase in economic autonomy.¹⁰⁷ Over the period numbers of European craftsman were brought to England to manufacture guns and armour. Furthermore, England possessed rich deposits of iron ore from which could be extracted much of the metal needed for the manufacture of handguns, armour and artillery. Even so, by the time of Henry's death the country still lacked sufficient craftsmen to meet the demands of the king's belligerent foreign policy as well as key natural resources such as copper for the founding of bronze artillery, and saltpetre, the central ingredient in gunpowder. In order to remedy these shortfalls the government relied heavily on its agents in the English merchant community.

One of Thomas Spinely's first duties for his new master was to arrange the manufacture and export to England of 24 guns from the Low Countries.¹⁰⁸ Eight years later Thomas Batcock was

31 January 1546.

¹⁰⁵ S.J.Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c.1485-1545*, (Oxford, 1988), p.201-202.

¹⁰⁶ See below, pp.209-210.

¹⁰⁷ Davies, 'Supply Services', *op.cit.*, pp.42-44.

¹⁰⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B III, fo.8, (*L&P*, I i, no.355), Henry to Spinely, January 1510.

commissioned by the government to oversee the manufacture and shipment of a culverin from Spain.¹⁰⁹ Laurence Stauber wrote to Henry from Nuremburg in 1537 advising him that some guns were available for purchase; in itself hardly a remarkable piece of news, but one which the agent clearly believed might still interest the king.¹¹⁰ Although by the close of the reign more artillery was being manufactured in England, English commercial agents like William Damsell were still buying guns and shipping them back to England.¹¹¹ Similarly large quantities of armour were either bought in, or shipped through the Low Countries. In 1541 John Osborne procured 200 pairs of demi-lance harness - light cavalry armour - from Antwerp, as well as 100,000 lbs of copper purchased from the Fuggers.¹¹² Three years later, Thomas Lok shipped a wide range of armour to England for the government including 200 mail shirts and 500 pieces of cavalry harness.¹¹³ In 1544 Edmund Harvel bought an unspecified quantity of armour and handguns for the king from an Italian merchant, Dominico Erisi.¹¹⁴ There was also a great demand for gunpowder. In 1524 sufficiently large quantities of powder were being stored in the English warehouse at Antwerp to provoke a complaint from the authorities.¹¹⁵ Twenty years later, William Damsell spent nearly £50,000 on powder, bought in Antwerp between 1544 and 1547.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ PRO, SP1/16, fos.235-244, (*L&P*, II ii, no.4108), Batcock's accounts for the manufacture of the king's culverin, 23 April 1518.

¹¹⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel. B XXI, fo.168, (*L&P*, XII i, no.986), Stauber to Henry, 20 April 1537.

¹¹¹ Between 1544 and 1547 Damsell procured eight 'brass' guns in Antwerp for Henry. Davies, 'Supply services', *op.cit.*,p.39.

¹¹² PRO, SP1/165, fo.195, (*L&P*, XVI, no.822), John Osborne to Henry, 11 May 1541.

¹¹³ PRO, SP1/189, fo.54, (*L&P*, XIX i, no.764) Thomas Lok to Henry, 23 June 1544.

¹¹⁴ *St.P.*, IX, p.696, (*L&P*, XIX I, no.680), Harvel to Henry, 6 June 1544

¹¹⁵ Davies, 'Supply services', *op.cit.*,p.45.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Not surprisingly the export of weapons and materiel was a highly sensitive issue with the government of the Low Countries. Invariably the emperor's need for munitions was so great that his councillors were loath to see manufacturers and merchants selling to anyone else. Furthermore, given the cool relations between Charles and Henry during much of the 1530s the Imperialists were unlikely to be enthusiastic about large quantities of arms being sold to the English. In the 1540s the situation became more complex. After Francis and Charles agreed peace terms in September 1544 the emperor was obliged to take a neutral stance between the remaining antagonists, in such circumstances he could hardly be seen to be allowing his subjects to continue selling arms to the English. For all these reasons the commercial activities of those merchants employed by the crown to arrange the shipment of arms often went arm in arm with diplomatic representations to the Burgundian government. One of John Hutton's first tasks as the king's agent in the Low Countries was to request permission of Mary for the export of 500 almain rivets - chain mail corselets.¹¹⁷ It is a reflection of the comments made directly above that in response Mary explained that due to the demand for armour created by Charles' latest war with France, she would have to decline the envoy's request.¹¹⁸ Nine years later when diplomatic representations were again largely unsuccessful, Henry's agents were obliged to pack the greater part of 5,000 handguns in sugar barrels and smuggle them out of Antwerp.¹¹⁹

The use of merchants by the government to import foodstuffs reached its high point in the 1540s when a dearth of various key crops both in the Mediterranean and in England was exacerbated by the outbreak of war across much of Europe.¹²⁰ Between 1544 and 1546 William Watson¹²¹ and

¹¹⁷ PRO, SP1/112, fo.223, (*L&P*, XI, no.1296) Hutton to Cromwell, 13 December 1536.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ PRO, SP1/200, fo.11 (*L&P*, XX i, no.606), Wotton to the Council, 29 April 1545. *CSPS*, VIII, p.230, van der Delft to Charles, 10 August 1545.

¹²⁰ PRO, SP1/213, fo.163, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.126), Vaughan, Dymmock and Watson to Paget, January 1546.

John Dymmock were dispatched to Holland, Denmark, and various Hanseatic cities including Lubeck, Bremen and Danzig to buy wheat, rye, bacon and butter,¹²² as well as to hire ships to transport both food and men to and from Boulogne.¹²³ Despite the largely commercial nature of their mission these men appear to have been equipped with either partial or full diplomatic credentials. In letters to Henry various of the cities to which Watson and Dymmock were dispatched variously describe them as commissaries and/or ambassadors.¹²⁴ Although one must always take into account the relaxed attitude towards diplomatic terminology still prevalent in some quarters at this time, it is clear that the merchants had been armed with some kind of diplomatic credentials in order to facilitate their mission.

Henry also came to rely upon his merchant envoys to find him the extra money he needed to finance his wars. Until the 1540s the king had largely been able to depend upon English resources to pay for his foreign policy. When he was involved in credit finance it was as the lender rather than the borrower. In such circumstances the difficulties which arose concerned logistical issues such as transportation, problems which perhaps demanded patience and possibly discretion, but no particular commercial expertise. Even so as early as 1523 William Knight was

¹²¹ William Watson, also known as John Brende, was not in fact a merchant but primarily employed by the king on the Scottish frontier overseeing the construction of fortifications and the calling of musters. D.L.Potter, 'The international mercenary market in the sixteenth century: Anglo-French competition in Germany, 1543-1550', *EHR*, 111, (1996), 24-58, esp. pp.28-29.

¹²² PRO, SP1/190, fo.172, (*L&P*, XIX i, no.996), Consuls of Danzig to Henry, 27 July 1544; SP1/206, fo.69, (*L&P*, XX ii, no.175), Dymmock to the Council, 20 August 1545; SP1/213, fo.71, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.56), instructions to Dymmock and Watson, 12 January 1546; SP1/215, fo.25, (*ibid*, no.350), Dymmock to the Council, 7 March 1546.

¹²³ PRO, SP1/205, fos.128, 130, (*L&P*, XX ii, nos.68-69) Dymmock to Wriothesley and Dymmock to Paget, 7 August 1545.

¹²⁴ Thus, PRO, SP1/214, fos.166, (*L&P*, XXI i, no.287), 26 February 1546, City of Lubeck to Henry, refers to Dymmock and Watson as the king's ambassadors.

passing on to Wolsey the Archduchess Margaret's request that the king appoint a commercial agent in the Low Countries to organize his financial affairs.¹²⁵

Only in the final years of the reign when war with Scotland and the most ambitious expedition yet launched against France had drained his treasury did Henry turn to the international money-market at Antwerp for credit.¹²⁶ When he did so he relied almost entirely on the services of Stephen Vaughan, his agent and ambassador in the Low Countries for more than a decade. Vaughan's expertise and wide range of business connections proved invaluable to Henry. In the first six months of 1544 alone the merchant raised 210,000 crowns for his master.¹²⁷ Although a relatively small amount when placed against England's total war expenditure, it nevertheless represented quite an achievement on Vaughan's part. Unlike the emperor, Henry was a stranger to the financiers of Antwerp and Augsburg who needed to be convinced that the English king represented a credible risk - no mean feat given the country's shaky financial state, and from September 1544 its isolated position as sole opponent of France. Via his links with the Imperial financial agent, Gasparo Ducci, Vaughan was able to open a line of credit with the Welsers, in itself a signal to other would-be creditors that English debt was a sound commodity. As his biographer has observed, 'Although Vaughan received little credit at home for all his efforts, the success in winning the confidence of the German banking houses was largely due to him.'¹²⁸ Furthermore, by exploiting his position in the Merchant Adventurers the ambassador was able to underwrite further borrowings using the collective assets of the company as collateral. At a more technical level Vaughan advised the government on the most effective ways of avoiding

¹²⁵ Rogers, *Hackett*, p.6, (*L&P*, III, no.3366), Knight to Wolsey, 28 September, 1523.

¹²⁶ For a detailed and somewhat tortuous account of English efforts to raise loans at Antwerp see, Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan*, pp.44-76.

¹²⁷ Richardson, *Vaughan*, p.48.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p.54.

exchange rate costs¹²⁹ and the most competitive interest rates at which to take up loans.¹³⁰

The agent also acted as the government's chief trader. Aware of the surfeit of lead plundered from England's monasteries and currently swamping the English market, Vaughan suggested the government export some to Antwerp where he was confident he would be able to get a reasonable price for it.¹³¹ Such was the government's enthusiasm for the scheme that the merchant was forced to write and advise them to restrict the amounts they sent over to Antwerp. Hearing that they were planning to export as much as 12,000 fodder,¹³² forty or fifty times as much as Vaughan had expected, he had to explain that the appearance of so much lead on the market would cause the price to plummet.¹³³ Having sold between two and three hundred fodder in 1544, the following year he managed to arrange a commodity swap with two Spanish merchants, Martin Lopez and Fernando Assa, who agreed to ship quantities of lead from Newcastle and Hull in return for which they would pay with alum.¹³⁴ Again it should be stressed that the money raised from these activities was small in comparison to the demands placed on the king's treasury by his continuing war with France. Nevertheless, as a further example of the diverse range of responsibilities undertaken by Henry's merchant envoys and agents, they serve to demonstrate just how useful such men could be when the full range of their skills and experience was utilised.

¹²⁹ PRO, SP1/190, fo.31, (*L&P*, XIX i, no.911; XX i, no.1316) Vaughan to Paget, 14 July 1544, Vaughan to Henry, 30 July 1545.

¹³⁰ PRO, SP1/203, fo.213, (*L&P*, XX i, no.1194), Vaughan to Paget, 14 July 1545.

¹³¹ PRO, SP1/189, fo.232, SP1/190, fo.31, (*L&P*, XIX i, nos. 869, 911), Vaughan, Dymmock and Lok to the Council, 6 July 1544 and Vaughan to Paget, 14 July 1544.

¹³² One fodder = 2,184 lbs.

¹³³ PRO, SP1/191, fo.147, (*L&P*, XIX ii, no.119), Vaughan to the Council, 20 August 1544.

¹³⁴ PRO, SP1/202, fo.48, SP1/203, fo.54, SP1/204, fo.57, (*L&P*, XX i, nos.930, 1099, 1223), Vaughan to Paget, 13 June, 3 July and 19 July 1545.

Until London's development as a centre of international finance in the later 16th century, Henry and his successors would be forced to look to the continent in order raise loans. Yet while the English crown was obliged to depend on the likes of Stephen Vaughan and later Richard Gresham to raise finance abroad, both Charles and Francis possessed cities within their own territories with well established money markets. Certainly the emperor relied upon foreign finance experts like Gasparo Ducci to raise loans from foreign banks such as the *Gualteroti* of Florence who contributed 55,000 crowns to Charles' campaign for the imperial crown, and of course the Fuggers who supported the emperor throughout his reign. Yet these transactions were largely managed in Antwerp in the heart of Charles' territory and required no involvement on the part of the emperor's diplomatic staff. Similarly Francis was able to rely upon the bourse at Lyons to raise funds for his wars with Charles. In addition to French financiers he made regular use of the Florentine banking families resident in Lyons, most prominently the Guadagni, Elbène and Capponi.¹³⁵ As with the emperor, however, the funding of foreign policy, remained a largely domestic issue.

Conclusion

Relatively few in number, those merchants who came to serve the king abroad performed a wider range of services for Henry and his advisers than either the clergy or nobility. Some were eventually accredited as full ambassadors and as such dealt with the same political and diplomatic issues as their clerical and noble colleagues. However, it was not in the performance of such tasks that the real strengths of men like Hackett, Vaughan and Dymmock lay. As prominent merchants trading in the busiest and most cosmopolitan cities in Europe they were excellently placed to gather the most up-to-date information from the widest variety of sources. Their ex-patriate status rendered them eminently suitable for permanent postings, while their

¹³⁵ Dubost, *La France italienne*, pp.164-165.

responsibilities as the leading individuals within their respective commercial communities, dovetailed well with the developing consular role of the resident envoy. Finally, as the increasing scale and expense of war made it less practical for a prince to plan a campaign based around the resources which his own country could provide, the commercial and financial expertise of merchants became ever more valuable. In the early decades of Henry's reign the king's greatest need had been for men who could navigate the murky channels that traced the Vatican; scholars who could grasp the arcane subtleties of civil law and theology. By its close a new kind of expert was called for, one who understood the intricacies of international finance and commodity trading. Probably not as corrupt as the Roman curia, the Antwerp bourse was every bit as complex, and any prince who turned to it for succour was no less in need of guidance. At the close of Henry's reign the English government had only just begun to exploit this new opportunity, even so, the aid and advice of the king's merchants was already proving invaluable in taking full advantage of the fiscal indulgences which the Antwerp money-market was prepared to grant.

Chapter Five

Rewards

Introduction

Any reading of the diplomatic correspondence of Henry VIII's ambassadors soon gives the impression that those chosen for foreign service were less than happy at the prospect. The general attitude of the king's ambassadors was summed up by Stephen Vaughan:

If yow woold not be displeased with the wryting of your entier poor frende, I woolde saye that emonge all other the king's subiects they wer most unhappy that shulde be sent on any busyness out of the realme. For what soever ther busynes is, or of how great importance soever it be, or in what thyng soever they desyre to be answered, never or veray late cometh any [answer]. Can men that entierly endevoyre to brynge to passe thynges comytt to theyr charge, be quyet in ther harts when being in the necessitie of thadvise or counsaile of those to whome the thyngs only apperteyne, they altogether forget the parties sent and his affayres also.¹

In addition to the sense of isolation and the frequent feeling that one had been forgotten, many envoys complained of the material costs of diplomatic service. In 1515, Sir Robert Wingfield wrote to Henry's council:

I have contynued at this corte above iiii years and a half the king's ambassador, and servyd so that I doubt nott to have the thanks of hys grace and all the raylme. And the mean while, by the death of Edmund de la Pole I have forborne the chieff thinge and all that I had to serve the kinge with,.....And where it pleasyd his grace to geve me the office of Hygh Marshall in the town of Calleys, the sayd office hath been occupied this oon yere paste in my name without delyvering any penny to my personne. So I have ben forcyd nott only to spend all that myght be gotten off my owne, but also made all my frends weary of lendyng to

¹ PRO, SP1/87, fos.97-8, (*L&P*, VII, no.1515), Vaughan to Cromwell, 7 December 1534.

my great unhartie ease as God knoweth.²

Towards the end of Henry's reign John Dymmock complained to William Paget:

Hyt maye pleas yor lorshipe to have pore John Dymocke in remembrance,.....that I maye tarye at home and do myn owen besynes for I am not abill to contyne after thes maner with X s a daie. I and my servants ar fayne to paye dobill the whiche we wer wont to do.I have served thes ii yer and left myn owen occupaycion whiche showld have beyn worth at the lest, 4 or 500 pounds stirling.³

Furthermore, numerous ambassadors felt that foreign service was responsible for doing long term damage to their prosperity.. Thomas Magnus, Henry's Scottish expert, observed that he was, 'in maner litle beter of substance but as I had xxv yeres ago.⁴

The aim of this final section will be to consider the credibility of the unceasing complaints that diplomatic service invariably left ambassadors in an impoverished state and that the government was consistently unsympathetic to the financial needs of its diplomatic staff. It will also assess how important a part diplomatic service played in the lives of those appointed as ambassadors and to what degree foreign service was responsible for the advancement or truncation of their careers.

² PRO, SP1/9, fos.134-135, (*L&P*, I ii, no.3340), Robert Wingfield to the Council, 6 October 1514.

³ PRO, SP1/214, fo.53, (*L&P* XXI i, no.201), Dymmock to Paget, 12 February 1546.

⁴ PRO, SP1/51, fos.138-9, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.5070), Magnus to Tuke, 27 December 1528. Given that the contention made in this chapter will be that diplomatic service could potentially be highly rewarding it is worth noting that Magnus by the mid-1530s was not only a member of the king's council in the North and Archdeacon of the East Riding, but master of St Leonard's hospice and the college of St Sepulchre in York and Sibthorpe college in Nottinghamshire, vicar of Kendal in Westmorland and rector of Beadale in Cleveland. At this time he held eight benefices in the diocese of York alone. *The Clifford Letters of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. A.G.Dickens, (London, 1962), pp.42-43.

Diets

The most frequent and often repeated complaints of the early Tudor ambassador concerned the payment of their diets.⁵ If among the reports of Henry's envoys one does not find frequent complaints on such matters as problems of cashflow and dire warnings of incipient bankruptcy, it is most likely because the relevant documents have either been lost or mutilated. Sir Robert Wingfield complained about the inadequacy of his diets on a regular basis, on one occasion warning the king, that if he did not receive more money soon he would be compelled to hide himself in shame.⁶ Ten years later, as resident to the Archduchess Margaret in the Low Countries, he was still hammering home the point that twenty shillings was insufficient for an ambassador to support himself.⁷ Five years after that he wrote to Stephen Gardiner from Calais, this time on his

⁵ During the time of Henry's father the responsibility for payment of diets had shifted from the Exchequer to the king's Chamber, J.M.Currin, '*Por expensis ambassatorum*: Diplomacy and financial administration in the reign of Henry VII,' *EHR*, 108, (1993), 589-609. The freer access which Henry VII had to this source of finance allowed for a greater degree of flexibility and speed in the provision of diets, travelling expenses and so on, an important consideration where the immediacy of a response to a development in foreign affairs might well play a part in their outcome. For the first 27 years of Henry VIII's reign the Chamber continued to provide the great majority of money used to finance the king's diplomacy, only giving up its monopoly from 1536 when the court of Augmentations came to play an increasing part in the payment of ambassadors' diets and expenses. G.M.Bell's remark that, 'The treasurer of the chamber was the paymaster for diplomats during the entire period', Bell, '*Tudor Stuart diplomatic history and the Henrician experience*', in *State, Sovereigns and Society*, ed. C.Carlton, 1998), pp.25-43, takes no account of D.L.Potter's research 25 years earlier, which demonstrated that with the establishment of the Court of Augmentations in 1536, the chamber's role in the payment of ambassadors declined. By the mid-1540s nearly all ambassadors to the Low Countries, the emperor and Germany as well certain special embassies to France were financed by Augmentations, D.L.Potter, '*Diplomacy in the mid-16th century: England and France 1536-1550*', Ph.D, (Cambridge, 1973), p.297.

⁶ PRO, SP1/9 fos.134-135, (*L&P*, I ii, no.3340), Wingfield to Henry, 6 October 1514. For other complaints see, BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XVIII, fos.95, 105, 140, (*ibid*, nos.3218, 3525, *L&P* II i,no.294), Robert Wingfield to Henry, 31 August and 6 December 1514, Wingfield to the council, 3 April 1515.

⁷ BL, Cotton MS, Galba B VIII, fo.168, (*L&P*, IV i no.1350), Wingfield to Wolsey, 22 May 1525.

successor John Hackett's behalf, making pretty much the same point.⁸ As junior commissioner at Cambrai in July 1529 Hackett made his own case:

to tell your m[astership] the werry trowth yf I had not had the secours of my Lord of London is kytchyn and table and som tymys with Master More, I had not aben able to sawe the kyng my master is honnor nether myne nown as his pore orator, and my confydens and trust is that when your m[astership] knowys my nessesytethat ye will help me with your good mynd and assistens.⁹

Wingfield and Hackett's grievances were repeated by many other royal ambassadors. In 1518 John Stile wrote to the king informing him that he had had to sell some of his plate in order to augment his diets.¹⁰ Two of Stile's successors at the Spanish court, Richard Sampson and Edward Lee, both complained to Wolsey that their diets were insufficient to carry on as ambassadors,¹¹ a point underlined by another resident to the Spanish court, Thomas Hannibal:

This yorney is the most costly yorney that any man may imagyn. No man may thynkyde but he that is in hit: I am in as costly corte and countrey as any in the worlde. On my faythe, I spend as moche in on day her as shuld secur me in London in a hole wyk. It is no smal charge to folow a corte or to be in a cite wher such a prince is, and many tymes in the wyk I must doo mor than my mynde is for my master's sak, and to hys honor I wyll spend my

⁸ 'the sayde Master Hackett was promysyd by my lorde in this town at his beynghe heyre that he wolde se his dyetts augmentyd which to me semyth were right necessary, for I know well that he hath put his fryendes to greet charge synst he was the kynges servaunte, specially to mayntayne the offyce which he hath in charge for the kyngis honner. And alsoo I am well aqwayntyed and of knowlege that many tymys such dyetis as be grawntyed be slakly payid which is hygh dysease of mynde to such as have noon other shyfte but theyre redy monney.' PRO, SP1/45 fos.89-90, Rogers, *op.cit.*, pp.106-107, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3611) Wingfield to Gardiner, 27 November 1527.

⁹ PRO, SP1/55 fo.52, Rogers, *op.cit.*, p.295, Hackett to Brian Tuke, 11 August 1529.

¹⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp. C I fo.125, (*L&P*, II ii, no.3537), Stile to Henry, 11 February 1518.

¹¹ 'Most humbly I beseche your grace to know that this countree is very deare so that with my xx s the daye and all that I have got of myn own lyving wyll not suffice...I wold most gladly that your grace knew that in thes parties how litle it is off xx s by the daye and how shortly it is spende, all things be yett off such price.' PRO.SP1/28, fos.97-98, (*L&P*, III ii, no.3157), Sampson to Wolsey, 3 July 1523; See also, BL, Cotton MS, Vesp C III, fos.250-251, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2602), Lee to Wolsey, 2 November 1526.

bloode. A thousand ducatts in this country for an embassatour is littel regarde it. I rather be in France or Flanders for viii^c crowns tuchyng myn expenses than in thys country for ii thousande.¹²

In 1520 Cuthbert Tunstall, attending the emperor at the Diet of Worms addressed a letter to Wolsey requesting more diets since he had already exceeded the amount he had received at his departure by 200 pounds and could find no English merchants from whom to borrow more.¹³ Stephen Gardiner and Edward Foxe wrote from Rome in 1528, warning Wolsey and the king that if Gregorio de Casali did not receive more diets he would no longer be able to continue there as resident ambassador.¹⁴ Despite receiving 53s 6d a day, William Howard nevertheless wrote to his half brother, the Duke of Norfolk, complaining

And where you wryte to me that I shulde shape my gowne after my cloth, I am well assured that my trayne is not so grete but I cowlde shyfte well with my dyetts, but the resorte of gentlemen is so grete from tyme to tyme that I moote not howe to shyfte them withowt you will have me to shoote the gates agenst them. I have layne all the tyme that the kynge hath ben at Ambois half a myle withowte the towne, and that not withstanding they come daily to me.¹⁵

¹² PRO, SP1/24 fo.160, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2281), Hannibal to Wolsey, 24 May 1522, Saragosa. Although ambassadors complained of the cost of living in the countries to which they had been dispatched, Hannibal, Sampson and Lee had more justification than most. Population rises in Spain in the early 16th century had led to greater demand for basic food stuffs and consequent inflation. Although it is perhaps premature to point to the impact of silver and gold imports on Spanish prices in the 1520s, those ambassadors travelling to Spain in the 1530s and 1540s would undoubtedly begun suffer from the inflow of central American bullion. H.Kamen, *Spain, 1469-1714*, (2 ed., London, 1991), pp.99-102; F.Braudel and F.Spooner, 'Prices in Europe, 1450-1750', in *Cambridge Economic History of Europe: vol.IV, The Economy of Expanding Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Cambridge, 1967), eds.E.E.Rich and C.H.Wilson, pp.378-487.

¹³ The actual amount Tunstall had spent in excess of his original diets is uncertain since most of the figure is obscured in the manuscript. However, one can read the number 'two', making 200 the most likely figure. BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XX, fo.180, (*L&P*, III i, no.1098), Tunstall to Wolsey, 17 December 1520.

¹⁴ BL, Harleian MS 419, fo.71, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4119), Gardiner and Foxe to Wolsey, March 1528.

¹⁵ PRO, SP1/137, fo.199v, (*L&P*, XVI i, no.824), William Howard to the Duke of Norfolk, 11

William Paget, Howard's successor in France, assured the Privy Council that he would not be able to keep the post of ambassador long if they did not increase the twenty shillings a day they currently paid him.¹⁶

It is hard to ignore the mountain of evidence which testifies to the financial difficulties of Henry's ambassadors. However, it would be unwise to use these grievances as the sole basis for assessing how well the Tudor government paid its diplomatic staff.¹⁷ In the early years of the reign the common wage rate for an ambassador was twenty shillings a day. Certainly with regard to the first resident envoys little or no distinction was made between their varying ranks or the destination of the courts to which they were dispatched. Thus Sir Robert Wingfield, long time resident at the imperial court, Thomas Spinelly, from 1517 Henry's envoy in Spain, and Sir Thomas Boleyn, first English permanent envoy to the court of Francis I, all received the same diets.¹⁸ Wingfield hailed from a well established knightly family in Suffolk, Spinelly was a Florentine merchant, and Boleyn was a well connected courtier married to the Duke of Norfolk's daughter.

May 1541.

¹⁶ *St.P.*, VIII, p.633, (*L&P*, XVII, no.1335), Paget to the Council, 12 November 1541. It is unclear why Paget's diets were originally set at this low level. It is possible that although he was becoming increasingly influential in Henry's government his diets were based on the actual positions he held at the time of his accreditation to France, namely clerk of the signet and clerk of the privy council. Although the first office could be financially very rewarding and the second was of a highly sensitive nature, neither carried great rank with it.

¹⁷ Most historians have to varying degrees sympathized with the complaints of early modern ambassadors. See, Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, pp.222-224; Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan*, p.5; Potter, *Anglo-French Diplomacy*, pp.295-300.

¹⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XVIII, fo.140, (*L&P*, II i, no.294), Wingfield to the Council, 3 April 1515. PRO, E36/216, fo.71, (*L&P*, II, p.1534), Chamber payments to Boleyn, 13 March 1519; *ibid*, fo.118, (*ibid*, p.1537), Chamber payments to Spinelly, September, 1519.

With regard to special embassies distinctions were made usually reflecting the rank of the ambassador. In November 1518 the Earl of Worcester, dispatched to France to ratify the Treaty of London, received 66s 8d while his colleague, Nicholas West, Bishop of Ely, who nine years earlier as the Dean of Windsor had only been granted twenty shillings was paid 53s 4d.¹⁹ John Kite, Bishop of Armagh, performing a special mission to Spain in 1518 was paid 66s 6d, a remarkably generous wage and one of the highest paid to a bishop sent abroad during Henry's reign.²⁰

As the 1520s progressed changes in the rates of ambassadorial diets were gradually introduced. From 1520 membership of the king's privy chamber usually ensured the payment of much higher diets. Thus, Sir Richard Wingfield appointed resident to the French court in January 1520 initially received twenty shillings a day²¹ but was awarded a 100% increase in June which was retrospectively dated to the beginning of his embassy.²² His successor, Richard Jerningham, another gentleman of the privy chamber, also received forty shillings a day.²³ Although others of the king's attendants posted to France were paid at a lower rate, notably Sir Francis Bryan and Sir John Welsborne respectively dispatched to France in 1529 and 1530, who both received 26s 6d,

¹⁹ PRO E36/216, fo.146, (*L&P*, II ii, p.1453), Chamber payment made to West, November 1511; *ibid*, fo.45, (*ibid*, p.1479), Chamber payments to the Earl of Worcester and Bishop of Ely, November 1518.

²⁰ PRO, E36/216, fo.89, (*L&P*, II ii, p.1536), Chamber payment to Kite, May 1518.

²¹ *Ibid*, fo.153, (*L&P*, III ii, p.1539), Chamber payment to Sir Richard Wingfield, January 1520.

²² Item: to Sir Richard Wingfield, knight, in full payment for his diotts at xx s the day, and alsoo xx s for every day in rewarde. Being ambassador with the Frenche king, ending the xxth day of August. PRO, E36/216, fo.216v, (*L&P*, III ii, p.1542), Chamber payment to Sir Richard Wingfield, October 1520.

²³ *Ibid*, fo.220, (*ibid*, p.1543), Chamber payment to Sir Richard Jerningham, January 1521.

the general trend was upwards.²⁴ By the late 1530s permanent ambassadors at the rank of knight and above had seen their diets rise to 53s 4d, among them Henry Knyvett at the Imperial court, and Francis Bryan and William Howard resident with Francis I. In less than two decades at least one group of Tudor ambassadors had seen their wages increase by more than 150%.

