An unusual episode in international diplomatic relations in the early seventeenth century: Sully's embassy to London, June 1603

The recent publication of volume IV of Sully's *Œconomies royales* (1) allows a reassessment of the diplomatic activity following the accession of James I (James VI of Scotland) in 1603, when he succeeded Queen Elizabeth. The king of France, Henri IV, chose as his emissary on this occasion his principal minister, the baron de Rosny (later known as the *duc de Sully*), who thirty years later gave an extensive account of this embassy in his memoirs. Comparing these memoirs with the English sources allows us to come to a fuller understanding of the diplomatic manœuvres that took place in London (2).

Sully had the advantages both of being a Protestant and of occupying a central position in Henri's government, where he was in charge of finances, communications, the artillery and fortifications. This gave him a prestige which allowed him to debate with James I almost as an equal. The English king was also deeply read in theology, as was Sully, who frequently debated in Paris with Catholic prelates, several of whom were his friends (3).

Queen Elizabeth died on 24 March 1603, or 3rd April according to the Gregorian calendar, which we shall follow (4). England's ports had been shut, but the news leaked out to the governor of Dieppe by April 7th, and he sent the news on to Paris. It reached Sully there on April 8th, and he notified such officials as the ambassadors for England and Scotland. Henri IV was on a visit to eastern France, but he knew of the death by April 10th (5).

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(1) The *Œconomies royales* were privately printed in 1638-1640 at the *château* of Sully-sur-Loire, and were several times re-edited, notably in 1837 in the collection of Michaud and Poujoulat. A new edition, edited by David Buisseret and Bernard Barbiche, is being published since 1970 by the Société de l'histoire de France; the fourth volume of this edition appeared in 2019.

(2) The present article builds on a paper given by David Buisseret at the conference titled « Sully, le ministre et le mécène » (23-24 November 2012) whose proceedings were published in 2014 in the « Cahiers d'Aubigné » (*Albineana* 26) pp.171-180.

(3) See « Un huguenot irénique » in *Sully*, by Bernard Barbiche and Ségolène de Dainville-Barbiche (Paris, 1997) pp.414-423.

(4) In England, the early Julian calendar would survive until 1572.

(5) *Œconomies royales,* t. IV, p.63, n. 1.

The Queen's death precipitated a major upset in the diplomacy of western Europe. Elizabeth and the Spanish monarchy had been at loggerheads, with the Spaniards seeking to interfere in English domestic politics, and English seamen like Sir Francis Drake ravaging Spanish trade in the New World, while Elizabeth herself supported the longstanding war of independence being waged by the United Provinces. Spain and France had theoretically made peace by the Treaty of Vervins (1598), but the old open hostilities had in fact given way to a period of cold war, waged enthusiastically by both sides. The question now became, what would be the policy of James I ? Would he pursue the « auld alliance » of Scotland and France as English sovereign, or would he too seek peace with Spain ?

These problems would play out in London during the months following Elizabeth's death, as various countries sent their representatives to James' court, seeking to advance their interests. In France, the King convened a meeting of his leading councillors, and they drew up a set of instructions, to which Sully largely contributed (6). Some of these instructions were general in nature : he was to congratulate James on his accession, to deliver to him personal letters from the French king and queen, to ratify existing treaties and so forth. He was not to make a point of complaining about English pirates, and would only broach the subject of marriages for the two kings' children if the subject arose. He would try to promote the cause of the English Catholics, whose position was ambiguous; would James continue the relatively hostile policies of Elizabeth, or would he let himself be persuaded by his Catholic wife ?

The heart of his negotiation would be England's future relations with Spain. Ideally, Henri IV wanted a continuation of the aggressive policies of Queen Elizabeth; failing this, he at least wanted a continuation of English support for the revolt in the Netherlands, which was so draining to Spanish power. Such support would crucially involve aid for the Dutch town of Ostend, which the Spaniards had been trying to capture since July 1601. In fact, Henri IV wanted the English to continue a war with Spain that the French crown had already given up; this was an unlikely theme for successful negotiation.

