

Short Abstract

The thesis deals with the diplomatic career of Reginald Pole at the beginning of his time as a Roman cardinal. Pole's elevation to the cardinalate in 1536 and his quest to persuade Charles V and Francis I to help re-establishing Roman obedience in England are portrayed. Pole's two legations of 1537 and 1539 both failed, it is argued, because of the ongoing hostilities between the houses of Habsburg and Valois: neither the emperor nor the French king could afford to alienate the powerful English ruler, nor were they interested in taking up a costly and risky enterprise on behalf of religion. The differences between the two legations and the different reasons for their failing are discussed. The reaction of the English policy makers both to the legations themselves and to Pole's activities is also considered. The almost complete annihilation of Pole's family in England is linked with Pole's efforts against the English king, and it is shown that the Poles in England lost their lives not because of their alleged treasonable activities in combination with the so-called "Exeter Conspiracy" but because they were used as hostages by Henry VIII against Reginald Pole: it is argued that the "Exeter Conspiracy" is a misnomer, and that the two families involved suffered for reasons of *raison d'état* and personal revenge. Pole's major writings against the English king in the 1530s, *De ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* and the *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*, are then examined with regard to Pole's political maxims and his use of anti-Machiavellism in his fight against the English schism. Overall, it is argued in the thesis that Pole was an able politician whose failure is to be explained by the untimeliness of his attempts to unite Charles V and Francis I in a fight for religion and by his own exclusively religious motivation in political affairs.

Abstract

The main subject of the thesis is the diplomatic career of Reginald Pole shortly after his elevation to the cardinalate in 1536. In doing so it aims to be a contribution to the study of the foreign policies of the curia as well as of England in the sixteenth century. England is not viewed as the active participant in foreign politics here, but as one which has to react to others' initiatives. At the same time the thesis tries to fill a gap in the biography of Reginald Pole, who has hitherto been seen predominantly as an eminent humanist and reform theologian. In the past the study of Pole's political involvement has concentrated on his efforts to reconcile the English church with Rome and to establish a lasting peace arrangement between the warring houses of Habsburg and Valois in the 1550s. The beginning of his time in the service of the Roman curia, which was largely overshadowed by political events, has so far enjoyed little attention in comparison with his involvement in the Council of Trent, the Italian reform movement, and the ecclesiastical changes in England during the reign of Mary Tudor.

The main source for this thesis is the correspondence of the diplomats and politicians involved in Pole's legations in the 1530s: the letters of the papal diplomats all over Europe are of vital importance here. Thus, the thesis is also an attempt to write about English history with the help of sources which are largely unavailable in this country. The Vatican archives were the most important source for the thesis, although archives in France, Belgium, and Austria were also consulted for the French and Habsburg sides of the legations. Ever since the Vatican archives were opened to the public in 1882, European historians have used these archives for a better understanding of their national histories. Editions of the correspondence of nuncios accredited in various European countries, mainly the *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland* and the *Acta nuntiaturae Gallicae*, have greatly helped the understanding of events and developments in European history. No such editions exist for sources concerning English history. This thesis ought, therefore, be understood as an attempt to demonstrate the rich yield of these

archives for a study which primarily concerns English history. While this method of looking at national history predominantly with the aid of foreign sources has enjoyed a lively and fruitful tradition on the Continent for the last hundred years, it has hitherto been somewhat neglected for English historiography. However, as much as the thesis is concerned with the impact of European diplomacy on English policy it is also, by the very nature of its approach, a study of European diplomacy in the 1530s. The intricate system of diplomatic exchange in the Europe of the early reformation is viewed from the point of view of the Tudor government.

The narrative part of the thesis starts with Reginald Pole's final breach with his cousin, Henry VIII, over the religious changes in England. As a direct result of his open opposition to the English king Pole was promoted to the cardinalate in 1536. It is suggested that this advancement was bestowed upon him mainly for political reasons, rather than, as has been generally assumed in the past, as a tribute to Pole's highly acclaimed learning and his theological potential. Pole's elevation was immediately followed by his first legation in 1537, which led him to France and to the Netherlands. He set out from Rome while the Pilgrimage of Grace was at its height in England. He was commissioned to support the insurgents in their fight and to procure support for the rebels at the Habsburg and Valois courts in Brussels and Paris. Since the latter was impossible while the rulers of these two houses were at war, his commission also provided for peace negotiations between Charles V and Francis I. The English reaction to the legation was very hostile from the start. Henry VIII's diplomats demanded of the French king that the cardinal should be extradited as a traitor. Since Francis I could not afford to alienate the English king while he was at war with the emperor, he was compelled to ban Pole from France, in order to avoid the embarrassing situation of having to extradite a papal legate. As Charles V was equally interested in preserving English neutrality in the ongoing conflict, Pole was prevented from entering the Netherlands. Thus, in this legation princes who professed allegiance to papal authority disregarded a papal legate on the insistence of a schismatic ruler for the first time: the religious significance of the office of legate was sacrificed in order to appease Henry VIII. It became apparent during Pole's 1537 legation that neither

Charles V nor Francis I was prepared to jeopardize their political aims for purely religious reasons. The negotiations which Pole managed to conduct with the courts in Paris and Brussels were utterly fruitless, because the prerequisite for any form of joint action against Henry VIII's religious policies was missing, namely unity between the two leading European monarchs loyal to Rome. The English government could play its trump card by threatening both rulers with the cessation of neutrality; at the same time English assassins could move freely in both French and imperial territory in their hunt for the pope's ambassador. The lesson to be learnt from this legation by the curial policy makers was that neither the emperor nor the King of France was prepared to wage a religious war on behalf of the Roman church. Neither of them was prepared to compromise their situation while they were struggling for European hegemony.