In addition to the general diet increases introduced by Henry's government in the later decades of the reign, individual wage rises were granted to ambassadors. In 1539 Thomas Wyatt saw his diets increased by a full mark from forty shillings to 53s 4d.²⁵ Two years later William Paget, having been appointed to the French court with diets of twenty shillings, saw them increased on two occasions, first to thirty shillings and then forty.²⁶ Nicholas Wotton, dispatched to the emperor in 1543 with 26s 4d, received a one mark increase to forty shillings when he travelled with Charles' army on its invasion of France the following year.²⁷

Considerable care was also taken by ambassadors and government alike to ensure that pay scales reflected the rank of the envoys appointed. Thus when Edmund Bonner whilst serving as resident in France was appointed Bishop of Hereford in November 1538 his diets were swiftly raised from forty shillings to 53s 4d.²⁸ In 1535 William Fitzwilliam wrote to Cromwell to complain about a

²⁴ PRO, E101/420/11, fo.47v, (*L&P*, V, p.313), Chamber payments to Bryan. July to December 1529; *ibid*, fo.141, (*ibid*, p.319, Chamber payments to Welsborne, March to December 1530. It is worth noting however, that in his next embassy to France, Bryan was paid forty shillings, *ibid*, fo.32, (*ibid*, p.322), Chamber payments to Bryan, October 1530 to December 1531.

²⁵ BL, Harleian MS 282, fo.193, (*L&P*, XIII i no.710), Cromwell to Wyatt, 8 May 1538.

²⁶ *Proceedings and ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, ed.H.Nicholas, (London, 1837), VII, p.283, (*L&P*, XVII, no.1447), ordinance dated, 13 December 1541.

²⁷ In view of both the general and individual diet increases awarded by Henry's government, David Potter's assertion that, 'Rising costs were evidently not taken into account in England,' is perhaps a little unfair. Potter, 'Diplomacy in the mid-16th century', *op.cit.*, p.300, note 4.

²⁸ Arundel MS 97, fos.34 and 70, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.1280, XIV ii, mo.781), Chamber payments

shortfall in his diets:

And where also in the said warraunt I am appointed to the dietts of xxx iiis iiid it maye please you to understande that in alle the journeys it hath pleased the king's highnesse to put me unto sythens I have been Knight of the Garter, I had never lesse then liii S iiid lyke as yf it please you to calle unto remembrance I had in my last journey befor this to Calays wherof surely I saved not oon grote.²⁹

Given that only eleven men carried out diplomatic missions for the king after they had received the Garter,³⁰ membership of the Order would have been a rare factor to add into ambassadorial pay. Where it did apply, however, the would-be recipients were clearly assiduous in claiming for it. The importance of rank in the calculation of diets is best demonstrated by a letter of William Paget to Brian Tuke:

If his maiesties pleasor be to have me tary any longer yow must provide and send me som more money for my dietts. For at my departyng I made my warrant until Easter and after XI s the day which his maiestie said was the old diet of a baron which is trew in dede when all things wer better chepe than now. But now barons hath iiij marks and so hath sum knyghts had as Mr Knyvet and Mr Bryan. And the saying is, (for I must speke for the honesty of the king's secretary,) that the king's secretary allwaiys is felow by his office to a baron.³¹

The first point of interest here is that Paget and Henry discussed how much the secretary should receive for his embassy to the Low Countries and the king arrived at his conclusion based on precedent. Furthermore, the only other record of diets paid to a royal secretary going on embassy, forty shillings allotted to William Knight for his mission to France in 1528 supports the king's

to Bonner, September 1538 and October 1539.

²⁹ PRO, SP1/95 fos.75-76, D.F.Vodden, 'The correspondence of William Fitzwilliam, Earl of Southampton', M.Phil, (2 vols., London, 1972), II, pp.843-846, (*L&P*, IX no.50), Fitzwilliam to Cromwell, 8 August 1535.

³⁰ G.F.Beltz, *Memorials of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, (London, 1841), pp.167-175.

³¹ PRO, SP1/199 fo.89v, (*L&P*, XX i, no.426), Paget to Petre, 25 March 1545.

assertion.³² The clear idea held by the secretary of exactly what diets each rank of envoy should receive, based not only on social status but also by office, contrasted sharply with the less discriminating policy practised in the earlier part of the reign.

On occasion unusual circumstances led to increased expenditure for ambassadors for which the rather inflexible system of diet payments failed to compensate. Richard Sampson, writing from Spain in November 1522, complained to Wolsey that due to the Comuneros risings which had swept the country over the last two years, the countryside was barren and even such supplies as firewood had risen sharply in price.³³ In 1528 Stephen Gardiner and Edward Foxe writing from Orvieto drew attention to the inflated prices caused by the current upheavals in Italy:

we arryved here at Orviet upon Saturday last in the mornyng and having no garments ne apparel oother then the coots we did ride in being moch worn and defaced by reason of the fowle wether....we wer compelled to tary all that day and the next within the howse whiles our garments was cut. The making therin we founde very great difficultie, al things here being in suche a scarcite and derthe as we thinke hath not been seen in any place, and that not oonly in victell whiche can not be brought in to the towne in any great quantite by reason that all things are conveyed by asses and mules, but also in oother necessaryes, so as that clothe, chamblet or such like merchandises which in England is worth xx shillings is here worth vi pounds, and yet not to be had in any quantite. And had we not made provision for owr gownes as like we must of necessity have goon in Spanysh clokes such as we could have borrowed of the poepe's servaunts.³⁴

Fifteen years later, Nicholas Wotton as ambassador to the emperor accompanied him to the Diet of Speyer. Prior to his departure, he warned William Paget that given the multitudes which would be gathering in the town prices for lodgings and food would rise steeply and place an intolerable strain on his funds.³⁵ There is no evidence that any of these envoys received further payments to

³² PRO, E101/420/11, fo.57v, (*L&P*, V, p.315), Chamber payment to Knight, September 1528 to March 1529.

³³ PRO, SP1/26, fo.155-6, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2661), Sampson to Wolsey, 10 November 1522.

³⁴ SP1/47, fo.137, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4090), Gardiner and Foxe to Tuke, March 1528.

³⁵ PRO, SP1/182 fo.146, (*L&P*, XVIII ii no.458), Wotton to Paget, 5 December 1543.

compensate them for these extraordinary costs.

However, the fact that the cost of living varied in certain countries does appear to have been acknowledged by the government.³⁶ Envoys dispatched to Spain received somewhat higher diets than ambassadors sent elsewhere.³⁷ Thus Edward Lee, initially awarded 26s 4d diets, received a half mark increase to 33s 6d in 1527 during his sojourn in Spain.³⁸ Both Nicholas Hawkins and Richard Pate received thirty shillings when residing with Charles in Spain.³⁹ In comparison Richard Sampson, a far more experienced ambassador performing a special embassy to the emperor in Italy, was paid only 26s 8d.⁴⁰ Similarly, while Nicholas Harvey and Thomas Elyot received respectively 26s 4d and twenty shillings during their residencies with Charles in the Low Countries,⁴¹ Thomas Wyatt and Richard Tate began their embassies to the emperor in Spain with

³⁶ My assessment of the relation between diet rates and the location of diplomatic postings disagrees with G.M.Bell, 'Tudor Stuart diplomatic history,' *op.cit.*, p.42 n.36, who sees no connection between the two factors.

³⁷ For remarks concerning the unusually high cost of living in Spain see: PRO, SP1/24 fo.160, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2281), Hannibal to Wolsey, 24 May 1522, Saragosa. Upon hearing news that Wolsey might be travelling to Spain Edward Lee warned of the various extraordinary arrangements he would have to make, 'your grace never had a more honorable and godelie jorneye but in charge and payne it shall excede all oder that ever you have had. And if your grace come expedient it shalbe that grace call my Lord of London and Master dean of the chapell who can geve informacion of maneye preparacions that your grace must have coming in to Spayne whiche in ooder countrayes you sholde not nede. Againe your grace must have aguareles and aposintados whiche must be [called] from the corte to meet with your servants and goo afor to make provision.....at their first entre into Spayne, for else your grace and your company noder fynd meate ne drink, ne cariage ne lodgings'. BL, Cotton MS, Vesp C III, fos.250-251, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2602), Lee to Wolsey, 2 November 1526.

³⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C III, fos.291-294, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2682), Lee to Wolsey, 2 December 1526.

³⁹ E101/420/11, fo.101, (*L&P*, V, p.316), Chamber payment to Hawkins, BL, Arundel MS, 97, fo.2, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.1280), Chamber payment to Richard Pate, February 1538.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, fo.60v, (*ibid*, p.315), Chamber payment to Richard Sampson, October 1528.

⁴¹ PRO, E101/420/11, fo.142, (*L&P*, V, p.323), Chamber payment to Harvey, December 1530; SP1/72, fos.36-37, (*ibid*, V, no.1554), Elyot to Cromwell, 18 November 1532.

forty shillings each.⁴² Other than the higher rates that a posting to Spain attracted, few generalizations can be made. Diets to residents in France varied from individual to individual most likely based on rank and offices held.⁴³ Between September 1535 and October 1538 Stephen Gardiner was paid 56s 4d,⁴⁴ the greatest sum paid to any resident ambassador appointed by Henry - he was also the highest ranking permanent envoy to serve during the reign.

Often the financial difficulties of ambassadors were as much the result of cashflow problems as they were the rates at which diets were set. Certainly on various occasions the government was tardy in the payment of envoys. In April 1522 Thomas Spinely wrote to Brian Tuke, Treasurer of the Chamber:

And sens y receyved yours of the vith parceyving that in my particular affeyrres I have ben putted in good hope and hade feayre words (with non effects) wherin I thanke you allweyis for your labour and goode mind. Nevertheles, I am not in myn hert satisfied with suche dealyng with me thinkyng that my services have oderwyse deserved recompense, praying you again to speke to my lord's grace without tarrying unto my cummyng. For yf I had enjoyed of my annuytie as all other the king's servants and ambassadors doythe I wol suffer it more pacently than I can do, but the an[cient] proverbe that all good services be recompensed with moche ingratytude evydently appeyareth in me to be trewe...⁴⁵

Aside from the notably brusque style in which Spinely complained to Tuke, unthinkable in a letter to the cardinal, it is worth noting that at the heart of his complaint was the observation that he had been kept waiting while other ambassadors had already been paid. The case of Gregorio

⁴² BL, Arundel Ms 97, fo.117, Augmentations payment to Tate, March 1539; *ibid*, fos.51, 78, Augmentations payments to Wyatt, May 1539.

⁴³ W.C.Richardson's assertion that ambassadors to France usually received the highest diets, fails to take account of the fact that in the majority of cases, certainly for much of the 1520s and 1530s, the residents dispatched to Francis were higher ranking than those sent elsewhere; W.C.Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan, Tudor financier*, (Baton Rouge, 1953), p.7.

⁴⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Titus B I, fo.442, (*L&P*, IX, no.217).

⁴⁵ BL, Cotton MS Galba B VII, fo.288, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2196), Spinely to Tuke, 24 April 1522.

de Casali has already been noted. However, the entreaties of Gardiner and Foxe appear to have had little effect. Almost a year later another of Henry's envoys to Rome, Pietro Vannes, was writing to Wolsey to inform him that if Casali did not receive diets soon he would be unable to continue as the king's ambassador.⁴⁶ Almost certainly native Englishmen dispatched abroad had an advantage over their foreign born colleagues in that they left behind them numerous family members, friends and agents who could sue on their behalf for the prompt payment of wages. Even so, this by no means ensured that they would receive their diets on time. Thomas Hannibal's lament quoted above concerning the expense of serving at the Spanish court was largely the result of the non-arrival of his diets, the transference of which he had entrusted to his factor Anthony Vivaldi.⁴⁷ When Thomas Wyatt serving at the same court almost two decades later encountered the same difficulties he turned to Cromwell's secretary, Thomas Wriothesley, for help. Wriothesley ensured that the ambassador received the money owing to him, but warned Wyatt:

Surely, though I write it meself, if I wer not better in sollicitacion of your affairs thenne most of your agents be, ye might, I feare, eate your breade there with dishonor to his maietie and dishonestie to yourself. Spurre them lusterly by your next letter.⁴⁸

Even a man as well connected as Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, was compelled on occasion to chase up his arrears as in October 1542 when he wrote to Henry complaining that he was not only owed three months diets, but also 100 marks post money.⁴⁹ Again however, there are examples of the government acting to alleviate the difficulties of its envoys. Both Richard Sampson and Edward Lee were permitted by Wolsey to draw their diets from the receipts of his

⁴⁶ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XI fo.30, (*L&P*, IV iii, no.5225), Vannes to Wolsey, 27 January 1529.

⁴⁷ PRO, SP1/24, fo.160, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2281), Hannibal to Wolsey, 24 May 1522.

⁴⁸ BL, Harleian MS 282, fo.273, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.711), Wriothesley to Wyatt, 8 April 1538.

⁴⁹ *St.P.*, IX, p.189, (*L&P*, XVII, no.905), Bonner to Henry, 4 October 1542.

Spanish bishoprics.⁵⁰ Given that these payments were made in ducats the arrangement possessed the further advantage of saving the ambassadors exchange charges.⁵¹ On another occasion when Lee was forced to meet these costs himself the government reimbursed him to the sum of £55 5s 6d.⁵²

Aside from the problem of actually getting the money that an ambassador was entitled to, the other significant difficulty often encountered was the extraordinary costs which arose before and during a mission. The initial expenditure for an outgoing ambassador could be considerable. Furniture, plate, horses and mules were all required to equip a diplomatic household properly. Thomas Spinely travelling to Spain in 1517 informed Brian Tuke that:

I am honorably loyged, certyfing you that I am pourveyed of plate, hangyngs and all othere necessary for oone that shulde be the king's majesty's ambassador, remembring the rowme is grownded upon honnor and glory the saynge that hath been spokynne of Sir John Style, and that those that do not kepe themselves honorably been nothing estymed.⁵³

Richard Sampson writing to Wolsey from Spain in 1523, asked the cardinal if he might borrow 600 ducats to buy new plate. Although he had sufficient quantities of tin suitable for his own needs, the ambassador lacked any silver tableware, without which he felt unable to entertain members of the emperor's household and council.⁵⁴ Twenty years later Edmund Bonner

⁵⁰ PRO, SP1/40, fos.258-259, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2865), Lee to Wolsey, 9 February 1527. During his roving embassy throughout southern France and Italy John Russell was permitted to draw upon the money he was bringing to the Duke of Bourbon to cover his travelling expenses. PRO, SP1/36, fos.130-131, (*L&P*, IV i, no.1744), Russell's accounts, 4 November 1525.

⁵¹ It should be noted that since Wolsey could draw that proportion of his pension used by Sampson and Lee for diets directly from the Treasurer of the Chamber, he also was spared some of the expense of currency exchange.

⁵² PRO, E101/420/11, fo.71, (*L&P*, V p.316), Chamber payment to Lee, December 1527.

⁵³ PRO, SP1/15, fos.250-1, (*L&P*, II ii, no.3605), Spinely to Tuke, 19 August 1517.

⁵⁴ PRO, SP1/27, fo.1-2, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2774), Sampson to Wolsey, 14 January 1523.

complained that when he came to replace Gardiner as resident in France, the Bishop of Winchester refused to leave behind any of his furniture or mules, claiming that he could not spare them.⁵⁵

Similarly ambassadors could find the cost of horses and mules prohibitive. Stephen Vaughan sent to Germany in July 1533 complained that Cromwell had dispatched him with ten pounds yet he had spent twice that sum for a horse before leaving England.⁵⁶ William Paget, writing to the king at the outset of his embassy to France in 1541, observed that he had already spent a month's diets on two mules.⁵⁷ On other occasions, however, ambassadors had only themselves to blame when they encountered financial difficulties early in their mission. Cuthbert Tunstall admitted to Wolsey that he had overestimated the size of the train he would need for his journey to the Diet of Worms in 1520, It was this personal miscalculation which had now put him in difficulty.⁵⁸

Again the government did take steps to minimize the difficulties faced by ambassadors equipping themselves for embassies. On numerous occasions envoys were either given or lent sums of money prior to their departure. Thus Richard Wingfield was given £100 before beginning his embassy to France in January 1520.⁵⁹ William Fitzwilliam was lent £200 before travelling to the Valois court twelve months later,⁶⁰ and Stephen Gardiner was given £100 before undertaking his

⁵⁵ Foxe, vol V, p.154, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.144), Bonner to Cromwell, August 1538.

⁵⁶ PRO, SP1/78, fo.193, (*L&P*, VI, no.1040), Vaughan to Cromwell, 27 August 1533.

⁵⁷ *St.P.*, VII, p.663, (*L&P*, XIII, no.1335), Paget to Henry, 12 November 1541.

⁵⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XX, fo.180, (*L&P*, III i, no.1098), Tunstall to Wolsey, 17 December 1520.

⁵⁹ PRO, E36/216, fo.153, (*L&P*, III ii, p.1539), payment in prest made to Richard Wingfield, January 1520.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, fo.239, (*ibid*, p.1541). Sir William Fitzwilliam lent £200, January 1521.

first mission to France in 1529.⁶¹ It was also common practice for outgoing ambassadors to either sell their furnishings and plate to an incoming envoy or give them to him and receive payment from the government upon his return. When John Wallop received notice from Cromwell in February 1540 that he was to replace Edmund Bonner in France, he wrote to the lord privy seal explaining that at the conclusion of his last embassy he sold all his plate and furnishings. In view of this he observed that it would be most helpful if the Bishop of London would leave both his silver plate and mules behind for the incoming ambassador to make use of.⁶² Along with his notification to Thomas Wyatt that he was to be replaced at the Imperial court, Henry also instructed the ambassador to give what assistance he could to his replacement:

willing and requiring yow that of suche thynges that ye have of ours that ye can spare that the said Tate shall desire any part ye shall by warrant hereof delyver unto hym the same, be it plate or other.....And also if ye have any of your owne stuff mete for hym that ye can spare, we pray yow to graunte that he may have it of yow upon a reasonable price to be made bitween yow.⁶³

By this arrangement Wyatt recouped at least some of the cost which his embassy had given rise to, at the same time that Richard Tate was spared the extra expense of purchasing large amounts of new plate and furniture.

The pressing duty of every ambassador to keep his government well informed ensured that large costs were run up with the employment of couriers.⁶⁴ For the government it was impossible to

⁶¹ Stephen Gardiner paid £100, January 1529, PRO, E101/420/11, fo.19, (*L&P*, V, no.309).

⁶² *St.P.*, VIII, p.244, (*L&P*, XV, no.186), Wallop to Cromwell, 9 February 1540.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.193-194, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.744), Henry to Wyatt, 12 April 1539. The practice of buying plate and furniture at the beginning of a residency and selling it at upon one's departure is a clear indication that while the use of permanent envoys by the English had become systematic before the end of Henry's reign, the physical establishment of permanent embassies had not yet begun.

⁶⁴ E.J.B.,Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early-Modern Europe*, (The Hague, 1972), pp.14-17, deals briefly with English government's organization of posts and

anticipate in advance how many letters an ambassador would dispatch or by what route and means of transport those letters would arrive in England. In some cases the cost of sending diplomatic reports might be relatively low or non-existent. Envoys in the Low Countries could often rely on the Imperial postal service run by the de Tassis family to get their letters from Antwerp, Brussels or Malines to Calais, a facility for which the treasurer of Calais had the responsibility of paying.⁶⁵ On other occasions ambassadors might call upon merchants returning to England to carry dispatches for them.⁶⁶ Depending upon the sensitivity of the material contained in a dispatch envoys could also ask ambassadors from other courts to include their letters in any packet they might be sending to their prince, reducing at least some of the cost involved in sending couriers to England.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the government did pay its ambassadors a certain amount in advance to meet their postal costs. As resident in the Low Countries John Hackett was paid £15 a quarter,⁶⁸ while William Paget as resident ambassador to France was permitted £14 for the same period.⁶⁹ These were by no means large amounts but then in most cases Hackett could rely on the Imperial postal service or the assistance of his fellow merchants,

couriers. However, the work is primarily concerned with the European postal system in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

⁶⁵ Unsurprisingly the English were often somewhat dilatory in settling their postal bills at one stage owing the de Tassis for twenty months of deliveries! BL, Galba B IX fo.11, (*L&P* IV i, 1864), Jean Baptiste de Tassis to Wolsey, 2 January 1526.

⁶⁶ Thus Vaughan remarked to Cromwell, 'Your lorship knowyth except I dispa[tch] a poste with your letters, I have no spedyar waye then to sende the same to Andwerp to be conveyed unto Englande by the merchants.' PRO, SP1/154, fos.154-5, (*L&P*, XIV ii, no.541), Vaughan to Cromwell, 17 November 1539.

⁶⁷ Thus Edward Lee in answer to Henry's letter complaining about his laxity in supplying news explained that it was difficult to get letters through France over land but that he sent dispatches as often as possible via sea routes from Bilbao or St.Lucar to where they were couriered by the posts of the French ambassadors. PRO, SP1/40, fo.256, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2864), Lee to Henry, 9 February 1527.

⁶⁸ P.Hogrefe, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Englishmen*, (Iowa, 1967), p.159.

⁶⁹ Gammon, *op.cit.*, p.41.

while Paget, lacking these facilities, was only sending reports from Paris to Calais, a short and relatively inexpensive postal route.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, ambassadors were frequently obliged to send special couriers who had to be provided with sufficient funds to cover the costs of the various tolls or fares they would incur during in their journey. Such expenses varied enormously. In 1527 Edward Lee explained to Wolsey that he had saved the king two or three hundred ducats by sending a dispatch from the emperor's court in Valladolid to England by sea rather than over land for which he had only be charged thirteen ducats.⁷¹ In contrast, Lee's colleague in Spain, Girolamo Ghinucci, was reportedly spending up to £4 a day on postal costs.⁷² Ten years later Wyatt was spending anything between 100 and 200 ducats to ensure that the more sensitive of his reports reached England safely.⁷³ For many special envoys the question of outstanding postal costs might not be too pressing. The performance of shorter embassies did not usually give rise to excessive costs, and in those cases where it did, the ambassadors were soon able to return home and claim their expenses. In the case of resident ambassadors, however, the situation was often different. Although the government might make periodic payments in settlement of outstanding costs they could be widely spaced and most envoys might expect to complete their embassy before a final settlement was reached. Upon his return home in September 1538, Stephen Gardiner was still

⁷⁰ Between September 1541 and June 1543, the period in which Paget was resident in France, Francis spent the lion's share of his time either in Paris or nearby at Fontainebleau or St Germaine en Laye, *CAF*, VIII, pp.513-519. The ambassador would therefore have been able to send his couriers on the great road which linked Paris and Calais via Beauvais, Abbeville, Montreuil, Boulogne sur Mer and Marquise, C.Etienne, *La Guide des chemins de 1553*, ed.J.Bonnerot, (Paris, 1936), pp.53-54.

⁷¹ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp. C IV, fo.74, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2987), Lee to Wolsey, 25 March 1527.

⁷² *Ibid*, no.4589), Darius to Wolsey, 31 July 1528.

⁷³ For example in June 1538 he paid Rougecroix pursuant 120 ducats to carry a report to England, and 140 ducats to a servant, Anderson, to deliver another dispatch, this time by sea. BL, Cotton MS, Vesp. C XIV, fo.19, (*L&P*, XIV i, no.1123), Wyatt's expenses, June 1538.

owed £137 pounds in postal costs backdated over the previous fourteen months.⁷⁴

To suggest that Henry's ambassadors did not frequently find themselves in financial difficulties whilst abroad would be to ignore the large amount of evidence to the contrary. However, simply to explain their problems in terms of low wages is to greatly over simplify the issue. Other factors such as cashflow, fluctuating prices in foreign countries, and irregular expenses particularly with regard to the use of couriers, all contributed to the problem. What has previously failed to attract any attention is the efforts made on the part of Henry's government to help the king's ambassadors. Significant increases in diets were introduced throughout the reign, as well as the award of individual wage rises to various resident envoys, and the payment of extra money to those men sent to Spain. Wolsey at least helped some ambassadors by allowing them to make use of the revenues from his Spanish bishoprics and pensions, while the king offset the initial outlay costs of embassies by either giving or lending outgoing ambassadors large sums of money. Most returning envoys could hope to recoup at least some of their costs by selling their old plate to the crown for incoming ambassadors to use.

How did foreign envoys fare in comparison? A superficial analysis of French pay scales from the late 1520s onwards appears to suggest that Francis' envoys received roughly the same pay as Henry's.⁷⁵ Between 1531 and 1539 French resident ambassadors posted to the English court

⁷⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Vesp.C XIV, fo.18, (*L&P* XIII ii no.444), Gardiner's expenses, 23 June 1537-31 August 1538.

⁷⁵ Any assessment of French pay scales only becomes feasible from the mid 1520s when ambassadors began to receive their diets from the newly established *Trésorier de l'Epargne* listed in *CAF*, and even then only when disbursements were made to resident envoys since they were the only payments which specified both a sum of money and the number of days for which it had been paid. For French financial reforms carried out in the early 1520s see Knecht, *Francis I*, *op.cit.*, pp.198-200; Potter, *France*, *op.cit.*, pp.142-144. My calculations are based on an exchange rate of 10 *lt* to 1 pound, R.J.Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I*, (Cambridge, 1994) p.10. However, it should be noted the rates of exchange between English and French money's of account did fluctuate throughout the reign going as low as 8 *lt* to 1

received twenty *lt* a day, the rough equivalent of forty shillings.⁷⁶ Those ambassadors accredited to the emperor were paid fifteen or twenty *lt*, a day.⁷⁷ Certainly these levels of pay were comparable to those awarded to some of Henry's ambassadors, in particular the majority of privy chamber envoys dispatched to France in the 1530s and a number of the residents appointed to the emperor, notably Nicholas Hawkins and Richard Pate. However, higher ranking ambassadors, especially French bishops, did less well than English envoys. While Bonner, accredited to the emperor in 1542, was paid at least 53s 4d,⁷⁸ Antoine Castelnau, Bishop of Tarbes, Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavour and Claude Dodieu, Bishop of Rennes, served connectively at the Imperial court between August 1538 and December 1541, the first and last at the rate of twenty *lt* and de Selve at fifteen.⁷⁹ Similarly Castelnau was paid twenty *lt* when he served as resident at the English court,⁸⁰ roughly 40% less than his opposite number, Stephen Gardiner, was being paid in France.

pound at certain times.

⁷⁶ *Mandements au Trésorier d'Epargne* can be found for: Giles Pommeraye, 11 December 1531, BN, Clairambault 1,215, fo.70 (*CAF*, II, p.146, no.4,573); Jean Dintville, 17 January 1533, BN, MS fr.15,628, fo.363, (*ibid*, p.294, no.5,273); Louis Perreau, s.de Castillon, 9 September 1533 and 16 June 1537, BN, Clairambault 1,215, fo.71v, AN, J.961, fo.69 (*ibid*, p.506, no.6,238, *CAF*, VIII, p.134, no.30,490); Charles De Solier, s.de Morette, 16 February 1536, BN, Clairambault 1,215, fo.74v, (*CAF*, III, p.177, no.8,313) and Antoine de Castelnau, Bishop of Tarbes, 12 May 1535, *ibid*, fo.74, (*ibid*, p.77, no.7,834) specifying diets of twenty *lt* a day.

⁷⁷ *Mandements au Trésorier d'Epargne* can be found for: Claude Dodieu, s.de Vély, 22 May 1531, 28 April 1533 and 5 June 1538, *CAF*, II, pp.40, 400 and III, p.559, and Georges de Selve, Bishop of Lavour, 7 April 1540, *ibid*, IV, p.98, specifying diets of fifteen *lt* a day.

⁷⁸ No record of his diets remains, however, as noted earlier 53s 6d was the minimum level for a bishop's diets, and given that Charles was in Spain there is a good chance, Bonner received more than this.

⁷⁹ Payment of 3,600 *lt* for 180 days made to Antoine de Castelnau, Bishop of Tarbes, *CAF*, III, p.714, no.10,778. Payment made to Georges de Selve of 2,600 *lt* for 180 days, *CAF*, IV, p.98, no.11,453. Payment made to Claude Dodieu, 1800 *lt*, for 90 days, *ibid*, p.143, no.11,655.

⁸⁰ Payment made to Antoine de Castelnau, Bishop of Tarbes, 12 May 1535, BN, Clairambault 1,215, fo.74, (*CAF*, III, p.77.no.7,834).

Unlike the wages paid to English envoys French ambassadors saw no increase in the rate of their diets between 1530 and 1547, and in the case of residents accredited to the English court they actually suffered a 50% cut. The first ambassador to receive only ten *lt* a day was Charles de Marillac appointed to the English court in March 1539.⁸¹ That the lower rate was not simply a reflection of his status is illustrated by the fact that both his immediate successor, Roger d'Aspremont, and the last of Francis' residents in England, Odet de Selve were also paid ten *lt* a day.⁸² According to de Selve the cut had been instigated by Chancellor Poyet in order to save money,⁸³ although if such were the case it is interesting that the Chancellor did not press for similar cuts in the pay of ambassadors drafted to other courts.

It is perhaps instructive that for much of the time that Henry's ambassadors were assuring the king and his advisers that wherever they happened to be posted was exponentially more expensive than England, Francis' envoys in London were making exactly the opposite point. During his period as resident ambassador to the English court Jean du Bellay complained bitterly of the expense he had been put to:

La despense est icy telle que chacun scayt. Prenez ma puissance, et quelque chose davantaige dont mes amys me pourrontt ayder et pourveoyez au surplus. Si j'avoye de quoy porter le faix comme assez d'aultres prélatz ou que fusse en lieu de peu de despense comme Venise et aultre lieu là où Je diray mot Je vouldroye en estre blasmé.⁸⁴

Despite being the last resident to the English court in Francis' reign to receive twenty *lt* a day,

⁸¹ On the 11 March 1539 Marillac received 900 *lt* for ninety days, *ibid*, fo.77v (*CAF*, III, p.745-6, no.10,920).

⁸² *Ibid*, fo.80v (*CAF*, IV, p.403 no.12,886); *Correspondence politique de Odet de Selve*, ed. Germain Lefèvre Pontalis, (Paris, 1888), p.30, (*L&P*, XXI ii, no.193), Selve to Claude d'Annebault, 30 June 1546.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

⁸⁴ *Ambassades*, p.341, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4542), du Bellay to Montmorency, 21 July 1528.