It was regarded as a source of great prestige to accompany a foreign embassy, and so Sully would be leading a large party to England, consisting of nearly one hundred prominent Frenchmen and about three hundred of their servants. Among the party was the Italian gentleman Giovanni Degli Effetti, a spy of the papal court, whom Sully consented to take at the request of the papal nuncio in Paris, with whom he was particularly close (7). It would be the task of Degli Ef-

(6) For these instructions, see *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, pp.74-76.

(7) On the activities of Degli Effetti see the *Correspondance du nonce en France Innocenzo del Bufalo*, ed. Bernard Barbiche (Rome/Paris, 1964).

fetti, who stayed on after the return of the main party, to make contacts among the leaders of Catholicism in England, and to report back to Rome concerning their activity (8).

Sully left Paris with his party on June 7th, 1603, and made his way north to Calais, where he arrived on June 13th. The passage of such a large party could be compared to the progresses periodically undertaken by monarchs like Henri IV and Queen Elizabeth, who were sometimes ironically said to eat their way around their major supporters. On this journey, food and lodging would have been relatively easy to find in great towns like Beauvais, Abbeville, Montreuil and Boulogne, as the party advanced at the rate of roughly 25 miles a day.

There was a problem at Calais, as the French monarchy did not have suitable vessels for crossing the strait to England. Sully was at this time building up a fleet of Mediterranean galleys, to protect French commerce in those parts, but the French navy lacked what were called "vaisseaux ronds" for northern waters (9). Both the English and the Dutch admirals in Calais offered their services, and Sully decided to accept the English offer, setting sail with his party on June 15th.

This led to a diplomatic incident as the ship on which he was sailing approached the English coast. A small accompanying French ship flew the French ensign as the two ships entered English waters, and the English captain, furious at this violation of English sovereignty, threatened to fire on the French vessel. Sully succeeded in calming things, and the English admiral eventually made amends by explaining to his French counterpart that the English captain was a rough-and-ready mariner, unused to diplomatic niceties. This would be the first of several contretemps which would test Sully's speed and appropriateness of reaction during his embassy.

Arriving in the afternoon, Sully and his contingent were greeted by Sir Lewis Lewkenor, newly-appointed master of ceremonies, and spent the night in Dover. The gentlemen of Kent had been warned by their sheriff to provide about one hundred carts to carry the French group's possessions, and this seems to have worked quite well (10). After a quick visit to Dover Castle, where Sully was not invited to view the fortifications, the party moved on to Canterbury, attending a

(8) The Venetians were astonishingly well informed about Sully's mission. In August 1603 secretary Scaramelli wrote back to the Doge that « I have discovered that there is a Roman here, a soldier, called Giovanni Degli Effetti. He speaks excellent French, plays brilliantly, and has very good manners... [He] is cautiously collecting all the news he can to forward it to the nuncio or to Rome ». *Calendar of State Papers (Venice) 1603-1607* (London, 1900). p.52.

(9) *Œconomies royales* t. IV, p.81, n. 5.

(10) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, p.82, n. 4.

service in the cathedral that Sully much admired. It seemed to him that the spectators along the way were unusually enthusiastic, perhaps, as he put it, because many of them were Protestant textile-workers who had fled the Spanish Netherlands. The next day, June 17th, they moved on to Rochester, a smaller town in which it was hard to find accommodation. Suitable houses were marked with symbols, but these were sometimes effaced by the townspeople. The following day, greeted by Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton, and by Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, they embarked at Gravesend on a group of elegant "barges" designed for carrying people, and made their way up the River Thames to the Tower of London. Here they were greeted by a furious display of cannon-fire, particularly appealing to Sully, who in France as *grand maître de l'artillerie* had organized many such a display himself.

