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INTRODUCTION-THE RESIDENT AMBASSADOR

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the major powers of Europe were becoming stronger, more united, and more militarily effective. Tied into this centralization of power among the major states was a development in the role of diplomacy; in general, as nations became more unified, relations between the major powers began to be far more organized.¹ Most of the smaller states would take their cue from the larger powers, rather than taking any initiative of their own. In this changing period of international politics, ambassadors began to take on a more important role in the way in which diplomatic service was conducted.

Traditionally, diplomatic ambassadors were usually sent abroad on one specific point of business, and once their duties were discharged, they were expected to return home. Also, in the early 1400s, ambassadors were sent and received by regional authorities rather than by monarchs. For example, during the reign of Charles VII the duke of Orleans sent an ambassador to Venice, while the Comte de Foix sent ambassadors to Castile and Navarre.² Kings made treaties with their own vassals and the vassals of their neighbors. In addition, cities negotiated with one another without reference to their respective sovereigns. Indeed, in the thirteenth century Gulielmus Durandus writes that " a legatus (i.e. a diplomatic agent) is anybody sent by another."³ As the monarchs of Europe began to consolidate

their powers, rulers became unwilling to allow their subjects to exercise this manner of freedom; the sending and receiving of ambassadors was, in effect, a threat to their monarchical authority and the security of the nation as a whole. One of the most visible results of this "crack-down" on the nobility was the development of an officially endorsed "resident" ambassador.⁴

Medieval diplomats were generally sent abroad for a short time to conduct a single piece of business, generally marriage negotiations or peace treaties, and then to return home. Characteristic of the fifteenth century, however, was a tendency for ambassadors to remain abroad for extended periods of time, months, sometimes even years. They were not merely present to negotiate a single piece of business, as had their predecessors, but were expected to represent their sovereign and to accumulate court gossip. In order to have up to date information, monarchs began to demand that new reports of ambassadorial activities be transmitted every few days. To better protect these messages between monarch and diplomat, the ambassadors of the late fifteenth century commonly used codes and cyphers in their reports.⁵ Indeed, these early "resident" ambassadors were often viewed with a great deal of suspicion by their host countries; generally considered to be little more than foreign spies. In fact, some ambassadors themselves were confused over their actual status, as they were commanded to remain at foreign courts after they had discharged their original duties, and were

left with no new orders.⁶ Ambassadors were not entirely on their own, however, owing to the increasing number of "how-to-books" which were being produced, expounding on the duties of a Christian ambassador.⁷ These treatises, however, were often far too idealistic for the goal of most monarchs. Take, for example, an excerpt from Bernard du Rosiers definition of an ambassador written in the fifteenth century:

The business of an ambassador is peace. An ambassador labors for the public good...The speedy completion of an ambassadors mission is in the interest of all...An ambassador is sacred because he acts for the general welfare. Ambassadors must never be sent to stir up wars and international dissensions, to plot the seizure of other people's property, to foment rebellion or schism, or to organize pernicious leagues or illegal conspiracies.⁸

Unfortunately for Rosiers, most monarchs expected their ambassadors to stir up wars, internal dissensions, rebellions, etc., among their rivals. One of the ways in which they were better able to do this was in the form of the resident ambassador.

Permanent diplomatic representation is generally viewed as an outgrowth of the embassies sent between a number of Italian cities during the turmoil of the fifteenth century. More precisely, Florence, Venice, and the Duchy of Milan were the innovators in diplomatic relation of their times.⁹ From 1456-1458, Alfonso of Aragon waged an unofficial war with Genoa over possession of Corsica.¹⁰ During the next thirty years there were also five more wars among the Italian powers, lasting an average of two years apiece.¹¹

In addition, Italian soil was menaced by Turkish forces which managed to raid deep into Friuli and to create a Christian slave market in Otranto in the kingdom of Naples.¹² As governments toppled and the Italian peninsula became increasingly unstable, it became important for the city-states to have up to date information on the political scene. As a result, permanent, resident ambassadors were becoming a fixture in the Italian political struggle for survival. This new innovation began to find its way to the North and the larger powers.

The mission of the permanent ambassador was generally the gathering and transmission of information, as well as the accumulation of allies in foreign courts. They were expected to "help keep a restless ally in line, calm an unjust suspicion, or smooth over a threatened misunderstanding."¹³ They were to remain at their posts until recalled, and to take general charge of the interests of their sponsor. In the end, when it best served his sovereign, "Peace was the main business of an ambassador."¹⁴ Because of the importance of their duties, and the effects which they had on international events, early resident diplomats were viewed with ever increasing suspicion by their host countries. As testament to this, one only has to look at the deathbed contemplations of Henry VII, who considered the idea of expelling all foreign ambassadors from England¹⁵; no doubt to smooth Henry VIII's assumption of power. While they may have occupied a nebulous position

in the eyes of many monarchs, the ambassadors themselves slowly began to become accustomed to their new position. As more and more of the same men were sent abroad on diplomatic missions, a class of "professional ambassadors" began to emerge.¹⁶ Unlike their medieval predecessors who considered themselves warriors rather than diplomats¹⁷, the emerging resident ambassadors were becoming increasingly aware of the vital position they played in the role of European politics.

While the use of resident ambassadors was not a European-wide phenomenon, it did see a marked increase from transitional "Renaissance" kings (i.e. Louis of France and Henry VII) to the accession of what are generally considered to be the first truly "Renaissance Kings": Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France. When Henry came to the throne, there was only one permanent English ambassador established in Rome; at the time of his death, there were three ambassadors stationed in Rome and an extensive diplomatic network. As for Francis, when he came to power in 1515 there was also only one resident ambassador; at the time of his death in 1547, he had created ten permanent ambassadorial positions, in addition to sending numerous ad hoc ambassadors throughout his reign.¹⁸ This increase in increase in the number of permanent representatives indicates that the time of the resident ambassador had arrived among the major political players of Europe.

Despite the spread of this political innovation to the North, many practices of the Middle Ages were still very

much alive and would survive for generations. For example, far into the fifteenth century and beyond, diplomacy was still carried out by a wide range of institutions and people other than crowned heads of state. Procurators (representatives empowered to negotiate on behalf of their employers) were often sent by groups of merchants to deal with rulers against whom they had a claim or from whom they wished to extract concessions.¹⁹ In addition, the Turks would refuse to send permanent ambassadors until well into the 1700s. There would also continue to be little correspondence between the greater powers of Europe and those states which were at the periphery of European politics (i.e. Russia, Hungary, the Scandinavian kingdoms, Poland, etc.).²⁰ Many historians attribute this to the fact that areas in Eastern and Northern Europe were less politically and diplomatically organized than the major powers and were therefore not deserving, or did not require, resident ambassadors. The prevailing belief is that "Medieval" diplomacy survived in certain regions because they were more "primitive"²¹ or isolated than the major powers; therefore, the major powers did not feel the need to implement any of the new diplomatic innovations (i.e. resident ambassadors) in these regions. This train of thought is usually used to support the fact that none of the major powers sent a resident ambassador to Scotland. However, this does not seem to gel with the facts: Scotland had played a pivotal role in the relations between two of