Louis Perreau, s.de Castillon, often complained of financial hardship and in the summer of 1538 informed Montmorency that he had been forced to leave the court and find lodgings outside London for which he was paying with credit.⁸⁵ Odet de Selve claimed that the cost of living in England in the late 1540s was such that he would have been unable to support himself had his diets been paid at the rate enjoyed by Marillac's predecessors. De Selve observed that the English people already held everything French in contempt, and the poverty in which he was compelled to live by the meagreness of his diets only reinforced their low opinion.⁸⁶

Gifts and Grants

If ambassadors did suffer material loss while performing diplomatic service they could reasonably expect to see much of it offset by the receipt of rewards. These took two forms. Firstly the gifts given to departing envoys by foreign princes, not only a reward to an outgoing ambassador, but an act of courtesy towards his master. In addition there were the grants and offices given to envoys by the king upon their return to England, at least in part as recognition of the services they had performed abroad.

A range of factors appear to have come into play in determining the generosity of the gifts to be awarded to departing ambassadors. A major consideration was the seniority of the envoys taking their leave. Thus Charles, distributing rewards to Henry's ambassadors, the Earl of Worcester, Cuthbert Tunstall, Master of the Rolls, Sir Richard Wingfield and Thomas Spinelly in January 1518, paid them respectively eighty, sixty, fifty and forty marks.⁸⁷ At the French court the largest

⁸⁵ Kaulek, p.86, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.78), Castillon to Montmorency, 12 August 1538.

⁸⁶ *Correspondence de Odet de Selve*, *op.cit.*,p.30, (*L&P*, XXI ii, no.193), Selve to Claude d'Annebault, 30 June 1546.

⁸⁷ PRO, SP1/15, fo.131, (*L&P*, II ii, no.3260), Spinelly to Wolsey, 19 May 1517.

gifts were usually reserved for bishops and members of the aristocracy. George Boleyn as both Viscount Rochford and the brother of the king's mistress, received a gold chain valued at 2,445 *lt* in January 1530 and three years later a payment of 2,250 *lt*.⁸⁸ Stephen Gardiner upon his departure from the French court in September 1538 received gold plate worth 2,668 *lt*.⁸⁹

However other factors did come into play, notably the length of an ambassador's service and the popularity he enjoyed at the host court. Despite the fact that Sir Thomas Cheyne was a gentleman of Henry's privy chamber and Sir William Fitzwilliam was not, the former leaving the French court in 1526 received a money reward of 800 *lt* while the latter concluding a different embassy in the same year was rewarded with a gold cup worth 2,140 *lt*.⁹⁰ Although there is no reason to assume that Cheyne was unpopular at the French court, the testimony of one of Fitzwilliam's later diplomatic colleagues, John Taylor, underlines the high esteem in which the other man was held by Francis and his courtiers.⁹¹ It is surely no coincidence that one of the highest rewards paid by Francis to an English ambassador, 2,700 *lt*, was disbursed to Sir John Wallop,⁹² by no means one of Henry's highest ranking envoys to the French court, but certainly one of the longest serving. In contrast despite his position as Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner's unpopularity with Francis

⁸⁸ BN, Clairambault 1215, fos.69, 72, (*CAF*, I, p.687, no.3,594, II, p.371, no.5,628), *Mandements au Trésorier d'Epargne*, 29 January 1530 and 5 April 1533.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 76v, (*CAF*, III, p.605, no.10,284), *Mandements au Trésorier d'Epargne*, 16 September 1538.

⁹⁰ Richardson, 'Anglo-French diplomacy', *op.cit.*, pp.156, 162.

⁹¹ 'He hath the language of the Frenche tonge, with the xperyence of theyr maners and acquayntance with many of the court whyche dayly dyd resorte to hym and ofte tymes dyd advertyse hym of secret that wer in the court.' BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D IX, fo.139, (*L&P*, IV i, no.1901), Taylor to Wolsey, 17 January 1526.

⁹² BN, Clairambault 1,215, fo.79v, (*CAF*, IV, p.186, no.11,855), *Mandement au Trésorier d'Epargne*, 5 March 1540.

ensured that he departed with the relatively small reward of 1,350 *li*.⁹³ Simon Heynes, Bonner's colleague on a special embassy to the emperor in Spain fared even less well. According to Bonner, 'Master doctor Heynes by his upright dealing and professing the trouthe neyther gote thanks nor rewarde but blased abroad by honest folke to be a Lutherain the lesse he pleased in Spayne the better argumentit is that his intent was to serve noon but the king's highness and the trouthe' ⁹⁴ In contrast Richard Pate, who several years later would demonstrate his sympathy for the Roman Catholic faith by fleeing to Rome, left his embassy at the Imperial court with three gold cups worth 2,000 *crs*.⁹⁵ One should be careful, however, of assigning too much significance to the size of rewards paid to ambassadors. Nicholas Wotton arriving at the French court in August 1546 wrote to William Paget in a somewhat ironic tone concerning the welcome gift he had received from Francis I:

afre good longe deliberation the French king hath sent me a present...emonges it there are two cuppes the which I sold awaye to a goldsmyth when I was at Parys. The said cuppes love me so well that they are nowe returnid to me agayne. Marye indeede I solde them nakid but they returnid to me fayr bowrnished and cotid with good cases. And forbycause I had them as good chepe when they came to me fyrste as I had theym nowe, I entend, god willing to sell theym agayne, trusting that they love me so well that they will not be longe from me.⁹⁶

It seems highly unlikely that Francis or his advisers intended any deliberate offence to Wotton, more probably the ambassador's rather meagre gift was the result of an administrative error lent a farcical note by sheer coincidence. Despite the occasional experiences of men like Wotton and Heath, frequently accredited ambassadors or those chosen to lead particularly prestigious

⁹³ *Ibid*, (*Ibid*, p.88, no.11,403), *Mandement au Trésorier d'Epargne*, 1 March 1540.

⁹⁴ Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS, 538/47, fo.3v, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.60), Bonner to Cromwell, 9 August 1539.

⁹⁵ PRO, 31/9/65, fo.174, (*L&P*, XII ii, no.245), Bartholomeo Guidiccione, papal nuncio to the emperor in Spain, to an unknown correspondent, 11 July 1537.

⁹⁶ *St.P.*, IX, p.318, (*L&P*, XXI ii, no.190), Wotton to Paget, 29 September 1546.

embassies could expect to make a considerable amount of money from rewards. Francis Bryan, despatched to France on nine occasions received well in excess of 10,000 crowns,⁹⁷ the equivalent of more than a year and half's diets for an envoy of his rank. Sir Thomas Cheyne, chosen to lead the embassy sent to ratify and celebrate the Treaty of Boulogne in July 1546, reportedly left the French court with gold plate worth between five and six thousand crowns.⁹⁸

It was, however, the rewards dispensed by their own prince which offered returning ambassadors the best prospect of not only recouping their losses, but of increasing their regular income through annuities, grants of land and appointments to minor offices. One historian has recently observed that, 'No other ambassadorial group from any other reign collectively enjoyed so many domestic positions, advancements in rank and increases in wealth and power.'⁹⁹ Disappointingly no empirical evidence was offered in support of this statement, which nevertheless reflects a general assumption that nearly all grants and promotions made to ambassadors were done so as a direct result of the work they performed abroad.

Before assessing how well Henry did reward his envoys for their work it is necessary to make clear that in many cases diplomatic service represented only one of a range of duties performed by these men for their king. Thus during the years surrounding Henry's divorce from Katherine, men like Stephen Gardiner, Edward Foxe and Thomas Cranmer were as active on the home front as they were abroad. The shower of ecclesiastical appointments they received in the late 1520s and early 1530s were undoubtedly as much the result of Henry's gratitude for their legal and theological services as they were for their diplomatic efforts. Furthermore, it is important to keep

⁹⁷ BN, Clairambault 1,215, fos.64, 68, 73, 76, 77; AN J.960 nos.38, 14, 23, (*CAF*, I, pp.522, 605, 673, nos.2753, 3174, 3524; II, p.607, no.6728; III, pp. 325, 464, nos. 9018, 9644; VII, p.638, no. 27,880; VIII, pp.25, 52, nos. 29,468, 29712).

⁹⁸ *CSPS*, VIII. p.254, St.Mauris to Prince Philip, 16 July 1546.

⁹⁹ Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomacy', p.36.

in mind that the men chosen for diplomatic missions were often picked because they were high in the king's favour. Notable examples were royal favourites such as the Boleyns and Seymours and the components of the king's inner circle, his gentleman of the privy chamber, members of the Council and royal secretaries. While such men might well receive rewards for acting as Henry's ambassadors, they were also the king's political advisers, army officers and in some cases his friends, all roles which placed them in excellent positions to beg favours of Henry, with a reasonable expectation that they would be granted.

Despite these qualifications, it was nevertheless the case that many of Henry's hardest working ambassadors were well rewarded largely because of the work they performed abroad. Among this group it was the king's clerical envoys who appear to have done best. In one of his earliest letters to Erasmus Thomas More mentioned that their mutual friend, Cuthbert Tunstall, after only the briefest of gaps, had once again been dispatched on diplomatic business to the Low Countries.¹⁰⁰ He went on to observe that while Tunstall certainly deserved their sympathy, it was far less arduous for him as a priest to be sent abroad than it was for laymen such as More. Among the numerous advantages a clerical envoy enjoyed, More asserted that, 'priests can be very easily rewarded by monarchs for their labour and expense with ecclesiastical preferments without any expenditure on their parts but we cannot be dealt with so generously or easily.'¹⁰¹

That Henry could and did compensate his clerical ambassadors for the expense and discomfort which diplomatic service entailed is clearly illustrated by table one. The table lists the lesser ecclesiastical preferments received by clerical ambassadors in those years in which they performed diplomatic service for Henry. In all 56 'lesser' ecclesiastical offices were given to

¹⁰⁰ *Opus Epistolae*, ed.P.S.Allen, (11 vols.,Oxford, 1910-1947), vol.II, pp.196-197.

¹⁰¹ "Postremo, sacerdotibus laborum atque impensarum gratia auctoramentis ecclesiasticis procliue est principibus sine ullo sumptu suo rependere;", *ibid.*

clerical envoys. Furthermore, although for the purpose of distinguishing these preferments from promotions to the episcopacy they have been described as 'lesser', they include the granting of sixteen archdeaconries and ten deaneries, offices which brought with them considerable income. Although little documentary evidence remains actually specifying that these preferments were made because a cleric performed diplomatic service, the frequency with which such offices were awarded either during or shortly after the completion of an embassy would strongly suggest that such a link did exist, and indeed in some cases the issue is beyond doubt. In June 1544 William Paget wrote from the Low Countries to William Petre:

Master Peter I praye youe devise the meanes eyther by your self, by my Lord Chancelor or Mr Denny.....to get for Mr Wotton sum of Mr Layton's promociions if it chaunce hym [Layton] to dy.....; for I assure youe Mr Wotton is an honest man and servyth the kinges majeste here well, to his charge far above his diettes as the world goyth.¹⁰²

The month after Layton's death Wotton was chosen to replace him as dean of York.¹⁰³

Unable to give his lay ambassadors benefices, Henry rewarded their services with a combination of one off monetary payments, annuities, trade concessions, grants of land and minor offices. The infrequent references to monetary rewards in the Treasurer of the Chamber's accounts would suggest that the practice of paying one's own ambassadors lump sums at the close of a mission was far less common than that of paying departing envoys from other princes. On the occasions that such payments were made they were similar in proportion to those given to foreign ambassadors. Thomas Spinelly, a foreign agent of low social rank, received several rewards in the early years of Henry's reign, none greater than fifty pounds.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² PRO,SP1/188, fo.48, *St.P.* vol.IX i, p.694, (*L&P*, XIX, no.624), Paget to Petre, 3 June 1544. Layton died in the Low Countries between the 8 and 19 of June. *Ibid*, nos.649, and 736.

¹⁰³ B.Ficaro, 'Nicholas Wotton: dean and diplomat', Ph.D, (UKC, 1981), p.181.

¹⁰⁴ PRO, E36/215, fos.144, 191, (*L&P*, II ii, pp.1453 and 1456), payments to Spinelly, £26 13s 4d, October 1511 and £50 June 1512.

Table One :Preferments received by ecclesiastical envoys

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Preferment</u>
William Barlow	1536	prior of Bisham
William Benet	1530	archdeacon of Dorset
	1533	advowson of Barnock church
	1533	dean of Salisbury
	1533	prebend in Southwell
Edmund Bonner	1532	benefices of Cherry Burton, Blaydon, Ripple
	1535	archdeacon of Leicester
John Clerk	1519	living of South Malton
	1519	archdeacon of Colchester
	1519	dean of Windsor
Thomas Cranmer	1530	archdeacon of Taunton
Edward Foxe	1528	rector of Combemarbin
	1531	archdeacon of Leicester
Stephen Gardiner	1529	archdeacon of Norfolk
	1531	archdeacon of Leicester
Nicholas Heath	1534	archdeacon of Stafford
Simon Heynes	1535	rector of Fulham
	1535	canon of Windsor
William Knight	1515	dean of Newark
	1516	prebend of Farrendon-cum-Balderton
	1520	prebend of Lanvair, Bangor
	1522	archdeacon of Chester
	1523	archdeacon of Huntingdon
	1527	canon of Westminster
1528	archdeacon of Richmond	
Edward Lee	1523	archdeacon of Colchester
	1529	chancellor of Salisbury church
Richard Pace	1514	prebend of Bugthorpe, York
	1519	archdeacon of Colchester

Name	Date	Preferment
Richard Pace	1519	rector of Berwick, Leeds
	1519	prebend of Exeter
	1519	vicar of St Dunstons, Stepney
	1519	prebend of Finsbury, London
	1520	vicar of Llanwrig, Montgomeryshire
	1521	prebend of Combe, Salisbury
	1522	prebend of Bangor, Flintshire
Richard Pate	1522	dean of Exeter
	1533	prebend of Centum Solidarum, Lincs.
Richard Sampson	1516	dean of St. Stephens, Westminster
	1516	dean of the Chapel Royal
	1523	dean of Windsor
	1526	vicar of Stepney
	1526	prebend of Chiswick, St. Pauls
	1529	archdeacon of Suffolk
Cuthbert Tunstall	1515	archdeacon of Chester
	1519	prebend of Botvant, York
	1521	dean of Salisbury
	1521	prebends of Combe and Hornham
Pietro Vannes	1529	prebend of Bedwyn, Salisbury Cathedral
	1529	rector of Wheathampsted, Herts.
Nicholas Wotton	1539	archdeacon of Gloucester
	1541	dean of Canterbury
	1544	dean of York
	1546	prebend of Osbaldwick
John Young	1511	prebend of Holborn
	1512	prebend of Newington

In contrast Sir Edward Poynings was paid a reward of £100 in June 1513, while twenty years

later Francis Bryan received £200 in recognition of the services he had performed in France.¹⁰⁵ More frequently the king established annuities for his ambassadors. The most regular recipients of such payments were Henry's foreign agents, probably as much in compensation for the low diets they received as a reward for services rendered. In 1517 Spinelly was paid an annuity of £100.¹⁰⁶ Two years later one of Henry's German agents, Herman Rynk was granted an annuity of £20, a payment previously made to his father who also carried out various tasks for the Tudors in Germany,¹⁰⁷ and another German, Laurence Stauber, received regular payments of 150 crowns.¹⁰⁸ Less commonly English ambassadors, for the most part men in resident embassies, also received annuities. Among these were Robert Wingfield, John Stile, John Wallop and Stephen Vaughan who were respectively granted, 100 marks in November 1511, 40 marks in June 1512, 50 marks in January 1528 and £20 in July 1533.¹⁰⁹

The trade concessions allowed to various envoys usually took the form of licences exempting an individual from customs duties on a specific commodity for a certain period of time. Such concessions were of particular value to Henry's merchant envoys and agents among them Edmund Harvel who was granted a licence to export 200 sacks of wool in February 1538,¹¹⁰ and

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, fo.256, (*ibid*, p.1461), payment to Edward Poyning, June 1513; (*L&P*, VI, no.717).

¹⁰⁶ PRO, C66/630, m.14, (*L&P*, II ii, no.3662), Grant to Thomas Spinelly, 1 September 1518.

¹⁰⁷ In November 1519 Rynk received £66 13s 4d, presumably this included a backdated payment of his deceased father's annuity as well as his own newly awarded pension, *ibid*, 630, m.32, (*L&P*, III i 509), Grant to Herman Rynk, 12 November 1519.

¹⁰⁸ PRO, E101/420/11, fo.65, (*L&P*, V, p.308), 150 crowns annuity to Laurence Stauber. November 1529.

¹⁰⁹ PRO, C66/613, m.11, C66/616, m.11, C66/650, m.12, C66/622, m.22, (*L&P*, I i, no.709 (29), 1044 (17), IV ii, no.3869 (29), VI, no.929 (50)).

¹¹⁰ PRO, C66/677, m.33, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.384, (96)), grant to Edmund Harvel, 23 February 1538.

John Dymmok given a similar licence in October 1540 to ship 20,000 weight of bell metal.¹¹¹

Of course the most valuable rewards given by the king were the grants conferring land and minor offices on returning ambassadors, an approximate equivalent to the livings awarded to Henry's ecclesiastical envoys. However, a review of the monthly lists of grants in *L&P* clearly demonstrates that Henry, far from lavishing such rewards upon ambassadors gave them only sparingly. Only seventeen laymen were given grants of land and minor offices whilst either performing diplomatic service or within a year of completing it. Furthermore, the grants lavished on royal favourites like George Boleyn and Francis Bryan, even during periods of diplomatic service, probably had more to do with their intimacy with the king or relationships with his paramours than the work they were performing abroad. It should also be noted that the nature of the grants made to ambassadors were sometimes limited in their generosity. Although Edward Carne was granted various properties in Glamorgan in the 1540s as table two demonstrates he was nevertheless obliged to pay for them. Carne may have been given preferential treatment when staking his claim to the monastic spoils of Wales and perhaps the land was sold to him at bargain price. Even so, the ambassador who had worked so hard for the king in Rome and served for years as resident to the Low Countries was still obliged to donate to the royal coffers large sums of money for land which a decade before had not even been Henry's to sell!

¹¹¹ PRO, C76/206, m.8, (*L&P*, XVI, no.107 (31)), Grant to John Dymmok, 25 October 1540.

Table Two Grants of land and minor offices made to Henry VIII's lay ambassadors in those years in which they performed diplomatic service.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>I & P reference</u>	<u>Grant</u>
Thomas Boleyn	May 1514	I ii, 2964 (63)	Lordships of Saham Tony, Neckton, Panworth Hall, Cressington Parva, and the hundreds of Wayland and Grimmes Howe
George Boleyn	July 1531	V, 364 (28)	Steward of the honour of Raleigh, £10 p.a.
George Boleyn	April 1532	VI, 419, (8)	Wardship of Edmund, s. and h. of Sir Robert Sheffield.
George Boleyn	April 1533	VII, 632 (13)	Grant of the manor of Southe, Kent.
George Boleyn	June 1534	VIII, 922 (16)	Constable of Dover Castle and warden of the Cinque Ports
Anthony Browne	Feb 1528	IV ii, 3991 (8)	Lordships of Stewton Manor, Lincs., Newhall and Coppenhall, Cheshire, and Egiton, Rutland.
Francis Bryan	Dec 1529	IV iii (13)	Keeper of Isleworth Park, Middlesex.
Francis Bryan	March 1532	V 908 (18)	Constable of Warwick Castle.
Francis Bryan	March 1535	VIII 481 (31)	Monastery of St Virgin Mary, Raveston, Bucks.
Francis Bryan	June 1536	X 1256 (39)	Constable of Wallingford Castle.
Francis Bryan	June 1538	XIII i 1309 (30)	Steward of the manors of Newnam, Courtney and Ewelme, Oxon.

Name	Date	I&P reference	Grant
Francis Bryan	Feb 1539	XIV i 403 (57)	Bailiff of manor of Cheltsey.
Francis Bryan	June 1541	XVI 947 (18)	Manor of Ryseborough, Bucks.
Edward Carne	Aug 1543	XVIII ii 107 (43)	Grant in fee of £453 18s 1 ¹ / ₂ d of Lewinston manor, Glamorgan.
Edward Carne	Aug 1545	XX i 266 (13)	Grant in fee of £727 6s 4d of the manor of Ewweny, Glamorgan.
Edward Carne	Oct 1546	XXI ii 332 (83)	Grant in fee of £222 of the manor of Llanvethon, Glamorgan.
Thomas Cheyne	June 1525	IV i, 1466 (16)	Custody of Rochester Castle.
Wm Fitzwilliam Anth Browne	April 1526	IV i, 1532,	Bailiffs of Surrey, in Windsor Park.
Wm Fitzwilliam Anth Browne	Jan 1529	IV iii, 5510, (29)	Keepers of the Great Park at Windsor.
Wm Fitzwilliam Anth Browne	April 1527	IV ii, 3087	Keepers of Guildford Park.
Henry Knyvett	Feb 1542	XVII 137 (60)	Keeper of West Horsley manor.
Henry Knyvett	March 1542	XVII 220 (2)	Keeper of Mote Park, Windsor Forest.
Henry Knyvett	June 1542	XVII 1258	Keeper of chief house of the Order of St John's of Jerusalem
Edward Poynings	June 1518	II ii, 3260	Wardship of Thomas, s.and h. of John, Lord Clinton and Saye.

Name	Date	L&P reference	Grant
John Russell	Feb 1525	IV i, 1136, (15)	Keeper of Newport Castle.
John Russell	Dec 1526	IV ii, 2761	Manor of Angmondsham.
Ralph Sadler	July 1540	XV 942 (111)	Appointed Clerk of the Hanaper, salary £40 plus 18d a day riding expenses.
Ralph Sadler	Aug 1540	XV 1027(40)	Grant of the monastery of Selby, Yorks.
Ralph Sadler	Sept 1540	XVI 379 (26)	In exchange for the surrender to the crown of pensions from the Abbot of St.Peter, Westminster, and the Prior of Gisborough, grant of Staudon manor.
Ralph Sadler	March 1542	XVII 220 (48)	Manors of Temple Dynmesley and Temple Chelysne.
Ralph Sadler	March 1543	XVIII i 346 (56)	License to alienate the vicarage of Norton, Essex
Ralph Sadler	May 1543	XVIII i 802 (2)	Lease of Barwik farm, Herts., £7 6s 8d.
Ralph Sadler	April 1543	XVIII i 474 (37)	Lease of the messuage of Shockellwell, Hackney, with 50 acres, rent, £16 2s.
Thomas Seymour	June 1540	XV 611 (34)	License to alienate manors of Childerditch Hall and Tillingham Hall.
Stephen Vaughan	Dec 1540	XVI 379 (44)	Messuage, tenancy and shops previously belonging to St.Bartholomews, London.

Name	Date	I&P reference	Grant
Stephen Vaughan	Nov 1542	XVII 1154 (50)	Grant in fee of £101 9s 6d for rents reserved on various leases in London.
Stephen Vaughan	April 1534	VII 587 (13)	Appointed clerk in Chancery.
Stephen Vaughan	July 1544	XIX i 1035 (91)	Appointed one of the under treasurers in the tower of London.
John Wallop	March 1528	IV ii, 4124 (19)	Surveyor and Receiver on cloth subsidies in London and Southampton.
John Wallop	May 1529	IV iii 5510 (6)	Keeper of Dytton Park, Bucks.
John Wallop	May 1538	XIII i 1115 (63)	Various parcels of land in Dover and Somerset.
John Wallop	June 1530	IV iii 6480 (13)	Lieutenant of Calais Castle.
John Welsborne	Nov 1529	IV iii 6072 (23)	Certain land in Naburne, York.
John Welsborne	May 1530	IV iii 6418 (18)	Lease of Berkley Park.
Ric Wingfield	Oct 1515	II I, 1083	Wardship of John, s. and h. of Robert Brews.
Ric Wingfield	Sept 1523	III ii 3376	Manors of Swyneshed and Hardwick.
Rob Wingfield	Aug 1512	I i, 2222	Marshal of Calais.
Rob Wingfield	Aug 1519	III i, 102 (22)	Lease of Sherston manor, Wilts.
Thomas Wyatt	July 1540	XV 942 (51)	Grant by fee simple of the Monastery of Boxley, Kent.

Name	Date	I&P reference	Grant
Thomas Wyatt	Oct 1539	XIV ii 619 (49)	Grant of lands in Kent previously belonging to Christchurch Canterbury.
Thomas Wyatt	Nov 1540	XVI 305 (66)	License to alienate the manor of Milkwell with 30 acres.
Thomas Wyatt	Jan 1542	XVII 71 (24)	Manor of Paynhall and bailiff and steward of h manor.

Despite the relative paucity of grants made to lay ambassadors, Henry's envoys as a group were a long way from being hard done by. If the king did not or could not hand out large parcels of land to many of his ambassadors the financial pressures which diplomatic service often entailed were well compensated for by the combination of gifts from foreign princes and the wide variety of other emoluments which Henry did distribute to many of his envoys. The question remains, how important was diplomatic service to the careers of the men chosen to perform it? What proportion of all the work they did for the king was carried out abroad and to what extent did it advance their careers at home.

Career Advancement

Assessing the impact of diplomatic service upon an individual's career is often difficult and sometimes impossible. Far more than with the distribution of grants and minor offices promotions to the senior positions within church and state were more often than not the result of many factors. In most cases they came about as the result of a combination of services performed for Henry over a number of years. Furthermore, they were greatly influenced by the support or opposition a particular individual might encounter in court and council. Finally, the ever-shifting state of political and religious affairs could play a crucial part in the development of a man's

career. Thus the rate if not the height of Stephen Gardiner's meteoric rise was largely the result of Henry's decision to divorce Katherine of Aragon. Equally the Bishop of Winchester's ill-advised decision in May 1532 to identify himself as a conservative when the Pope's intransigence was driving the king towards an ever more radical position, probably cost him the Archbishopric of Canterbury.¹¹² Diplomacy had its part to play in the development of Gardiner's career as it did for so many others, but it is important to remember that even for the most active of the king's ambassadors service abroad was only one of the contributory factors which influenced their futures.

From a negative perspective it is quite easy to establish when diplomatic service probably had little or no impact on a man's career. Twenty two men spent three months or less abroad, a further seven served for six months or less and another sixteen worked as ambassadors for no more than nine months.¹¹³ No less than 54 men attended only one embassy. To say that this large number of relatively inactive ambassadors, almost 50% of the total, gained no advantage from their time abroad would be unwise. However, common sense dictates that a noble who served the king at court for decades and went to Scotland for a few weeks, or a priest who spent many years as a judge and royal councillor and attended one embassy to provide technical support for his colleagues, were far more likely to be rewarded for the former services than the latter.

For the most active of Henry's envoys, that is those who performed three or more missions or spent more than a year abroad - 46 in number - diplomatic service could play a crucial part in their future careers, but not necessarily a positive one. Before reaping the benefits of royal gratitude there was veritable gauntlet of hazards, both at home and abroad, to be run. Despite the laws of diplomatic immunity which at least in theory made the person of an ambassador

¹¹² Redworth, *op.cit.*, pp.35-38.

¹¹³ See appendix B.

inviolable,¹¹⁴ many of Henry's envoys were placed at considerable risk whilst carrying out missions. Richard Pace, sent to co-ordinate the Swiss-Imperial invasion of the Milanese in 1516, was threatened and held to ransom by mercenary captains and apparently almost poisoned by an Italian in French pay.¹¹⁵ Three years later whilst returning from the Imperial elections Pace was hounded by robbers and brigands and pursued for much of the journey between Cologne and Antwerp by a group of soldiers, estimated at 8,000 strong.¹¹⁶ Had he not been in the company of the Bishop of Liege and the Count of Nassau and their escort of 100 mounted soldiers, Pace doubted whether he would have completed the journey. As it was he and his companions were forced to ride day and night for three days.¹¹⁷

William Fitzwilliam, resident with Francis when he undertook his expedition against Hainault, was obliged to travel with the French king. Despite his status as ambassador the journey was not without risk:

And for my p[art] I never had a worse journey in all the warres that ever I have been in, and I assure your grace in no litle dangier of my life. For the other day the aventurers wold have taken my loggyng from me yet it was ill ynough for a man to set his horses in, and for because my servant showed them that the kyng wolde not be contented therwith, they wolde have strickenne hym befor my face. And so I was fayne to speke faire and with moche work kepe them that they hurte not my said servaunt¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ See D.E.Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton, 1967), pp.175-180; J.Ferguson, *English Diplomacy, 1422-1461*, (Oxford, 1972), p.156; Mattingly, *Diplomacy*, pp.256-269.

¹¹⁵ PRO, SP1/13, fos.79-81, (*L&P*, nos.1721 and 1729), Pace to Wolsey, 1 and 2 April 1516. SP1/14, fo.87, (*ibid*, no.2517), Pace to Wolsey, 7 November 1516.

¹¹⁶ PRO, SP1/18, fo.271, (*L&P*, III i, no.392), Pace to Wolsey, 22 July 1519.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁸ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.117, Vodden, *op.cit.*, II, pp.439-443, (*L&P*, III ii, no.1698), Fitzwilliam to Wolsey, 21 October 1521.

Ralph Sadler, given the dubious distinction of being the first English ambassador to hold a resident posting at the Scottish court, also found himself in considerable danger. When in August 1543 the English stopped and impounded a number of Scottish ships on the grounds that their cargo had been destined for the pro-French party in Scotland, the anger of the Scots focused on the ambassador:

the stave of whiche shippes hath brought the people of this towne, boothe men and woomen, and speciallie the merchantes, in to such a rage and furie that the whole is commoved agaynst me and swore grete othes that if their shippes wer not restored that they wolde have their amendes of me and myne, and that they wolde sett my howse here a fyre over my hed so that one of us there shuld not escape a lyve¹¹⁹

Sadler's position was rendered still more precarious when all the men from whom he might have expected protection, of both the pro and anti-English factions left Edinburgh. The provost of the town advised the ambassador that neither he nor his servants should leave their house since he simply did not have enough men at his disposal to ensure their safety.¹²⁰ Sadler had also been warned that if he attempted to leave before Henry released the impounded ships he would be killed.¹²¹ When an Englishman in Sadler's entourage did venture into the town he was attacked, apparently by twenty men, who, had he not fought against them with what must have been truly super-human valour, would certainly have killed him.¹²² When at the beginning of November the ambassador finally succeeded in slipping out of Edinburgh it was to take refuge in the cold and unfurnished castle of Tantallan in which he remained uncomfortably lodged for a month before

¹¹⁹ *The Hamilton Papers: Letters and Papers illustrating the political relations of England and Scotland in the 16th Century*, ed.J.Bain, (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1890-92), II, no.2, (L&P XVIII, ii no.111), Sadler to Henry, Edinburgh, 1 September 1543.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, no.14, (*ibid*, no. 133), Sadler to Suffolk and Tunstall, 5 September 1543.