Two years later Reginald Pole went on his second legation to the emperor and the French king in order to persuade these princes to intervene in England. Since this legation was ultimately as unsuccessful as the preceding one had been, these two legations have hitherto usually been seen in close combination with each other as a fruitless episode in Reginald Pole's life or as futile efforts of the Roman diplomacy. A closer examination of both legations shows that there were marked differences between them. First, the political situation in Europe had changed when Pole set out on his 1539 legation. The emperor and the French king were not at war with each other any longer and they had both indicated an interest in supporting the Roman cause in England. An offensive alliance between Valois and Habsburg seemed politically feasible in 1539. Since France and the imperial forces had ceased to be in a state of war the diplomatic situation for England had also changed dramatically. England was now isolated and could not use the threat to abandon her neutrality and to enter the war on one side or the other. The English diplomats tried to employ the same tactics to counteract Pole's legation as they had done two years earlier. When Pole arrived at the imperial court in Toledo they demanded of the emperor that Pole should either be ordered to leave Spain or he should be extradited to the English king as a traitor. While these tactics had sufficed to thwart Pole's mission in 1537, they proved vain in 1539. To their dismay the English

representatives at both the imperial and the French courts had to realize that they had lost a good deal of their influence. Consequently, England was forced to look for different allies on the Continent. Henry VIII's government found itself seeking closer ties to the protestant princes of the Empire and Denmark. The most obvious result of these changes on the European diplomatic scene was the marriage between Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves; the important factor, however, is that England had to be flexible enough to abandon the traditional pattern in foreign politics, which consisted of a balance of alliances between England and Burgundy (Habsburg) on the one hand and France and Scotland on the other. The relationship between England and Scotland was not influenced too drastically by Pole's legations, because it was assumed by the Roman policy makers and by Pole himself that Scottish aid could be safely counted on if it were possible to unite Francis I and Charles V against England.

Ultimately Pole's legation of 1539 failed because the newly gained accord between Charles V and Francis I was too little established for these two monarchs to trust each other. Each monarch feared to be betrayed by the other. England was also saved from intervention by the fact that the emperor wanted to concentrate his forces against the Turks who were threatening his possessions in the Mediterranean and on the Balkans. Francis I very carefully avoided committing himself to any mode of action during the 1539 legation, but pledged that he would be willing to contribute to the enterprise on the same basis as the emperor was prepared to do. Thus the French king made sure that the eventual failure of the legation could not be blamed on him.

A close examination of both legations reveals that their approach does not seem to fit into the general pattern of papal diplomacy in the 1520s and 1530s. It is generally assumed that Roman diplomats took a counselling role at the European courts and that one of their main objectives was the preservation of peace and the avoidance of bloodshed. Pole's two legations concerning the English schism had far more belligerent overtones than the work of his colleagues. In accordance with the Roman policy makers, Pole went as far as advocating punitive economical measures against England, moreover, he even called on the European princes to

wage a war of religion against Henry VIII. It is suggested in this thesis that the curial policy maker saw England as the testing ground for an aggressive policy towards the rise of protestantism. That is to say, if these policies had been successful an early aggressive response to the rise of the new teaching in the Empire and in northern Europe could not have been ruled out.

Internally the response of the English government to Pole's efforts was far more active and wide-ranging than it was abroad. The military threat was taken seriously in England during both legations, but notably in 1539 the government held musters and put the coastal fortifications in order. First and foremost, however, was the quest to silence Reginald Pole. Since the attempts to kidnap or assassinate Pole on the Continent failed, the English policy makers resorted to victimizing his family in England. The episode of the Henrician period generally known as the "Exeter Conspiracy" is viewed in this thesis in the context of Cardinal Pole's opposition. In the past this incident has been seen as an entirely internal affair of English history. It is argued that the name "Exeter Conspiracy" is a misnomer and it is also shown that the members of the houses of Pole and Courtenay, who suffered in this incident, were prosecuted for rather different reasons. While Henry Courtenay predominantly suffered because of his proximity to the throne, the Poles were used as hostages against Reginald Pole. The schedule of the actions against the various members of the Pole family fits into Reginald Pole's agenda of opposing Henry VIII. When Pole started antagonizing the English king by accepting the cardinalate and by conducting his 1537 legation, Henry first hinted at his plan to destroy the cardinal's family. As soon after the Pilgrimage of Grace as possible Geoffrey Pole was arrested and the prosecution of the so-called conspirators began. When England was in complete political isolation, Lord Montagu was executed, and when Pole had enraged the king with his second legation Pole's mother and the cardinal himself were attainted. The other strong indicator for the thesis that the Poles suffered not because of their treacherous tendencies, but because they happened to be related to the cardinal, is the fact that the Poles and the Courtenays were treated quite differently while they were state prisoners. Gertrude Courtenay, who had been severely incriminated in

the course of the examinations, was pardoned after she had spent some time in the Tower. Margaret Pole did not enjoy the same favour, although far less evidence had been found against her. She had to remain in prison until she was eventually executed. Another example are the two children held in the Tower, Henry Pole and Henry Courtenay. While young Courtenay was allowed to move about in the Tower relatively freely and was even provided with an education there, young Pole was strictly kept and did not enjoy any privileges. He eventually died in the Tower under unknown circumstances. If it was not for Reginald Pole's antagonism of Henry VIII, equal treatment of the members of the houses Pole and Courtenay would surely be expected.