The group then found lodging in London, where Sully stayed for three days with the French ambassador, Christophe de Harlay, comte de Beaumont. The danger of spreading so large a group among foreign hosts was shown when the young Charles de Combault, the only son of the grand audiencier de France, – a person known to be intemperate –, quarrelled with a Londoner and killed him. Sully heard of this when he was playing cards with some friends, and members of his party began to crowd into his room, seeking refuge from an infuriated London mob. Having identified the culprit by a close interrogation, Sully demanded, against the advice of Beaumont, that Combault receive the death penalty, at the hands of an English executioner. After a good deal of argument, it was agreed that the case should be decided by the Lord Mayor of London. This affair had roused a great deal of local indignation, and Sully's decision seems to have averted damage to the viability of his embassy (11).

While staying with Beaumont, Sully had his first meeting with Robert Cecil, England's Secretary of State who, having served Queen Elizabeth, had now passed on to James. Cecil and Sully were often to encounter each other over the next two weeks, and generally did not agree. In summary, Cecil was hostile to ventures against the Spanish Empire, and was to some degree ready to let the United Provinces fend for themselves. After staying for three days with Beaumont, Sully moved on June 21st to sumptuous lodgings at Arundel House, one of the celebrated « Strand palaces » west of the City; here he was able to establish himself in an elegant room with a view on the river. Like most of the grand buildings in this part of London, Arundel House had its own access to the river, which was the fastest way of traversing London at this time. At this base Sully received representatives from the United Provinces, from Venice and from the Count Pala-

(11) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, pp.85-87.

(12) Frederick IV, Count Palatine, was leader of a group of German princes trying to support the cause of the duc de Bouillon, a Protestant noble leader whose loyalty to Henri IV was suspect.

tine (12). The most important of these visitors was Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, come to plead the cause of the Netherlands.

The next day, Sunday 22nd June, Sully and about one hundred of his followers embarked on a number of barges, and made their way downstream to Greenwich, where they were received by James I in the slightly ramshackle palace of Placentia, with its wonderful views on the river. This first reception had a deeply symbolic aspect. Sully had been formally instructed that on this occasion he and his followers should wear mourning, in memory of Queen Elizabeth. But various English advisers had at the last moment strongly advised him that this would be very distasteful to James I, whose mother, Mary Queen of Scots, had after all been put to death by Elizabeth. So his party's dress was changed at the last minute, showing remarkable flexibility. As the Venetian secretary in London put it, « all got into their most fantastic costumes and went to Greenwich » (13). The English king was happy not to pay posthumous homage to his predecessor.

Sully's personal audience with James on this occasion was confined to small talk. James asked Sully if it were true that in addressing the Pope he would use the title « His Holiness, » an abusive usage to many Protestants. Sully claims to have replied that it was good to give rulers the title that they claimed, even if this was invalid; perhaps he was referring audaciously to the way in which English kings still kept « France » in their title. James also asked Sully if he were intending to convert to Catholicism, given his well-known familiarity with many Catholic prelates in Paris; Sully assured him that he had no such intention. There was a good deal of talk about hunting, James being an active (and indeed obsessed) hunter of deer, and so enjoying a fellow-sport with the French king. Sully assured him that his administrative duties left him no time for the pleasures of the chase. In general, to follow their conversation is to get the impression that they got on rather well together, each perhaps respecting the other's learned pedantry.

A couple of days elapsed after this first audience, and Sully partially used them to sound out the opinions of the leading British nobles, as well as of the foreign diplomats assembled in London. It seemed to him that the British nobles fell into four groups. First were those whose loyalty was primarily to the new king, and these included figures such as John Erskine, earl of Mar, Charles Blount, lord Mountjoy, and Sir Thomas Erskine, captain of the royal guards. They saw their interest as inclining rather towards France than anywhere else, influenced as they were by the reputation of Henri IV (14). Then came a pro-Spanish,

(13) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, p.112, n. 3.
(14) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, pp.322-323.

often old Catholic party, which notably included the Howard and Hume families (including Charles Howard, earl of Nottingham, Thomas Howard, earl of Suffolk, and George Hume, earl of Dunbar). There was also a large group of traditionalists like Robert Cecil, described as « having the ancient English attitude, that is to say being enemies of France ». Finally, Sully identified a large number of free spirits who simply wanted to take advantage of any change ; among these he numbered Henry Brook, lord Cobham, Sir Walter Raleigh and Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton. Subsequent plots would confirm the accuracy of Sully's assessment of this fourth group. Their plots also confirmed for James I that the Catholic factions were not to be trusted.