the major powers (England and France) for generations; Scotland's political scene was basically stabilized; and it had been blessed with James IV, who attempted to implement a number of Renaissance reforms. Under James, the Scottish navy was enlarged and artillery was beginning to be cast in Scotland rather than being brought from abroad. James also patronised the foundation of a new university at Aberdeen, a College of Surgeons, and introduced Scotland's first printing press.²² Even if one considered Scotland culturally primitive, its role as a constant thorn in the side of England would seem to demand the presence of a permanent ambassador. Because of Scotland's proximity to England, coupled with Scottish animosity towards the English, it was the natural ally for anyone who had a quarrel with England. However, while the greater powers carried on regular diplomatic correspondence through resident ambassadors, Scotland was exempted from this new diplomatic innovation. The key question is WHY? Obviously some of the larger powers, such as the Ottoman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire would have little interest in the affairs of Scotland; the Holy Roman Emperor was caught up in the turmoil in Italy, and the Sultan felt "no need for organized diplomatic relations with the Christian world."²³ But, why would England and France, who were continually at each other's throats, ignore a country with the ability to influence English affairs in their bid for power? One cannot really believe that any of the Renaissance kings

would ignore continuous diplomatic relations with such a key player, even if they considered it less developed than their own countries. Why then did they continue their "middle age" diplomacy into the sixteenth century? Because of the English disdain for Scotland, and despite the "new diplomacy" which had remodeled the English diplomatic system, England's relations with Scotland were based on the principles of intimidation and force of arms, and there were individuals better suited to implementing this policy than a resident ambassador. By examining the state of relations between the two countries, more specifically the events leading up to the flight of Queen Margaret from Scotland, it is possible to expose the prejudices which caused Henry to neglect the "new diplomacy" in Scotland, and which caused other powers, in this case France, to rely upon the diplomatic principles of an earlier time.

SCOTLAND--ENGLAND--FRANCE: THE AULD ALLIANCE

Because of the intricacies of international politics, it is best to resort to basics and look at the main driving factors of the relations between England, Scotland, and France. In this case, it is the "Auld Alliance" existing between Scotland and France at England's expense. The foundations of the "Alliance" were set in the 1290's by John Balliol in his struggle against Edward I for Scottish independence.

Commonly referred to as the "Toom Tabard", or Empty Coat, for his failure to resist the power of the English, John Balliol was set up as King of Scotland by Edward I after the death of Queen Margaret in 1290. The claimants to the Scottish crown had agreed to see the matter of succession settled at court rather than by force of arms; unfortunately, the man who instituted the court was Edward I. "For centuries the English kings had claimed to be overlords of their Scottish counterparts but this had meant little in practice and relations had been generally cordial";²⁴ this was all to change under Edward. Styling himself as the "Overlord of the Land of Scotland", Edward insisted that all those who claimed the throne as successor to Margaret recognize the king of England as their feudal superior. To reinforce this, Edward placed English constables in key Scottish royal castles and marshalled troops in case there was trouble. While Edward's actions

might seem a bit heavy handed, England's claim to Scotland was not unfounded. As early as 1070, King Malcolm III of Scotland was forced by William the Conqueror to submit to stringent terms of peace at Abernathy; Malcolm promised to "be William's man" and was forced to surrender his son Duncan as hostage.²⁵ This claim, along with the constant border warfare between the English and the Scots, would create an air of intolerance between the English and Scots for generations. The English felt they had a claim to Scotland, while the Scottish felt the need to prove themselves superior to their English oppressors.

After Edward had secured his position in Scotland, 104 auditors were summoned to settle the "Great Cause" and John Balliol was chosen as the new king.²⁶ Unfortunately for Balliol, the "ambitions of Edward I, backed by the disloyalty of thwarted competitors, ensured that John enjoyed insufficient peace in which to establish himself."²⁷

According to The Chronicles of Scotland:

Balliol schort tyme eftir his coronacioun come to pe New Castell, quhare he maid homage to King Edward for pe realme of Scotland, contrair pe mynde of all his nobillis, gevand him self and his realme in seruitude, quhilk was defendit in liberte to his dayis.²⁸

After conquering Wales, Edward was intent on following a similar policy towards Scotland. To this end, Edward intended to press his rights as Balliol's feudal overlord to "the limits of legality" while still preserving the letter of the law, all in an attempt to force Balliol to revolt.²⁹ Once Balliol turned against him, Edward could deal with him

as he would any unruly vassal (i.e. the confiscation of lands, castles, towns, etc.). As a result of Edward's desires, Balliol found himself called to English courts to answer the complaints and appeals of his own subjects, and was even threatened with a charge of contempt of court and the confiscation of three major castles and towns when he voiced his anger at these restrictions. The final straw came when he was ordered to collect increased taxes and levy Scottish troops for Edward's war against Philip IV of France in 1294. With the support of his counselors, Balliol ejected all Englishmen from Scotland, formally repudiated his allegiance to the English king. Most importantly, however, he concluded a defensive treaty with Philip in 1295:

King Ballioll, dcedand be pir slychtis of
Inglishmen extreme dangere to cum to his realme, send
Williame Bischop of Sanetandrois, with Schir Iohnne
Sowlis and Schir Ingerame Vmfra in France to renew pe
band with Philip pe Fourte...³⁰

"There had been previous understandings between the French and Scottish kings; but it was this treaty which established the tradition of a Scoto-French alliance."³¹ The 1295 alliance was more significant than any other previous Franco-Scottish alliance, however, because it was a clear repudiation of the type of English overlordship which Edward was trying to impose on Scotland.³² In addition, this treaty would endure as a political bond until the Reformation and as a tradition of friendship thereafter.³³ Edward's reign of terror after Balliol's defection, which

would earn Edward the title of "the Hammer of the Scots", only served to reinforce Scottish animosity towards England; "for more than half a century (it) was to evoke the worst passions of two kindred peoples."³⁴

"Edward demanded that, as a contumacious vassal, Balliol should surrender his kingdom and renounce the French alliance."³⁵ Balliol did both in July 1296, but, as Edward was still intent on the annexation of Scotland, his removal did not end the Franco-Scottish alliance. Instead, the alliance would be confirmed in the treaty of Corbeil in 1326 by Robert I and Charles IV.³⁶ The treaty explicitly stated that any future Anglo-Scottish reproachment would be nullified by conflict between France and England, obliging the Scottish king to attack England "in the name of his French ally."³⁷ The Scots would live up to this bargain in the future: 6,000 troops were sent to France in 1419, Archibald Douglas, head of the powerful Douglas clan, was sent to defend the Loire Valley for Charles VII ³⁸, and they were still committed to Charles's losing cause in 1428.³⁹

This "Auld Alliance" bound the two countries together in more than a mere political and military partnership, it also extended into the economic and domestic sphere. "The migration of Scots, initially as mercenaries, led to permanent settlement and intermarriage; there were Scots colonies in Dieppe and Rouen and a group of Scotsman acquired property and the right to clear part of the forests of Haute-Brune."⁴⁰ This intermarriage of political and

economic concerns served far better than a resident ambassador might. Since the French and Scots were inextricably bound by their everlasting enmity of the English, and their continuous stream of trade, there was little need for the constant flow of communication and court gossip which might be provided by a permanent embassy; it was readily available on the streets of Paris or in any of the markets of Scotland.

SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND--THE BETROTHAL

During the reign of Henry VII, there was no established diplomatic corps; most historians chalk this up to Henry's desire for gold. In truth, he had little need for an extensive diplomatic service : he was protected geographically from most of the other greater powers, he had no outstanding quarrels with any of them, and he had managed to subjugate political opposition at home. Actually, Henry's major concern was the consolidation of political power at home; he was intent on ensuring that his son would not have to experience a civil war on the scale he had when he came to power. In order to ensure a lasting peace, Henry would have to secure his borders; it was believed that once the borders were stabilized a long term security would naturally follow.⁴¹ Although Anglo-Scottish truces were a constant feature of the period, they meant little, especially on the borders; at sea, piracy disrupted commerce on both sides regardless of truces.⁴² Thus, "there appeared to be good reasons for Scotland's maintenance of a continual alliance with France and an attitude of hostility towards England and this seems to have been a nationally popular policy."⁴³ It is reported that a traveller to Scotland in 1435 remarked "that 'nothing pleases the Scots more than abuse of the English', and when the English taught their children archery they encouraged them to take good aim--so at least a Scot believed--by saying, 'There's a Scot. Shoot him!'"⁴⁴ With such hostility existing between the two

nations, could Henry truly consider England at peace? And, as Hall writes in his Chronicles:

The Kyng of England which nothing more embraced and desired than quiet tranquillitee and ferfichte love and amitie with all princes being his neyghboures and borderers, to thentent that he might lyve in his later dayes in an honest and quiet lyfe after so many laboures and vexaciones...⁴⁵

In order to impose greater order, and hopefully negate the "auld alliance", Henry decided to secure his borders by arranging a marriage between his daughter Margaret and James IV of Scotland. When she had reached the age of six, Henry was already sending ambassadors to Scotland in the hopes of a royal union;⁴⁶ her marriage would serve to form the first peace between the two since 1328. In addition, having a family member so closely tied to the Scottish court would serve better than any mere ambassador to transmit valuable information on French activities in the North, and to exert a calming influence (i.e. a pro-English influence) over James.

Unfortunately, negotiations were cut off prematurely due a number of ill conceived plots by both Henry and James. In 1491 Henry pledged his support to a group of rebellious Scots, led by the favorite of James III, Ramsay of Balmain, which was intended to seize James and convey him as a prisoner to England.⁴⁷ At the same time, Henry also entered into a secret arrangement with Archibald, Earl of Angus, the head of the House of Douglas. In their agreement, Douglas promised to do his utmost to prevent James from entering into war with England. If war did break out, Archibald

agreed to surrender his castle of Hermitage to Henry providing that he received one of equal value in England.⁴⁸ Both of these schemes, however, were discovered by James. In retaliation, James cut off negotiations and supported the various plots of Perkin Warbeck, the Yorkist pretender to the throne of England. In 1496 James invaded England on Warbeck's behalf and proclaimed him "Richard IV". Unfortunately for James, the people did not rally around this new "king" and the invasion turned out to be a total failure.⁴⁹ As a result of Warbeck's presence in Scotland, Henry carried out a policy of friendship with the French in order to keep Scotland politically isolated.⁵⁰ Throughout the Warbeck situation, Henry had begun negotiations with Archibald Douglas, fifth Earl of Angus, "who was the leader of a family with some tradition of friendship towards England and of independence towards the Scottish monarchy."⁵¹ Through Angus, Henry was able to ply James with considerable sums of money and with the proposal that he work out a marriage arrangement with Margaret. In addition, James was coming under increasing pressure from the Scottish Council, a collection of the most important men in Scotland whose duty it was to advise the king on domestic and foreign affairs⁵², to father a legitimate heir worthy of the crown⁵³; the numerous royal bastards he had spawned were becoming something of a headache in the matter of royal succession. The French, who desired to continue their policy of friendship with Henry, were also pressuring James

to appease the English by ceasing hostilities and agreeing to the royal union.⁵⁴ Due to these political demands, as well as the eventual capture and imprisonment of Warbeck, James finally agreed to the treaty of Ayton in 1497, opening up the possibility of greater friendship between James and Henry. This possibility seemed endangered by a series of border incursions in 1501:

In this yere a sodeyne chaunce, ye a thinge of no moment nor worthy to be regarded had almost so kyndeled agayne ye olde displeasure and grudge betwene king Henry & king James of Scotland, ty could scace keep their hates & bridle theiir courages from warre & fighting. The first mocion of this displeasure was thus: Certeine young men of ye Scottes came armed vnto Northa castel & behelde it woderous circumspectly...But when ye keepers of ye castell could noot perceaue any hostilitee or dammage towards him or his, & seyng theim departe of their awne accorde, determined it not coueniet to moue any questio to them nor once to stirre oute, But whe thei came again ye next day & viewed it likewyse, the keepers of thesaide castel suspectynge some fraude to lurcke in their lookynge, demaunded of them what was their entent...The Scotted euen like theim selves, aunswered them proudly and rustically with many disdeynfull woordes. Insomuch that after their blustering and blowing aunswers made, Thenglishmen being vexed and moude there with al, replied to them with hard & manly strokes, and after many a sore blow geuen and taken on bothe parties, & diuerse Scottes wounded & some slayne, the Scottes ...fled as fast as their horses would carye them. When thry came home abd certefied the kyng of thesame, he was therewith sore moued & angry, and sware by swete saint Ninyan ye there was nothing to him more inconstant and vnsteadfast then the obseruyng of the league by the kyng of England, and sent word thereof to king Henry in all hast by Marchemount his herauld.⁵⁵

Henry, still desiring to create a lasting peace with Scotland, answered the charges brought against him in a most conciliatory manner:

...it was not done through his defaulte, neither by his counsell nor knowledge, but rather by the

temerarious folly of ye keepers of the castell, requyring him for that cause not to thinke the league infringed, promising in the woorde of a kyng to enquier of the truth and who were the malefactoures. And if ye offence were founde to be begone on the partie of the keepers of the castell, he assured hym that they should for no mede or fauoure escape payne and punishment.⁵⁶

In order to assuage the Scots, Henry sent Richard, the bishop of Durham, to arrange a reasonable settlement. When Richard arrived, he found the unexpected; James, bowing to political pressures, was ready to negotiate for the hand of Margaret. After six years of negotiations, an arrangement was finally reached; in January of 1502 a treaty was signed confirming the betrothal of Margaret and James. At the last minute in the treaty negotiations, Henry demanded that James not renew his "old league and covenant with France."⁵⁷ James, however, only agreed not to renew the alliance for a time, but would say no more on the matter; he regarded the link with France as an insurance policy against Scotland's becoming a satellite of England, yet only as long as England and France remained at peace would this position remain tenable.⁵⁸

In the marriage negotiations, as well as in the ceremony itself, the observer sees a trend which would come to mark the state of diplomatic relations: Anglo-Scottish relations more or less in the hands of a single influential noble. In this case, Thomas Surrey was personally responsible for both the marriage negotiations and for the conduct of Margaret into Scotland. Surrey, who had been

given command of the Northern borders during the Warbeck situation, was one of the most important and influential nobles of his time, and was primarily responsible for keeping the Scottish border in a state of chaos during Warbeck's stay with James. Interestingly enough, James and Surrey, once off the battlefield, would find themselves to be good companions. After the marriage festivities, the letter Margaret sends to her father is ample testimony to the influence Surrey was able to exert over James:

Sir, as for news I have none to send, but that my Lord of Surrey is in great favour with the King here, that he cannot forbear the company of him no time of the day. He and the Bishop of Moray ordereth everything as nigh as they can to the King's pleasure: I pray God it may be for my heart's ease in time to come. They call not my chamberlain to them which I am sure will speak better for my part than any of them that be of that counsel. And if he speak anything for my cause, my Lord of Surrey hath such words unto him that he dare speak no further. God send me comfort to his pleasure, and that I and mine that be left here with me be well entreated, such ways as they have taken. For God's sake, sir, hold me excused that I write not myself to your grace, for I have no leisure this time, but with a wish I would I were with your grace now, and many times more, when I would answer. As for this that I have written to your grace, it is very true, but I pray God I may find it well for my welfare hereafter. No more to your grace at this time, but our Lord have you in his keeping. Written with the hand of your humble daughter,--

Margaret⁵⁹

Margaret's letter not only reveals the power which Thomas, Lord of Surrey, could exert over James, it also demonstrates the general attitude shared by all of the English about Scotland. For the English it was a place filled with uncertainty, where rebellion could break out at the drop of hat, or the political climate could change from tolerance to hatred towards the English at the instigation

of the French. Even for the new queen, there was a nagging uncertainty about her fate in this strange, and seemingly barbarous land. After all, the Scottish nobles had slain their own king after the battle of Sauchieburn in 1488 for the "in-bringing of Englishmen."⁶⁰ Imagine Margaret's shock at first seeing the heavy belt of iron links which James wore outside of his clothes in penance for having participated in the rebellion against his father. In addition, she was soon to discover that the constant fear of rebellion was only one of the dangers of her new realm, there still remained the "wild Scots" of the north.