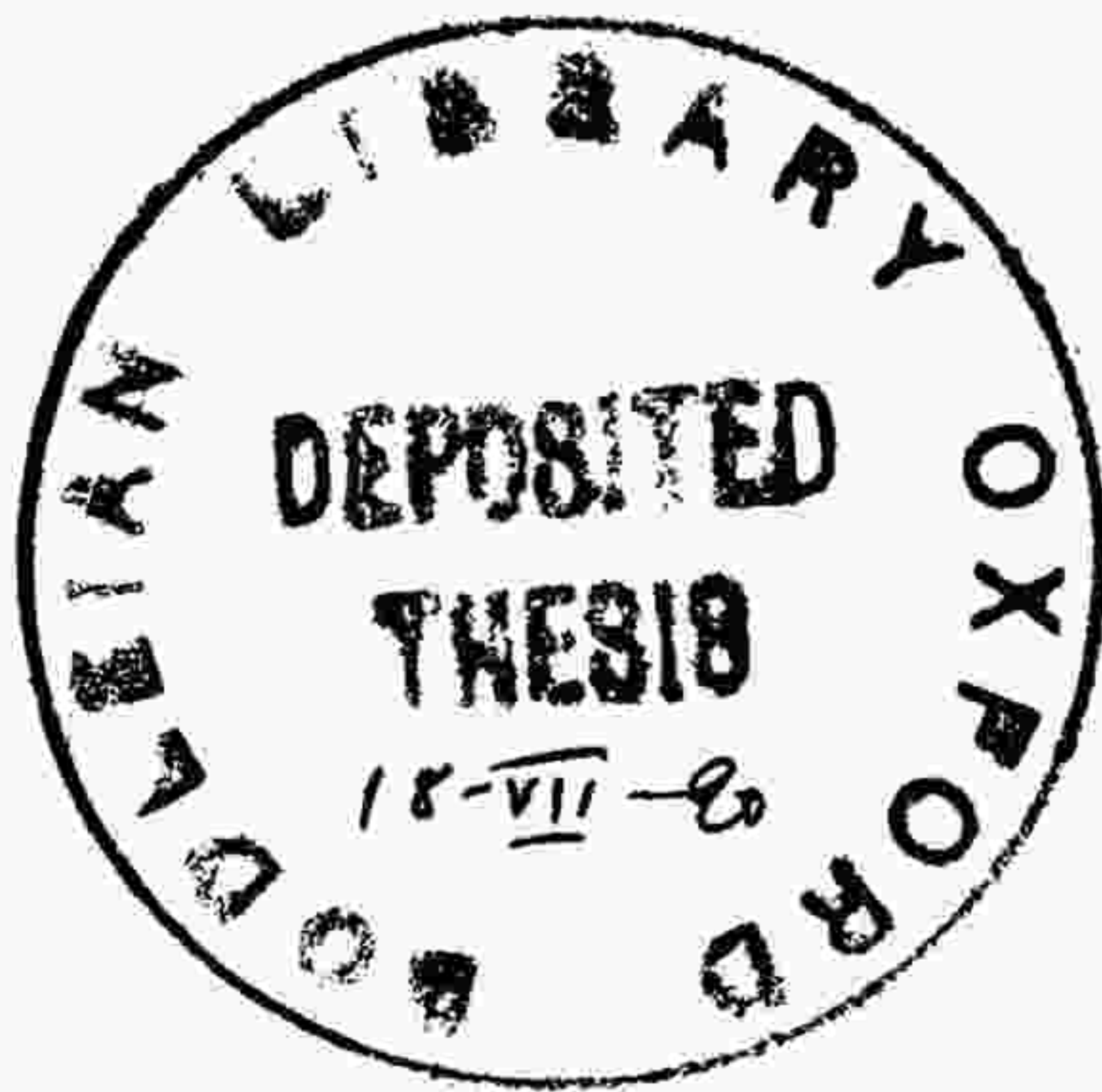
In the last chapter of the thesis Reginald Pole's political thought in the 1530s is discussed. Hitherto Pole's reputation as a politician has been that of a saintly and slightly unrealistic man whose main effort was to uphold the peace in Europe. While this assessment may have some validity for the cardinal's later career, it certainly does not hold true for the 1530s. His two main treatises of the 1530s, *De ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* and the *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*, are examined and it is shown that Pole outlined the major part of the belligerent programme of his legations in his writings. Pole's motivation for involving himself in politics is there identified as one exclusively dependent on religious questions and thus the failure of his legations is seen in the fact that his approach was anachronistic for his times. It is suggested that Pole did not fail because his legations were conducted in an incompetent manner, but that he handled politically difficult situations well. Pole's skill as a political propagandist is demonstrated by the example of his treatment of Thomas Cromwell in his *Apologia*. While historians in the past have spent much time trying to prove whether or not Pole's allegations against Cromwell could possibly be true, it is submitted that Pole falsified his account of his encounter with Cromwell for political reasons. Not only did he deliberately misrepresent Cromwell, he also made Cromwell out to be dependent on Machiavelli in order to strengthen his argument against the people whom he saw as the enemies of the church and the faith. His aim was not give his readers a coherent picture of the truth, but to write political propaganda. Pole