¹²¹ *Ibid*.

¹²² *Ibid*, no.27, (*ibid*, no.175), Sadler to Henry, 11 September 1543.

he was finally escorted to Berwick by George Douglas and a 400 strong guard.¹²³

Yet of the twelve men who actually died whilst still in possession of diplomatic credentials,¹²⁴ only one, Christopher Bainbridge, may have been the victim of foul play.¹²⁵ By comparison the envoys of Francis I were considerably less fortunate. Antoine d'Arces, s.de la Batie, in company with François de Bordeaux, s.de Ponssonnière, was accredited to Scotland in September 1516. In November, Ponssonnière returned to France while Batie remained in Scotland, appointed by the Duke of Albany as warden of the East Marches.¹²⁶ Less than a year later the French envoy was ambushed by David Home laird of Wedderburn; first taken prisoner he was later murdered and his head removed and displayed on the battlements of Wedderburn castle.¹²⁷ In 1541 Francis' agent in Milan Marsiglio was found murdered, and most famously of all Rincon and Fregosa, French envoys to the Sublime Porte and Venice, were taken prisoner by Imperial troops in the Milanese and then killed.¹²⁸

¹²³ *Ibid*, nos.85, 135, (*ibid*, nos.343, 483), Sadler to the Privy Council, 6 November 1543; Sadler to Suffolk, 12 December 1543.

¹²⁴ These were: Christopher Bainbridge, 14 July 1514, *L&P*, I ii, no.3076; Silvestro Gigli, 18 April 1521, *L&P*, III i, no.1247; Thomas Spinelly, 26 August 1522, *L&P*, III ii, no.2479; Richard Wingfield, 22 July 1525, *L&P*, IV i, no.1520; Robert Jerningham, 26 April 1528, *L&P*, IV ii, no.4215; William Benet, 26 September 1533, *L&P*, VI ii, no.1156; Nicholas Hawkins, January 1534, *L&P*, VII i, no.171; John Hackett, 27 October 1534, *L&P*, VII ii, no.1320; John Hutton, 5 September 1538, *L&P*, XIII ii, no.286; Richard Layton, c.9 June 1544, *L&P*, XIX i, no.736; Henry Knyvett, August 1546, *L&P*, XXI i, no.1405.

¹²⁵ For the inconclusive debate as to whether Bainbridge was actually poisoned and if so whether it was at the instigation of Silvestro Gigli see, Chambers, *Christopher Bainbridge*, pp.131-140, and Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, pp.50-52.

¹²⁶ *DBF*, art.'Antoine d'Arces'. vol.III pp.327-328.

¹²⁷ J.B.A.T.Teulet, *Relations politique de la France et l'Espagne avec l'Écosse en XVI^e siècle* (2 vols., Paris, 1862), vol.I pp.6-14.

¹²⁸ R.J.Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I*, (Cambridge, 1994), p.479.

But if the more obvious dangers inherent in diplomatic service never proved fatal to any of Henry's ambassadors, the less dramatic risks of foreign service, primarily ill-health, certainly claimed their share of lives. Of course one should be careful when drawing attention to fatalities suffered by diplomatic staff. In a number of cases the countries and cities in which they died were those in which they would have chosen to live whether they were serving as English ambassadors or not. Most obviously that ambitious careerist, Silvestro Gigli, a native Italian anyway, would always have chosen to die as physically close to the Holy See as he could get. John Hackett and John Hutton had both spent many years in the Low Countries pursuing their own business interests before they came to Henry's service and at the time of their deaths could be most accurately described as ex-patriates. In other cases, however, it is fair to say that ambassadors did meet premature deaths at least in part because of the inhospitable environments which their diplomatic missions exposed them to. Robert Jerningham, Henry's envoy to the camp of Odet de Foix in 1527 and 1528, was one of the thousands who fell victim to the epidemic which swept the French army during its occupation of Naples.¹²⁹ Numerous ambassadors dispatched to Spain suffered protracted illnesses, most likely malaria or dysentery, and two of them, Thomas Spinelly and Richard Wingfield, failed to recover.

Where illness was not fatal it was often severely debilitating and just as frequently partly brought on by the great pressures which diplomatic service entailed. As John Clerk testified, William Fitzwilliam endured great discomfort rather than relinquish the mission to which he and the Bishop of Bath and Wells had been dispatched:

he hath ben evill troubyld here w[ith] collique and shuld have ben undoubtedly worse had he not taken a merveillous absty[nence] [and very] good provision in tyme as he dyd: and he hath great payne to kepe hymself upright that he [might] the bettar attend to the king's busynes, wh[ich] I assure your grace he sparyd not to do for no payne. I speke this to thintent your grace shuld [w] a nother tyme have somwhatt the more [pity] upon hym,

¹²⁹ *St.P.*, VII p.67, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4215) John Carew to Wolsey, 28 April 1528.

for surely this ronnyng of the [posts is] meet for noon of us,.....and as for hym, the phi[sycian] shewyd hym playnly that ther is [nothing more] contrary unto his disease.¹³⁰

Fitzwilliam eventually recovered from his malady, Richard Pace was less fortunate. Possessed of a rather highly strung character, Pace was repeatedly ill whilst working as an ambassador, and it was in this capacity that he suffered his final nervous breakdown which put an end to his career both at home and abroad.¹³¹

No matter how arduous diplomatic service might be, the great majority of those who undertook it survived its rigours. However, the physical hardships endured by English ambassadors were only the most tangible of the threats to their long term welfare and future career prospects. The eventuality which most ambassadors probably feared rather more than discontented natives or opportunistic brigands was the dissatisfaction of the king. The failure to attain the desired objectives of a given mission either because of a poor performance on the ambassador's part, or due to unrealistic expectations on the behalf of Henry and his advisers, could have a serious impact on a man's career prospects.

In the months after Maximilian's failed attempt on Milan, an altogether more determined struggle ensued to gain possession of the English gold still flowing into central Europe. Robert

¹³⁰ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D X, fo.19v, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.2799), Clerk to Wolsey, 12 January 1527.

¹³¹ Throughout his diplomatic career Pace was troubled with poor health. In the aftermath of the Milan débacle he was so ill that in response to an urgent summons from the emperor, the English ambassador according to his own report had himself carried into the Imperial presence on a stretcher. PRO, SP1/13, fos.157-161, (*L&P*, II i, no.1896), Pace to Wolsey, 16 May 1516. During the Imperial elections of 1519 John Clerk reported to Wolsey that since 'Master Pace is syknes and his febyllnes rynnyth mervellosly in his mynd,' Henry had decided to dispatch Clerk to Cologne to take over the organization of his election campaign. *St.P.*, I p.2, (*L&P*, III i, no.302), Clerk to Wolsey, 13 June 1519. Pace's final collapse occurred in August 1525 in Venice where he remained for several months recuperating before his final journey home to England and a much deserved retirement of seclusion and insanity. Wegg, *op.cit.*, pp.260-267.

Wingfield's apparent readiness to permit the emperor unrestricted access to his master's treasure cost Henry 60,000 florins, and put Richard Pace in considerable danger. Just as importantly it placed enormous strain on Anglo-Imperial relations as Pace, correctly following his instructions, was forced to refuse further grants to Maximilian, whose expectations had been falsely raised by the unauthorized largesse of Wingfield. When Wingfield, in addition to wasting Henry's money, endangering the life of one of his most trusted servants and hindering the intricate plans of the Cardinal, went on to criticize not only Pace, but implicitly both Wolsey and the king, he almost sealed his own doom. In what is unquestionably the severest rebuke extant in the diplomatic correspondence of Henry VIII the king informed his ambassador:

And where as ye advaunt yourself [to be a mediator for the — contynuance of paternall and fillial love [and] amitie betwyxt themperor and us, your dedes be clerely repugnant to your words. For by these your dryfts, inducyng themperor to contynually demand of us, and the not accomplishing of his desires. which is importible for us to sustayne or do, ye have not oonly hyndered the mutuall intelligence betwyxt the said emperor and us, but also put hym in such jelously against our sayd secretary, Mr Pace, by contryved surmyses of sedicious writing against themperor that he hath banyshed hym his corte and countreys. And rather than this inconvients shuld ensue betwixt themperor and us, your [wayes] more studyng to gete thanks than [seeking our] honor, prouffite or sueritie, better it were ye [had never] been borne.....And assured may ye bee that in caas any danger or [harm] shall chauce unto hym (Pace) in those parties, we must [and will] arrect it precisely unto you, and in such wise p[unish you] therfor as all other shall take terrible example [therby].¹³²

In the event Pace returned home safely and Henry's anger at Wingfield subsided. The king nevertheless took revenge on his ambassador by delaying for more than a year the repayment to the Fuggers of 6,000 florins for which Wingfield had given surety and was as result hounded by the German bankers both in the Low Countries and in England.¹³³

¹³² BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B XIX, fos.361v-364, (*L&P*, II i, 2177), Henry to Wingfield, May 1516, draft copy with corrections by Thomas Ruthal.

¹³³ PRO, SP1/14, fo.213-214, (*L&P*, II ii, no.2822), Wingfield to Henry, 24 January 1517, Brussels; BL, Cotton MS, Galba B fo.307 (*ibid*, no.3599), Wingfield to Wolsey, 18 August 1517, Wenham Hall.

In February 1528 Gardiner and Foxe were dispatched to Rome with instructions to wring from Clement VII authorization for Wolsey to adjudicate on the legality of Henry's marriage to Katherine, or at least to secure the dispatch of a second legate equipped with the authority to do so. After a short time Foxe returned home to make a full report on the ambassadors' progress leaving Gardiner with the task of ensuring that the papal legate, Lorenzo Campeggio, had been given sufficient powers to bring the divorce proceedings to a satisfactory conclusion. Long before Campeggio was ready to set forth, the king's patience had come to an end. In a letter written by Foxe to Gardiner in May, the young ambassador's options were made absolutely clear:

Such instant sute as is made here by your frends both to the kingis highnes and also to my lord's grace for your schort retorning is utterly frows[trate], they alwais answering us that youe shall in any wyse accompany the legate untill he be on this syde the mountaynes, and in case he never come ye never to retorne.¹³⁴

Ultimately Gardiner fulfilled his mission bringing England's cardinal protector to Dover in October 1528 thus securing his place both at court and in the king's favour. In contrast Francis Bryan forfeited both, albeit temporarily, when the mission on which he had been jointly dispatched with Thomas Thirlby in May 1538 ended in failure. Their mission had three objectives:¹³⁵ firstly they were instructed to bring to a successful conclusion the marriages of both Henry and his daughter Mary to members of the French royal house,¹³⁶ secondly they were to secure the French king's agreement not to commit himself to a General Council which lacked Henry's support, and finally they were to ensure that no Franco-Imperial treaty was signed which did not encompass England. The ambassadors failed in every respect. What earned Bryan the king's particular disfavour was that despite instructions that should Francis be resistant to their

¹³⁴ BL, Harleian MS, 419, fo.111, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.4290), Foxe to Gardiner, May 1528.

¹³⁵ BL, Additional MS 25,114, fo.297, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.917), Henry to Gardiner, Bryan and Thirlby, 4 May 1538.

¹³⁶ The best account of the frantic search for Henry's fourth wife is still to be found in Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.358-362.

overtures he was to, 'gyve to the Frenche king suche dulce and gentel language as he dispaire not therby of our frendshypp towards hym',¹³⁷ the ambassador conducted his final interview with Francis in an abrupt manner bordering on rudeness before departing for England without taking formal leave. Shortly after Bryan's return, Castillon, the French resident in England, reported to Montmorency:

Quant au retour de maistre Bryant, il a eu si mauvaise chere de son maistre qu'il en est malade au lict. Comme m'a dict ce Roy mesme l'appellant ung bon yurongne de qui jamais ne se fyera et garde une bonne pensee a mons de Wincestre incontinent luy retourne.¹³⁸

In the wake of this outburst Bryan was removed from the position of Chief Gentleman of the privy chamber and despite being bedridden was closely interrogated about his activities whilst in France.¹³⁹

Considerably more threatening to an ambassador than royal annoyance at a job badly done, was the arousal of the king's suspicion that an envoy might be fraternizing with those he considered enemies. As England's isolation, whether perceived or real, grew, ambassadors often found themselves in an invidious position. Repeatedly they were instructed to gather information about exiles who continued faithful to Rome and rejected Henry's claims of royal supremacy, the most notable of whom was Cardinal Pole. Yet in order to do this it was necessary to make contact with Pole's servants and friends, in the process of which ambassadors left themselves open to charges of associating with the enemy and harbouring treasonable sympathies towards the Bishop of

¹³⁷ BL, Additional MS, 25,114, fo.297, (*L&P*, XIII i, no.917), Henry to Gardiner, Bryan and Thirlby, 4 May 1538.

¹³⁸ BL, Additional MS, fo.1, 33,514, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.280), Castillon to Montmorency, 5 September 1538.

¹³⁹ S.Brigden, "The shadow that you know", Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Francis Bryan at court and in embassy', *Historical Journal*, vol.39, (March 1996), 1-31, esp. pp.19-20.

Rome and his supporters.

In 1538 after Thomas Wyatt had sent his friend John Mason to make contact with Reginald Pole's servant, Richard Brancestor, in Paris, his fellow ambassadors, Edmund Bonner and Simon Heynes with whom he had earlier disagreed, forwarded a full report of the business to Cromwell.¹⁴⁰ At the time the lord privy seal chose to ignore the accusations made against his friend. In the aftermath of Cromwell's fall Bonner's earlier complaint about Wyatt and Mason once again came to light, and this time, deprived of a powerful protector the two men soon found themselves in the Tower.¹⁴¹ In the event a strong defence by Wyatt¹⁴² as well as a technical admission of guilt secured the ambassador's quick release and restoration to royal favour.¹⁴³ It does not alter the fact that for a brief time at least, Wyatt's fortune and possibly his life were put in jeopardy as a result of the fleeting and indirect contact that his associate had made with the traitor Reginald Pole.

Nearly ten years after Wyatt's difficulties the accusation that Stephen Gardiner had been in secret contact with both Pole and Paul IV during his 1540 embassy to Regensburg played an important part in his trial and subsequent imprisonment and deprivation from the see of Winchester.¹⁴⁴ It was his nephew, Germaine, however, who paid the ultimate price for associating with the king's enemies. During his uncle's long residency in France, Germaine had apparently made contact with the exiled cardinal whilst he was in Paris. Although the young man felt no immediate

¹⁴⁰ Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS, 47, fos.9-12, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.270), Bonner to Cromwell, August 1538.

¹⁴¹ See *The Lisle Letters*, ed. M.St Clare Byrne, (6 vols.. Chicago, 1981), VI pp.242-252.

¹⁴² BL, Harleian MS 78, fo.5, (*L&P*, XVI, no.640), Wyatt's defence, March 1541.

¹⁴³ Kaulek, *op.cit.*, p.278, (*ibid*, no.650), Marillac to Francis 25 March 1541.

¹⁴⁴ J.A.Muller, *Stephen Gardiner and the Tudor Reaction*, (London, 1926), p.198.

consequences from this ill-advised liaison it was eventually exploited to the full by his uncle's enemies. When in 1543 Gardiner found himself on trial for his part in the Prebendaries plot it was his earlier involvement with Pole which was used to greatest effect against him. As his uncle's biographer has observed, 'Winchester's young nephew did not die a traitor's death for his incitement of conspiracy in Kent. It seems certain that he was executed upon the pretext of treasons committed while he accompanied his uncle in France in the 1530s.'¹⁴⁵

Clearly an ambassadorial posting could be potentially ruinous to the careers of those chosen for the task. There is, however, considerable evidence to suggest that the performance of multiple diplomatic missions or prolonged periods of service abroad did much to improve the prospects of the men selected. For the younger and more junior of Henry's ambassadors a diplomatic posting gave them an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to the king and his advisers exactly what they were capable of. With the possible exception of officers in the army and navy, an occupation dominated by the nobility, no other area of public service offered the same chance to show off one's personal abilities directly to the king. The work of an ambassador was often extremely arduous, placing men in high pressure situations, requiring initiative, discretion and fortitude. Most importantly envoys had to be able to interpret and execute their master's instructions months after they had been drafted, and apply them to situations which had often changed radically from those known to Henry and his advisers. No doubt many of the king's servants in his government, judiciary and household possessed taxing jobs but none which afforded the same freedom of action as diplomatic service. Men who performed well abroad stood every chance of earning Henry's gratitude and cultivating his trust. Somewhat less ephemeral was the good opinion of men such as Wolsey, Cromwell and Paget. If an ambitious man could secure this by the performance of a sound tour of duty, his chances for promotion to higher office might well improve considerably.

¹⁴⁵ Redworth, *op.cit.*, p.205.

If Cavendish is to be believed Wolsey himself owed much of his early favour with Henry's father to the skill and efficiency with which he accomplished one of his first embassies.¹⁴⁶ Wolsey was summoned to Richmond by the king and given instructions to visit Maximilian in the Low Countries with certain proposals. The then royal chaplain immediately set off and succeeded in completing the embassy to the king of the Romans in just four days! Apparently when Wolsey approached the king Henry's first response was to upbraid him for not yet having begun the task he had been set. When the chaplain told him that he had not only completed the embassy to Maximilian but also carried out the additional instructions which Henry had sent on as an afterthought, the king was both amazed and delighted.¹⁴⁷ Despite Cavendish's claim that he received this story from the cardinal himself we are obliged to treat some elements of it with scepticism, not least the near super-luminal speed with which Wolsey completed the embassy. Yet if Cavendish or Wolsey, or perhaps both, displayed a taste for embroidery more commonly associated with the ladies of the court, then much about the story is nevertheless true. In 1508 Wolsey carried out two embassies to Maximilian in the Low Countries both concerned with the betrothal of Henry VII's daughter, Mary, to the young Archduke Charles.¹⁴⁸ That the king was satisfied with his chaplain's efforts is reflected in the appointment of the latter, first in February 1509 as Dean of Lincoln, and shortly afterwards as royal almoner.

Another man who may have owed much of his early advancement to the work he performed as an ambassador was Cuthbert Tunstall. Although as Archbishop Warham's chancellor at Canterbury he was by means devoid of important patrons, Tunstall's role in the service of the king and Wolsey was, prior to his appointment as ambassador to the Low Countries,

¹⁴⁶ G.Cavendish, 'The life and death of cardinal Wolsey', in *Two Early Tudor Lives*, eds.R.S.Sylvester and D.P.Harding, (Yale, 1962), pp.7-11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ W.Busch, *England Under the Tudors*, (3 vols., London, 1895), vol.1, p.225.

insignificant.¹⁴⁹ Yet after a year of almost continuous service as an ambassador, Tunstall found himself appointed Master of the Rolls and vice Chancellor,¹⁵⁰ promotions which in no small part must have reflected the satisfaction of the king and Cardinal with his work abroad.

During his first embassy to France William Fitzwilliam enjoyed praise from every quarter. Richard Jerningham informed Henry:

Mr Fitzwilliam hath ordered hym self soo here that he hath the king's favour, my ladies and the Admyrall's, and is in as good credence as well with thym and with the counsaill as any man of his degree that hath been here of a great space.¹⁵¹

Wolsey wrote to the ambassador acknowledging the high standard of his work,¹⁵² as well as enthusing to Henry, 'very glad am I to se the towareness of this young man, wyche in myn oppynion and pore jugement falleth right well in the mater.'¹⁵³ To tie the variety of promotions and responsibilities which Fitzwilliam received in the years after he returned from France too closely to his achievements whilst at the Valois court would be unwise. Even before his embassy he had been a close companion of the king as well being active in all the military adventures upon which his master embarked. In the years after this first embassy he played a prominent part in England's second war with France, taking command of the fleets entrusted with the defence of the south coast as well as joining the Earl of Surrey's 1522 expedition.¹⁵⁴ Doubtless his efforts in

¹⁴⁹ C.Sturge, *Cuthbert Tunstall, Churchman, Scholar, Statesman, Administrator*, (London, 1938), pp.20-30.

¹⁵⁰ *L&P*, II i, no.1882.

¹⁵¹ PRO, SP1/22, of.191-192, (*L&P*, III i, no.1337), Jerningham to Wolsey, 9 June 1521.

¹⁵² PRO, SP1/21, fo.214, (*L&P*, III i, no.1191), Wolsey to Fitzwilliam, 7 March 1521.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, fo.215, (*ibid*, no.1192), Wolsey to Henry, 7 March 1521.

¹⁵⁴ BL, Cotton MS, Caligula D VIII, fo.269, (*L&P*, III ii, no.2540), Surrey to Wolsey, 19 September 1522.

this area and his friendship with Henry contributed much to his election to the Order of the Garter in 1526,¹⁵⁵ and his inclusion among the inner circle of the king's advisers from the mid-1520s. Nevertheless his strong performance in France in 1521 certainly drew attention to Fitzwilliam's undoubted abilities and must have gone a long way towards convincing the king and Wolsey of his suitability for higher office and greater responsibility.¹⁵⁶

Fitzwilliam was by no means the only one of Henry's courtiers to benefit from the performance of diplomatic service. The validity of such experience with regard to membership of Henry's privy chamber was specified by Wolsey in the Eltham Ordinances of January 1526 in the preamble to which it was stated that the gentleman of the king's privy chamber should be, 'well languaged, experte in outwarde parts and meete and able to be sent on familiar messages'.¹⁵⁷ Much has been written about the politics of the privy chamber and the basis on which its members were chosen,¹⁵⁸ but in some cases at least the criteria mentioned in the Eltham Ordinances may have

¹⁵⁵ Beltz, *op.cit.*, p.171.

¹⁵⁶ One recent study of Henry's court has suggested that the decision to appoint Fitzwilliam to the French court in 1521 may have represented a conscious decision on the part of king and cardinal to prepare the courtier for higher office. Richardson, 'Anglo-French relations', pp.142-146.

¹⁵⁷ *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations For the Government of the Royal Household*, (London, 1790), p.154. The stress placed by Wolsey in the Eltham Ordinances on the importance of foreign languages is in sharp contrast to the advice he gave his own suite of gentlemen during the cardinal's 1527 embassy to France, 'Nowe to the poynt of the Frenche men's nature. Ye shall understand that the disposicion is suche that they wylbe at the first metyng as famylier with you as they had byn acquaynted with you long byfore and commyn with you in the Frenche tong as though ye understode every word they spoke. Therefore in lyke maner be ye as famylier with them agayn as they be with you. Yf they speke to you in the Frenche tong speke you to them in Englysshe tong for if you understand not them they shall no more understand you.' Cavendish, *op.cit.*, pp.47-48.

¹⁵⁸ See D.R.Starkey, 'The king's Privy Chamber, 1485-1547,' Ph.D, (Cambridge, 1973); G.Walker, 'The expulsion of the minions reconsidered,' *HJ*, 32, (1989), 1-16, Richardson, 'Anglo-French relations,' *passim*.

had their part to play. Sir Richard Wingfield, one of the 'foure sad and auncient knightes put to the kynges privie chamber' in 1519,¹⁵⁹ had performed several embassies to France and the Low Countries prior to his selection. Sir John Russell, by no means one of Henry's closet companions, was appointed to the privy chamber in January 1526 after four years of diplomatic service in France and Italy.¹⁶⁰ Finally, Sir John Wallop, rarely at court, but a man whose diplomatic and military duties took him to every corner of Europe, was chosen as a member of the privy chamber twice, firstly in the aftermath of his mission to the king of the Romans in 1528,¹⁶¹ and latterly upon the conclusion of his five year embassy at the court of Francis I.¹⁶² Appointment as one of the king's personal attendants surely represented the apogee of a courtier's career, and clearly in some cases the successful candidates owed their selection, at least in part, to the skills and experience they had gained from their work as ambassadors.

If, as I acknowledged earlier, the progress of men like Gardiner, Bonner and Thirlby owed much to the work they did for the king at home, their activities abroad also played a crucial part in their advancement. In particular there is a clear link between the most diplomatically active of Henry's clerics and the distribution of episcopal seats. Of the thirty most active ecclesiastical envoys sixteen were either promoted, or as in the case of Nicholas Wotton, offered promotion to the episcopacy.¹⁶³ Of the remaining fifteen, four, Gigli, Bainbridge, Kite and Ghinucci were already

¹⁵⁹ Hall, *Chronicles*, (London, 1808), p.596.

¹⁶⁰ D.Willen, *John Russell, First Earl of Bedford: One of the king's Men*, (IRHS, 1981), pp.16-17.

¹⁶¹ In grants for January and March 1528 Wallop was referred to as a gentleman of the king's privy chamber, *L&P*, IV, ii nos.3869, (29), 4121, (17).

¹⁶² Reappointed gentleman of the privy chamber March 1537, *L&P*, XII i, no.525.

¹⁶³ These were: Nicholas West, Cuthbert Tunstall, John Clerk, Stephen Gardiner, John Stokesley, Edward Lee. Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Hawkins, Edward Foxe, William Barlow, Richard Sampson, Edmund Bonner, Thomas Thirlby, Nicholas Heath, William Knight and Nicholas Wotton; *The Handbook of British Chronology*, eds.E.B.Fryde, D.E.Greenway, S.Porter and I.Roy, (London, 1986), pp.227-294. Cited hereafter as, *British Chronology*. For Wotton's

in possession of sees before they were appointed ambassadors, two more, Layton and Benet, died whilst still abroad, and one, Richard Pate fled the king's service.¹⁶⁴ In all only seven of the 31 key clerical envoys having completed active diplomatic careers then failed to become bishops in Henry's reign, in some cases at least probably because the king had no bishoprics to give them.¹⁶⁵

Again one must be careful not to see these promotions solely in terms of rewards for ambassadors. Ten of the sixteen envoys who became bishops also served the king as chaplains, almoners, secretaries and judges.¹⁶⁶ It seems reasonable to assume that the services they performed in these capacities would have done much to earn them Henry's favour. Nor was it always the case that elevation to the episcopacy followed closely upon the conclusion of a diplomatic career. Some of Henry's longest serving ambassadors had to wait years after their diplomatic service had ended before becoming bishops. Both William Knight and Richard Sampson devoted more than a decade of their lives to the diplomatic service of the king and yet Knight was forced to wait eleven years and Sampson seven before they were chosen to become prelates. Doubtless their diplomatic service ultimately worked in their favour, nevertheless they were obliged to watch as men like Hugh Latimer, John Hilsey and William Rugge, none of whom had been ambassadors, were promoted to the episcopacy before them. Why Knight and Sampson should have had to wait so long for their preferment to the episcopacy is unclear.¹⁶⁷ The most

reluctance to accept a bishopric see, Ficaro, 'Nicholas Wotton', p.41.

¹⁶⁴ In fact Pate was appointed Bishop of Worcester in place of Girolamo Ghinucci, when the latter died in July 1541. *Epistolae Reginaldi Poli*, ed.A.M.G.Brescia, (5 vols.,1744-1757), vol III, no.30, (*L&P*, XVI ii, no.1139), Reginald Pole to Gasparo Contarini, 1 September 1541.

¹⁶⁵ These were: Richard Pace, John Young, John Taylor, Robert Barnes, Thomas Hannibal, Thomas Magnus and Gian Baptiste de Casali.

¹⁶⁶ Lee, Stokesley, and Heath, had been royal almoners; Sampson, and Thirlby, had worked for the king as chaplains, Knight, Fox and Gardiner, were royal secretaries, and Tunstall and Clerk, had been Masters of the Rolls.

¹⁶⁷ Phylis Hembry in comparing the careers of John Clerk and William Knight suggests that Clerk's far more rapid advancement was due to his superior work as an ambassador. P Hembry,

obvious explanation is that their close association with Wolsey ensured their unpopularity with the Boleyn family and its supporters, an argument lent credence by the fact that Sampson's appointment to the see of Chichester occurred in June 1536 directly after the Boleyns' fell from royal favour. Be that as it may, what is sure is that their long years of diplomatic service to the king were by no means enough to secure their nomination to bishoprics.

However, the experiences of Knight and Sampson were most unusual. No less than twelve of the men appointed to bishoprics received them before they completed their last embassy and the remaining two a year and three years respectively after they had ceased to serve as ambassadors. In some cases it would seem that being chosen for an important embassy acted as a catalyst for elevation to the episcopate. Andrew Chibi, in his biography of John Stokesley sees the royal chaplain's appointment to the bishopric of London in 1530 as a move on the king's part to increase the credibility of the ambassador during his mission to France and Rome.¹⁶⁸ Edward Foxe's nomination to the see of Hereford in September 1535 appears at least in part to have been motivated by the desire of Henry and Cromwell to increase the prestige of the mission being dispatched to Germany by appointing a bishop to lead it.¹⁶⁹ The grant which conferred the bishopric upon Foxe's successor, Edmund Bonner, the resident envoy to the French court,

The Bishops of Bath and Wells, 1540-1640, (London, 1967), p.72. There is little evidence to support this assertion. If Clerk were considered the more capable diplomat why was it that Knight was appointed far more frequently as ambassador - indeed more often than any other man during Henry's reign. One is tempted to speculate that it was Knight's very ability as an ambassador and the prolonged absences from court to which it led, that may at least have been partially responsible for his long exclusion from the episcopacy.

¹⁶⁸ A Chibi, *Henry VIII's Conservative Scholar: Bishop John Stokesley, the Divorce, Royal Supremacy and Doctrinal Reform*, (Bern, 1997), p.16.