The Highlanders, or "wild Scots" as they were called by foreign observers, were descendants of the Picts and Scots "who had held the Romans at bay."⁶¹ They inhabited the north and west, and had preserved a great deal of the manners and customs of earlier periods (so much so, in fact, that they still spoke ancient Gaelic). Due to the rocky, barren terrain which they called home, the Highlanders survived by raiding and hunting in the much richer Lowlands. Those "luckless owners who tried to guard their property often lost their lives, while their homes and barns were looted and burned."⁶² Although James reassured his bride that the "wild Scots" were pacified under his rule, they required constant supervision to ensure their good behavior.

This unsettled aspect of Scotland's political landscape is one of the reasons that the English would not trust the region to a resident ambassador. After all, with the very

real possibility of a sudden change in power, combined with the dangers presented by the populace of Scotland itself, it was more prudent to rely on men such as Surrey, who knew England's border regions and had contacts among the various Scottish clans. Men such as these, who had taken part in numerous border skirmishes, would be less likely to be rattled by political upheavals, or the menacing character of the Scots themselves. In fact, due to their limited mobility and their need to appear "acceptable" in the eyes of their hosts, a resident ambassador might prove more of a detriment to the English than a boon in the "wild's" of Scottish politics. Indeed this realm was more suitable to the tender cares of men who could be as brutal as the atmosphere of the land itself; Thomas Dacre, Lord of the North.

PRELUDE: THE WARDEN OF THE NORTH--LORD DACRE

Henry VII's answer to the resident ambassador in Scotland was Thomas lord Dacre, sometimes called Lord Dacre of the North, Chief of the English Marches. For centuries, the Northern borders had been entrusted to the keeping of a few prominent northern families; generally these were the Percies, Nevilles, Cliffords, or the Dacres. These men were hardened by their environment, used to border clashes, pre-emptive strikes, and wanton destruction of the towns and villages of the Scots. Many of the Northern families had allies and confidants among the brigands who populated the no-man's zone separating the Northern border and the inhabited regions of Scotland, and they felt few qualms about resorting to the border raider's style of justice. Thomas Dacre was one of these men, hardened by life on the fringes of civilization. Perhaps the description in the Preface of "Letters and Papers of Henry VIII" will serve best to demonstrate this man's character:

fierce, imperious and indefatigable; not so fiery as Hotspur, but one to whom might be applied, more truly than to Hotspur himself, the exaggerated expression of prince Henry,--one that "would kill some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, wash his hands, and say to his wife: 'Fie upon this quiet life, I want work.'" But Dacre, unlike Hotspur, was a man of great policy, habituated to all those arts of disguise and surprise which had been fostered by his border life.⁶³

As Warden of the Marches, it was Dacre's duty to ensure that peace was maintained along the borders, and that the King's

wishes were satisfactorily carried out in Scotland. Because of the relative lawlessness of the area, Dacre ruled through force of arms and associations with various Scottish clans (particularly the Northern Tyne and border clans). Due to the free hand Dacre was accorded in the North, the only real restrictions which could be placed on him were the extent of his resources and the wishes of the king. It was not without some justification that Dacre could refer to himself as the king's "fiddling stick to hold Scotland in cumber and business."⁶⁴

The extent of Dacre's power in the North reveals one of the major concerns of the English monarchs: overly powerful nobles. Throughout his reign, Henry VII felt the need to restrict the actions of his nobles in order to avoid insurrection. However, the unique situation of the North, where an enemy army was virtually camped at the borders, meant that the Northern lords were relied upon more often than those nobles closer to England. As a result, their actions were rarely hampered by a fearful king. Because of the extent of their power, these Northern lords would prove to be a constant source of worry to the English monarchs. While Dacre's movements are not that well documented during the reign of Henry VII, mainly consisting of border raids and generally sending the Scottish authorities along the border into paroxysms of anger, he would leap into prominence after Henry's death.

THE KING IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE KING!

...The 1502 treaty, linked to the king's marriage to Henry's daughter, Margaret Tudor, could indeed have inaugurated long years of peace. But treaties are only as durable as the men who make them and Henry VII was not immortal.⁶⁵

Now, after the death of this noble Prince, Henry the. VIII. sonne to Kyng Henry the. VII. beganne his reigne the. xxii. dai of April, in the yere of our Lorde. 1509. and in the. xvii yere of his bodily age: Maximilian then beeyng Emperoure, and Lewes the. xii. reignyng in Fraunce. And Fernando beeyng kyng of Arragon and Castell, and kyng Iames the fourthe then ruling ouer the Scottes: whose stile was Proclaimed by the blast of a Trumpet in the citie od London, the. xxiii. daie of the saied monethe, with muche gladnes and reioysyng of the people.⁶⁶

While there may have been rejoicing in London, there was certainly little among the Scots. To the Scots, Henry was "a man even more vain, insecure and thirsty for glory than James."⁶⁷ In short, they realized that there was nothing more dangerous than an untried king yearning to get his feet wet in international politics, and prove his mettle as a prince in martial affairs. This attitude was doubly dangerous to the Scots considering their proximity to the new prince.

At first, Henry's time was consumed with marriage negotiations concerning Lady Catherine of Aragon and in endearing himself to the people of England; soon, however, he would turn to international matters. Indeed, it seemed as though Henry might follow the policies of his father when he renewed the treaties with Scotland which restrained border skirmishes and retaliation.⁶⁸ In fact, James and

Henry had a fairly good relationship at the start of Henry's reign, as is evidenced by James's correspondence with his "loving" brother-in-law:

After our most hardy reccomendation, dearest brother and cousin, We received your loving Letters written with your own hand, where through we understand good and kind heart ye bare to us, of the which we are right glad considering our tenderness of blood. God willing we shall bare the same to you, the which ye shall perceive indeed, if it pleasure you to charge us, as knoweth our Lord who have you in his keeping. At our Abbey of the Holy Cross the xi. day of June with the ill hand of your Cousin.

James R.⁶⁹

However, with Henry's marriage to Catherine came a naive trust in the advice of her father, Ferdinand, one of the most wily political schemers of the time. Ferdinand's overriding desire was to secure Henry's aid in his schemes against Louis XII.⁷⁰ Henry, "possessing the national prejudice against the French"⁷¹, was more than ready to lend his father-in-law whatever support he might need. Indeed, when the Abbot of Fecamp, Louis's ambassador, came to Henry in 1509, "he received anything but a warm welcome."⁷² The event is recorded by Badoer:

...The abbot announced the receipt by his King of a letter from King Henry, requesting friendship and peace, and stated that his king had sent him to confirm the said peace. Thereupon King Henry took offence, and, turning towards his attendants, exclaimed, "Who wrote this letter? I ask peace of the King of France, who dare not look me in the face, much less make war on me!!" With this he rose, nor would he hear anymore; so the ambassador withdrew. After this, "tilting at the ring" took place. The French ambassador was invited to be present, but no place having been reserved for him upon a stage reserved for guests, he departed in dudgeon. The King, however, had him recalled, and caused a cushion to be given him, and he sat down. In short, King Henry holds France in small account...⁷³

In addition, Pope Julius II sent Henry the Golden Rose, signifying him as a defender of the Christian faith, in 1510 in an attempt to win his support against the French. By 1511, Henry was "fully committed to an active share in European politics"⁷⁴. By October the Holy League, dedicated to the removal of French forces from Northern Italy, had been completed between Ferdinand and the Pope, and Henry was induced to join a few weeks later; in joining, Henry committed himself to prepare for war against the French in the following year.