adopted the only possible strategy in his quest to persuade the catholic rulers to take action on behalf of the church. However, the idea of religiously motivated war was not yet acceptable to the European policy makers. Pole's legations did not fail because he was an inept politician, but because nobody in the curia, including Pole, understood that the approach which Pole was commissioned to take had little prospect for success.

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*Reginald Pole and the Legations of 1537 and 1539; Diplomatic and
Polemical Responses to the Break with Rome*

A thesis in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
presented to the Faculty of Modern History by
Christoph Höllger, Hertford College.



*Meinen Eltern,
Johanna und Armin Höllger,
in tiefer Dankbarkeit
gewidmet*

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This thesis is very much the work of a 'travelling historian', which made its preparation unduly expensive because of the numerous research trips to various archives in Europe which I had to take during the last three years. I would like to thank the Rhodes Trust for bestowing one of their much prized scholarships upon me, thus enabling me to study at Oxford for three years without the financial worries which are so detrimental to many other graduate students. I would also like to thank the Principal and Fellows of Hertford College for helping with my travel expenses by giving me a Senior Scholarship, and the German National Scholarship Foundation for making half a year's funding possible after the Rhodes Scholarship had expired so that I could finish the thesis.

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The list of people who helped me in my research here in Oxford is long. Mrs Clapinson of the Bodleian Library was always willing to lend her assistance whenever I needed help with particularly difficult manuscripts. Mrs Julia Briggs of Hertford College made time for me at a very busy moment to discuss the literary historical implications of dialogues as a literary genre. Dr Glyn Redworth of Christ Church College read one chapter of the thesis and gave useful advice about it. Dr Thomas Mueller, formerly of Christ Church College, made his knowledge of the Spanish language available. Mrs Stephanie West of Hertford College sacrificed a lot of time in helping me disentangle the complicated style of Reginald Pole's Latin. All the quotations of Pole's *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum* used in the thesis are hers, and she tirelessly provided me with many more translations than are used in this thesis. I would like to express my special gratitude to her.

Professor Thomas F. Mayer of Augustana College, Illinois, generously made his expertise on Reginald Pole available to me. Not only did he allow me to read several of his papers before they were published and let me consult his transcripts from the State Archives in Parma, he was also always willing to discuss various problems and to advise me on how to handle a difficult subject. I am greatly indebted to him.

There are always a few people who can never be thanked adequately. The first to be named here is my supervisor, Mrs Jennifer Loach of Somerville College. Without her guidance and assistance, as well as the many hours of stimulating discussion, the thesis would have never been completed. It was she who always showed enthusiasm for papal diplomacy, even when I did not. Her interest in my research also extended to an interest in my welfare in Oxford for which I am extremely grateful. Others in this list are many of my friends, notably Klaus Küster, who always supported me and cheered me up, and lastly my parents, whose understanding and whose belief in me when I faltered and whose friendship gave me the support I needed to complete this study.

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List of Abbreviations

AGR	Archives Générales du Royaume, Brussels
ANG	<i>Acta nuntiaturae Gallicae</i>
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City
Baroni	P. G. Baroni (ed.), <i>La nunziatura in Francia di Rodolfo Pio (1535-1537)</i> (Bologna, 1962).
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City
BL	British Library, London
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
CalStP, Spain	<i>Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, Henry VII and Henry VIII</i>
EHR	<i>The English Historical Review</i>
HHStA	Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
L&P	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–47</i>
Lisle Letters	M. St. Claire Byrne (ed.), <i>The Lisle Letters</i> , 6 vols. (Chicago, 1981)
NB	<i>Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland, erste Abteilung</i>
PRO	Public Record Office, London
Quirini	A. M. Quirini (ed.), <i>Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli S. R. E. Cardinalis et aliorum ipsum collectio</i> , 5 vols. (Brescia 1744–57, repr. 1969)
RSTC	<i>A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640</i> (revised edition 1986)
StP	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Henry VIII, Foreign Correspondence</i>

I. Introduction

The early years of Reginald Pole's cardinalate were dominated by his diplomatic actions in response to the religious changes in his native England. These years must be seen as the decisive period of Pole's career. Pole began his career in Roman service in 1536 by writing his invective against Henry VIII, *De ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione*, and subsequently accepting his elevation to the cardinalate. The early phase of this career in exile took the cardinal on two legations to the Habsburg and Valois rulers of Europe in 1537 and 1539. Both legations were designed to persuade Charles V and Francis I to intervene in England on behalf of the Roman church. During these years Reginald Pole was outlawed in his native country and his family in England was almost completely extinguished as a direct consequence of their prominent relative's activities on the Continent. In these years Pole also developed as a political thinker; this period of his life may mark the end of Pole's formative period.