¹⁶⁹ Of course an existing bishop could have been appointed to lead the mission, but Foxe's theological expertise, diplomatic experience and perhaps most importantly his close ties to Cromwell and probable commitment to the evangelical movement, rendered him eminently suitable for the commission. McEntegart, *op.cit.*, p.90.

specified that, 'in order to appear more honourable to his legation', he was to be permitted to take the bishopric and all its profits into his hands *in absentia* straight away.¹⁷⁰

There also appears to be a close association between the occupants of the richest and most senior sees and the most frequently accredited of Henry's clerical diplomats. Aside from Wolsey's brief tenancy, the see of Winchester was occupied between 1502 and 1547 first by Richard Fox, one of Henry VII's most active ambassadors, and then Stephen Gardiner.¹⁷¹ Between 1522 and 1549 Tunstall, Stokesley and Bonner were respectively nominated bishops of London. Edward Lee followed Wolsey at York soon after Tunstall's translation from London to Durham. Of the last three incumbents of the bishopric of Hereford, two, Edward Foxe and Edmund Bonner, were important Henrician diplomats and the third, John Skip, was only offered the see in 1539 after Nicholas Wotton had declined the promotion. Finally, the see of Bath and Wells which Wolsey valued sufficiently to seek the destruction of its incumbent, Castellesi, passed in 1523 from the cardinal to Henry's current ambassador in Rome, John Clerk, who eighteen years later at last relinquished it to the long overlooked William Knight.

One honour granted to very few English ecclesiastics was a place in the college of cardinals. At least moderate numbers of French and Imperial envoys to Rome, men such as François de Tournon, Jean du Bellay and Gabriel de Gramont for the French, and Girolamo de Vich, Garcia de Loaysa and Pedro Quiñones for the Imperialists, received red hats.¹⁷² Of course Francis and Charles were in a much stronger position to put pressure on the Pope to choose their nominees than was Henry, added to which the break with Rome ensured a far narrower window of opportunity for would-be English cardinals. Even so it was those men accredited by Henry as

¹⁷⁰ PRO, C66/786, m.10 (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.968, (44)), November 1538.

¹⁷¹ *British Chronology*, pp.227-294.

¹⁷² *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, ed.C.Eubel, (8 vols.,Munster, 1910), vol III, pp.12-31.

ambassadors to Rome who came closest to election to the cardinalate. Christopher Bainbridge was the only English envoy in Henry's reign to enter the sacred college. Although in part he owed his election to his close relationship with Julius II, it probably had more to do with the Pope's desire to bind the English king more tightly to the Holy League.¹⁷³ Other English ambassadors whose names were associated with the cardinalate included Silvestro Gigli, Gian Baptiste de Casali and Girolamo Ghinucci. Although it does not seem likely that Gigli's candidacy was supported by Henry,¹⁷⁴ there is no doubt that he was eager to obtain the election of the other two men.¹⁷⁵ In the event Casali failed even to gain a bishopric, but Ghinucci once having divorced himself from English interests was elected to the cardinalate in 1535. In a backhanded sense one may still say his service to the English king played a part in his election. Although Ghinucci's earlier participation in the divorce case probably delayed his appointment, the loss of his English bishopric and subsequent break with the king served to identify him as victim of Tudor tyranny and therefore a reliable supporter of the Imperial and Papal causes.

Within Henry's government and household clerical and secular envoys alike received advancement at least partly because of the experience they had gained while working abroad. As one historian has remarked, 'Most early Tudor politicians of consequence, and certainly every secretary of state except Cromwell, stood squarely on the tripod of connection, administrative skill and diplomacy.'¹⁷⁶ The position of royal secretary before the rise of Cromwell was granted

¹⁷³ Chambers, *op.cit.*, p.36.

¹⁷⁴ In May 1520 Giulio de Medici wrote to a correspondent in England instructing to explain to the Cardinal that his uncle might soon be contacting Henry about Gigli's possible election to the cardinalate. He went on to explain that Leo did not think the bishop a suitable candidate and that any proposals on the Pope's part would merely be a smokes screen to mislead Gigli. BL, Cotton MS, Vitel.B VI, fo.87, (*L&P*, III i, no.853), Medici to , May 1520.

¹⁷⁵ BL, Add MS, 15,387, fo.225, (*L&P*, IV iii, no.6322), Henry to Clement VII, 9 April 1530; PRO, SP1/58, fo.160, (*ibid*, no.6735), Henry to Benet, 24 November 1530.

¹⁷⁶ A.J.Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966),p.68.

solely to experienced ambassadors, specifically Richard Pace, William Knight, and Stephen Gardiner.¹⁷⁷ Above all the duties of Henry's pre-Cromwellian secretaries involved assisting the king with the day-to-day administration of foreign affairs, and in particular reading incoming dispatches and drafting replies.¹⁷⁸ An individual who had personal experience of the courts and people dealt with in diplomatic reports, had the potential to be far more than simply a royal amanuensis. He was in a position to fill in gaps in dispatches, provide background knowledge, and serve in an advisory capacity when drafting replies.

Furthermore, highly trained royal secretaries with a wealth of diplomatic experience were excellent candidates for the most sensitive missions. Enjoying the trust of both Wolsey and the king, thoroughly versed in the latest developments in foreign affairs and always on hand to receive direct instructions from Henry himself, they could be invaluable as ambassadors. What was more, the appointment of a royal secretary to a diplomatic mission attracted none of the attention that the accreditation of a gentleman of the privy chamber or high ranking councillor would have done. Thus Richard Pace was chosen to perform a selection of secret or highly sensitive embassies, among them the 1516 mission to Maximilian and the Swiss, the management of Henry's candidacy for the Imperial throne in 1519, and the liaison with the traitor Duke of Bourbon in 1523. Four years later it was another secretary, William Knight, who began the struggle to obtain Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon, when he travelled to Rome with instructions to which even the cardinal was not privy, to obtain a papal dispensation permitting

¹⁷⁷ R.O'Day, *The Tudor Age*, (Harlow, 1995), p.110.

¹⁷⁸ F.G.Emmison, *Tudor Secretary: Sir William Petre, at Court and Home*, (London, 1961), p.49. It has been argued by P.Hennan in a study of Gilbert Bayard in *Arras et la diplomatie européenne*, ed.C.Giry Deloison, (Arras, 1999), that French royal secretaries seldom participated directly as ambassadors. The obvious exception was Florimond Robertet, but it was certainly the case that they did not perform resident embassies.

the king to re-marry.¹⁷⁹

Under Cromwell the secretaryship was transformed into the principal office of government and as such embraced far more than foreign policy administration.¹⁸⁰ However, shortly before Cromwell's fall the office once again underwent change and was split in two, with responsibility for the administration of foreign affairs being placed in the hands of the more senior of the secretaries. Again the association between active diplomatic service and appointment to the new office of secretary of state was a close one. Ralph Sadler, Thomas Wriothesley and William Paget, three out of the four men appointed to the office in the final decade of the reign, all spent considerable amounts of time serving abroad. Of course they were also highly experienced bureaucrats, trusted by Cromwell and well known to the king, undoubtedly a crucial factor in explaining their appointment. Yet given the amount of time they were obliged to devote to foreign affairs their earlier experience in the area would surely have advanced their candidacy above that of other senior members of the Cromwell administration.

Chosen as secretary before Cromwell's fall, Thomas Wriothesley was primarily responsible for the management of diplomatic correspondence until 1543, communicating with ambassadors both on a personal level as well as on behalf of the king and lord privy council.¹⁸¹ Concerning William Paget's promotion to the secretaryship, one historian has written, 'The invaluable training of a regular embassy added to his earlier experience in diplomacy, made him one of the chief figures in Henry's diplomatic service. The fact was duly acknowledged within three days of his

¹⁷⁹ For Knight's mission see, G.de C.Parmiter, *The king's Great Matter: A Study of Anglo-French Relations, 1527-1534*, (London, 1967), pp.21-24; Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, pp.202-205; Gwyn, *Wolsey*, pp.515-518.

¹⁸⁰ G.R.Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative changes in the Reign of Henry VIII*, (Cambridge, 1953), pp.298-315.

¹⁸¹ Potter, 'Anglo-French diplomacy,' *op.cit.*, pp.287-288.

return to England by his appointment as one of the two principal secretaries of state.¹⁸²

Even more than for Wriothesley, Paget's time as secretary was dominated by the management of diplomatic affairs. In addition to dealing with the daily correspondence of Henry's ambassadors and the reception of foreign envoys,¹⁸³ the king continued to employ him on diplomatic missions,¹⁸⁴ the performance of which offered no respite from the more routine business of diplomacy which at least in part he was expected to deal with even when absent from the country.¹⁸⁵

For the small group of merchant envoys employed by the king it might well be argued that appointment as full ambassador was not so much a stepping stone to further advancement but rather represented the apex of their careers. At court they had regular access to the most senior members of government, and less frequently the prince himself. Furthermore, their role as ambassador demanded that they maintain a regular correspondence with both the king and his council, obviously a line of contact with enormous potential value. Another reason that one might associate the apogee of the merchant ambassador's career with his diplomatic accreditation was that in most cases the men so appointed died in office. Spinelly, Hackett, Hutton and Harvel all died while still serving as ambassadors. For those who managed to retire from foreign service the

¹⁸² Gammon, *op.cit.*, p.53.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, pp.79-86.

¹⁸⁴ After Paget's appointment as secretary in February 1543, he performed two missions to the emperor in 1544 and 1545 as well as taking part in the negotiations with France between April and June 1546 which led to the Treaty of Boulogne. See Appendix A.

¹⁸⁵ Whilst in Calais in November 1544 he received a report from Wriothesley and Petre outlining Henry's plans to dispatch embassies to the king of Denmark and the Duke of Saxony and Landgrave of Hesse. Paget was instructed to contact Christopher Mont, the man chosen for the German embassies and explain what was required of him. *St.P.* X, 188-189, (*L&P*, XIX, ii, no.614), Wriothesley and Petre to Paget, 14 November 1544.

rewards were at best modest. Shortly after his return from Spain, John Stile was appointed controller of the coinage of tin for Devon and Cornwall.¹⁸⁶ and for much of the 1520s served as the king's treasurer in Ireland.¹⁸⁷ As Stephen Vaughan's biographer observed, '[he] received but a meagre share of the official spoils commonly parcelled out to faithful ministers of the crown from the political grab bag of the day';¹⁸⁸ In addition to his appointment as clerk of chancery in April 1534, Vaughan's only other reward from the government was the office of undertreasurer which he received in 1544 with salary of 200 marks a year.¹⁸⁹

One office which a number of Henry's merchant ambassadors did gain appointment to was that of governorship of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, the leading position in one of England's most powerful commercial organizations. John Stile, John Hackett, John Hutton and Stephen Vaughan were all elected to the office either during or after long periods of diplomatic service. Although there is no direct evidence to connect their election to their work as ambassadors, or that they were chosen as the result of government pressure,¹⁹⁰ it seems probable that there was a link. By choosing a royal envoy to lead the Merchant Adventurers its membership gained the undoubted advantage of having a governor who was in frequent contact

¹⁸⁶ *L&P*, II ii, no.4508.

¹⁸⁷ The warrant appointing Stile as treasurer for Ireland does not remain, however the grant to John Gothelman as the next controller of tin coinage for Devon and Cornwall is dated 26 March 1520, *L&P*, III I, no.701. Presumably Stile undertook his new responsibilities shortly afterwards.

¹⁸⁸ Richardson, *Stephen Vaughan*, p.14.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.79.

¹⁹⁰ Certainly Stephen Vaughan's nomination to the office was made without direction from London. Upon being offered the position the merchant wrote to Cromwell, 'I thanked them of theyr goode wille and tolde them that as I coulde not nor myght not take any suche office befor I had therin knowen the kings majesties pleasure, so I wolde not promyse them to be theyr governor till I wer certyfyed therof.....It maye then please your lordship to lett me know the kyngs maiesties pleasure whiche I shall most humbly obey.' PRO SP1/142, fo.54, (*L&P*, XIV, i, no.64); Vaughan to Cromwell, 21 January 1539.

with both the English and Burgundian governments in whose hands much of their present and future prosperity rested.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly diplomatic service had its drawbacks. It was usually expensive and at best ambassadors could expect long delays before they were fully reimbursed. Despite diplomatic immunity envoys were frequently put in danger both *en route* to foreign courts and on occasion during the missions themselves. When embassies did not go as planned ambassadors were the first to be blamed, and for those men whose instructions brought them into contact with the king's enemies accusations of treason were a genuine risk.

Yet for those chosen to undertake it foreign service had much to offer. If the diets they received were inadequate then the government was neither entirely unsympathetic or unresponsive to its ambassadors' complaints. Over the period wages did increase and the king and his advisers often acted to alleviate the financial difficulties of individual envoys. Shortfalls were frequently compensated for by the gifts of foreign princes as well as the admittedly imbalanced distribution of grants and minor offices by the king. Most importantly, however, there seems to be a clear link between the most active of Henry's ambassadors and those men appointed to the most important offices in church and state. Despite all the qualifications that must be applied: the fact that a number of ambassadors were already high office holders when they began diplomatic service; that many envoys performed numerous services for the king outside their work as ambassadors, and that some of those who carried out missions owed much of their preferment to their friendship with Henry or their relationship with those to whom he was enamoured, still for a good few missions abroad played a vital part in their advancement. The episcopate was dominated by retired and active ambassadors. Nearly all royal secretaries first served on diplomatic missions. Even for younger men already high in Henry's favour, foreign service

provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to do more than cut a fine figure at court and dash about on England's infrequent battlefields.

The numbers of men who spent more than a total of three or four years abroad were not great, and the careers of only a handful of clerics were ever dominated by diplomatic service. In this respect the potential rewards available to an ambassador were disproportionate to the time he was called upon to serve. Diplomatic work was rarely easy and Henry VIII was the most demanding of taskmasters, yet for those men with sufficient ability and endurance to excel in the most challenging of environments selection for diplomatic service offered one of the best opportunities to succeed in Tudor England.

Conclusion

In his work on the Elizabethan diplomatic service,¹ Gary Bell has argued that the second half of the 16th century witnessed a 'subtle revolution'. He states that men like Robert Bowes, Henry Killigrew and Thomas Randolph, 'one of the first in England who can be positively identified as a career diplomat',² were employed as ambassadors with a regularity and longevity previously unknown in England. By contrast envoys before 1558 seldom went abroad more than once or twice.³ He points to the use of diplomatic specialists both in regional terms: Robert Bowes in Scotland; Thomas Wilson in Portugal; John Herbet and Daniel Rogers in Denmark, and technical areas: Thomas Gresham and Horatio Pallavicino were financial experts and John Shers and William Waad responsible for intelligence gathering.⁴ He draws attention to the appointment of experienced ambassadors to administrative positions such as principal secretary and master of the posts linking their careers abroad to their governmental functions at home.⁵ He argues that Elizabeth's government made a conscious attempt to train future ambassadors for diplomatic service by including them in the suites of experienced envoys, usually in a supportive role such as

¹ G.M.Bell, 'The men and their rewards in the Elizabethan diplomatic service, 1558-1585', Ph.D, (UCLA, 1975); 'Elizabethan diplomacy, the subtle revolution', in *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy*, eds.M.A.Thorpe and A.J.Slavin, (Missouri, 1994); 'Tudor Stuart diplomacy, history and the Henrician experience', *State, Sovereigns and Society*, ed.C.Carlton, (Stroud, 1998), pp.25-43.

² *Ibid*, p.268.

³ *Ibid*, p.276.

⁴ Bell, 'The men who served', pp.30-31.

⁵ Bell, 'Subtle revolution', p.268.

that of secretary.⁶ Whereas in the reign of her father the clergy and nobility had played a dominant part in diplomacy, in that of Elizabeth, 'we see yet another underpinning of diplomatic professionalism: the lesser men of the realm found roles once thought to be the prerogative of peers.'⁷

In fact most of what Bell claims as being specific to Elizabethan diplomatic practice can be readily identified in the reign of her father. The total periods spent abroad by Elizabeth's most hard-working ambassadors were certainly matched by those of Henry. Thomas Randolph and Robert Bowes spent more than 10 years serving abroad. Yet Thomas Spinelly remained at the court of the future Charles V for 13 years 4 months and Edmund Harvel resided in Venice as Henry's agent and ambassador for 12 years. After Bowes and Randolph the next longest serving Elizabethan envoys were Henry Killigrew and Edward Stafford, both remained abroad for more than 5 years. Yet John Stile resided in Spain for 9 years 1 month, John Hackett served Henry in the Low Countries for 8 years 1 month, and Robert Wingfield, albeit with extremely poor grace, served a total of 9 years 2 months. Overall no less than 27 of Henry's ambassadors spent in excess of 3 years in Scotland or on the continent. Nor is there much difference between the frequency with which the most active of Elizabeth's ambassadors were accredited and than those of her father: Thomas Randolph performed 12 missions, Henry Killigrew and Thomas Wilkes 11 each. In comparison William Knight carried out 13 missions and Richard Wingfield and Francis

⁶ 'We are moving beyond the days of the talented amateur in diplomatic representation. The Elizabethan government, quite deliberately it would seem, was providing for diplomatic schooling, and simultaneously it was remoulding the fundamental structure of diplomatic representation abroad.' *Ibid*, p.272.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.275.

Bryan, 9 each. Bell's assertion that ambassadors before the time of Elizabeth rarely performed more than 1 or 2 embassies is simply incorrect. Throughout Henry's reign 37 men performed 3 or more missions, among them Stephen Gardiner and Richard Pace who served on 8 occasions, William Paget, appointed seven times and Nicholas Wotton and Thomas Boleyn, both of whom carried out six embassies.

Elizabeth was certainly not the first to make frequent use of specialists in diplomacy. Ralph Sadler is widely acknowledged as Henry's expert on Scottish affairs, yet one might equally point to Thomas Magnus and Thomas Dacre both prominent in Anglo-Scottish diplomacy in the earlier decades of the king's reign and both men whose lives and careers were intimately associated with the affairs of the northern border counties. One of the key reasons for employing men of low status such as John Stile, Thomas Spinelly, John Hackett, John Hutton, Stephen Vaughan and Edmund Harvel, was the intimate knowledge they possessed of the countries, courts and governments to which they were accredited. Another reason was the commercial expertise they possessed upon which Henry came to rely particularly in the 1540s. While it is true that the king depended upon the clergy to perform many of his embassies, it is also the case that they possessed skills highly relevant to diplomacy at levels that few of Elizabeth's ambassadors could match. Most had doctorates, many in civil law as well as a thorough understanding of Latin. By comparison Bell's own analysis of Elizabethan envoys between 1559 and 1585 leads to the conclusion that 65% had received a higher education.⁸ This is not to say that they obtained degrees, or studied civil law let alone gained doctorates in the field. It is not my aim here to traduce Elizabeth's diplomatic corps; indeed my own contention with regard to the decline of the

⁸ Bell. 'The men who served', p.15.

clergy in English diplomacy was that the increasing numbers of well trained laymen freed the crown from its traditional dependence upon the church. It does not alter the fact that greater numbers of Henry's ambassadors were almost certainly more highly trained than their successors in those fields most pertinent to the practice of diplomacy.

Whether a decline in the role played by the aristocracy in diplomacy is an indicator of a growing tendency towards professionalism is questionable. In any case the point is moot since Bell's suggestion that, while Elizabethan peers played a marginal role in diplomacy Henry's were still very much active, is incorrect. In order to arrive at the statistic that 51% of all embassies carried out by Henry's ambassadors were performed by peers, Bell includes 'doctors of the church', and bishops. Clearly the former group were not members of the House of Lords and should not have been counted, and while all members of the episcopate were of course peers it is something of a miss-representation to classify them first and foremost as aristocrats. None were born to noble families and to suggest that men like Tunstall, Clerk, Gardiner, Bonner and Thirlby - all chosen as ambassadors before they were elected as bishops - were chosen to serve abroad because they were aristocrats, is clearly wrong-headed. Bell makes the further point that, 'Not one titled Elizabethan...ever served as a resident ambassador which is again at sharp variance with Henry VIII's reign.'⁹ In fact Henry appointed only two nobles to resident embassies: George Boleyn served for three months in France in 1529, and William Howard resided at the same court for a year in 1540. The difference is hardly of revolutionary proportions.¹⁰

⁹ Bell, 'Subtle diplomacy', p.275.

¹⁰ A point that Bell himself, partially conceded in his later work, 'They were not simply the conveyors of gifts or the presenters of ceremonial distinctions...Rather these Henrician

It is undeniable that Henrician diplomacy was dominated by the gentry and clergy. However, the so-called lesser men that Bell draws attention to in his work, that is lay bureaucrats and administrators, were already active in the conduct of foreign affairs decades before Elizabeth came to the throne. William Paget began his diplomatic service in the early 1530s and was one of Henry's most active ambassadors throughout the 1540s.¹¹ From the mid-1530s onwards Ralph Sadler was central in Henry's dealings with Scotland,¹² while Thomas Wriothesley was active in English diplomacy between 1537 and 1540¹³. Other commoners who played a part in Henry's diplomacy included William Petre, and Richard Morrison. Furthermore, Paget, Wriothesley, Sadler and Petre all went on to hold the post of the king's principal secretary and certainly in the case of Paget and Wriothesley, a key element of their duties was the administration of foreign policy.¹⁴

Should we then move backward the date of Bell's 'subtle revolution' to the final decades of Henry's reign? I think not. Certainly the most important development in English diplomatic practice in the 16th century was the use of resident diplomacy and it was in Henry's reign that this

aristocrats were working diplomats - although not so devoted as to be resident ambassadors.' Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history', p.30.

¹¹ S.R.Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William First Lord Paget - Tudor Minister*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.22-25, 27-29, 35-55.

¹² A.J.Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966), pp.75-82, 85-93, 94-132.

¹³ J.J.Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, (London, 1997), pp.355-361, 368-370.

¹⁴ Gammon, *op.cit.*, pp.78-88. For Wriothesley see, D.L.Potter, 'Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century: England and France, 1536-1550', Ph.D, (Cambridge, 1973), pp.286-288. It is also worth noting that from November 1545 Paget and Mason replaced Tuke as Henry's Masters of the Post. *L&P*. XX ii, no.910 (27).

really began. Yet there is no revolution here. Henry VII had toyed with the new diplomacy while Ferdinand of Aragon had embraced it; decades before this it was already common practice among the Italian city states. Yet despite this abundance of examples Henry and Wolsey adopted the use of resident ambassadors almost grudgingly taking more than ten years to apply the system properly. In fairness, to some extent to Wolsey but mostly to Cromwell, Paget and his colleagues, it was in the years between 1520 and 1550 that not only the use of resident ambassadors but the overall organization and administration of diplomacy was modernized. Rates of pay were increased and regulated, resident and special diplomacy was integrated, and the calibre of the men chosen to serve abroad was improved so that in most cases the skills and abilities of the ambassadors chosen for a mission reflected its needs. Yet here again there is no revolution, merely a harmonization of standards with the diplomatic services of other European powers, notably the houses of Habsburg and Valois.

What of the ambassadors themselves? Can we identify a cadre of career diplomats or the development of professionalism in Henry's diplomatic service? Charles Giry Deloison in his work on the English and French diplomatic services in the late 15th and early 16th centuries established useful criteria in order to answer this question.¹⁵ Did any of those who served Henry VII, Henry VIII, Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I do so principally in a diplomatic capacity? Can one recognize any type of hierarchical organization based solely on diplomatic experience? Did diplomatic service represent the sole or primary source of enumeration and advancement for those who performed it? In every case Deloison argued not. Those men who served abroad

¹⁵ C.Giry-Deloison, 'Le personnel diplomatique au début du XVI^e siècle. L'exemple les relations franco-anglaises de l'avènement de Henry VII au Camp du Drap d'Or, (1485-1520)', *Journal des Savants*, (July-December 1987), 205-249, esp.p.240.

between 1475 and 1520 were drawn from the government or royal household, when they completed a diplomatic mission it was to these domestic functions they returned. Hierarchy within a mission was primarily determined by social status, there was no career ladder up which one might climb based on diplomatic ability or experience. None of those chosen for foreign service expected to make a living at it. The best place to gain promotions, privilege and gifts was as close as possible to the king's side. What benefits might accrue from the performance of an embassy were largely based on the nature of its outcome. Aside from diets paid in advance remuneration for diplomatic service was granted on a largely arbitrary basis.¹⁶

For the most part Deloison's arguments are equally applicable to the ambassadors of Henry VIII. The advent of resident diplomacy meant that more men spent longer abroad than ever before. Furthermore, as the demands of diplomatic service became more frequent the potential rewards *for its performance grew in magnitude. In the reign of Henry VIII foreign service did become an important element in the careers of a number of the king's servants. But no more than in the time of his father did these men see themselves as diplomats. They were clerics, scholars, gentlemen, nobles, merchants and bureaucrats, mostly eager for advancement in the church, at court and in the government, who had little choice but to travel abroad whenever the king or his advisers told them to go. As soon as they returned to court, or even Calais, they re-adopted those elements of their professional and social identity which in the duration of a diplomatic mission they had been obliged either to share with or give second place to the function of ambassador.*

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp.241-244.

The ambassadors of Henry VIII were not the first of a new breed of modern diplomats nor the forerunners of the Elizabethan professionals. The best of them possessed an abundance of skills and talents including fluency in foreign languages, training in civil and canon law, knowledge and experience of warfare, financial acumen and ultimately expertise in the conduct of diplomatic affairs. Were they successful as ambassadors? The question is surely unanswerable. Is it realistic to suggest that Gardiner, Foxe, Knight, Ghinucci and the rest failed in their missions to secure Henry's divorce? Of course not. No ambassador no matter how talented could have wrung from Clement VII a lasting commitment to support the divorce of Katherine of Aragon while her nephew dominated Italy. During his reign Henry went to war on three occasions, but then he did so because he wanted to, and what's more he did so when he wanted to. What then could any ambassador have done to alter the outcome. Various residents to the French court appear to have established a rapport with Francis I. Yet they did so either during periods of *entente* between England and France, or at times when the French king was keen to secure Henry's neutrality. Only the misanthropic demeanour of a Bonner could poison the waters in such circumstances, *and it is worth remembering that even he was only ejected from Francis' court at a time when Franco-Imperial relations were unusually good.* If one wishes to assess the calibre of Henry's ambassadors on a diplomatic level it can only be done in terms of the skills they possessed to carry out the tasks they were set, and in this regard as I hope I have shown, they were well qualified. Beyond this one can only remark that the ambassadors of Henry VIII were also the men who before, during and after his reign, dominated the government of church and state in England, and in this respect were certainly pre-eminent in their time.

Appendix A: English Diplomatic Missions, 1509 to 1547

Despite the existence of a published list of embassies carried out by English envoys between 1509 and 1688, ¹ I felt the inclusion of this appendix was necessary for several reasons. Given the numerous references made throughout the thesis to the diplomatic missions performed by Henry's ambassadors, an accompanying list is obviously a useful aid to the reader. Furthermore, the various statistics quoted in this study are for the most part derived from the lists which constitute appendices A and B, the inclusion of the appendices is therefore important as a means by which to check the reliability of the figures on which a number of arguments are based.

However, the inclusion of appendix A in particular is of use in its own right. Undoubtedly useful as G.M.Bell's *Handlist of British Ambassadors* was, it has, at least for the reign of Henry VIII, many failings, including large numbers of inaccuracies and mistakes, and a smaller number of factual omissions. In Bell's defence the project he undertook was of daunting scope and doubtless performed with constraints on both time and space. Most importantly he lacked an existing list of embassies upon which to improve. For all its flaws the *Handlist of British Ambassadors* nevertheless provided me with an extremely useful framework upon which to base my own list. In addition to the factual errors in the *Handlist* it suffers from two particular weaknesses. Firstly, Bell appears to have relied almost entirely upon *L&P* for his information about the movements of Henry's ambassadors. Central to such a study though *L&P* is, other sources can be used to augment it. Both the *CSPS* and *CSPV* offer additional information on the arrival and departure of English ambassadors at foreign courts. For France one can use the *CAF*, vol. IX, to gain a clearer impression of their movements. Other collections of dispatches from foreign envoys to their governments give

¹ G.M.Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688*, (London, 1990).

occasional insights into the subject. Finally, one can make use of individual studies of specific ambassadors both to clarify where they were and when, and to establish exactly what it was they were doing.

The other great problem with the *Handlist* is the method used by Bell for referencing the beginning and conclusion of embassies². In the majority of cases this is highly imprecise. Where evidence of ambassadorial diets or commissions and letters of credence are lacking the author bases dates on information drawn from letters and other documentation. Unfortunately he gives no reference for his sources leaving one to flounder through *L&P* in search of them. More frustrating still, where no sources exist, particularly for the conclusion of a mission, Bell often provides entirely arbitrary information for which no justification is offered, and as far as I have been able to determine none exists. The objective in appendix A is to provide a more detailed and reliable list of the embassies performed by Henry's ambassadors, and to make clear from where the information upon which it is based has come. Inevitably there will be mistakes, but for all my criticism of Professor Bell's work I must concede that such errors as there are would have been far greater in number were it not for his earlier efforts.

Note on methodology

The most accurate means of determining when an ambassador began and concluded an embassy is to refer to the dates between which he received diets. Until 1536 all such payments were made by the treasurer of the king's chamber, after this point payments were made to envoys from both the chamber and court of augmentations. Where no records of ambassadorial pay remain it is possible to establish when missions began from the dates of commissions or letters of credence. Unfortunately no equivalent evidence for an ambassadors

² *Ibid*, pp 6-8

return to court exists. Where no better source remains I have given the date on which an envoy received either his letter of recall from the king or *congé* from his host prince or government. The greatest source of information about ambassadors' movements is to be found in both the letters and dispatches of the envoys themselves and those of other people. Where a letter or other document calendared in *L&P* specifies an ambassador's location on the date that it is written and no better source for the beginning or end of his embassy can be found, I have written the place mentioned in the document before the date it mentions. For example if Chapuys wrote to the emperor on the 1 January 1530 to report that on that day Francis Bryan had left for the French court, and the letter was calendared in *L&P*, then the reference in the appendix would simply be London 1 January 1530. Where I have found documents that refer to the movement of an ambassador, either advising of a future date for his departure or mentioning that he has left or returned to court on a date earlier than that of the letter itself, I have included a footnote to explain the basis for the date provided. All dates given for which the evidence is to be found in a source other than *L&P* have been footnoted. Rather than speculate as to the probable time of arrival at a host court or return to England, I have simply provided dates for the last known location of an ambassador. Thus if the first *piece of evidence we have for the start of an embassy is that William Knight reached Brussels on the 15 April 1518*, then next to the start date of the mission I have added the town's name. Of course the problem with this approach is that it does not give one a precise idea of when an embassy really began. It does, however, indicate exactly what the sources tell us as well as providing the best possible indication of where a person was at a specific time. Where the documentation is so sparse that little more can be gathered other than the start date of an embassy I have specified no date for its conclusion, confining myself to a reference for the last document relating to the mission. No matter how unsatisfactory this approach it still seems preferable to simply guessing at a date, or offering some nebulous point of conclusion such as 'winter 1534', which is really of little help, and for which there is no historical proof anyway.