A second audience took place on Wednesday, June 25th, and this time the talk was more substantive. It became plain that James would not engage England in a war with Spain, but that he was resolved to offer some help to the Netherlands. As Cecil later put it, his master was resolved not to let the United Provinces go under; neither would he risk ruin to save them (15). Various German princes had hoped that James I could be persuaded to take up the cause of the duc de Bouillon, a discontented French Protestant magnate with a powerful base at Sedan. But this was not a cause in which James could be recruited, for he was a full-blooded believer in the Divine Right of Kings, and would do nothing to encourage wayward subjects like Bouillon.

On Sunday, June 29th, James offered Sully and his party a splendid feast at Greenwich. In conversation with Sully, the King mentioned for the first time the possibility of a dynastic alliance, but nothing came of it at this stage. It seems to have been about now that, upon the advice of Cecil, James began to be attracted to an ingenious plan for helping the Dutch indirectly. During the reign of Elizabeth, Henri IV had often received subsidies to maintain his armies in the field, and by 1603 these loans amounted to about 3 375 000 *livres.* What if the French now continued to support the Dutch, counting part of their payment against what they owed the English ? James would thus be able to recover Elizabeth's loans, simultaneously helping the Dutch in their desperate struggle; of course, this arrangement would need to be secret.

In the days which followed, this plan seemed increasingly attractive, as the time came for Sully to wind up his visit. Towards the end of June, though, he seemes to have fallen ill with a recurrence of an old wound that he had received at Chartres in 1591, and this malady disrupted the hitherto even flow of his correspondence with France. Verifiable letters exist that he wrote from London on June 20th, 24th and 28th. After that time there are three long and eccentric letters all dated July 10th, a manifestly impossible date, as Sully had left London on July

(15) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, p.142.

(16) At the Archives départementales du Calvados (F 7276, fo. 50-58) may be found elements of these letters, under the heading « Minutte de la lettre escrite au Roy par Monseigneur le duc de Sully lors de son ambassade d'Angleterre » .

5th, crossing the Channel on July 8th. It is largely from these misdated letters that it is possible to reconstruct the final events of the embassy (16).

Before he left London on July 5th, Sully seems to have had one final audience with James I, at the Palace of Westminster. The simple « traicté » which they then signed (for Sully was not authorized to conclude a full-blown alliance) crucially included the words that France would supply such money as the Netherlands needed, half of this counting against what might be owed to the King of England (17). This agreement was modified occasionally, notably when Cecil insisted that only one-third of the money could count against the debts. It was ratified with unusual speed, at Villers-Cotterêts for France on July 19th, and then on August 9th at Hampton Court. It was supposed, of course, to be secret (18), but as early as August 7th its main terms had been described to the doge of Venice by the Venetian representative in Paris, Angelo Badoer, and we know that Philip III of Spain was equally well informed (19).

The sequence of subsequent payments is also well known to us, thanks to Sully's meticulous book-keeping as *surintendant des finances* (20). In 1603 and 1604, France paid 1 350 000 *livres* to support the Netherlands, and from 1605 to 1607 increased this amount to 1 950 000 *livres* (21). In these years the English debt was accordingly reduced by 450 000 and then 650 000 *livres.* After 1607, as Sully noted, the English king no longer wanted to contribute his third (22). By that time, the maritime rivalry between England and the Netherlands was replacing the former contest with Spain. In fact, as Venetian ambassador Niccolò Molin noted in a report to the doge of 1607 (23), the 1603 agreement was never fully implemented, but the French liked to claim that it was, in order to encourage friction between England and Spain (these two had in fact signed a treaty of peace and alliance, the Treaty of Madrid, on 28 August 1604).