Hitherto no detailed study of this part of Pole's career has been presented.¹ The reasons for this are manifold. Pole's diplomatic efforts in the late 1530s were all denied success. The history of failure has seldom attracted the attention of historians.² Furthermore, it is difficult to treat Pole's legations in combination with other diplomatic efforts of the papacy of the time. Normal practice for the papal diplomatic service in the sixteenth century was to send one representative to one ruler or city only. If negotiations with more than one party were required, the curia would despatch more than one diplomat. Pole, however, was always sent as legate to more than one ruler. This is one reason why historians who deal with

¹Pole's role as a papal diplomat has been dealt with in most biographies devoted to the cardinal, but their significance for European history has not been fully appreciated there. A. Zimmermann, *Kardinal Pole, sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Regensburg, 1893), M. Haile, *The Life of Reginald Pole* (London, 1910), R. Biron, J. Barennes, *Un prince anglais Cardinal légat au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, s.d., but 1922), and W. Schenk, *Reginald Pole. Cardinal of England* (London, 1950).

²R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada* (London, 1966, repr. 1971) mentions Pole's legations, but does not tell us much more than that they failed, whereas P. S. Crowson, in his largely fallacious account of *Tudor Foreign Policy* (New York, 1973) informs us about the 1537 legation (p. 112-3), but neglects the 1539 legation completely.

papal diplomatic history of this period, usually leave out Pole's legations completely, or give them minor consideration only.³ Another reason for the neglect of Pole's missions is that there is almost no tradition within English historiography which analyses events pertaining to English history with the aid of Vatican sources.⁴ Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, and other European countries installed Historical Institutes in Rome after Pius XIII had opened the Vatican Archives to the public in 1882. On the Continent it has since become a tradition to use the vast fund of information of these archives for research purposes in the national histories of individual countries and in European history. Most of these institutes in Rome have since started issuing editions of the correspondence of nuncios and legates.⁵ No such efforts have been made by English historians. Consequently, the sources available in the Vatican have never been taken into account extensively by English-speaking historians, because both the tradition of working in the Vatican archives is lacking and the support by an established institution in Rome is not available to them.⁶

The stress on the work with the correspondence of papal diplomats has been

³B. Barbiche and S. de Dainteville-Barbiche, 'Les légats "a latere" en France et leurs facultés aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles', *Archivum Historiae Pontificae*, XXII (1985) p. 93-165, very often exclude Pole from the cursory discussion presented on all legations. P. D. Blet, *Histoire de la représentation du Saint-Siège des origines à l'aube du XIX^e siècle* (Vatican City, 1982) mentions Pole's 1537 legation once only, and not even in its political context (p. 231). A. Pieper, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der ständigen Nuntiaturen* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1894) published some materials pertaining to Pole's 1539 legations, but did not discuss its implications. H. Biaudet, *Les nonciatures apostoliques jusqu'en 1648* (Helsinki, 1910) did not mention England, or Reginald Pole, at all in his discussion of the origins of papal diplomatic representation.

⁴One of the few exceptions being W. E. Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England* (Cambridge, 1974), whose study leads up to the English breach with Rome.

⁵Most notably the *NB* issued by the German Historical Institute and the *ANG* by the Ecole Française in Rome. For the history of these editions see H. Lutz, 'Zum Abschluß der Editionsreihe "Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland, Erste Abteilung"', in D. Albrecht *et al.*, *Politik und Konfession. Festschrift für Konrad Repgen zum 60. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1983) p. 49-60.

⁶Although an American author, G. Mattingly may serve as an example of how the availability of Vatican sources and thus the existence of the curial diplomacy has never become quite established in the consciousness of English-speaking historians. In his *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London, 1955) there is an almost complete absence of the papal diplomatic network, which was the most highly developed in Europe in the sixteenth century.

criticized in recent years because of their almost exclusive concern with political matters. However, I believe that it is still justifiable to consult this material, if the information contained in it has been neglected so far. It must also be pointed out that this form of source gains new importance nowadays, due to its relevance to European history in general and to its supra-national character.⁷ Editions of materials from the Vatican pertaining to English affairs would be a great help for the English historian.

Another difficulty, which makes the topic appear unwieldy, is the multitude of foreign and domestic manuscript collections which had to be consulted for the completion of this thesis. While the collections in the Vatican and those in the British Library and the Public Record Office are the most important ones, other major archives on the Continent had to be consulted, if only to ascertain that no material is available there. One of the most interesting collections in this context is the so-called Carte Farnesiane collection. While one part of it is kept in Vatican Archives, two other, and most likely more substantial, parts were deposited in the State Archives of Naples and Parma respectively. It was impossible to use the Parma collection for this study, because the archives there are closed indefinitely due to the unsafe state of the buildings.⁸ While the Parma collection is merely unavailable at the moment, the Naples collection is lost for ever. It fell victim to a fire during World War II. I have been able to find an inventory of the contents of this collection, but this was compiled with a strong bias towards information pertaining to the Empire, so that it was not directly helpful to the questions raised in this study.⁹ However, the Neapolitan collection is not altogether lost for the modern historian. In the Archives Générales in Brussels I located a volume of transcripts from this collection among the papers of the nineteenth-century historian L. P. Gachard.¹⁰ These transcripts provided me with invaluable material for the

⁷H. Lutz, 'Die Bedeutung der Nuntiaturberichte für die europäische Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsschreibung', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, LIII (1973) p. 160.