Where ambassadorial instructions remain I have listed both their primary source and secondary reference. In the many cases where instructions have been lost I have listed documents which provide the clearest idea of the nature of a given embassy. On a few occasions where no specific documents offer an insight into a mission, I have included a brief summary of its objectives or provided a secondary reference, usually to a biography, where a summary of the mission can be found.

key

aug	Payment made by the Treasurer of Augmentations.
ch	Payment made by the Treasurer of the Chamber.
com	Date on which a commission was issued to an ambassador.
congé	Date on which the host prince or government granted an ambassador leave to depart.
cred	Date on which a letter of credence was issued to an ambassador.
ins	Date on which earliest traceable instructions were issued to an ambassador.
passport	Date on which a passport to leave England was issued to an ambassador.
reward	Date on which the host prince or government distributed gifts to departing ambassadors.
*	Marks embassies not included in Bell's <i>Handlist</i> .

Conferences

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
C1	Cuthbert Tunstall Thomas More William Knight John Hackett	Special Special Special	ch 29 June 1529 ch 29 June 1529 ch 29 June 1529	London 29 Aug 1529 London 29 Aug 1529 London 29 Aug 1529	Rogers, <i>Hackett</i> , p.277, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.5818.
C2 Calais, Bruges	Thomas Wolsey ³	Special	com 29 July 1521	Dover 28 Nov 1521	sugg Rymer XIII, 749-50, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.1443.

³ Bell, *Handlist*, p.63, lists Tunstall, Ruthall, Somerset, Docwra and West in this embassy. Although they accompanied the cardinal to Calais and no doubt played an important supporting role in the negotiations, only Wolsey's name was on the commission, Rymer, 749.

Denmark

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
D1	John Baker	Special	cred 17 March 1514	26 Aug 1514 ⁴	sugg Cal.B II, fo.197, <i>L&P</i> , I ii, nos.2721, 2731.
D2	Thomas Legh	Special	ch 21 December 1532	28 March 1533 ⁵ Via Lubeck	sugg <i>L&P</i> , V, no.1633.
D3	Edmund Bonner Thomas Cavendish	Special Special	com 20 July 1535 com 20 July 1535	ch 27 April 1536 ch 27 April 1536	sugg Nero B III, fos.94-94, 100-108, <i>L&P</i> , X, nos.24, 303.
D4	Robert Barnes George St.Leger	Special Special	ch10 March 1539 ch10 March 1539	25 c.June 1539 ⁶ 25 c.June 1539	sugg Deputy Keeper 45 th Report, App.II 19, <i>L&P</i> , XIV i, no.955.
D5	Richard Morrison	Special	cred 31 December 1546	early March 1547 ⁷	sugg Deputy Keeper 45 th Report App.,II, 21, <i>L&P</i> , XXI ii, no.6

⁴ This is the date on which Christian III cancelled a letter of credence intended for Baker's departure – the last reference for this embassy.

⁵ On 31 March Chapuys informed Charles that Legh had returned three days earlier.

⁶ Henry wrote to Christian III on this date, informing him that Barnes and St Leger had delivered his letters, *L&P*, XIV I, no.1156.

⁷ Morrison travelled from his mission to Christian III at the diet being held in Holstein to Hamburg, from where, according to the mercenary captain, Conrad Pfening, he began his journey back to England on 23 February 1547. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553*, ed.W.B.Turnball, (London, 1861), p.5.

The Emperor

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E1 Germany Central Europe	Robert Wingfield	Resident	ch 31 May 1510	21 August 1517 ⁸	Samuto, X, pp.458-459, <i>L&P</i> , I i, nos.450,455.
E2 Low Countries	John Yong Thomas Boleyn	Special Special	cred 16 May 1512 cred 16 May 1512	Calais 11 May 1513 Calais 11 May 1513	Le Glay, <i>Annalectes</i> , p.184 ⁹ <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.1196.
E3 Germany, Switzerland, Italy	Richard Pace	Special	Antwerp 25 Oct 1515	c.20 Dec 1517 ¹⁰	Nero B VI, fo.36, <i>L&P</i> , II i, nos.1065, 1095.
E4 Low Countries	Charles Somerset	Special	ins 28 Dec 1516	Brussels 5 June 1517 ¹¹	SP1/14, fos.163-169, <i>L&P</i> , II i, no.2713.
E5 Spain	Thomas Spinelly	Resident	28 June 1519 ¹²	died 26 Aug 1522	

⁸ On 5 June 1517 Wingfield was in Brussels. The next mention of him comes 18 August by which time he had reached his family home, Wenham Hall, in Suffolk. G.J.Undreiner, 'Robert Wingfield: erster ständiger englischer gesandter am deutschen hofe', Ph.D, (Freiburg, 1932), P.125,.

⁹ E.A.J Le Glay, *Annalectes Historique*, (Lille, 1838).

¹⁰ J.Wegg, *Richard Pace, a Tudor Diplomatist*, (London, 1932), p.116.

¹¹ Worcester was joined in this mission by Tunstall, already present in the Low Countries.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E6 Low Countries Germany	Cuthbert Tunstall	Special	com 1 Sept 1520 ¹³	Antwerp 24 April 1521	Galba B I, fo.200, L&P, III i nos.892, 969.
E7 Low Countries Germany	Richard Wingfield	Special	Brussels 13 May 1521	congé 10 Jan 1522	SP1/22, fos.29-38, L&P, III i no.1270.
E8 Low Countries	Thomas Docwra Thomas Boleyn	Special Special	Bruges 20 Oct 1521 Bruges 20 Oct 1521	Oudenarde 17 Nov 1521 Oudenarde 17 Nov 1521	Vit B XX, fos.24-52, L&P, III ii, no.1694.
E9 Low Countries	Robert Wingfield	Special	Calais 29 Jan 1522	Calais 26 May 1522	sugg.Galba B VII fos.4-6, L&P, III ii, nos.2042-2043.
E10 Low Countries	Richard Wingfield	Special	Calais 3/4 May 1522	Calais 26 May 1522	Galba B VII fos.295-296, L&P, III ii, no.2246
E11 Spain	Thomas Boleyn Richard Sampson	Special Resident	ch 25 Sept 1522 ¹⁴ ch 25 Sept 1522	congé 6 May 1523 congé 22 Jan 1526 ¹⁵	Vesp.C II, fos. 14-24, L&P, III ii, nos.2481, 2567.

¹² Spinelly was in fact with Charles' court from 1509 till his death in 1522. However, I have divided the embassy into three sections related to the changing status of the Habsburg prince and the location of his court, qv the Low Countries and Spain.

¹³ Bell, *Handlist*, p.42, lists this embassy as beginning on 1 September 1519. Sturge, *op.cit.*, p.356, makes it clear that Tunstall did not undertake a mission to Germany in 1519.

¹⁴ In a letter to the cardinal of 23 July 1523 Sampson mentioned that his diets for the current embassy had been paid from 1 September 1522, L&P, III ii, no.3157.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E12 Spain	Richard Jerningham	Special	com 19 May 1523	congé mid-Apr 1524	Vesp. C II fos. 136-137 <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no. 3036.
E13 The Duke of Bourbon's army	Richard Pace	Special	Maines 28 May 1524	Trent 1 February 1525 ¹⁶	<i>St.P.</i> , VI, p. 288, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, no. 374.
E14 Spain	Cuthbert Tunstall Richard Wingfield	Special Special	com 26 March 1525 com 26 March 1525	congé 22 Jan 1526 died 22 July 1525	Add. MS, 48,085 135-195, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, no. 1212
E15 Spain	Edward Lee	Resident	London 16 Nov 1525 ¹⁷	ch 21 Oct 1529	Cambridge MS, EE IV 27, no. 4, fos. 1-3, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, no. 1798.
E16 Spain	Girolamo Ghinucci	Resident ¹⁸	25 Nov 1526 via Poissy	5 Oct 1529 ¹⁹	sugg. Cal D X, fos. 284-292, <i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no. 2705.

¹⁵ Sampson returned to England with Tunstall. *En route* they had an audience with the French king at Madrid 28 January, *L&P*, IV i, no. 1932.

¹⁶ On this date Pace received instructions dated 16 January 1525, ordering him to Venice, *L&P*, IV i, no. 1054.

¹⁷ On the 17 November, the Venetian ambassador to England, Lorenzo Orio, informed the Doge that Lee had left London the day before, *CSPV*, III, p. 504.

¹⁸ Bell, *Handlist*, p. 45, lists this embassy as special, yet aside from the fact that Ghinucci spent almost three years at the Imperial court in Spain, the bishop's letter of credence to the pope in October 1529 states that he has been residing with the emperor. *L&P*, IV, iii, no. 5987.

¹⁹ The French ambassador, Morette, informed Francis on 17 November 1526 that Ghinucci was to leave from England for the Imperial court in four to six days time. *L&P*, IV ii, no. 2638. The date given for the conclusion of the embassy is that on which the bishop was given a letter of credence to represent Henry at the Papal court.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E17 Spain	Francis Poyntz	Special	Valladolid 2 July 1527 via Paris	Paris 22 Nov 1527	Cambridge MS, EE IV 27, no.12, L&P, IV ii, nos. 3143-5, 3179.
E18 Spain	Sylvester Darius	Special	Clermont 27 Apr 1528	Calais 6 Dec 1528	Sugg. Vesp. C IV, fos.253-254, L&P, IV ii,nos.4637, 4909.
E19 Bologna	Nicholas Carew Richard Sampson	Special Special	Greenwich 4 Oct 1529 Greenwich 4 Oct 1529	24 Feb 1530 ²⁰	Sugg.Knecht, pp.86-96, 101., L&P, IV iii, no.6069, app.nos.240, 253.
E20 Bologna	Thomas Boleyn John Stokesley	Special Special	cred 20 Jan 1530 cred 20 Jan 1530	23 March 1530 ²¹ 23 March 1530	SP1/56, fos.136-138, L&P, IV iii, no.6111.

²⁰ Bell, *Handlist*, p.46, states the ambassadors returned together. However, since Carew travelled back to England by sea while Sampson went overland he arrived back at court considerably earlier than his colleague on about 22 February, more than two months before the date given by Bell, CSPS, IV i, p.514, Chapuys to Charles, 23 April 1530.

²¹ Bell, *Handlist*, p.46, states that Boleyn and Lee were accredited to Charles until 3 August 1530, the date to which Boleyn continued to receive diets. In fact Charles left Bologna on 23 March, nine days after the envoys' arrival in the city. For Charles' departure see, Bradford, *The Correspondence of Charles V*, p.498. Jean Joachim de Passano, Francis' ambassador in England, notified the king of the English ambassadors entry into Bologna on 14 March, CSPS, IV i, p.486, Passano to Francis, 28 March 1530.

Shortly after the emperor's departure Boleyn and Lee crossed the Alps into France, from where the Earl of Wiltshire sent the king's almoner back to England, whilst himself remaining at the French court till late July. L&P, IV iii, no.6355, Boleyn to Henry, 24 April 1530, Lyons. Lee was back in London by the end of May, *ibid*, no.6411, James Clyffé to Bonner, 29 May 1530.

Stokesley remained in Bologna to gather support for the king's divorce, qv. Italy. On the 25th he wrote to Henry from St Germain, stating that he expected to reach Calais within three weeks, L&P, IV iii, no.6637.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E20 continued	Edward Lee	Special	cred 20 Jan 1530	23 March 1530	
E21 Low Countries Augsburg	Nicholas Harvey	Resident	early June 1530 ²²	congé 13 Feb 1531	sugg.SP1/57, fos.252-255, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.6511
E22 Low Countries	John Hackett	Resident	Calais 3 Feb 1531	13 Jan 1532 ²³	Rogers, <i>Hackett</i> , pp.298-302, <i>L&P</i> , V, nos.69, 99, 315.
E23 Low Countries Germany	Thomas Elyot	Resident	ins 7 Oct 1531	c.2 June 1532 ²⁴	Vitel B XXI fo.60, <i>L&P</i> , V, app. no.15.
E24 Germany, Italy	Thomas Cranmer	Resident	late Jan 1532 ²⁵	Lyons 9-10 Dec 1533	Strype, <i>op.cit.</i> pp.679-681 ²⁶ <i>L&P</i> , V, no.1290.

²² On 6 June 1530 Chapuys told Charles that Harvey had set out for the Imperial court on Whit Sunday, *CSPS*, p.586.

²³ Bell, *Handlist.*, p.48, states that Hackett was accredited to Charles until April 1532. However, the emperor left Brussels for the Diet of Ratisbon on the 17 January, Bradford, *op.cit.*, p.497, presumably accompanied by Thomas Elyot. Hackett was not re-accredited to the regent until 12 April, qv. the Low Countries.

²⁴ Chapuys informed Charles on 5 June that Elyot had been to visit two days earlier, *L&P*, V, no.1077.

²⁵ D.MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer, A Life*, (London, 1996), p.69-70.

²⁶ *Memorials of Thomas Cranmer*, ed.J.Strype, (2 vols., Oxford, 1840).

Thesis Ref.	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E25 Mantua, Spain	Nicholas Hawkins	Resident	cred 2 Oct 1532	died Jan 1534	sugg. Vitel. B XXI, fos. 77-78, L&P, V, nos. 1380-1381.
E26 Spain, Italy	Richard Pate	Resident	passport 15 Nov 1533	Valladolid 28 June 1537 ²⁷	Nero B VI, fos. 89-94, L&P, VIII, no. 1209.
E27 Spain	Thomas Wyatt	Resident	cred 2 March 1537	aug 17 June 1539	Nott, p. 312, L&P, XII, no. 637.
E28	John Dudley	Special	Paris 24 Oct 1537	London 23 Dec 1537	No instructions.
E29 Spain	Edmund Bonner Simon Heynes	Special Special	aug 6 April 1538 aug 6 April 1538	cred 23 July 1538 ²⁸ 31 August 1538	St. P., VIII, pp. 23-27, L&P, XIII i, no. 695.
E30 Spain	Philip Hobby	Special	ins 16 Oct 1538	c. 17 Dec 1538 ²⁹	Vitel. B XXI, fos. 168-176, L&P, XIII ii, no. 622.
E31 Spain	Richard Tate	Resident	aug 26 March 1539	aug 6 Feb 1540	St. P., VIII, pp. 193-194, L&P, XIV i, no. 746.

²⁷ Bartholomeo Guidiccione, papal nuncio to the Imperial court, informed an unknown correspondent that Pate left on this date, L&P, XII ii, no. 245.

²⁸ Bonner was accredited as Henry's resident to the French court on this date, whilst Heynes returned directly to England.

²⁹ On 23 December the king wrote to Wriothesley in the Low Countries informing him that Knyvett had reached the court on about the 17th. L&P, XIII ii, no. 1127.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E32	Low Countries Thomas Wyatt	Resident ³⁰	ins 15 Nov 1539	London 8 May 1540	Harl.282, fo.78, <i>L&P</i> , XIV ii, no.524.
E33	Low Countries Richard Pate	Resident	passport 9 April 1540	15 Dec 1540 ³¹	<i>St.P.</i> VIII, pp.344, 373 <i>L&P</i> , XV, nos. 662, 836.
E34	Ratisbon Germany Stephen Gardiner Henry Knyvett	Special Resident	aug 1 Nov 1540 aug 1 Nov 1540	aug 8 Oct 1541 aug 30 April 1542	Kaulek, <i>Marillac</i> , p.241, <i>L&P</i> , XVI, no.269.
E35	Spain Low Countries Edmund Bonner	Resident	aug 8 Feb 1542	recall 15 Dec 1543	<i>St.P.</i> , IX, pp.1-5, <i>L&P</i> , XVII, no.292.
E36	Spain Thomas Thirlby	Special	cred 1 July 1542	Plymouth 10 Oct 1542	<i>St.P.</i> , IX, p.68. <i>L&P</i> , XVII, no.447.
E37	Francis Bryan	Resident	aug 4 Oct 1543	aug 28 Dec 1543	CSPS, VI ii, p.248. sugg <i>L&P</i> , XVIII ii, no.305. ³²

³⁰ Bell, *Handlist*, p.49, lists this as a special embassy, however, Wyatt's instructions specify that he was sent to replace Tate.

³¹ The exact date of Pate's departure is not clear, although given that news of his flight was not generally known till the second week of January it seems likely that he left towards the end of December. See Kaulek, *Marillac*, p.257., (*L&P*, XVI, no.446), Montmorency to Marillac, 11 January 1541.

³² Bell, *Handlist*, p.50 lists Bryan's embassy as special and states that it concluded on 28 December 1544. Henry's letter of recall, *L&P*, XVIII ii no.418, describes Bryan as a resident ambassador. The embassy concluded 28 December 1543, augmentations, *L&P*, XIX i, no.368, p.241.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
E38 Low Countries	Nicholas Wotton	Resident	cred 24 Nov 1543	31 August 1545 ³³	Galba B XI fo.1, Germany L&P, XVIII ii no.420.
E39 Speyer	William Paget	Special	cred 18 May 1544	London 15 June 1544	St.P., IX p.682, sugg L&P, XIX i no. 619.
E40 Low Countries	Stephen Gardiner Edward Seymour	Special Special	Calais 23 Oct 1544 Calais 23 Oct 1544	Brussels 22 Nov 1544 Brussels 22 Nov 1544	sugg. St.P., X, p.147, L&P, XIX ii no.492.
E41 Low Countries	William Paget	Special	cred 20 Feb 1545	aug 12 April 1545	St.P., X, p.295, L&P, XX i, no.227.
E42 Bourbourg	Thomas Thirlby William Petre Edward Carne Stephen Vaughan Thomas Chamberlain	Special Special Special Special Special	8 May 1545 ³⁴ 8 May 1545 8 May 1545 8 May 1545 8 May 1545	15 July 1545 ³⁵ 15 July 1545 15 July 1545 15 July 1545 15 July 1545	sugg Galba B X, fos.145-320, L&P, XX i, no.1202.

³³ This was the date on which Charles wrote to Henry acknowledging Wotton's recall and Thirlby's appointment as the new English resident ambassador.

³⁴ Writing to Edward Carne, the king's resident in the Low Countries, on 28 April the council instructed him to tell the queen regent that would be leaving her court temporarily in order to take part in the commercial taking place at Bourbourg which were to begin on 8 May, L&P, XX I, no.594.

³⁵ This was the date on which Thirlby informed Paget that, 'our brawling here is near at an end.' *Ibid.*, no.1196.

Thesis.Ref _____ Ambassador(s) _____ Embassy _____ Commenced _____ Concluded _____ Instructions _____

E43 Low Countries Germany	Thomas Thirlby	Resident	Brussels 28 August 1545 ³⁶	c.16 July 1548 ³⁷	
E44 Low Countries	Stephen Gardiner	Special	com 23 Oct 1545	London 18-21 March 1546 ³⁸	<i>St.P.</i> X, p.639, <i>L&P</i> , XX ii, no.639.

³⁶ Bell, *Handlist*, p.52, states that Thirlby's residency began on 27 April 1545. However, Thirlby travelled to Bourbourg as a special envoy and when the talks were completed he returned to Calais to await further instructions before going on to Brussels at the end of August, *L&P*, XX ii, no.256

³⁷ Van der Delft informed Charles on 23 July 1548 that Thirlby had returned to court the previous week, *CSPS*, IX, p.279.

³⁸ On 18 March Cornelius Scepper informed Queen Mary that Gardiner had not yet returned to court, *L&P*, XXI i, no.416. On 21 March Gardiner attended a meeting of the Privy Council, *ibid*, no.432.

France

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F1	Thomas Docwra Nicholas West	Special Special	com 20 June 1510 com 20 June 1510	Paris 23 July 1510 ³⁹ Paris 23 July 1510	Rymet XIII, 276, (1104), <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.519. (47).
F2	John Yong	Special	ch 25 July 1511	Dover 30 Sept 1511	Le Clay, Negotiations, I, p.431 <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.850.
F3	Charles Somerset Thomas Docwra Nicholas West Thomas Howard II Thomas Howard III Thomas Grey Charles Brandon	Special Special Special Special Special Special Special	com 18 Aug 1514 com 18 Aug 1514 com 18 Aug 1514 com 23 Sept 1514 com 23 Sept 1514 com 23 Sept 1514 9 Oct 1514	Paris 14-15 Nov 1514 Paris 14-15 Nov 1514 Paris 14-15 Nov 1514 ⁴⁰ mid-Oct 1514 mid-Oct 1514 Clermont 28 Nov 1514 ⁴¹ Clermont 28 Nov 1514	Add.MS 30,600, fo.371, <i>L&P</i> , I ii, no.3226, (21). <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.3234, (33).

³⁹ It is unclear when this embassy ended. The last record concerning the mission is dated 23 July, the date on which Docwra and West witnessed Louis XIII's ratification of the renewed Anglo-French treaty by which the king recognized his obligation to pay Henry 745,000 crowns. *L&P*, I i, no.538.

⁴⁰ *L&P*, I ii, no.3438, Letter of commendation from Suffolk to Wolsey on the departure of Worcester, West and Docwra, 14 November 1514.

⁴¹ Bell, *Handlist.*, p.66, gives the impression that Grey left with Surrey and Norfolk in mid-October. However, it is quite clear that the Marquis remained behind with Suffolk, Worcester, West and Docwra, taking his leave from Louis at the same time as the Duke. *L&P*, I ii, no.3485.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F4	Charles Brandon Nicholas West Richard Wingfield	Special Special Special	cred 14 Jan 1515 cred 14 Jan 1515 cred 14 Jan 1515	Dover 20 May 1515 Dover 8 May 1515 Calais mid-Feb 1515	Galba B III, fo.227, <i>L&P</i> , II i, no.24.
F5	William Sydney	Special	May 1515 ⁴²	Lyons 23 July 1515	SP1 10, fos.174-176, <i>L&P</i> , II i, no.468.
F6	Richard Wingfield	Special	Calais 16 Aug 1515	Calais 27 Sept 1515 ⁴³	Cal. D VI, fo.238 <i>L&P</i> , II, i, no.827.
F7	Charles Somerset Nicholas West Thomas Docwra Nicholas Vaux	Special Special Special Special	com 9 Nov 1518 com 9 Nov 1518 com 9 Nov 1518 com 9 Nov 1518	Tournai 12 Feb 1519 Tournai 12 Feb 1519 Tournai 12 Feb 1519 Tournai 12 Feb 1519	Rymer, XIII, 656, <i>L&P</i> , II, ii, no.4564.

⁴² Sidney was an unaccredited member of Suffolk's embassy and may well have remained in France as a newly accredited ambassador after the Duke's departure. *L&P*, II i, nos.296, 331, Suffolk and Wingfield to Wolsey, 3 and 17 April 1515.

⁴³ Although Wingfield received instructions for this embassy no evidence that he actually travelled to France remains. Two letters written by Wingfield to Wolsey from Calais on the above dates, (*L&P*, II i, nos. 815, 953), do at least provide earliest and latest times of departure and return for this elusive mission.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F8	Thomas Boleyn	Resident	ch 19 Nov 1518 ⁴⁴	congé 8 March 1520	Cal D VII, fos.88, 100, 112, L&P, III i, nos.70, 121, 210.
F9	Richard Wingfield	Resident	ch 31 Jan 1520	ch 20 Aug 1520 ⁴⁵	SP1/19, fos.200-210, L&P, III i, no.629.
F10	Richard Jerningham	Resident	St.Germaine 1 Aug 1520	congé 14 Feb 1521	SP1/21, fos.20-27, L&P, III i, no.936.
F11	Nicholas Carew	Special	Calais 15 Dec 1520 ⁴⁶	early Feb 1521 ⁴⁷	sugg Cal D VII, fos.1-5 L&P, III i no.1126.
F12	William Fitzwilliam	Resident	ch.10 Jan 1521	St.Germaine c.31 Jan 1522	SP1/21, fos.193,205-6, L&P, III i, nos.1152, 1161.

⁴⁴ Bell, *Handlist*, p.68, states that Boleyn's residency began in mid-January 1519. However, in L&P, III i, no.57), Boleyn to Wolsey, 2 February 1519, the ambassador informed the cardinal that on 17 February the first 100 days of his diets would have been spent, dating the outset of his mission from the 19 November 1518.

⁴⁵ Although the entry in L&P, III ii, p.1543, does not specify a date for the conclusion of Wingfield's diets, it is listed in E36/216, fo.216v.

⁴⁶ The *Gabriel* transported Carew to Calais on this date, L&P, IV iii, p.3105.

⁴⁷ In his first letter from France on the 6 February, William Fitzwilliam described his reception and mentioned his meeting with Richard Jerningham at the French court, L&P, III I, no.1157. Had Carew still been at court Fitzwilliam would have been unlikely to omit his name from the report.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F13	Richard Jerningham	Special	Dover 11 May 1521	c. 10 Oct. 1521 ⁴⁸	Cal. D VIII, fos. 5-9, L&P, III i, no. 1283.
F14	Charles Somerset Nicholas West	Special Special	cred 20 Oct 1521 cred 20 Oct 1521	Arriens 22 Nov 1521 Arriens 22 Nov 1521	Cal. D VIII, fos. 123-124 L&P, III ii, no. 1696.
F15	Thomas Cheyne	Resident	Calais 14 Jan 1522 ⁴⁹	Lyons 28 May 1522	Cal. D VIII, fos. 201-209. L&P, II ii, no. 1991.
F16	John Taylor William Fitzwilliam	Resident Special	St. Albans 15 Oct 1525 St. Albans 15 Oct 1525	Dover 26 Nov 1526 Lyons 20 Jan 1526	Cal. D IX fos. 187-192, L&P, IV i, no. 1705.
F17	Thomas Cheyne	Resident	cred 22 March 1526	Angoulême 27 May 1526	Cal. D IX, fo. 164-170, L&P, IV i, no. 2038.
F18	John Clerk	Resident ⁵⁰	London 18 July 1526	Arriens 19 Aug 1527	Cal. D IX, fos. 237-244, L&P, IV ii, no. 2416.

⁴⁸ Pace wrote to Wolsey on the 13 October expressing the king's concern that the cardinal might be ill as he had had no news from him since Jerningham's return, L&P, III ii, no. 1673. Given the usual daily correspondence between king and cardinal, it seems unlikely the absence of Wolsey's letters would have extended beyond two or three days at most.

⁴⁹ The *Mighell* transported Cheyne to Calais on this date, L&P, IV iii, p. 3107.

⁵⁰ Bell, *Handlist*, p. 71, lists this embassy as special. However, Clerk's instructions make it clear that he was sent to the French court as a direct replacement for John Taylor, the current resident envoy to Francis.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F19	William Fitzwilliam	Special	Poissy 21 Dec 1526	congé 12 Jan 1527	SP1/47, fo.26, L&P, IV i, no.2728.
F20	Thomas Boleyn Anthony Browne	Special Special	com 17 May 1527 com 17 May 1527	congé c.23 June 1527 congé c.13 Nov 1527	Add.MS, 5,712, fo.70, L&P, IV ii, no.3124.
F21	Thomas Wolsey	Special	com 18 June 1527	Dover 24 Sept 1527 ⁵¹	Rymer XIV, 198, L&P, IV ii, no.3186.
F22*	Robert Jerningham	Special	29 August 1527 ⁵²	died 26 April 1528	sugg <i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.1, L&P, IV ii, no.3240.
F23	Arthur Plantagenet John Taylor Nicholas Carew Thomas Wriothesley	Special Resident Special Special	com 22 Oct 1527 com 22 Oct 1527 com 22 Oct 1527 com 22 Oct 1527	congé c.13 Nov 1527 Calais 3 June 1529 congé c.13 Nov 1527 congé c.13 Nov 1527	Add.MS, 5,712 fo.30, L&P, IV ii, no.3508.
F24	John Wallop	Special	Poissy 27 Feb 1528	congé c.26 April 1528	SP1/50, fos.6-17, L&P, IV ii, no.3986.

⁵¹ *Chronicle of Calais*. p.41.

⁵² Jerningham accompanied Wolsey on his mammoth embassy to France, and was dispatched by the cardinal to the French army in Italy led by Odet de Foix, sr de Lautrec, *L&P*, IV ii, no.3240.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F25	John Clerk	Special	Paris 2 April 1528	Dover 30 Sept 1528 ⁵³	sugg Cal E II fo.148, <i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no.4155.
F26	Francis Bryan	Special	ins 21 Aug 1528	c.24 Sept 1528 ⁵⁴	SP1/50, fos.6-17, <i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no.4656
F27	Charles Brandon William Fitzwilliam	Special Special	ch 12 May 1529 ch 18 May 1529	Calais 29 June 1529 ⁵⁵ Calais 29 June 1529	sugg Cal D IX, fos.56-60, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.5675.
F28	Francis Bryan	Resident	ch 16 July 1529	1 Dec 1529	sugg Titus B I, fo.286, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.5802.

⁵³ Bell, *Handlist*, p.73, lists the embassy as concluding on 4 November 1528, however, Clerk left Paris with Campeggio, and escorted the legate to England where they arrived on the 29 or 30 September. *L&P*, IV ii, no.4803, Campeggio to Wolsey, 1 October 1528.

⁵⁴ Clerk wrote to Wolsey on the 24 September from Montreuil informing the cardinal that Bryan had gone ahead to prepare Campeggio welcome in England, *L&P*, IV ii, no.4767.