Amidst his preparations for war, Henry received letters from Margaret, inquiring about her inheritance; her brother, Arthur, had bequeathed to her all of his personal property with the understanding that Henry VII would receive use of them first, but with his death they were still not forthcoming. In reply, Henry sent Dr. Nicholas West and Lord Dacre to Scotland in the hopes of using the inheritance issue to keep James from entering the upcoming war on France's side. At their interview, West made it clear that the inheritance would not be sent, unless Margaret could ensure James's neutrality in the upcoming clash; when asked if the jewels were ready to be sent, West replied only if "the king would promise to keep the treaty of peace"⁷⁵ and added that "if he (James) would make war (Henry)...would not only withhold that, but also take from them the best Towns they had."⁷⁶ Margaret's reply reflected the attitude which was beginning to exist in Scotland:

Right excellent, right high and mighty Prince, our dearest and best beloved Brother. We commend us unto you in our most hardy wise. Your ambassador Doctor West delivered us your loving letters...We cannot believe that of your mind or by your command we are so unfriendly delt with in our father's Legacy, whereof we would not have spoken nor written had not the Doctor now spoken to us of the same in his credence. Our husband knows it is withheld for his sake, and will recompense us so far as the Doctor shows him. We are ashamed therewith;...⁷⁷

When West returned to England, he had little choice but to inform Henry that he thought there was little hope of dissuading James from supporting his "auld ally".⁷⁸

Obviously, one can see the first cracks beginning to appear in the Anglo-Scottish peace. Beyond that, however, one can also see why relations between the two countries were better served by ad hoc ambassadors and personal diplomacy than by a permanent ambassador. Considering the messages of enmity which were regularly circulated between the two kingdoms, it would be hard for a permanent ambassador to exist in an area governed by absolute hatred and mistrust of his country. After all, for hundreds of years normal relations between the two countries generally consisted of countless border raids and a state of undeclared warfare. In fact, one could say that the only time relations between the two countries ever broke down was during periods of peace. In addition, the two countries were bound so closely by marriage and geography that letters between monarchs served as a franker, more direct method of communication. Also, how many permanent ambassadors could

deliver a direct insult to a pair of monarchs and still walk away unscathed?

Despite the affront to her stature as queen, Margaret still adopted a conciliatory tone towards James in matters concerning foreign policy⁷⁹; in fact, she "used her utmost endeavours to prevent an open breach of the peace with England."⁸⁰ James, however, was being drawn more and more into the sphere of French influence. Louis XII offered James a "grant of a whole disme 'throughout all his realm, on this side and beyond the Mountains, to be levied by the King of Scots within a year after the peace was made'; also a number of men of arms and shipping."⁸¹ Louis also promised James enough men and money to conduct a crusade into the Holy Land, knowing that this would play on his romantic spirit.⁸² Further, Anne of Brittany, Louis' Queen, wrote to James, "enclosing a ring plucked from her own finger, invoking him as her knight and assuring him that his delay in taking up arms against the English had given rise to aspersions on his valor which she was anxious to dispel."⁸³

For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquoise ring and glove
And charged him as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance,
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.⁸⁴

By this time, however, James was inextricably bound to the French cause; war with England was inevitable.

Throughout this tense period, Lord Dacre was in constant contact with Henry concerning the readiness of the border regions for Scottish hostilities. As of 1512, Dacre was advising the cessation of hostilities until the border regions were put into better order, so that it could be made "hard for the Scots to make enterprise within the realm."⁸⁵ Later, in December of the same year, Dacre was reporting on James's readiness to join the French enterprise, and gave a detailed report on the French provisions sent to Scotland⁸⁶; in the same letter, Dacre, having fortified the border, expressed his readiness to engage the Scots.

In June of 1513, Henry set out for Dover, where he appointed Catherine the Regent of England and ordered Surrey once more to the border. Upon his arrival at Calais, Henry was met by a Scottish herald bearing a list of grievances drawn up by James; he accused Henry of violating their peace treaty by arming the borders, and asked him to "desist from further invation and utter destruction of our brother and Cousin the most Christian king (Louis XII)."⁸⁷ Henry's reply left little doubt to his feelings towards James:

Now we perceyue the kyng of Scottes our brother in law & your master to be ye same person whome we euer toke hym to be, for we neuer estemed hym to be of any truthe & so nowe we haue founde it, for notwithsandyng his othe, his promise in ye woorde of kyng, & his awne hand and seale, yet nowe he hath broke his faith and promise to his great dishonour and infamie for euer, and entendeth to inuade our realme in our absence whiche he first not ones attempte, our person beinge presente, but he sheweth him self not to be degenerate from the condicones of his forefathers, whose faythes for the most pare hath euer byn violated and other promises neuer obserued, farther than they list. Therefore tell thy master, first that he shall neuer be comprised in any league where in I am a

confederate, & also that i suspecting his treuth (as now the dede proueth) haue left an earle in my realme at home which shallbe able to defende him and all his powre...but thus saye to thy master, that I am the very owner of Scotlad, & ye he holdeth it of me by my homage, and in so much as now contrary to his bounden duety he being my vasall, doth rebel against me...⁸⁸

After the heralds departure, Henry dictated a letter which represents his attitude not only towards James, but towards the Scottish in general:

Right excellent, right high, and mighty prince, &c. and haue receiued your writying...wherein after rehersal and accumulacio of many surmised iniuries grefes and damages doone by vs & our subiectes to you and your lieges,...remembering that to theim and euery of theim in effect reasonable aunswere founded vpon lawe and coscience hath tofor ben made to you and your counsail, ye not only requyre vs to desiste from farther inuasion and vtter destruction of your brother & Cousyng the French kyng, but also certifie vs that you will take parte in defence of thesayd kyng...your immagened quarells causeless deuised to breake with vs contrarye to your othe promised, all honor and kyndnesse: We cannot maruayle, considering the auncient accustomed manners of your progenitours, whiche neuer kept lenger faythe and promise than pleased them. Howbeit, yf the loue and dread of God, nighness of bloud, honour of the world, lawe and reason, had bound you, we suppose ye woulde neuer haue so farre proceded, specially in our absence. Wherein the Pope and all princes Christened may well note in you, dishonorable demeanour when ye lyeng in awayte seke the waies to do that in our sayde absence, which ye would haue ben well aduised to attempte, we beyng within our realme and present...Nevertheless, we remembrynge the brytlines of you promise and suspectyng though not wholly beleuying so much vnstedfastnes, thought it right expedient and necessarie to put our saide realme in a readyness for resisting of your sayde enterprises,...and requyte you and oure enemies, which by suche vnnatural demeanour haue gyuen sufficiente cause to the dysersion of you and your posterite for euer from the possyibilitie that ye thynke to haue to the royaume, whiche ye now attempte to inuade....Fynally as towchyng your requisicion to desist from farther attemptyng againste our enemy the French kyng, we knowe you for no competent iudge of so high aucthoritie to require vs in that benaife...⁸⁹

After sending this, Henry wrote to Catherine, advising her to tell Surrey to be ready for a defensive campaign in case the Scots invaded.⁹⁰ For James, this command signaled the beginning of the end.