⁸Professor T. F. Mayer has worked in these archives and has generously allowed me to see his transcripts, which were unfortunately not directly relevant to this study. For the Parma materials see G. B. Parks, 'The Parma Letters and the Dangers to Cardinal Pole', *Catholic Historical Review*, XLVI (1960) p. 299-317.

⁹Archives of the German Historical Institute in Rome: Sammelbestand Nuntiaturberichte I/11.

chapter on the 1539 legation. In the same archive I found an autograph letter Pole's to Granvelle, the chancellor of Charles V, which has hitherto not been published.¹¹

The French correspondence for these legations proved to be the most difficult part of my search for material. I have been unable to find material in the Archives Nationales in Paris, and have been only marginally successful in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In the archives of the Foreign Ministry in Paris I was informed that the French government returned sizeable collections pertaining to the relations of Spain and France to Spain after the Napoleonic era, thus a search in the archives of Simancas would certainly prove fruitful.¹² Yet, even more surprisingly, I found correspondence between Francis and his minister, Montmorency, and Pole in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna.¹³ I have not been able to find out how these pieces of correspondence came to this unlikely homestead.

While the thesis is mainly concerned with Pole's role as a papal diplomat, the effect of Pole's activities on English policies and on the welfare of his family in England had also to be taken into account. The episode described in the chapter entitled 'The Destruction of the Pole Family', has hitherto been seen detached from Reginald Pole's role as a papal diplomat. Thus it has been viewed in the context of English history, rather than in that of its continental implications. It will be argued that the almost complete annihilation of the Poles in England was a direct result of Reginald Pole's efforts against the policies of Henry VIII. Thus, the episode of Henry's reign which is generally known as the "Exeter Conspiracy" will be viewed in a new light, and it will be suggested that the term conspiracy is a misnomer.

Pole's elevation to the cardinalate, the legations of 1537 and 1539, and the destruction of the Pole family form the narrative core of the thesis. Without a detailed knowledge of these events, an assessment of Pole's life cannot be but incomplete. Since Pole's political work has been greatly neglected in the past, it follows that his views on politics have likewise attracted little attention by modern

¹⁰AGR: Papiers Gachard 643.

¹¹Cf. appendix of this thesis, p. 216-29 below.

¹²Financial difficulties made it impossible for me to consult the archives in Simancas.

¹³HHStA: Großbritannien Varia 3/3.

historians. His political writings of the 1530s, *De Unitate* and the *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*, will be examined in the last chapter of this thesis. In the course of this examination it will be argued that the commonly established picture of Pole as a predominantly theologically minded person whose efforts as a politician were marred by his ineptitude in this field cannot withstand close examination. Using Pole's attacks on Machiavelli and the English policy makers as an example, and contrasting his theoretical stipulations with his political actions, we will show that Pole had a good understanding of the political world in which he moved and that the concept of pure politics did not exist for him as his political actions were governed by a predominantly religious motivation.

This thesis does not argue against authors who have in the past shown us Pole as a theologian and church man. It supplements their accounts with another important facet of Pole's career. If we do not understand the beginning of Pole's time in the rank of a cardinal as a politician, if we do not see his objectives, his efforts, his failures, and his theoretical thought about the political machinations of Europe, we cannot understand the role he played later as a conciliarist and church reformer. The thesis argues strongly against other points, however: it strives to prove that Pole cannot be seen as an eirenic and conciliatory cardinal, whose policies were idealistic and ruined by his political ineptitude, as his political efforts in 1550s suggest.¹⁴ It also attempts to stem the tide against those who are inclined to see Pole's failures in 1537 and 1539 as a direct result of the cardinal's inexperience and saintliness. First and foremost, however, this thesis is an attempt to retrace an important chapter of the history of Tudor foreign policy predominantly relying on sources unavailable in this country.

¹⁴Pole's political efforts both in England and on the Continent in the 1550s have been dealt with mainly by H. Lutz, *Christianitas afflicta. Europa, das Reich und die päpstliche Politik im Niedergang der Hegemonie Kaiser Karls V. (1552-1556)* (Göttingen, 1964) p. 276-305 and p. 384-398, also, more recently, in *NB XV* (ed. H. Lutz) p. xiii-lxxxi.

II. Pole's Breach with England and His Elevation to the Cardinalate

II. 1. Reginald Pole between England and Rome

When Paul III summoned Reginald Pole to Rome in July 1536 it became obvious that the English scholar would not be able to avoid pursuing a public career. If allowed to choose he would have preferred to lead the secluded life of a scholar, but when his royal kinsman, Henry VIII, forced him into giving his opinion on the divorce from Catherine of Aragon it must have dawned on Pole that this had become impossible.