⁵⁵ *Chronicle of Calais*, p.41.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F29	George Boleyn John Stokesley	Resident ⁵⁶ Resident	8 Oct 1529 8 Oct 1529	14-16 Feb 1530 ⁵⁷ c.20-30 Jan 1530 ⁵⁸	<i>St.P.</i> , VI, p.219, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.6073.
F30	Francis Bryan	Special	cred 21 Feb 1530	by 2 Sept 1530 ⁵⁹	sugg Le Grand, pp.431,433, 437, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, nos.6227, 6257-8.
F31	John Welsborne	Resident	ch 14 March 1530	ch 19 Dec 1530	No instructions.
F32	Edward Foxe	Special	ch 24 May 1530	London 20 July 1530	

⁵⁶ Bell, *Handlist*, p.74 lists both men as special envoys. However, their instructions printed *in extenso* in *St.P.*, VI, p.219, specify that they were sent to reside at the French court.

⁵⁷ In his description of this embassy Bell, *Handlist*, states that Boleyn passed through France to discharge his primary mission in Venice. This is incorrect. In a letter to Thomas Boleyn dated 16 January 1530 Stokesley informed him that his son had left Paris the previous day to meet the French King ten miles outside Troyes, *L&P*, IV iii, no.6147. In a letter to the Emperor dated 22 February 1530, Chapuys remarked that George Boleyn had returned to court six to eight days before, *CSPS*, IV i, p.467. Aside from the fact that Boleyn was accredited as resident to the French king, he simply would not have had the opportunity to travel to Venice and back in the time available.

⁵⁸ Stokesley was included in the letter of credence issued to Thomas Boleyn and Edward Lee on 20 January 1530 and presumably joined them *en route* to Bologna.

⁵⁹ Bell, *Handlist*, p.74, states this embassy finished on the 1 April 1530. However Bryan was still definitely in France on 23 July 1530, *L&P*, IV iii, no.6526. He had probably returned to England by 2 September 1530, the date on which Henry wrote to Montmorency to thank him for his treatment of the ambassador, *ibid*, no.6603.

⁶⁰ J.Le Grand, *Histoire du divorce de Henri VIII*, (3 vols., Paris, 1688).

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F33*	Thomas Boleyn	Special	Lyons 24 Apr 1530 ⁶¹	ch 3 August 1530	
F34	Francis Bryan	Resident	ch 13 Oct 1530	20 Dec 1531 ⁶²	sugg <i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.211, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.6733.
F35	Edward Foxe	Special	London 4 May 1531 ⁶³	London 23 Dec 1531	sugg <i>CSPS</i> , IV ii, pp.152-7, <i>L&P</i> , V, nos.238, 251
F36	Stephen Gardiner	Resident ⁶⁴	London 29 Dec 1531	London 6 March 1532	Pocock, II, pp.157-165, <i>L&P</i> , V, no.711.
F37	John Wallop	Resident	March 1532 ⁶⁵	reward 27 Feb 1537 ⁶⁶	

⁶¹ He undertook this embassy directly after completely his mission to the Emperor at Bologna.

⁶² Francesco Capello, Venetian ambassador to England, informed the signory on 2 January 1532 that Bryan and Foxe, see F32, had returned to court on 23 December, *CSPV*, IV, p.311.

⁶³ In his letter to the emperor of the 14 May, Chapuys noted that Foxe had left for the French court ten days earlier. *L&P* V, no.238.

⁶⁴ Although Bell, *Handlist*, p.76, classifies this embassy as special, Gardiner's instructions make it clear that he had been sent to France as resident ambassador. BL, Add.MS 25,114, fo.71, (*L&P*, V, no.791), Henry to Gardiner, 9 Feb 1532.

⁶⁵ Bell, *Handlist*, p.73, lists Wallop's embassy as starting in September 1532, this is certainly far too late. *CAF*, IX, p.93, places Wallop's arrival in France as April 1532, an approximation supported by Chapuys who informed the emperor in March that Henry was only awaiting the return of Gardiner before dispatching Wallop to the French court. *L&P*, VI, no.850, Chapuys to Charles, 6 March 1532. Furthermore, if Wallop did not arrive in France until September 1532, it would have meant that Henry had no diplomatic contact with Francis for over six months, a highly improbable

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F38	Nicholas Carew	Special	2 Oct 1532 ⁶⁷	Compiègne 24 Nov 1532 ⁶⁸	sugg <i>CSPS</i> , IV ii, pp.523-30, <i>L&P</i> , V, no.1377.
F39	George Boleyn	Special	ch.13 March 1533	London 7 April 1533 ⁶⁹	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.427. <i>L&P</i> , VI, no.230.
F40	Thomas Howard George Boleyn William Paulet	Special Special Special	26 May 1533 ⁷⁰ 26 May 1533 26 May 1533	1 Sept 1533 ⁷¹ 1 Sept 1533 1 Sept 1533	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.473 <i>L&P</i> , VI, no.641.

lacunae at a time when the English king was so dependent on French support.

⁶⁶ *CAF*, III, p.282, no.8920.

⁶⁷ Chapuys informed Charles on 1 October 1532 that Carew was leaving for France the following day. *L&P*, V, no.1377.

⁶⁸ *CAF*, VIII, p.480.

⁶⁹ Bell, *Handlist*, p.75, although listing this embassy separately, states that Boleyn did not return before joining Norfolk's mission to Francis and Clement at Marseilles the following month. However, Chapuys informed Charles on 15 April 1533 that, 'Boleyn returned from his embassy to France eight days ago.' *L&P*, V, no.230.

⁷⁰ Chapuys reported to the Emperor on 26 May 1533 that in response to the arrival of a French gentleman in London, Norfolk had hastened his departure and dislodged with his train that morning. I have assumed that his 'train' included the other ambassadors accredited to the mission. *L&P*, VI, no.541.

⁷¹ Chapuys informed Charles on 3 September 1533 that the ambassadors had returned from France two days ago. *L&P*, VI, no.1069.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F40 continued	Anthony Browne Francis Bryan	Special Special	26 May 1533 26 May 1533	1 Sept 1533 Marseilles 13 Nov 1533	
F41	Stephen Gardiner	Special	3 Sept 1533 ⁷²	Late Nov 1533 ⁷³	sugg. SPI/79, fo.9, <i>L&P</i> , VI, no.1071.
F42	George Boleyn William Fitzwilliam	Special Special	Dover 16 April 1534 Dover 16 April 1534	London 3-4 May 1534 London 3-4 May 1534	Nero B III, fos.118-120, <i>L&P</i> , VII i, no.470.
F43	George Boleyn	Special	9 July 1534 ⁷⁴	St Germaine 25 July 1534 ⁷⁵	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.565, <i>L&P</i> , VII ii, no.958.
F44	Simon Heynes Christopher Mont	Special Special	ch 1 August 1535 ch 1 August 1535	Paris 4 Nov 1535 Joinville 7 Sept 1535 ⁷⁶	<i>Cal. E I</i> , fo.35, <i>L&P</i> , IX, no.180.

⁷² In the same letter in which Chapuys told Charles about the return of Norfolk from France he announced Gardiner's departure for the French court. *Ibid.*

⁷³ Eleanor, Lady Rutland, wrote to William Paston on the 17 November remarking that she still had no news of the Bishop of Winchester's return, which suggests that it was probably imminent. *L&P*, VI, no.1438.

⁷⁴ Chapuys informed Charles on 15 July 1534 that Boleyn had set out from court six days ago. *L&P*, VII ii, no. 980.

⁷⁵ *CAF*, VIII, p.486.

⁷⁶ Mont separated from Heynes in order to meet with Philip Melancthon at Wittenburg and hopefully persuade him to come to England,

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F45	Stephen Gardiner	Resident	aug 1 Oct 1535	aug 28 Sept 1538	Add.MS, 25,114, fos.96-102, <i>L&P</i> , IX, no.443.
F46	Francis Bryan	Special	London 2 Nov 1535	28 Jan 1536 ⁷⁷	sugg Add.MS, 8,715, fo.156 <i>L&P</i> , IX, no. 947.
F47	Henry Knyvett	Special	cred 30 July 1537	Melun 4 Aug 1537	Add.MS, 25,114, fo.269, <i>L&P</i> , XII i, no.368.
F48	Francis Bryan Thomas Thirlby	Resident ⁷⁸ Resident	aug 6 April 1538 aug 6 April 1538	Portsmouth 11-12 Aug 1538 Dover 26 Sept 1538 ⁷⁹	Harl.7,571, fo.35, Add MS. 25,114, fo.297 <i>L&P</i> , XIII i, nos.900, 917.

qv Germany.

⁷⁷ Chapuys informed Charles on 29 January 1536 that Bryan had returned from France the previous day. *L&P*, X, no.199.

⁷⁸ Bell, *Handlist*, p.76, states that both men were accredited as special envoys.. However, *L&P*, XIII ii, no.1280, payments from augmentations, repeatedly describe Bryan and Thirlby as a the king's resident ambassadors at the French court..

⁷⁹ Bell, *Handlist*, p.76, states that Bryan and Thirlby returned together around 15 August. In fact the two envoys separated in France and Thirlby accompanied Gardiner back to England, late in September, *L&P*, XIII ii, no.442.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F49	Edmund Bonner	Resident	cred 24 July 1538	reward 1 March 1540 ⁸⁰	Add MS 18,738, fo.15, <i>L&P</i> , XIII i, no.1440.
F50	Anthony Browne	Special	Dover 26 Sept 1538	Compiègne 21 Oct 1538 ⁸¹	
F51	John Wallop	Resident	2 Feb 1540 ⁸²	London 1 March 1541	<i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.244, <i>L&P</i> , XV, no.186.
F52	Thomas Howard	Special	Dover 3 Feb 1540	London 1 March 1540 ⁸³	<i>St.P.</i> VIII, p.245, <i>L&P</i> , XV, no.145.
F53*	Edward Came	Special	Paris 4 July 1540	congé.6 Aug 1540	<i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.272, <i>L&P</i> , XV, no.828.
F54	William Howard	Resident	cred 18 Jan 1541	Paris 21 Nov 1541	<i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.511, <i>L&P</i> , XVI, no.464.

⁸⁰ *CAF*, IV, p.88, no.11,403.

⁸¹ Traveling with Bonner, Browne linked up with Henry's envoys to the Low Countries, Wriothesley, Came and Vaughan at Compiègne wither they had followed the Regent for her interview with the French king. Bronwe had an audience with Mary on 17 October 1538, *L&P*, XIII ii, no.635.

⁸² *L&P*, XV, no.186. Acknowledgement from Wallop to Cromwell of receipt of his instructions to depart immediately for France, 9 February 1540.

⁸³ Norfolk arrived back the day before yesterday, *L&P*, no.289, Marillac to Francis, 3 March 1540.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
F55	William Paget	Resident	cred 24 Sept 1541	15-22 April 1543 ⁸⁴	<i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.611, <i>L&P</i> , XVI, no.1198.
F56	John Dudley William Paget Nicholas Wotton	Special Special Special	ins 17 April 1546 ins 17 April 1546 ins 27 April 1546	c.10 June 1546 9 June 1546 ⁸⁵ by 14 June 1546 ⁸⁶	<i>St.P.</i> , XI, p.102, <i>L&P</i> , XXI i, no.610.
F57	Thomas Cheyne	Special	cred 16 June 1546	18 July 1546 ⁸⁷	Holinshed, pp.973, 974, <i>L&P</i> , XXI i, nos.1071, 1094.
F58	John Dudley Cuthbert Tunstall Henry Knyvett Nicholas Wotton	Special Special Special Resident	passport 2 July 1546 passport 2 July 1546 passport 2 July 1546 passport 2 July 1546	13 Aug 1546 c.20 Aug 1546 ⁸⁸ died c.3-10 Aug 1546 ⁸⁹ late Aug 1549	SP1/221, fos.57-58, <i>L&P</i> , XXI i, nos.1177.

⁸⁴ On the 14 April Paget wrote from Boulogne where he remained the *guest* of the town's governor, Oudart de Bies, *L&P* XVIII I, no.403. On the 23 April he was admitted to the privy council as one of the king's principal secretaries, *ibid*, no.452.

⁸⁵ On 10 June van der Delft informed Charles of Paget's return the previous evening, *L&P*, XXI i, no.1033.

⁸⁶ Wotton attended Privy Council meetings on these dates, *L&P*, XXI i nos.684, 1057.

⁸⁷ De Selve informed Francis of Cheyne's return on this date, *L&P*, XXI i, no.1303.

⁸⁸ Sturge, p.251.

⁸⁹ Tunstall and Lisle reported that Knyvett was suffering from a fever on 3 August, *L&P*, XXI i, no.1405.

Germany

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
G1 Frankfurt Imperial elections	Richard Pace	Special	cred 11 May 1519	Penshurst 11 Aug 1519	Vitel. B XX fo. 111, <i>L&P</i> , III i nos. 239, 241.
G2 Hanse	William Knight Richard Sampson Thomas More John Wiltshire	Special Special Special Special	com 10 June 1520 com 10 June 1520 com 10 June 1520 com 10 June 1520	c. 14 Aug 1520 ⁹⁰ c. 14 Aug 1520 c. 14 Aug 1520 c. 14 Aug 1520	sugg Galba B VII, fo. 118. <i>L&P</i> , III i, no. 979.
G3 Ferdinand at Nurnburg	Henry Parker William Hussey Edward Lee	Special Special Special	ins 26 Aug 1523 ins 26 Aug 1523 ins 26 Aug 1523	Feb 1524 ⁹¹ Feb 1524 Feb 1524	Strype's Memorials I, p. 42, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no. 3275.
G4 Hamburg*	Henry Standish John Baker	Special Special	com 27 Feb 1524 com 27 Feb 1524	n.d. n.d.	Rymer XIV, 12 <i>L&P</i> , IV I, no. 125.

⁹⁰ T.H.Lloyd, *England and the German Hanse, 1157-1611: A Study of their Trade and Commercial Diplomacy*, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 255-256.

⁹¹ There is no reference to indicate when this embassy ended. The latest point possible for its conclusion is early February 1524 since the signature of Thomas Wriothesley, the herald accompanying the mission, is to be found on legal documents concerning a dispute between the Earl and Countess of Oxford dated the 14 February 1524, *L&P*, IV i, no. 106 (7).

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
G5	John Wallop	Special	Antwerp 14 Sept 1526	n.d. ⁹²	Sugg. Vit.B XXI, fos.10-11, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, 2530.
G6	Saxony, Hesse	William Paget Special	late Aug 1531 ⁹³	London 8 Feb 1532 ⁹⁴	Gammon, pp.22-25. ⁹⁵
G7	Hesse, Saxony Lunberg, Hainault Bavaria, Brunswick	William Paget Special	c.16 Feb 1532 ⁹⁶	2 Nov 1532 ⁹⁷	Vitel.B XXI, fos.152-155, <i>L&P</i> , Add. 1, no.767.

⁹² The last reference for this mission is a letter from Wallop to Wolsey written at Vienna dated 11 July 1527, *L&P*, IV ii, no.3256. However, there is no indication from it that the embassy was near to its conclusion.

⁹³ In an undated letter Henry wrote to Edward Foxe and Francis Bryan, his ambassadors in France mentioning that Paget had been dispatched with the French envoy, Gervase Wain, on a mission to Germany, *L&P*, V, no.548. *CAF*, IX, p.8, states that Wain's embassy began on the 31 August.

⁹⁴ Paget travelled through France on his return to England. On the 9 February Henry wrote to Gardiner advising him that Paget had delivered his letters the previous day, *I&P*, V, no.791.

⁹⁵ S.R.Gammon, *Statesman and Schemer: William First Lord Paget - Tudor Minister*, (Newton Abbot, 1973).

⁹⁶ Henry wrote to Gardiner on this date instructing him to ask Francis that he appoint someone of lesser status than Guillaume du Bellay with whom Paget could co-operate on an equal basis, *L&P*, V, no.807.

⁹⁷ Chapuys informed Charles on the 10 November that Paget had returned eight days earlier, *L&P*, VI, no.1531.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
G8 Bavaria	Christopher Mont	Special Resident agent	Nuremburg 22 Aug 1533 ⁹⁸ 1534	n.d. 1547	SP1/78, fos.192-193, Sugg L&P, VI, nos.1040
G9 Saxony	Stephen Vaughan	Special	Calais 28 July 1533	Antwerp 25 Oct 1533	Sugg St.P. VII, p.503, SP1/ L&P, VI, 1079, 1082.
G10 Lunburg, Poland, Mecklenburg, Prussia	William Paget	Special	ch 31 January 1534	Hamburg 25 May 1534 ⁹⁹	Add.MS, 29,547, fo.1, L&P, VII, no.148.
G11 Saxony, Hesse Cologne, Treves, Bavaria	Nicholas Heath	Special	ch 31 Jan 1534 ¹⁰⁰	n.d. ¹⁰¹	Harl.6,148, fo.81, SP1/82, fos.29-39, L&P, VII, nos.19, 21.

⁹⁸ Mont's diplomatic status throughout Henry's reign is by no means clear. Between 1533 and 1542 he performed a number of special missions to various German princes and religious diets. In addition to these embassies the German supplied Cromwell with regular news and offered assistance to other English ambassadors accredited to German courts. In 1534 he was awarded an annuity of £20 for life, L&P, VII, no.922 (25), which for lack of any more specific documentation I have decided to use as the starting point for his service as a resident English diplomatic agent. For a basic narrative of Mont's diplomatic career see, E.Hilderbrandt, 'Christopher Mont, Anglo-German diplomat', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, (1984), 281-292.

⁹⁹ On this date Thomas Legh reported that he was sending Paget home with news of his mission, L&P, VII i. no.710.

¹⁰⁰ Heath was supposed to meet up with Mont in Nuremburg, but the time he arrived in Bavaria the German had left for Hesse. L&P, IX, no.395.

¹⁰¹ Heath's last letter was dated from Nuremburg, the 31 March 1534, L&P, VII I, no.395.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
G12 Lubeck, Hamburg	Thomas Legh	Special	ch 31 Jan 1534 ¹⁰²	early July 1534	sugg Galba B X, fo.44, L&P, VII, no.167.
G13 Wittenburg	Christopher Mont	Special	Joinville 7 Sept 1535	mid-Dec1535 ¹⁰³	St.P., VII, p.629, sugg L&P, no.299.
G14	Edward Foxe Nicholas Heath	Special Special	cred 31 Aug 1535 cred 31 Aug 1535	4 July 1536 ¹⁰⁴ 4 July 1536	SP1/96, fos.12-31, L&P, IX, no.213.
G15 Saxony, Hesse	Christopher Mont	Special	cred 5 Feb 1538	London c.16 May 1538	SP1/129 fos.140-155, L&P, XIII i no.367.
G16 Saxony, Hesse	Christopher Mont Thomas Paynell	Special Special	24 Jan 1539 ¹⁰⁵ 24 Jan 1539	London 23 April 1539 London 23 April 1539	SP1/102, fos.105-107, L&P, XIV i, no.103.

¹⁰² Although the warrant for Legh's diets specify the destination of his embassy as Denmark, the surviving evidence would suggest his mission was primarily concerned with Lubeck and Hamburg. On 3 April he wrote from Lubeck, L&P, VII I, no.433, seven weeks later on 25 May he was in Hamburg where he was to remain until the conclusion of the embassy towards the end of June. *Ibid*, nos. 710, 871.

¹⁰³ In a letter from Joinville on the 7 September Mont estimated that in order to travel to Wittenburg, hold talks with Philip Melancthon and return to England, he would need diets for a further three months, L&P, IX, no.300.

¹⁰⁴ Chapuys informed Charles on 14 July 1536 that Foxe had returned ten days ago. L&P, XI, no.80.

¹⁰⁵ Castillon informed Montmorency on 26 January 1539 that Henry had sent a doctor, presumably Mont, the previous day to the diet in Germany. L&P, XIV i, no.144.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions	
G17	Cleves, Saxony	Nicholas Wotton Richard Berde	Special Special	ch 11 March 1539 ch 11 March 1539 ¹⁰⁶	Rochester 1 Jan 1540 late Aug 1539 ¹⁰⁶	Harl.296, fo.65. <i>L&P</i> , XIV i, no.489.
G18	Saxony, Hesse	Christopher Mont	Special	London 19 Aug 1539	ch 12 Oct 1539	Sugg.Harl.6,989, fo.41, <i>L&P</i> , XIV ii, no.63.
G19	Cleves	Nicholas Wotton	Resident	cred 25 Jan 1540	mid-July 1541 ¹⁰⁷	sugg. <i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.269, <i>L&P</i> , XV, no.242.
G20		John Clerk	Special	cred 22 June 1540	died 3 Jan 1541	
G21	Frankfurt, Cleves, Diet of Hagenau	Christopher Mont ¹⁰⁸	Special	by 21 March 140 ¹⁰⁹	late Aug 1540 ¹¹⁰	<i>Vitel.</i> B XXI, fo.133,

¹⁰⁶ Berde returned briefly to England in June/July to escort Holbein to Cleves. *L&P*, XIV ii, no.400.

¹⁰⁷ Wotton wrote from Cleves on the 8 July acknowledging Henry's letter of recall, but explaining that he had to await the return of Duke William in order to get his passport, *L&P*, XVI, no.980.

¹⁰⁸ Bell, *Handlist*, p.131, states that Thomas Paynell joined Mont on this embassy. However, none of the letters sent by Mont during this embassy include Paynell's name, nor did the German make any mention of him in his correspondence. See *L&P*, XV, nos.419, 666, 720, 797.

¹⁰⁹ Mont wrote to Cromwell from Frankfurt on this date which is the first document relating to the mission, *L&P*, XV, no.980.

¹¹⁰ The Diet of Hagenau finished towards the end of July, *L&P*, XV, no.814.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
G22 Hess	Walter Bucler	Special agent	aug 26 Jan 1545 ¹¹¹	London Dec 1545 ¹¹²	<i>St.P.</i> , X, p.278, <i>L&P.</i> , XXI, no.91/

¹¹¹ Bell, *Handlist*, p.131, incorrectly lists this embassy as beginning on 24 April 1546.

¹¹² In a letter of 19 December Philip, Landgrave of Hesse wrote to Henry making the assumption that Bucler had already reached the English court. *L&P.*, XX ii, no.992.

Italy

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
It1	John Russell	Special	com 2 Aug 1523	London 20 Sept 1523 ¹¹³	<i>St.P.</i> VI, p.163, <i>L&P</i> , II ii, no.3217
It2	John Russell	Special	Malines 15 Oct 1523	ch 5 Nov 1525	sugg Bradford, <i>Correspondence</i> , p.83, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.3399.
It3	John Stokesley	Special	23 March 1530 ¹¹⁴	Calais c.16 Oct 1530 ¹¹⁵	

¹¹³ Thomas More informed Wolsey of Russell's return on this date and of the king's satisfaction over the manner in which the envoy had performed his mission, *L&P*, III ii, 3346.

¹¹⁴ Stokesley remained in Bologna after the departure of his colleagues, Thomas Boleyn and Edward Lee, qv. The Emperor.

¹¹⁵ On the 25 September Stokesley wrote to Henry from St Germain, estimating that he would reach Calais within three weeks, *L&P*, IV iii, no.6637.

Low Countries

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
LC1	Thomas Spinelly	Resident agent/ambassador	22 April 1509 ¹¹⁶	Flushing 8 Sept 1517	Galba B III, fo.6, L&P, I i, no.355.
LC2	Edward Poynings Richard Wingfield	Special Special	ch 8 Jan 1513 ch 8 Jan 1513	16-23 May 1513 ¹¹⁷ ch 24 June 1513	Rymer, XIII, 344 L&P, I i, no.1524 (39).
LC3	Richard Wingfield William Knight	Special Special	com 19 Feb 1514 com 19 Feb 1514	ch 21 Nov 1514 Malines 10-15 May 1514 ¹¹⁸	Arrangement of marriage between Mary and Charles and discussions about troop movements in the forthcoming campaign against France.

¹¹⁶ In a letter dated 28 May 1509, Spinelly thanked the king for accepting his offer of continued service as an agent in the Low Countries, *St.P.* IV, pp.19-20, (*L&P*, I i, no.83). I have thus dated his residency from the outset of the reign. Quite when Spinelly was promoted from agent to ambassador is difficult to say. He was given the rank of ambassador in the commission of 7 May 1515, see LC5. Whether he retained it after the conclusion of the special embassy is unclear. However, the Florentine was definitely a fully accredited resident envoy when he travelled to Spain with Charles in July 1517. See Sp3.

¹¹⁷ According to Wingfield, Poynings intended to take his leave of the Low Countries within the week. *L&P*, II i, no.1887, Richard Wingfield to Henry, 16 May 1513.

¹¹⁸ On 10 May 1514 a letter was sent from Malines signed by Wingfield, Knight and Spinelly, *L&P* I ii, no.2894. A further dispatch sent on 15 May 1514 only contained the signatures of the latter two envoys, *L&P* I ii, no.2906.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
LC4	Edward Poynings	Special	Tournai 12 Feb	n.d. ¹¹⁹	sugg SP1/10, fo.62, L&P, II i, no.149.
LC5	Edward Poynings Cuthbert Tunstall Richard Sampson William Knight Thomas More John Clifford	Special Special Special Special Special Special	com 7 May 1515 com 7 May 1515 ¹²³	Brussels 21 Sept 1515 Calais 17 Sept 1517 ¹²⁰ Calais 5 Feb 1516 Brussels 23 Feb 1516 recall 21 Oct 1515 ¹²²	Rymer XIII, 497, 121 L&P, II i, no.422. New commission given to Tunstall and Knight 1 Oct 1515 for a treaty of alliance with Charles. L&P, II i, no.976.
LC6	Edward Poynings	Special	com 21 Feb 1516	c.31 May 1516 ¹²⁴	Rymer, XIII, 545, L&P, II i, no.1574.

¹¹⁹ The only document dealing with this mission is Poynings' letter to Wolsey from Tournai written on the 12 February, announcing his imminent departure, L&P, II I, no.49.

¹²⁰ This extended special embassy was broken up with three brief visits home: c.2 October 1515 to 30 October 1515; 30 January to c.9 February 1516, and c.23 April to 19 May 1516. See Sturge, pp.35-38.

¹²¹ Spinelly was also included in this commission and it is possible that his promotion from agent to ambassador was effective from this date.

¹²² *The Complete Works of Sir Thomas More*, eds.E.Surtz and J.H.Hexter, (15 vols, Yale, 1963-1986), vol.IV, pp.573-575.

¹²³ As governor of the Merchant Adventurers Clifford was permanently resident in the Low Countries and thus presumably contributed to the talks as and when his colleagues required his assistance.

¹²⁴ On 4 June 1516 William Lord Mounjjoy informed Wolsey that Poynings had returned to Tournai and was now on his way back to England with articles concerning the city's garrison.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
LC7	Richard Wingfield	Special	Brussels 13 June 1516	Calais 7 Sept 1516 ¹²⁵	sugg Galba B VI, fos.67-72. <i>L&P</i> , II i, no.2006.
LC8	William Knight	Special	ins 30 Dec 1516	Brussels 5 March 1517 ¹²⁶	SP1 14, fos.163-169, <i>L&P</i> , II i, no.2713.
LC9	William Knight	Special	audience 21 March 1518	Early Dec 1518 ¹²⁷	SP1 16, fos.123-124 <i>L&P</i> , II ii, no.3907.
LC10	Robert Wingfield	Special	Calais 16 Aug 1522	Malmes 3 April 1523	SP1/25, fos.132-137, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.2455.
LC11	William Knight	Resident	Malmes 7 April 1523	Malmes 4 May 1525	SP1/25, fos.132-137, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.2455.
LC12	Robert Wingfield	Resident	Malmes 13 June 1525	Calais 25 May 1526 ¹²⁸	Galba B VII, fo.140, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, no.1301.

¹²⁵ Bell, *Handlist*, p. 173, states that Wingfield remained in the Low Countries until September 1517. However, *L&P*, II i, no.2322, Wingfield and Tunstall to Wolsey, 31 August 1516, states that Wingfield would be returning to Calais the following day.

¹²⁶ Knight arrived in the Low Countries with Worcester. His instructions stipulated that since Tunstall was to join the Earl in negotiating with Maximilian, Knight was to take his place as Henry's representative with Margaret.

¹²⁷ From the Low Countries Knight travelled to Austria on a mission to the emperor, he arrived there 28-30 December 1518. *L&P*, III i, no.24.

¹²⁸ Undreiner, *op.cit.*, p.118.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
LC13	John Hackett	Resident agent/ambassador ¹³⁰	22 May 1526	31 Jan 1531 ¹²⁹	
LC14	John Hackett William Knight John Tregonwell*	Resident Special Special	19 April 1532 19 April 1532 19 April 1532	died 27 Oct 1534 mid-June 1532 ¹³¹ mid-June 1532	Rogers, <i>Hackett</i> , pp.307-12, <i>L&P</i> , V, no.946.
LC15	John Hutton	Resident ¹³² agent	5 April 1537	died 5 Sept 1538	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.680, <i>L&P</i> , XIII, i, no.980.

¹²⁹ After a brief stay in Calais Hackett returned to the Low Countries, this time as Henry's ambassador to the emperor, *L&P*, V, no.100..

¹³⁰ It is not entirely clear when Hackett was promoted from the king's agent to his ambassador. Certainly when he took over from Wingfield in May 1526 it was as Henry's agent, Rogers, *op.cit.*, p. 13. Certainly by February 1528 he had received full accreditation as Henry's ambassador to the Low Countries, *ibid*, p.111, (*L&P*, IV ii, no.3966).

¹³¹ Although Hackett was included in the original commission for the negotiations at Bourbourg, he left before their conclusion to take up his post as resident ambassador with the queen regent. On the 13 June he wrote to Henry giving an account of his first audience, *L&P*, V, no.1091. The same month Knight and Tregonwell wrote to Hackett briefing him on the final stages of their meeting with the Imperial commissioners, *ibid*, no.1090.