When he got back to Henri IV Sully naturally liked to claim a great diplomatic triumph, and in truth he had largely succeeded in carrying out his instructions. The old alliances had been renewed, James had rebuffed the duc de Bouillon, and

(17) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, p.196.

(18) As Sully put it, the payments were to be made « le plus secrettement et couvertement que faire se pourra, » *ŒR*, t. IV, p.196.

(19) *Calendar of State Papers (Venice) 1603-1607*, Angelo Badoer to the Doge from Paris, 7 August 1603, p.78.

(20) See BnF, ms. fr. 4827, fo. 110-112, « Convention, accord, cession, transport, acceptation et quittance de ce que Henri IV devait au roy d'Angleterre ».

(21) See AN 120 AP 25, « Estat des dettes que le roy paie tous les ans, 1609, » fo. 172.

(22) BnF, ms. fr. 4827, fo. 112.

(23) *Calendar of State Papers (Venice) 1603-1607*, p.501.

the matter of the marriage had been broached. It had proved impossible to help the English Catholics, whose addiction to plots would be their downfall. On the most important question of all, English help for the United Provinces, a satisfactory compromise had been reached. Sully had begun to discharge an onerous and inconvenient obligation, while at the same time sustaining the resistance of the United Provinces.

He surely had established a good relationship with James I. Describing the English king to Henri IV, Sully remarked that he was an excellent conversationalist, who was never boring, because he had a wide range of knowledge, spoke well, enjoyed discussion, and left no subject about which he did not seek information. He knew, for instance, that he was not well informed about the art of war, and sought information about it. Sully then added that he rather feared that James was inclined to meditation rather than action.

Perhaps, indeed, this was a feature of the new English king which his contemporaries found defective, at a time when kings had also to be military leaders, like the king of France. When Sully first met James, the latter complained that in France he was not highly regarded, because he was known to be a prince whose natural inclination was for peace. It is easy to see how Henri could fall in with this attitude ; indeed, on one occasion he is said to have remarked dismissively that « The king of Scotland [before 1603] does very well as a scholar » (24). Did he, perhaps, invent that other damning phrase, that James was « the wisest fool in Christendom » ?

Sully observed James carefully, noting for instance that he never took water with his wine. He was fascinated by the way in which James spoke French, and observed several novel turns of phrase. For instance, he noted that the King used « fastidié » when « ennuyé » might have been more obvious, and that he used « fisiciens » instead of « médecins » (25). After « prototype », Sully observed with interest that the King used this word, which indeed was a neologism. Like his predecessor Elizabeth, James had a remarkable facility with language, which is particularly noticeable given the other evidence which emerges from Sully's memoirs.

On the whole, people on both sides of the Channel lacked skill in the others' language. When they came to enumerate the members of Sully's entourage, the English scribes so mangled their names in their letters to Cecil that it is often impossible to know whom they mean. Who are « Monsieur de Bossu », « Monsieur de Sewegam », « Monsieur de Boys de Lassines » and « Monsieur de Fassen-

(24) *Œconomies royales,* t. IV, pp.164-165.
(25) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, p.116.
(26) For instance, who is « Oleradous » ? « Argyle » ?

berge » ? On the other side, even in the memoirs there are some English names which defy identification (26).

Back in France, Sully made arrangements for gifts for those who had helped him during the embassy, and indeed for those whom he hoped might one day be useful (27). James received six fine horses, and his son a golden lance and helmet set with diamonds ; there were over twenty other gifts, calibrated with the importance of the recipient. Towards the bottom came guard commander Sir Thomas Erskine's golden decoration, followed by a golden cup for Cecil's clerk. The final entry was for 1 200 *écus*, to be given by ambassador Beaumont to whom he might judge fit.