Henry's reply to the Scottish herald and his subsequent letter, more than merely expressing his anger at James's affront, also reveals another reason why the "Renaissance prince" never sent a resident ambassador to Scotland. To the mind of an Englishman, Scotland was, and always had been, a part of England. It has been postulated that Henry learned to hate the Scots from his mentor John Skelton, who was virulently anti-Scottish.⁹¹ Far more than a learned response, however, Henry's answer harkens back to the time of Edward I and the "Auld Alliance". To the English kings, Scotland was nothing more than a fiefdom which owed its existence to the continuing tolerance and the whims of the King of England. Whatever any treaty might say and whatever agreements might have been made in the past, ingrained in the mindset of the English monarchs was the belief that Scotland was only an extension of England, existing by their grace. To send a resident ambassador to Scotland would have served as a recognition of its separateness, almost as an admission of their independence. The use of ad hoc ambassadors and border families allowed the English kings to treat the Scottish as they would some powerful, unruly nobleman; in this case by sowing discord among James's

subjects and resorting to a sword and fire policy when necessary.

After the "Ill Raid" (a preliminary Scottish invasion), James issued a formal declaration of war, in which he highlights one of the reasons why France was so secure in their political position in Scotland that they had no need for resident ambassadors:

We are not ignorant that here will be objected, the breach of a league between our brother and us. We have not broken that league...A national league is ever to be preferred before any personal; and an ancient to a new ally. The league between France and Scotland, having continued many ages, should justly be preferred before that of England, which we, as an ally of the House of England, did contract...for we declare and manifest that if our brother shall leave off the invasion of France,...that we will disband our forces,...and in the meantime consent to a truce, or cessation of arms, till a perfect and lasting peace can be concluded...⁹²

In this declaration, the reader finds clear evidence of Scotland's total commitment to the French cause. Although they usually came out on the losing end of this alliance, the Scots were too mired in their hate of the English to do anything other than support France. Why should the French waste their resources on sending a resident ambassador, when they had centuries of hate and mistrust of the English on their side? Confidant that the Scots would support them in any action, the French knew that Scotland would never deviate from the sphere of their influence.

In accordance with his declaration of war, James crossed the border and laid siege to Ford Castle. Upon capturing the castle, James was overcome by his rampant

libido. Seduced by the charms of Lady Heron, the lady of the castle, James dallied at Ford Castle for three weeks; more than enough time for Surrey to cross the border. At this time, Queen Catherine reported to Henry that "...They are all here very glad to be busy with the Scots, for they take it as a pastime."⁹³ When he arrived in Newcastle, Surrey issued a challenge to James to do battle on Friday, September 9th.⁹⁴ In response, James crossed the Till and took position an advantageous position on the hill of Flodden. Unfortunately for James, his estimation of his abilities as a general were far too great. Leaving his position on the hill, James led a mad charge into the enemy. "Their spears were too long and their daggers too short to offer much defense, for the English with their shorter halberts sliced away at the spears and gored the flesh before the rushing Scots could recover."⁹⁵

O Flodden Foeld the ruin to revolve
Or that most dolent day for to deplore
I Nill for dread that dolout to (you) dissolve
Or show how that prince in his triumphant glory
Destroyed was what needed process more
Not by the virtue of English ordinance
But by his own wilfull misgovernance.

Alas that day had been counselable
He had obtained laud, glory, and victory
Whose piteous process being so lamentable
I nill at length to put in memory
I never read in tragedy nor story
At one journey so many nobles slain
For the defense and love of their sovrein⁹⁶

As the victorious English moved over the bloody field, they found almost 11,000 dead; among those reckoned dead were the king himself, his son (Archbishop) Alexander, 12 earls, 14

lords, a bishop, two abbots, and knights and nobleman of almost every Scottish family.⁹⁷ In one battle, the flower of Scotland's manhood had been all but snuffed out, the Scottish threat had been averted, and the period of Regency was about to begin.

THE REGENCY

Margaret, at James's insistence, had been named regent of the realm and tutrix of her son, James V. Despite James's mistrust of the English, he realized that Margaret's actions would be closely watched by the Scottish nobility and therefore had little fear of investing her with so much authority. Within days of Flodden, Margaret was already grasping the reigns of power. Summoning the remaining councilors and noblemen left in Scotland, Margaret created some semblance of government. In addition, she contacted her brother, urging peace "for her kingdom, protection for her son, and renewed truce between the two realms."⁹⁸ Henry replied that "if the Scots want peace, they can have it..."⁹⁹ Since the main advocate of the French alliance had fallen in battle, and his pro-English sister was now at the helm of Scottish government, Henry could afford to be generous in terms of peace. Unfortunately, he still held a grudge against a number of the border inhabitants.

It is during this period of the Regency (1513-1514) that one can truly see the influence of the border magnates over Scottish affairs. After the terrible events at Flodden, it seemed as though Surrey might push unopposed into the heart of Scotland. Fortunately, Surrey had too few men and horses for such an endeavor¹⁰⁰ and was forced to disband the levies he had gathered. Lord Dacre, however, was left to carry out Henry's desires along the border. On

November 10, Dacre carried out two raids, at the insistence of Henry, upon the West and Middle Marches. In his letter to Henry on November 13, 1513, he readily describes the destruction he wrought:

...Upon Thursday last past I assembled your subjects...and rode in at Gallespeth...and there set forth two forays--my brother..., who burnt and destroyed the town of Rowcastle, with all the corn..., and won two towers in it, and burnt both roof and floor; and Sir Roger Fenwick,...(who) burnt the town of Langton and destroyed all the corn therein... My said brother came in at Cressopbridge and there entered the Middle Marches,...fourteen miles within the ground of Scotland, and then put forth two forays. Sir John Ratcliff,...burnt the town at Dyker, with a tower in the same; they laid corn and straw to the door and burnt it both roof and floor, and so smoked them out. Also the said Sir John and his company burnt the towns of Snowden and Lurchestrother,...and took divers prisoners with much insight and goods. Nicholas Harrington, Nicholas Ridley, Thomas Medilton, and George Skelton,...burnt the town of Hyndhalghede;...and in likewise the towns of West Sawside and East Sawside...We put us in array to come homewards, and rode no faster than our sheep and swine that we had won would drive, which were of no great substance, for the country was warned of our coming, and the beacons burnt from midnight forward.

Please it your grace, as for the Raid to be made upon your West March I cannot see how it can be done conveniently unto the next light, for two considerations; one is that I dare not be absent from this Middle March during this light...; and one other is that my servants' horses, which came to this Raid, were sore laboured for they rode twenty-eight hours without any abate...And in the next light I shall, God willing, perform the said Raid; and in the mean time shall cause small Raids be made, which shall be as great annoyance to the Scots as a great Raid should be and thus shall your money be employed to the best I can, and for the greatest hurt and destruction of the Scots;...101

Dacre's attitude in this letter harkens back to those men who regarded going to war against the Scots as a "pastime", and once again reveals the English disgust for all things Scottish. One can see in his letter an almost gleeful pride

in the damage he and his brother wrought upon the Scottish countryside. Indeed, he seems to deeply regret the fact that he cannot continue his mission of destruction until his men are rested enough to carry out their work with renewed vigor. For Dacre and his men, torturing the Scottish, burning their towns and villages, and carrying off their animals and goods was more than just sport, it was a life's calling. Little wonder that no English ambassador ever stayed for more than a few weeks! When one considers the hostility which existed between the two, unabated by the royal marriage, it is obvious that a resident ambassador from either nation would not survive long in his host country. While the killing of an ambassador was not exactly a common occurrence, mobs were far too prevalent in both countries. One could hardly predict what an angry mob of Scottish or English citizenry might do to the representative of the opposing power.