¹³² Bell, *Handlist*, p.176, incorrectly describes Hutton as a resident ambassador from 3 April 1537. The instructions of this date issued to the merchant required him to inform queen Mary that Henry had, 'appointed hym to be his grace's agent in those parts.' PRO, SP1/115 fos.70-80, f.70, (*L&P*, XII i, no.866), Henry to Hutton 3 April 1537. Instructions of the same date issued to Gardiner in France directed the bishop to liaise with, 'our servant John Hutton, ovr agent resident in Flanders.' BL, Additional MS,25,114, fo.253, (*ibid*, no.817), Henry to Gardiner, 3 April 1537.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
LC16	ilip Hoby	Special	red 2 March 1538	c.31 March 1538	Add. MS, 5,498, fo.1, <i>L&P</i> , XIII I, no.380.
LC17	Stephen Vaughan Thomas Wriothesley	Resident ¹³³ Special	aug 17 Sept 1538 Rochester 27 Sept 1538	early Feb 1540 ¹³⁴ Calais 23 March 1539	<i>L&P</i> , XIII ii, no.419, <i>St.P.</i> , VIII, pp.43-46.
LC18	Edward Came	Special	c.11 Oct 1538 ¹³⁵	Calais 23 March 1539	sugg <i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.89, <i>L&P</i> , XIII ii, no.880.
LC19	Anthony St Leger	Special	Brussels 19 Oct 1539	Brussels 13 Nov 1539	sugg <i>CSPS</i> , VI I, no.91, <i>L&P</i> , XIV ii, no.415.

¹³³ Bell, *Handlist*, p.176, lists Vaughan as an agent, but in the instructions given to him and his colleague, Thomas Wriothesley, for the negotiation of Henry's marriage to Christina, Duchess of Milan, it was specified that, 'the said Stephen Vaughan shall contynue as ambassadour there resident till further knolege of his mayeties pleasure.' *St.P.*, VIII, pp.43-46, p.46, (*L&P*, XIII ii, no.419), Instructions for Thomas Wriothesley and Stephen Vaughan, September 1538.

¹³⁴ Vaughan accompanied Anne of Cleves to Canterbury at the end of December 1539, before returning to Brussels by mid-January 1540, *L&P*, XV, no.68. On the 3 February Wyatt informed Cromwell that Vaughan would bring him what news he had, *ibid*, no.161.

¹³⁵ On the 11 October Chapuys informed Charles that Henry was on the point of dispatching Came to join Wriothesley and Vaughan, *CSPS*, VI I, p. .

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
LC20	Edward Carne Stephen Vaughan	Special Special	aug 17 June 1541 aug. 17 June 1541	Brussels 29 Dec 1541 ¹³⁶ Brussels 29 Dec 1541	<i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.577, <i>L&P</i> , XVI, no.906.
LC21	Thomas Seymour Nicholas Wotton	Resident Resident	aug 30 April 1543 aug 30 April 1543	Brussels 6 July 1543 24 Nov 1543 ¹³⁷	<i>St.P.</i> , IX, p.365, <i>L&P</i> , XVIII i, no.473.
LC22	Richard Layton	Resident	cred 24 Nov 1543	died 9 June 1544	
LC23	Edward Carne	Resident	Brussels 14 June 1544	after 8 July 1548 ¹³⁸	

¹³⁶ On the 10 January 1542 Chapuys wrote to Mary acknowledging receipt of her letters of the 29 December notifying of the imminent departure of Henry's ambassadors from Brussels, *L&P*, XVII, app. No.1.

¹³⁷ On this date Wotton received his instructions to replace Bonner and Bryan as Henry's resident with the emperor, *L&P*, XVIII ii no.420.

¹³⁸ This was the last date on which Carne dispatched a report from the Low Countries. Since it was counter-signed by his replacement Thomas Chamberlain it seems likely that he would have returned soon afterwards, *Calendar, State Papers, Edward VI*, p.25.

The Papacy

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
P1	Chr.Bainbridge	Resident	com 30 Sept 1509	died 14 July 1514	Rymer XIII, 263 <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.99(33).
P2	Silvestro Gigli	Resident	Rome Oct 1512 ¹³⁹	died 18 April 1521	sugg Vitel.B IV, fos.104-106, <i>L&P</i> , I ii, no.2611.
P3	John Clerk	Special	Nancy 7 March 1521 audience with Francis	Antwerp 19 Sept 1522 audience	Vit.B V, fos.145-150, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.1510.
P4	Richard Pace	Special	Chent 22 Dec 1521 audience with Charles	Venice 20 Aug 1522 ¹⁴⁰	

¹³⁹ Bell, *Handlist*, p.159 states that Gigli's embassy to Rome began on 4 February 1512. Although a commission was issued on this date to Gigli, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Robert, Abbot of Wynchcombe to attend the Fifth Lateran Council in Rome, *L&P*, I i, no.1048, it was never carried out. Badoer writing to the signory on 20 February reported that Henry had recalled his ambassadors upon hearing news that the Leo had postponed the opening of the council until 1 November. *CSPV*, II, no.1067. A further commission for Gigli and Robert Wingfield to attend the council was issued in April 1512, *ibid*, no.1170 (1). Certainly Wingfield who was in the company of the emperor throughout 1512 did not go to Rome, Undreiner, *op.cit.*, p.119. W.Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and England Before the Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1974), p.45, states that Gigli did not reach Rome until October.

¹⁴⁰ Pace went directly from Rome to undertake a new embassy at Venice.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
P5	Spain, Rome Thomas Hannibal	Resident	com 9 March 1522	Dover 1 Sept 1524	Vitel.B V, fo.46, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.2098.
P6	John Clerk	Resident	com 12 March 1523	Lyons 14 Dec 1525 ^o audience with Louise	Vitel.B V, fo.164 <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.2887.
P7	Richard Pace	Special –	Rome late Sept 1523 ¹⁴¹	Malines c.18 May 1524 ¹⁴²	Burnet II, no.48, <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.3389.
P8	Girolamo Ghinucci Gregorio de Casali	Resident ¹⁴³ Resident ¹⁴⁴	cred 20 Sept 1525 cred 20 Sept 1525	15 Oct 1526 June 1538 ¹⁴⁵	Add.MS, 15,387, fos.170-171, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, no.1650.

¹⁴¹ Having left Venice about 5 August 1523 Pace travelled to Rome via Milan. Wegg, *op.cit.*, p.219. He had not reached Rome by 14 September 1523, *L&P*, III ii, no.3331, Clerk to Wolsey, 14 September 1523.

¹⁴² Wolsey wrote to Pace on the 28 May acknowledging receipt of his letters from Malines dated the 18 May. It was in this letter that the cardinal instructed Pace to postpone his return to England and join the Duke of Bourbon's army, *L&P*, IV I, no.374.

¹⁴³ Bell, *Handlist*, p.160 lists Ghinucci and Casali as special envoys. However, Henry in his letter of credence to Clement, *L&P*, IV i, no.1650, states that both men have been appointed to replace Clerk, the incumbent resident ambassador, whom he is recalling.

¹⁴⁴ Bell, *Handlist*, implies that Casali's embassy to Rome ended at approximately the same time that Ghinucci was recalled, and that the former travelled to Venice as a semi-accredited agent of the king, only being appointed resident ambassador to the Papacy in August 1527. In fact, apart from two brief visits to Bologna in January 1527, *L&P*, IV ii, no.2780 and Venice in March, *ibid*, 2931, Casali remained in Rome until early June, *ibid*, nos.2720, 2875, 2907, 2971, 3011, 3046 and 3156. On about 7 June the ambassador left Rome to liaise with Wolsey whom he met at Abbeville about

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
P9	John Russell	Special	cred 2 Jan 1527	Rome c.1 May 1527 ¹⁴⁶	<i>St.P.</i> , VI, p.560, <i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no. 2769.
P10	William Knight	Special	Compiègne 1 Sept 1527	Paris 25 April 1528 ¹⁴⁷	<i>St.P.</i> , I, p.267; VII, p.1. <i>L&P</i> , IV ii, nos.3400, 3420.
P11	Stephen Gardiner Edward Foxe	Special Special	Dover 11 Feb 1528 ¹⁴⁸ Dover 11 Feb 1528	Venice 4 Aug 1528 1 May 1528 ¹⁴⁹	<i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no.3913.

29 August, *ibid*, no.3310, before returning directly to Rome.

¹⁴⁵ Bell, *Hamalist*, p.196, states that Casali continued to serve Henry until 1540. However, the last record of diets paid to him as 'the king's orator', is June 1538, *L&P*, XVI, p.380.

¹⁴⁶ Domenego Venier, Venetian ambassador to Rome, informed the Doge of Russell's imminent departure on this date. *CSPV*, III, p.100,

¹⁴⁷ Knight had an audience with Francis on this date, *L&P*, IV ii, no.4196, *CAF*, VIII, p.456.

¹⁴⁸ They had an audience with Francis at St.Germaine en Laye on 24 February and with Louise at Poissy the following day.

¹⁴⁹ Wolsey wrote to Henry on the 25 April to suggest that more ships be used to patrol the Channel in order to protect both the papal legate, Lorenzo Campeggio and Edward Foxe, whose arrival he daily expected, *L&P*, IV ii, no.4217. Foxe reached London by the 10 May, the date on which Wolsey, notified Gregorio de Casali of his arrival, *ibid*, no.4245.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
P12	Francis Bryan Peter Vannes	Special Special	cred 27 Nov 1528 cred 27 Nov 1528	22 June 1529 ¹⁵⁰ congé 5 Sept 1529	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.117, <i>L&P</i> , IV ii, no.4978.
P13	Stephen Gardiner	Special	21 Jan 1529 ¹⁵¹	London 22 June 1529	sugg Arundel 151, fo.46b, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, nos.5270, 5272.
P14*	Richard Croke	Special Agent	Bologna 27 Dec 1529	Venice 24 Dec 1530	Vitel. B XIII, fos.6-13 <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, nos.6104-7.
P15	William Benet	Resident	cred 20 May 1529	London 23 Dec 1531 ¹⁵²	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.171, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.5575. Add MS, 25,114, fo.56-59, <i>L&P</i> , V, no.611.

¹⁵⁰ Campeggio wrote from London on 24 June to Cardinal Giovanni Salviati informing him that Bryan and Gardiner had returned from Rome tow days earlier. *L&P*, IV iii, no.5712.

¹⁵¹ Gasparo Contarini informing the signory of Gardiner's arrival in Rome on 15 February, stated that he had left England on 21 January. *CSPV*, IV, p.199.

¹⁵² On 2 January 1532 Francesco Capello informed the Signory of Benet's return to court on 23 December. *CSPV*, IV, p.714.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
P16	Girolamo Ghinucci	Resident	cred 5 Oct 1529	c.July-Sept 1533 ¹⁵³	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.205, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, no.5988.
P17	William Benet	Resident	London 31 Dec 1531	died 26 Sept 1533	<i>Add.MS</i> , 5,114, fos.56-58, <i>L&P</i> , V, no.611.
P18	Edward Carne	Resident	Rome late Nov 1530 ¹⁵⁴	Paris 28 Oct 1533	
P19	Edmund Bonner	Special	Dover 13 February 1533	Marseilles 13 Nov 1533	<i>St.P.</i> , VII, p.413, <i>L&P</i> , VI, no.101.

¹⁵³ It is difficult to pinpoint when exactly Ghinucci left Henry's service. On in his letter of the 12 July 1533 to Cromwell, Carne suggests that the bishop was still co-operating with himself, Benet and Bonner in defending Henry's case, *L&P*, VI, no.809. On 3 September, however, Chapuys informed Charles that Henry had lately taken into his hands the revenues from the bishoprics of Salisbury and Worcester, *ibid*, no.1069, which would suggest that the king had dispensed with Ghinucci's services by this date.

¹⁵⁴ Bell, *Hamlst*, p.164, that both Edward Carne and Edmund Bonner joined Benet in Rome in spring 1532. However, Carne must have left England no later than mid to late November 1530, since the king addressed a letter to both ambassadors dated 6 December 1530, *L&P*, IV iii, no.6760.

Scotland

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
Sc1	Robert Drury Marm. Constabele John Batemanson	Special Special Special	com 7 Sept 1509 com 7 Sept 1509 com 7 Sept 1509	Edinburgh 28 Nov 1509 Edinburgh 28 Nov 1509 Edinburgh 28 Nov 1509	Rymer XIII, 263 <i>L&P</i> , I i, 161
Sc2	Robert Drury Marm. Constable	Special Special	com 1 June 1510 com 1 June 1510	n.d. ¹⁵⁵ n.d.	Rymer XIII, 278 <i>L&P</i> , I i, 519 (1).
Sc3	Nicholas West	Special	com 3 Nov 1511	n.d. ¹⁵⁶	Rymer XIII, 309 <i>L&P</i> , I i, 969, (2).
Sc4	Nicholas West Thomas Dacre	Special Special	com 15 April 1512 com 15 April 1512	ch.20 June 1512 Carlisle 20 July 1512	Titus B I fo.98, <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.880.
Sc5	Nicholas West	Special	com 15 Feb 1513	Edinburgh 13 April 1513	Rymer XIII, 347, ¹⁵⁷ <i>L&P</i> , I i, 1662, (32).

¹⁵⁵ The ambassadors' commission is the only document remaining from this embassy.

¹⁵⁶ The ambassador's commission is the only document remaining from this embassy.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Dacre's name was also listed in this commission, however, there is no evidence that he accompanied West on the embassy.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
Sc6	Thomas Magnus	Special	Edinburgh 29 May 1519	n.d. ¹⁵⁸	Vesp F III, fo.36b, Sugg <i>L&P</i> , III i, 269.
Sc7	Thomas Magnus Roger Radcliff	Special Special	Newcastle 9 Oct 1524 Newcastle 9 Oct 1524	Berwick 12 Jan 1526 London c.20 Dec 1524	<i>St.P.</i> IV, p.191-201, <i>L&P</i> , IV i, 767.
Sc8	Thomas Clifford	Special	Edinburgh 2 Dec 1529	mid Dec 1529	sugg <i>St.P.</i> IV, p.571, <i>L&P</i> , IV iii, 6077-8..
Sc9	Thomas Magnus Thomas Franklyn Hugh Whitehead	Special Special Special	cred 26 May 1534 cred 26 May 1534 cred 26 May 1534	Durham 9 July 1534 Durham 9 July 1534 Durham 9 July 1534	Sugg Cal B III, fos.63, <i>L&P</i> , VII, ii 963.
Sc10	William Howard	Special	ins 20 Jan 1535	20 March 1535 ¹⁵⁹	Harl.1,355, fos.22-23, <i>L&P</i> , VIII, no.70.
Sc11	William Barlow	Special	cred.3 Oct 1535	n.d.	<i>Hamilton Papers</i> , I, pp.18-28, <i>L&P</i> , IX, no.730.
Sc12	William Howard William Barlow	Special Special	York 1 Feb 1536 York 1 Feb 1536	London 30 May 1536 early June 1536 ¹⁶⁰	<i>Hamilton Papers</i> , I, pp.29-33, Not in <i>L&P</i> .

¹⁵⁸ The only document to remain from this embassy is James' acknowledgement of Magnus' arrival, *L&P*, III i, 269.

¹⁵⁹ Chapuys wrote to Charles on 23 March 1535, that Howard had arrived back in London three days earlier. *L&P*, VIII, no.429.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
Sc13	Thomas Holcroft	Special	cred 27 Dec 1536	n.d. ¹⁶¹	sugg. Add. MS,32, 646, L&P XI 1373.
Sc14	Ralph Sadler	Special	London 15 Jan 1537 ¹⁶²	after 10 Feb 1537 ¹⁶³	Mission described in Slavin, <i>op.cit.</i> , pp.75-77. ¹⁶⁴
Sc15	Ralph Sadler	Special	Dover 27 March 1537	Calais 6 April 1537	St.P. V, p.70, L&P, XII i, no.540.
Sc16	Ralph Sadler	Special	late May 1537	c.29 June 1537 ¹⁶⁵	Mission described in Slavin, <i>op.cit.</i> , pp.80-82.

¹⁶⁰ Bell, *Handlist.*, p.237 states that Barlow remained in Scotland until the beginning of October. However, although I have been unable to find any evidence of this, the envoy did write to Cromwell on 23 May 1536 explaining that he had remained behind for two or three more days awaiting a final messenger from the Privy seal, suggesting that he left Scotland very shortly after Howard. St.P., V, p.52, L&P, X, no.944.

¹⁶¹ Only Clifford's letter of credence remains.

¹⁶² A.J.Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507-1547*, (Cambridge, 1966), p.74.

¹⁶³ On this date Queen Margaret wrote to Henry informing him that she had received Sadler, L&P, XII I, no.397.

¹⁶⁴ Bell, *Handlist.*, p.237, cites St.P. V, p.81, (L&P XII i, 1313), as the instructions for this mission. However, the document refers to the publication of the bull issued by Paul III excommunicating Henry. Although the bull was issued 30 August 1535 it was not published until 17 December 1538.

¹⁶⁵ Viscount Lisle's agent in London, John Hussee, informed the Deputy of Calais that Sadler had recently returned from Scotland. L&P, XII ii, no.166, 29 June 1537.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
Sc17	Ralph Sadler	Special	Edinburgh 17 Feb 1540	congé 29 Feb 1540	<i>Sadler Papers</i> , I, pp.3-13, <i>L&P</i> XV 136.
Sc18	Ralph Sadler	Resident	ins 13 March 1543	Berwick 12 Dec 1543	Add.MS,32,650, fos. 29-45, <i>L&P</i> XVIII i, no.271.

Spain

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
SP1	John Stile	Resident	April 1509	congé 12 May 1518	Vesp.C I fo.75, <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.1659.
SP2	William Knight	Special	Isle of 3 June 1512 Wight	Valladolid 18 Aug 1513	Vesp.C I fo.75, <i>L&P</i> , I i, no.1659.
SP3	Thomas Spinelly	Resident	Flushing 8 Sept 1517	27 June 1519 ¹⁶⁶	
SP4	John Kite John Berners	Special Special	28 Feb 1518 28 Feb 1518 ¹⁶⁷	Saragosa 7 January 1519 Saragosa 7 January 1519	sugg Vesp C I, fos.147-150, <i>L&P</i> , II ii, no.4160.

¹⁶⁶ From this date I have listed Spinelly as Henry's ambassador to the emperor.

¹⁶⁷ This was the date on which the Venetian ambassador, Sebastian Guistimian reported their departure to the Doge, *CSPV*, II, p.434.

Switzerland

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
SW1	William Knight Richard Woodhouse	Special Special	Maines 10-15 May 1514 May 1514	21 Aug 1514 21 Aug 1514	sugg SP1/230, fo.206, <i>L&P</i> , I ii, no.2997.
SW2	William Knight	Special	Calais 29 Jan 1522	Calais 11 April 1522	SP1/ 24, fos.20-21, sugg <i>L&P</i> , III ii, no.2047.
SW3	William Knight	Special	Maines 29 June 1523	Brussels 16 Aug 1523	sugg Galba B VI, fo.131, <i>L&P</i> , III i, no.3140.

Venice

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
V1	Thomas Sheffield Thomas Newport	Special Special	Venice 3 Sept 1513 Venice 3 Sept 1513	15 Nov 1513 ¹⁶⁸ 15 Nov 1513	sugg. Sanuto, XVII, p.42, L&P, I ii, no.2254.
V2	Richard Pace	Special	Venice 20 Aug 1522	Venice 5 August 1523	Nero B VII, fos.28-37, L&P, III ii, no.2497.
V3	Richard Pace	Speical	Trent 1 February 1525	London 17 Nov 1525	Vit B VII, fo.33. L&P, IV i, no.1054.
V4	Gian Baptiste de Casali Resident		early Dec 1525 ¹⁶⁹	15 March 1535 ¹⁷⁰	

¹⁶⁸ Sheffield and Newport were knights hospitallers of the Order of St John and performed this mission *en route* to Rhodes. *CSPV*, II, p.117.

¹⁶⁹ Lorenzo Orio, the Venetian ambassdoe at the English court, wrote to the Signory on the 6 December advising them that Henry had already sent letters to Casali in Rome instructing him to replace Pace in Venice, *CSPV*, III, p.507.

¹⁷⁰ Bell, *Handlist*, p.286 states that Casali was resident in Venice until August 1536. In fact Henry appointed the Italian as his special ambassador to John Zapolyai in March 1535. On the 17 March 1535 the Venetian senate voted 157-35 in favour of awarding Casali a gift of 500 ducats. *CSPV*, V, p.18. In the event Casali's mission to Zapolyai never took place since the ambassador was intercepted by Charles' brother Ferdinand whilst crossing Austria and imprisoned for nearly a year. *L&P*, VIII, nos.713, 1052.

Thesis Ref	Ambassador(s)	Embassy	Commenced	Concluded	Instructions
V5	Edmund Harvel	Resident	11 March 1535 ¹⁷¹	died c1 Jan 1550 ¹⁷²	<i>St.P.</i> , VIII, p.130,

¹⁷¹ On this date Harvel wrote to Cromwell thanking the lord privy seal for placing him in Henry's service. *L&P*, VIII, no.375.

¹⁷² Harvel's funeral was on 7 January 1550, *CSPV*, V, p.291.

Appendix B: The Ambassadors of Henry VIII

The following list is based on the figures set out in appendix A and requires some clarification. Although the figures listing the number of embassies carried out by the king's ambassadors are accurate, the statistics dealing with the periods of time they spent abroad are, unavoidably, imprecise. In addition to the fact that exact dates for the beginning and conclusion of diplomatic missions are often unavailable, it has not in certain cases been possible to provide any concluding date whatsoever. Where this has occurred, rather than speculate I have elected not to include the embassy in the total period spent abroad by an ambassador. In such cases I have inserted in the Total number of embassies column a bracketed number to show how many missions have not been taken in to account in the figure displaying an ambassador's total period of diplomatic service.

I have divided Henry's ambassadors into two groups; key ambassador denoted by 'K' and non-key, denoted by, 'NK'. Key ambassadors are constituted by one of three criteria. Those men appointed to resident embassies, individuals who performed at least three missions, or were posted abroad for a year or more.

Name	Status	Group	Age at First Embassy	Number of Embassies (S) (R)	Total number of Embassies	Time Abroad Yrs Mths
Bainbridge, Christopher	K	Clergy	45	0 1	1	4 9
Baker, John	NK	Gentry	25	2 0	2(1)	0 5
Barnes, Robert	K	Clergy	45	1 0	1	0 3
Barlow, William	K	Clergy	uk	2 0	2(1)	0 4
Bateman, Matthew	NK	uk	uk	1 0	1	0 3.5
Benet, William	K	Clergy	uk	0 2	2	4 4
Berde, Richrad	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 5.5
Boleyn, George	K	Aristocracy	uk	1 5	6	0 9.5
Boleyn, Thomas	K	Gentry/Aristocracy	35	5 1	6	3 1
Bonner, Edmund	K	Clergy	35	3 2	5	5 3
Brandon, Charles	K	Aristocracy	34	3 0	3	0 7
Browne, Anthony	K	Gentry	27	3 0	3	0 10
Bryan, Francis	K	Gentry	36	7 2	9	3 11
Bourchier, John	NK	Aristocracy	56	1 0	1	0 10
Bucler, Walter	NK	Bureaucrat	uk	1 0	1	0 11
Carew, Nicholas	K	Gentry	43	4 0	4	0 8.5
Came, Edward	K	Gentry	37	3 2	5	8 1
Casali, Gregoriu de	K	Foreign noble	uk	0 1	1	12 10
Casali, Gian Baptiste de	K	Clergy	uk	0 1	1	9 2
Cavendish, Richard	NK	uk	uk	1 0	1	0 9
Chamberlain, Thomas	NK	Merchant	uk	1 0	1	0 2
Cheyne, Thomas	K	Gentry	40	2 1	3	0 7
Clerk, John	K	Clergy	39	3 2	5	6 5

Name	Status	Group	Age at First Embassy	Number of Embassies (S) (R)	Total number of Embassies	Time Abroad Yrs Mths
Clifford, John	NK	Merchant	uk	1 0	1(1)	-
Clifford, Thomas	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	.5
Constable, Robert	NK	Gentry	54	2 0	2(1)	2.5
Cranmer, Thomas	K	Clergy	41	0 1	1	11
Croke, Richard	K	Lay scholar	40	1 0	1	0
Dacre, Thomas	K	Aristocracy	45	1 0	1	3
Darius, Sylvester	NK	Clergy	uk	1 0	1	7
Drury, Robert	NK	Gentry	53	2 0	2(1)	2.5
Dudley, John	NK	Aristocracy	33	2 0	2	3.5
Docwra, Thomas	K	Gentry	uk	4 0	4	8
Elyot, Thomas	K	Gentry	41	0 1	1	8
Fitzwilliam, William	K	Gentry	30	4 1	5	7
Foxe, Edward	K	Clergy	32	5 0	5	11
Franklyn, William	NK	Clergy	54	1 0	1	1.5
Gardiner, Stephen	K	Clergy	31	6 2	8	10
Ghinucci, Jerome	K	Clergy	uk	0 2	2	1
Gigli, Silvestro	K	Clergy	49	0 1	1	6
Grey, Thomas	NK	Aristocracy	37	1 0	1	2
Hackett, John	K	Merchant	46	0 3	3	1
Hannibal, Thomas	K	Clergy	uk	0 1	1	6
Harvel, Edmund	K	Merchant	uk	0 1	1	10
Harvey, Nicholas	K	Gentry	39	0 1	1	8
Hawkins, Nicholas	K	Clergy	uk	0 1	1	4
Heath, Nicholas	K	Clergy	33	2 0	2(1)	11
Heynes, Simon	NK	Clergy	uk	2 0	2	9

Name	Status	Group	Age at First Embassy	Number of Embassies (S) (R)	Total number of Embassies	Time Abroad Yrs Mths
Hoby, Philip	NK	Gentry	33	2 0	2	0 3
Holcroft, Thomas	NK	Gentry	30	1 0	1(1)	-
Howard, Thomas	NK	Aristocracy	71	1 0	1	1
Howard, Thomas	K	Aristocracy	41	3 0	3	5
Howard, William	K	Aristocracy		2 1	3	4
Hutton, John	K	Merchant	uk	0 1	1	5
Jerningham, Richard	K	Gentry	uk	2 1	3	11
Jerningham, Robert	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	8
Kite, John	NK	Clergy	51	1 0	1	11
Knight, William	K	Clergy	36	12 1	13	0
Knyvett, Henry	K	Gentry	uk	2 1	3	8
Layton, Richard	K	Clergy	43	0 1	1	7
Lee, Edward	K	Clergy	41	2 1	3	7
Legh, Thomas	NK	Clergy	uk	2 0	2	8
Magnus, Thomas	K	Clergy	52	3 0	2(1)	5
Mont, Christopher	K	Foreign scholar	36	6 1	7	0
More, Thomas	K	Lawyer	38	3 0	3	7.5
Morison, Richard	NK	Scholar	32	1 0	1	3
Newport, Thomas	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	2
Pace, Richard	K	Clergy	37	7 0	7	9
Page, William	K	Bureaucrat	26	6 1	7	5
Parker, Henry	NK	Aristocracy	47	1 0	1	5
Pate, Richard	K	Clergy	uk	0 2	2	7
Paulet, William	NK	Gentry	48	1 0	1	3
Paynell, Thomas	NK	Clergy	uk	1 0	1	3
Petre, William	NK	Bureaucrat	40	1 0	1	2

Name	Status	Group	Age at First Embassy	Number of Embassies (S) (R)	Total number of Embassies	Time Abroad Yrs Mths
Plantagenet, Arthur	NK	Aristocracy	47	1 0	1	0 1
Poynings, Edward	K	Gentry	54	4 0	4(1)	0 11
Poynts, Francis	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 4
Radcliff, Roger	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 2
Russell, John	K	Gentry	37	3 0	3	2 6
St.Leger, Anthony	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 1
St.Leger, George	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 3.5
Sadler, Ralph	K	Bureaucrat	30	4 1	5	1 0
Sampson, Richard	K	Clergy	uk	3 1	4	4 9
Seymour, Edward	NK	Aristocracy	38	1 0	1	0 1
Seymour, Thomas	K	Gentry	35	0 1	1	0 2
Sheffield, Thomas	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 2
Somerset, Charles	K	Aristocracy	54	4 0	4	1 0
Spinelly, Thomas	K	Merchant	uk	0 4	4	13 4
Standish, Henry	NK	Clergy	uk	1 0	1(1)	-
Stile, John	K	Merchant	uk	0 1	1	9 1
Stokesley, John	K	Clergy	54	2 1	3	1 0
Sydney, William	NK	Clergy	33	1 0	1	0 3
Tate, Richard	K	Gentry	uk	0 1	1	0 10
Taylor, John	K	Clergy	uk	0 2	2	2 8
Thirlby, Thomas	K	Clergy	33	2 2	4	3 10
Tregonwell, John	nk	Bureaucrat	uk	1 0	1	0 2
Tunstall, Cuthbert	K	Clergy	41	5 0	5	5 11
Vannes, Peter	NK	Clergy	uk	1 0	1	0 9
Vaughan, Stephen	K	Merchant	31	3 1	4	2 3.5
Wallop, John	K	Gentry	uk	2 2	4(1)	6 2

Name	Status	Group	Age at First Embassy	Number of Embassies (S) (R)	Total number of Embassies	Time Abroad Yrs Mths
Welsborne, John	K	Gentry	32	0 1	1	0 9
West, Nicholas	K	Clergy	49	8 0	8(1)	1 4
Whitehead, Hugh	NK	Clergy	uk	1 0	1	0 1.5
Wiltshire, John	NK	Gentry	uk	1 0	1	0 3
Wingfield, Richard	K	Gentry	44	8 1	9	3 11
Wingfield, Robert	K	Gentry	40	2 2	4	9 1.5
Wolsey, Thomas	NK	Clergy	46	2 0	2	0 7
Woodhouse, Thomas	NK	uk	uk	1 0	1	0 3
Wotton, Nicholas	K	Clergy	42	4 2	6	7 11
Wriothesley, Thomas	K	Bureaucrat	22	1 0	1	0 6
Wyatt, Thomas	K	Gentry	34	0 2	2	2 5
Yong, John	K	Clergy	44	2 0	2	1 2

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