From what letters remain in the French and English archives, it is clear that Sully's communications with France, and instructions from the King, flowed relatively speedily and efficiently. There was one exception, and that was Sully's letter of June 20th, which Henri IV never received. It could never be traced, in spite of a good many investigations (28). The reason was eventually discovered in April 1604, when Nicholas Lhoste, a clerk in the department of foreign affairs directed by Nicholas de Neufville, was revealed to be in the pay of the Spaniards. Lhoste drowned in the Marne as he was trying to flee to the Spanish Netherlands, but he had long gone undetected (except by some Venetian diplomats... (29)). It is curious to think that all Sully's negotiations, including the theoretically secret ones, had fallen under the eyes of Philip III.

Sully's embassy took place during an unusual patch of years, when it was for a time possible to envisage some form of alliance between England and France. For many years before that, hostility was the rule, as England sought to retain her French possessions. Soon, with the lessening of the threat from Spain, the possibility of an Anglo-French alliance would disappear, and the two countries would embark on worldwide hostilities which would last intermittently for three hundred years.

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(27) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, pp.201-203.
(28) *Œconomies royales*, t. IV, pp.87-95.
(29) See the observation by Angelo Badoer, *Calendar of State Papers (Venice) 1603-1607*, letter to the Doge, Paris 11 May 1604, p.148

Résumés

Les fils de François Ier et la guerre

François Ier a eu de la chance d'avoir plusieurs fils, François, Henri et Charles, pour assurer la pérennité de sa lignée. Louis XI, Charles VIII et Louis XII n'avaient eu ce bonheur. Mais cette fratrie expose au risque de voir les fils se quereller et troubler la paix publique. Une historiographie psychologisante a de fait souligné leur rivalité, à la guerre comme à la cour, évoquant les rumeurs d'empoisonnement de François par Henri, puis l'opposition de ce dernier avec Charles, protégée par la maitresse de François Ier, la duchesse d'Etampes. Or il n'y eut pas de guerre des fils mais ceux ci furent victimes, acteurs et cause de guerre. François et Henri ont été prisonniers en Espagne où le roi les a substitués à lui afin de créer la fiction que le sang de France est toujours en prison, malgré sa libération. Puis les fils du roi chevalier ont appris la guerre en Champagne, en Provence, en Picardie et en Roussillon sous la tutelle de capitaines aguerris, sans jamais être maitres des opérations ni trouver occasion de se faire une réputation. Les capitaines victorieux sont alors François de Guise ou le duc d'Enghien. La guerre n'a pas excité une jalousie des fils. En revanche, ils ont été la cause de l'acharnement de François Ier à réclamer le Milanais après 1535. En effet en couronnant le dauphin François duc de Bretagne en 1532, le souverain a privé son cadet d'une couronne ducale. Afin d'empêcher une lutte fratricide, il cherche alors une couronne de substitution pour Henri puis pour Charles. La mort de ce dernier éteint cette revendication puisque seul Henri survit.

Francis I was fortunate to have several sons, Francis, Henry and Charles, to ensure the continuity of his lineage. Louis XI, Charles VIII and Louis XII were not so lucky. But these siblings exposed themselves to the risk of seeing their sons quarrelling and disturbing the public peace. A historiography based on psychological approach has underlined their rivalry, at war as at court, evoking the rumors of poisoning of Francis by Henry, then the opposition of the latter with Charles, protected by the mistress of Francis I, the Duchess of Etampes. However, there was no war between the sons, but they were victims, actors and cause of war. Francis and Henry were prisoners in Spain where the king substituted them for him in order to create the fiction that the « blood of France » was still imprisoned, despite his liberation. Then the sons of the knight king learned the war in Champagne, Provence, Picardy and Roussillon under the tutelage of old captains, without ever being chiefs of operations or finding an opportunity to make a reputation for themselves. The victorious captains were then François de Guise or the Duke of Enghien. The war did not raise a jealousy between the brothers. But they were the cause of Francis I claiming non stop the Milanese duchy after 1535. Indeed, by crowning Duke of Brittany, the dauphin of France François, in 1532, the sovereign deprived his younger son of a ducal crown. In order to prevent a fratricidal struggle, he looked for a substitute crown for Henry and then for Charles. The death of the latter extinguished this claim since only Henri survived.