Pole had had few and infrequent appearances on the diplomatic scene until this decisive year of his life. During his student years in Padua the *Signori* of the Venetian republic regarded him as a quasi representative of the English king and thus he took part in some state occasions there in the company of the official English ambassador to Venice.¹ He had also actively helped producing the pronouncement of the Sorbonne in favour of Henry's divorce in 1529-30. Pole's active role in the negotiations with the Parisian theologians has recently been discussed comprehensively.²

As the gulf between Henry and the papacy widened and an armed conflict between the catholic nations and the schismatic English became a political possibility, Pole's name started to appear in the correspondence of both papal and imperial diplomats as a potential leader of either English or foreign opposition to Henry's ecclesiastical policy. After the execution of More and Fisher the papal nuncio in France, Rodolfo Pio, bishop of Faenza, suggested in a letter to the curia that it would be worth considering conferring Fisher's red hat on Reginald Pole, the young alienated kinsman of the English king who had left England to pursue his studies in Padua.³ Similarly, imperial diplomats tried to bring Pole's name to the attention of Charles V. They portrayed him as an Englishman of noble pedigree

¹W. Schenk, *Reginald Pole. Cardinal of England* (London, 1950) p. 15-6.

²T. F., Mayer, 'A Fate Worse than Death: Reginald Pole and the Parisian Theologians', *EHR*, CIII (1988) p. 870-91. I am greatly indebted to Professor Mayer, who kindly let me read this article before it was published.

³Pio to Cardinal Palmieri, La Frère, 4 Aug. 1535; Baroni, no. 56.

and catholic loyalties who might be an appropriate match for Mary Tudor if England rid herself of Henry and returned to traditional religion.⁴

Thus, Pole had already gained some attention in the political world when in 1536 he sent the manuscript of his book *Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* (*De Unitate*) to England;⁵ a book in which he ventured to follow Henry's request and declare his opinion on the divorce and the royal supremacy. Pole knew that with the dispatch of this forceful rejection of Henry's ecclesiastical policies he would have to give up his secluded lifestyle. His choice was either to reach an understanding with his sovereign or to start working actively for the opposition against the changes in England.

His friends in Italy, notably Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, Gian Matteo Giberti, and Gian Pietro Carafa, confirmed Pole's opinion that it would be inadvisable to return to England immediately. Hence it is not surprising that in the summer of 1536 both Henry VIII and Paul III went to great lengths to persuade Pole to side with them. Paul, under Contarini's influence, saw the potential of the Englishman's piety and learning for the reform of the church and realized the value of a close relative of Henry's who was loyal to the Roman church. For Henry, who at that time was faced with one of the most serious threats to his position in the Pilgrimage of Grace, the political danger of Pole declaring himself against the English crown was enormous. Thus on 12 July Contarini informed Pole that the pope was intending to summon Pole to Rome and at the same time he entreated his friend not to return to England.⁶ Even before Contarini wrote the letter, Pole had received the reaction on his book from England.⁷ A letter from his friend and companion Thomas Starkey informed Pole that Starkey was disgusted with the

⁴Chapuys to Charles V, London, 8 Nov. 1534; *CalStP, Spain V,1*, no. 109.

⁵The manuscript, which Pole sent to England is in PRO: SP1/104. For other existing manuscripts and the early prints of *De Unitate* see T. F. Dunn, 'The Development of the Text of Reginald Pole's *De Unitate Ecclesiae*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LXX (1976) p. 455-68. For an English translation see *Pole's Defense of the Unity of the Church*, trans. and ed. J. G. Dwyer (Westminster, Md., 1965).

⁶Contarini to Pole, Rome, 12 Aug. 1536; Quirini, I, no. 36.

⁷This becomes apparent from Contarini's next letter to Pole, Rome, 18 July 1536; Quirini, I, no. 37, where the cardinal acknowledges Pole's letter of 8 July 1536 (not extant), in which Pole had reported about Henry's reaction.

attack on Henry. Interestingly, Starkey exhorted Pole not to expect too much of the pope, who would use him only as a tool against England.⁸ The fact that he took this line of reasoning before Pole had declared any intention of going to Rome shows that the danger of Pole's open declaration for the papacy concerned the English government greatly.

The letter in which Henry VIII recalled his cousin from Italy is lost, but it must have been more vehement than Pole expected. On 17 July Pole wrote two letters to England, one to his mother, which will be dealt with in a different context,⁹ and one to the king, from which we can deduce not only that Henry had ordered Pole to return to England, but also that he had been very outspoken about his indignation about *De Unitate*. Pole's answer is very open and daring. He flatly refused to follow Henry's summons and added a frank explanation of his reasons: he stated that as long as it would be regarded as a treasonable offence to dispute the title of the English monarch as Supreme Head of the Church, he would feel a 'sufficient impediment' for following Henry's summons.¹⁰ The letter goes on to explain certain passages of *De Unitate* and to exhort Henry to return to the Roman obedience. It is the first instance of Pole's open disobedience to his king. Pole upheld the views he had uttered in *De Unitate* by attacking Henry's title as Supreme Head of the Church and by implying that England was being ruled by unjust laws, which impeded his return there.