While it was "contrary to all Scots custom and tradition which allowed the regency to the man nearest in blood to the young king"¹⁰², Margaret was allowed to remain tutrix of her son. Once again pregnant with James's child, and made tutrix by James's will, Margaret's position as head of the government was more or less safe. Despite attempts by the Earl of Arran, James V's uncle, to seize the regency, the Scottish lords refused to grant it as long as "the queen kept her widowhood and her body clean from lechery."¹⁰³

The seventeen month old king's coronation on 21 September 1513, known as the "Mourning Coronation", was not merely a coronation, but a fond goodbye to "peaceful and prosperous times."¹⁰⁴ The people of Scotland, well acquainted with the effects of a royal minority, were prepared for the worst (especially considering how long a minority James V's promised to be). Sure enough, soon after the Scottish Parliament ratified Margaret's appointment as guardian of the King, opposition among the nobility and clergy began to emerge. The opposition soon coalesced into a very vocal pro-French party, which began to call for the appointment of John, Duke of Albany, as regent. Adhering to the tradition of entrusting the regency to the King's nearest adult male kinsman, the pro-French Scots found Albany to be an excellent alternative; Albany was the son of James III's brother, making him the closest male kinsman, had important political contacts in France, and had the added bonus of not being English. In addition, the pro-French faction's resolve was further hardened by a promise from king Louis to send an army of Frenchmen to Scotland commanded by the Duke of Albany; the offer arrived a day before Margaret announced that she had gotten Henry to agree to a one year truce. To make peace, as was Margaret's intention, was a repudiation of Louis's offer. Others, who held no pro-French sympathies, were also anxious for French aid. When James had left for Flodden, he had apparently emptied the treasury for the war effort. The money which

James had set aside for Margaret's safe-keeping was never turned over to the Scottish treasury and the government was in dire financial straits. To many, it seemed as though France was the only hope of salvation. Pregnant and plagued by sickness, Margaret was helpless to resist the Council's formal request to "invite the Duke over from France to wrest from the people coin to fill the empty treasury."¹⁰⁵

Unfortunately for the Scots, Albany was extremely reluctant to accept such an invitation. From his childhood, Albany had been raised amid the French court and culture. He had married a French heiress, and was "entirely a man of France in outlook, feelings and habits."¹⁰⁶ He spoke no Scottish, and his only link to Scotland was by ancestry and infrequent correspondence with James IV.¹⁰⁷ As a result, Albany hesitated while he tried to make up his mind.

For Margaret, conditions grew steadily worse; the parliament of March 20 bore this out. The young lords, despising the idea of being ruled by a woman, used any excuse available to undercut Margaret's position. The embassy she wished to send to England "was delayed for the most trifling reasons."¹⁰⁸ Despite her protests, excuses were found to delay the ambassador to England until Albany arrived in case he might want continue the war with England. In addition, many of the pro-French faction were putting forth the idea that Margaret should marry Louis, thereby welding the two kingdoms together. Weakened by both her political and physical struggles, Margaret retired to

Stirling to deliver James's posthumous child. All of these events were reported in detail to Henry by Lord Dacre (April 8, 1514):

On breaking up of the Scottish Council on the 5th, the Parliament was "continued" to the 15th of May. The bill for Albany's restitution was read, but is not yet determined. A herald will be sent to England to demand safe conduct for ambassadors on the pretense that some of those mentioned in the last are sick; really to prolong the time till they know if Albany is coming, in which case they will send none. They have dispatched Islay herald by the West coast, to invite him to come secretly and be their protector. The Queen has taken her chamber at Stirling Castle. If the French King pleases to marry her he can have her.¹⁰⁹

While recovering from childbirth, Margaret found that more and more power was slowly being assumed by the Council. Her only real authority was in the proximity of the young king himself. Increasingly, Margaret found herself relying upon the traditionally pro-English House of Douglas. In the infighting which occurred amongst the Scottish factions, law was thrown to the wind. Again, this is reported by Dacre (June 4, 1514):

Sir, of a surety, there is noder law ne reason ne justice at this day used ne kept in Scotland, but git that git may.¹¹⁰

The lawlessness would only increase once Margaret's secret marriage was discovered.

On August 6, Margaret had secretly married nineteen year old Archibald Douglas the Earl of Angus. Margaret's primary reasons for marrying Angus were that he was both handsome and head of the powerful House of Douglas. With all the pressure being placed on her by the various Scottish

factions, Margaret was in desperate need of support, both politically and emotionally. The ceremony was kept private, and no one knew of the marriage for several weeks. Truly, Margaret could not have found a worse match. Angus, being the head of the pro-English Douglas clan, drew the enmity of most of the pro-French Council members. As Margaret heaped rewards upon the Angus's family, the anger of the French faction increased until they discovered the truth behind the marriage. Unbeknownst to Margaret, the Council decided that she had forfeited her right as the king's guardian with her second marriage. When she arrived at Parliament in August, she was greeted by unkind glances and the news that she was no longer regent of Scotland.¹¹¹ She would have to resign the regency in favor of Albany, James IV's nearest kinsman.¹¹² Fearing the Council's anger, Margaret was forced to retreat to her castle at Stirling. On September 18, Parliament formally requested Albany's presence in Scotland. As usual, all of these activities were faithfully reported to Henry by Dacre.

The one conciliation which Margaret had were the promises of English aid brought by Dacres' men. Promised an English army to suppress the rebellious Scots, Margaret was beginning to feel that her position was secure. Unfortunately, Henry had no intention of sending an army, as this would alienate Louis, and perhaps restart hostilities. The one service which Henry was able to extend to his sister was Louis' promise that he would detain the Duke of Albany

in France. Although in time this might have allowed Margaret to reconsolidate her power, Louis died only a few weeks later. With the accession of Francis I to the French throne, Louis's promise was negated. While Francis still intended to maintain peaceful negotiations with England, he recognized the usefulness of Scotland. As a result, Francis was intent on preserving the "auld alliance".¹¹³

THE DEPOSITION

To the great relief of the Scots, Albany appeared off the Scottish coast on May 17. The Scots were somewhat dismayed that Albany was not accompanied by a French army with which to crush the English. Albany, however, was committed to a policy of peace, as long as that suited Francis. Rather than initiate another war with England, Albany's mission was to ensure that Scotland remained out of Margaret's hands, and was drawn ever further into the French sphere of influence.

At first, Albany attempted to endear himself to Margaret in the hopes of gaining her support. Margaret, however, was far from receptive. Albany was aware that without the support of the Queen or the custody of the king, his authority was in danger. Realizing this, Margaret retreated with her children to Stirling in the hope of delaying the inevitable. When the day of reckoning did come, and four emissaries from parliament appeared before the gates of Stirling for the children, Margaret demanded six days to consider their mandate. It is unknown what actions she might have intended to take in these six days, but Henry and Lord Dacre were not idle. Still bound by the French treaty, Henry's only option in Scotland was insurrection. He ordered Lord Dacre to renew his border raids and stir up trouble among the border clans. For Dacre, this was welcome news. "As he raged, burned and pillaged the villages, farms, the barns and fields, as he

slaughtered the cattle and the sheep, he wooed Hume the chamberlain into becoming the chief rival of the Duke of Albany. Hume, while not betraying any English interests, entered the border raids with delight and waged angry destruction on his own lands and against his own people with English arms and munitions."¹¹⁴

Not to be intimidated by a few border raids, or the bold actions of a woman, Albany ordered the siege of Stirling castle. Dacre, however, had arranged a plan by which Hume and Angus, accompanied by sixty men, could smuggle the king and his brother from the castle and carry them across the border into England. Unfortunately, Hume and Angus arrived late, and found the castle under siege. As a result of this failed attempt, Margaret was forced to give her children over to Albany, and was escorted to her chambers at Edinburgh.