LE CARDINAL JEAN DU BELLAY ET LES COMPLOTS CONTRE ANDREA DORIA (1547-1550)

À partir principalement de la correspondance du cardinal Jean Du Bellay, cette étude analyse les relations entre les adversaires d'Andrea Doria, devenu maître de Gênes, le roi de France et ses représentants. Elle porte d'une part sur la tentative de Giulio Cibo de renverser Doria (1548). Henri II y avait donné son secret accord, ses représentants en Italie en étaient avertis et une intervention militaire était prévue. Lors de l'échec, le cardinal s'efforça d'effacer toute trace de la participation française et démentit toute allusion à celle-ci. D'autre part, cette étude porte sur la transmission au roi par Jean Du Bellay de propositions de plusieurs comploteurs, prêts à passer à l'action moyennant récompense. Henri ii évita de répondre, à la déception du cardinal, convaincu que l'occasion était bonne d'affaiblir ainsi indirectement Charles Quint et qu'une paix durable avec lui était impossible.

This work originates mainly from the correspondences of Cardinal Jean Du Bellay. It analyses the relationships between the enemies of Andrea Doria, new ruler of Genoa, the king of France and his delegates. On one hand, this work looks at Giulio Cibo's attempt to overthrow Doria (1548). Henri II had given his secret consent to this initiative and his delegates in Italy were informed of this decision, as a military intervention was prepared. After the plan's failure, the cardinal took measures to erase all traces of French participation and denied any hints of it. On the other hand, this work looks at the few proposals from conspirators transmitted to the king by Jean Du Bellay, containing promises of plots in exchange for recompense. Henri II avoided answering, greatly disappointing the cardinal, who was convinced that the king's help would indirectly weaken Charles V and that a lasting peace with him was impossible.

L'AMBASSADE DE GIULIO ALVAROTTI EN FRANCE (1544-1565) : LE « PARFAIT AMBASSADEUR » FERRARAIS D'UNE DIPLOMATIE ASYMÉTRIQUE

L'ambassade de l'envoyé du duc de Ferrare, Giulio Alvarotti, qui débute au printemps 1544, s'étend jusqu'au mois de mars 1565. Ces 21 années passées dans le royaume de France sont exceptionnelles à plusieurs titres. Son séjour se distingue, tout d'abord, par sa longévité, excédant de beaucoup la durée habituelle des ambassades ferraraises. Alvarotti reste même en poste après le décès du duc de Ferrare, Ercole d'Este et l'avènement d'Alfonso d'Este. Cette ambassade coïncide également avec la dernière phase des guerres d'Italie au cours de laquelle la politique française du duché de Ferrare constitue une des principales préoccupations d'Ercole d'Este. Enfin, Alvarotti assiste à la montée des tensions religieuses et à l'éclatement de la première guerre de Religion en 1562-1563, dont il livre une analyse précieuse. Cette ambassade permet aussi bien de démêler l'écheveau des relations entre le duché de Ferrare et le royaume de France que de revenir sur les pratiques permettant à un ambassadeur de se maintenir en poste. C'est l'occasion de réfléchir sur le fonctionnement d'une ambassade italienne à la cour de France.