THE ESCAPE

As has already been mentioned, Lord Dacre, King Henry's "fiddling stick", was very busy during Margaret's period as regent. Throughout the regency, Dacre was busy concentrating his efforts on the Scottish nobility. After securing the services of Lord Home, Chamberlain of Scotland, as well as the support of Angus and the Douglas clan, it seemed as though Dacre would have the support he needed to smuggle the queen and children across the border. After Margaret's capture, and the open rebellion of Lord Home (i.e. during the escape attempt at Stirling)¹¹⁵, Dacre's plan seemed to be in ruins. However, few people could realize the full extent of this man's resourcefulness.

Sequestered at Edinburgh, Margaret was isolated from both her children and any opportunity to seize power. In addition, she lost the privacy of her correspondence. Earlier, Margaret had warned her brother to disregard any correspondence not signed "your loving sister"; any other correspondence had been written under duress. Albany, however, soon discovered this ploy and supervised (more or less writing) all of her writings. Dacre also discovered Margaret's little ploy, and made a regular practice of intercepting all letters from Margaret to Henry. Indeed, in August, Dacre discovered that Albany had compelled the Queen to write to Henry, Francis, and the Pope assuring them that she was content in her present situation. Albany, however,

intercepted the French messenger, and forwarded all three letters to England. "After this episode the statement which was reiterated by the Duke in his letters to Dacre, Henry, and others that 'the Queen is content' received no credence from his correspondents."¹¹⁶ In addition to intercepting the letters, Dacre also issued a letter to Albany proclaiming exactly why the Queen was not "content".

Few resident ambassadors, for fear of their position and the political repercussions, would be able to do as Dacre had. In addition to insulting the Regent of Scotland, as well as intercepting French messengers, Dacre was also assisting the Scottish nobles to riot, and secreting messages to Margaret in which he put forward various escape plans of his own devising. By the beginning of September, Margaret was ready to accept Lord Dacre's schemes.¹¹⁷

Nearly seven months pregnant, Margaret appealed to Dacre for his aid. After telling her that her former refusals of his plans had led to "the utter destruction of the King and prince, your sons, my master's nephews"¹¹⁸, he put forth his idea. Margaret was to get permission to leave for Linlithgow for her "lying in" period. From there, Margaret was to escape under cover of darkness (with the aid of Angus and the Douglasses) and proceed to Blackadder Castle. Dacre would meet her there, and then convey her across the border into England. Along with this message, Dacre conveyed a sum of money for the bribing of servants, etc.¹¹⁹

Receiving permission from Albany to go to Linlithgow, Margaret began her journey on September 13, 1515. She and Angus, under cover of night, left the castle and met George Douglas along the road; Douglas conveyed them to Lord Hume, who conducted them to Tantallon Castle (a Douglas fortress). From Tantallon, Margaret finally reached Blackadder. Safe from the Scottish lords at last, Margaret began to plan for the escape of her children. Hoping to draw away the garrison at Stirling, Lord Hume set fire to one of his own towns.¹²⁰ Unfortunately, Albany was far too diligent to be drawn away from the presence of the king. Instead, he declared Lord Hume a rebel and arsonist, and ordered the immediate capture of the Queen.

Fearing Albany's intentions, Margaret, at Lord Dacre's insistence, fled to Berwick, "the gateway to England."¹²¹ Unfortunately, the commander of the English garrison at Berwick had no idea that Margaret's arrival was imminent, and had orders to refuse entrance to anyone from Scotland, even to the king's sister. As a result, Margaret was forced to take refuge at a local church. Hearing of this, Albany dispatched a French ambassador to Berwick bearing a letter of concessions to Margaret; if he could not win her by force, he would try diplomacy. Just as the ambassador arrived to see the Queen, he was informed that she had already left for Morpeth Castle, one of Lord Dacre's strongholds. In truth, Dacre was at that moment escorting Margaret out the back door of the church. After a brief

"laying in' at Morpeth, Margaret finally entered London on the third of March.¹²² "The King's 'fiddling stick' had again succeeded in keeping Scotland dancing to England's tune."¹²³

CONCLUSION

In the end, due in large part to Lord Dacre's rather disturbing influence, Albany found the Scots too hard to govern.¹²⁴ After two years as Regent, he returned to France. He had, however, managed to strengthen the bond between France and Scotland by his presence. Albany's departure, as well as his influence over the Scots, highlights the general theme of this paper: the major powers did not have to rely on resident ambassadors to influence Scotland because they had other methods.

The French had relied for centuries on the "Auld Alliance" to keep on good terms with Scotland. Although the Scots invariably came out on the losing end of this arrangement, they were loath to repudiate the agreement; it was one of the few things which prevented wholesale war with the English. For the French, a permanent ambassador would be a waste of money and man-power; far better to send ad hoc ambassadors when the situation called for it (as is evident from Albany's brief stay). The French were confident that as long as Scotland and England were joined by geography and mutual hatred, they could always count on the goodwill of the Scots. Bound by economic and political ties which had existed for generations, the French were secure in their Scottish alliance.

On the English side, there were better ways of dealing with Scotland than by sending a resident ambassador; they relied on fear and intimidation. Lord Dacre was the primary

instrument of English "diplomacy". Through Dacre and the other English border families, the English kings were able to influence Scottish affairs. No resident ambassador would be capable of carrying out the kind of actions which Dacre performed on a regular basis. In addition to transmitting the mundane types of information expected of an ambassador, dacre also intercepted messengers, engaged in border warfare, and was given almost limitless authority in his relations with Scotland. With men such as this at Henry's disposal, who were ready to commit any act imaginable for the king's welfare, and who were able to operate almost unrestrained by any rules of conduct, why should any English king bother with a resident ambassador? While this may have solved Henry's problem along the border, it would later lead to greater difficulties. Because of their isolation from court, and the great power they were invested with, the Northern families would often play a pivotal role in English uprisings. For example, in 1528 a number of the Northern lords felt confident enough in their abilities to support the Pilgrimage of Grace in response to increasing tax demands.¹²⁵ By relying on these Northern lords, the English monarchs may have controlled the border, but they had left themselves open to internal risings.

Aside from the presence of the Northern families, two other reasons for the absence of an English ambassador also come into play. Firstly the Scottish disdain for all things English made the sending of an ambassador impractical.

Secondly, the presence of Margaret was seen as an almost certain assurance of peace. At the very least, Henry was sure that he could rely on her to temper James's pro-French attitude, and to help create a pro-English atmosphere.

As to those other powers which have only been mentioned in passing, they had concerns of their own which kept them from taking an active interest in Scotland. The Holy Roman Emperor, for example, was engrossed in his Italian affairs. In a like manner, most of the larger powers were caught up in their own continental affairs and would have felt that France's influence over the Scots was too powerful to bother with the sending of an ambassador.

While many historians point to Scotland as a primitive nation, too mired in the backwardness of the Middle Ages to receive permanent ambassadors, it is more accurate to say that the new "enlightened" princes were too set in their ancient biases to send any. From England's ancestral hate to France's security in an age old alliance, it's evident that these two "enlightened" powers were hampered in their relations with Scotland by their medieval outlook.

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