The embassy of the envoy of the Duke of Ferrara, Giulio Alvarotti, began in the spring of 1544 and lasted until March 1565. These 21 years spent in the kingdom of France were exceptional in many ways. First, his stay is distinguished by its longevity, far exceeding the usual duration of the Ferrarese embassies. Alvarotti even remained in office after the death of the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole d'Este, and the advent of the new duke Alfonso d'Este. This embassy also coincided with the last phase of the Italian Wars, during which the French policy of the Duchy of Ferrara was one of Ercole d'Este's main concerns. Finally, Alvarotti witnessed the rise in religious tensions and the outbreak of the First War of Religion in 1562-1563, of which he provides a valuable analysis. This embassy allowed him to unravel the tangle of relations between the Duchy of Ferrara and the Kingdom of France, as well as to go back over the practices that allowed an ambassador to remain in office. It is an opportunity to reflect on the functioning of an Italian embassy at the French court.

UN ÉPISODE SINGULIER DE L'HISTOIRE DES RELATIONS DIPLOMATIQUES AU DÉBUT DU XVIIE SIÈCLE : L'AMBASSADE DE SULLY À LONDRES EN JUIN 1603

La mort de la reine Élisabeth en 1603 donna lieu à une activité diplomatique intense à Londres, quand les puissances européennes tentèrent de sonder et d'influencer le nouveau roi d'Angleterre Jacques Ier (Jacques VI d'Écosse). Pour mener son ambassade extraordinaire à cette occasion, Henri IV choisit Sully, à qui ses nombreuses charges et l'amitié du roi conféraient un prestige particulier. Sully avait la tâche impossible de persuader les Anglais de poursuivre la politique belliqueuse d'Élisabeth à l'égard de l'Espagne. Il n'y parvint pas, mais il obtint un compromis avantageux, suivant lequel une partie de la dette due par la France à l'Angleterre et remboursable annuellement irait aux Provinces-Unies pour soutenir leur lutte contre l'Espagne. Cette ambassade fut également remarquable par plusieurs incidents diplomatiques, par l'habileté et la présence d'esprit dont Sully fit preuve, et par l'excellente relation personnelle qu'il sut établir avec Jacques Ier.

The death of queen Elizabeth in 1603 led to intense diplomatic activity in London, as the various powers sought to assess and influence the new King of England, James I (James VI of Scotland). Henri IV chose Sully as his extraordinary envoy on this occasion, with the primary task of persuading James to continue Elizabeth's policy of active hostility towards Spain. Sully did not succeed in this impossible task, but he did come to an agreement by which part of the French debt to England, as it was repaid, would go towards the support of the Netherlands in their fierce resistance to Spain. The embassy was remarkable for several noteworthy incidents, in which Sully showed remarkable presence of mind ; he also established a warm rapport with James I.

La société des diplomates. Enseignements tirés des archives privées du cardinal de Bernis

La redécouverte des riches archives personnelles du cardinal de Bernis, ministre et ambassadeur de Louis xv et Louis xvi, a permis à une équipe d'historiens de mettre en évidence le fonctionnement organique de la « société des diplomates » à la fin de l'Ancien Régime. À la faveur d'échanges épistolaires transversaux qui n'ont pas été conservés dans les archives publiques, Bernis et ses pairs communiquent très librement entre eux des informations aussi cruciales pour l'exercice des négociations que pour la construction des carrières et l'apprentissage du métier de diplomate. La correspondance particulière et amicale que Bernis et le ministre Vergennes ont entretenue de 1774 à 1787 permet parallèlement d'enquêter sur la crise de la monarchie et le déploiement mondial de la diplomatie française, au prisme d'un échange de longue haleine qui érige le langage intime au rang de ressource politique véritable.

The rediscovery of the personal archives of the cardinal de Bernis, who was both a minister and an ambassador, has enabled a group of historians to highlight the organic operational system of « the diplomats' society » at the end of the Ancien Régime. Thanks to cross-epistolary exchanges which have not been kept in public archives, Bernis and his peers communicated freely information which was not only crucial for negotiations, but also essential to build a career and learn the skills to become a diplomat. Besides, the private and amicable correspondence Bernis kept upt with Minister Vergennes from 1774 to 1787 gives historians the opportunity to investigate the crisis of the monarchy and the development of France's global diplomatic strategy, from the perspective of a long-term correspondence in which intimate language proves to be a real political resource.