Undoubtedly Pole also informed Contarini about the dilemma into which he had been brought by Henry's recall, because on 18 July Contarini expressed his sympathy about Henry's reaction, but also announced that 'jam vidi literas conscriptas ad te, quibus te, etiam invitum, ad nos vocat hoc autumnus'.¹¹ Unfortunately none of Pole's reasoning on whether or not he should obey Henry's recall has been preserved. However, despite the firm answer he had made to the king, it appears that he considered obeying Henry, for Rome proceeded extraordinarily fast in the matter, doubtless in order to dissuade Pole from returning

⁸Starkey to Pole, *s.l.*, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/105, f. 49-51, mainly f. 49^v; *L&P XI*, no. 74.

⁹Cf. p. 83-4 below.

¹⁰Pole to Henry VIII, Venice, 15 July 1536; BL: Cleo E iv,2, f. 341-46^v; *L&P XI*, no. 91.

¹¹Contarini to Pole, Rome, 18 July 1536; Quirini, I, no. 37; 'I have already seen letters which are written to you and are calling you to us in the autumn, even against your will'.

to his native country. Thus Pole found himself torn between two forces, one, to which his conscience responded, trying to commit him to the service of the church, and the other attempting to make him return to his natural allegiance.

On 19 July Paul III sent Pole a brief with an official summons to Rome; he was to take part in a commission which had been set up to discuss possibilities for the reformation of the church. The alacrity with which Paul worked to secure Pole's service for the church is emphasized by the early date of the dispatch of the brief, given that Pole's presence was not required until late autumn 1536.¹² On the other hand, the English government also displayed great zeal in persuading Pole to a last minute change of mind in order to get him back home. It was clear to the government that fast action would be necessary if any hope for Pole's return was to be sustained. From a dispatch of the imperial ambassador in England, Eustace Chapuys, to Charles V's first minister, Granvelle, we can see that Henry sent a messenger to Italy to remind Pole of his duties towards his king and country.¹³ However, Pole had already accepted the papal summons.¹⁴ Pole personally passed on the news to England about his intended journey to Rome in a letter to Tunstall.¹⁵ It seems that he was beginning to feel comfortable with his decision, despite the fact that he was still receiving letters from England exhorting him to return. Almost without exception these appealed to Pole's natural allegiance and warned him that the pope would abuse him as a tool against his native country.¹⁶

On 31 August Pole informed Contarini that he was due to leave Venice for Rome in mid-September. Joyfully he added, 'habebo autem, ejusmodi itineris duces, quales ne optare quidem meliores possem. Hic sunt Veronenses, et Theatinus Episcopi.'¹⁷ Had Pole not been accompanied by these two, Henry

¹²Paul III to Pole, Rome, 19 July 1536; Quirini, I, no. 39.

¹³Chapuys to A. de Granvelle, London, 23 July 1536; *L&P XI*, no. 148, which quote a Vienna manuscript as the source of this letter, which I have been unable to locate in the HHStA.

¹⁴Pole to Paul III, Padua, *s.d.*; Quirini, I, no. 40.

¹⁵Pole to Tunstall, Padua, 1 Aug. 1536; BL: Cleo E. iv,2, f. 350-61^v; *L&P XI*, no. 210.

¹⁶Tunstall to Pole, Aukland, 4 Sep. 1536; PRO: SP 1/106, f. 104-5^v; *L&P XI*, no. 401, and Starkey to Pole, *s.l.*, *s.d.*; BL: Cleo. E iv,2, f. 379-83^v; *L&P XI*, no. 402.

¹⁷Pole to Contarini, Venice, 31 Aug. 1536; Quirini, I, no. 41; 'I will also have guides for this journey, [such] that I could not wish for better. They are the bishops of Verona [Giberti] and of Chieti [Carafa].'

might have at last succeeded in changing his cousin's mind and threatening him into returning to England, for when the party reached Verona Pole received letters, which almost made him submit.

Primae autem, quae a Cromuello illo, cujus arbitrio Rex regnat, ad me sunt datae, plenae omni genere minarum erant, atque has ex Regis verbis scripsit. Alterae, quas ad me Tunstallus, Episcopus Dunelmensis, scripsit, nihil contenebant praeter oppugnationem autoritatis Pontificis ... Tertiae vero, quae me maxime movebant, a matre, et a fratre erant scriptae sic miserabiliter, ut prorsus iis lectis ... prope succuberim.¹⁸

Pole goes on to describe how Giberti and Carafa dissuaded him from giving in to Henry and convinced him anew that his only possible hope lay in relying on Paul's goodness and inclination to help. He wrote, it seems, a sharp reply to Henry: he hoped the king might understand that no threats would move him to leave his chosen path. It would be of great interest to know how Cromwell had threatened Pole. It is very likely that he threatened to have Pole assassinated, because in the above quoted letter Pole expresses for the first time a concern for the safety of his life. The fear of assassination was to haunt Pole for the next seventeen years.

The incident in Verona must be regarded as the turning point in Pole's life. It is true that Henry tried to persuade him to return to his natural allegiance even after he was created a cardinal, and it is even conceivable that Henry's invitations were not necessarily a trap, but from the letter which Pole wrote to his king from Verona it was quite clear that he was not going to change his mind again. To remain faithful to his cause he had accepted the fact that he would be in danger of assassination and that the lives of his friends and family in England would be endangered because of his conduct. He went on to Rome in order to partake in the reform work that was about to begin there, but also, finally to enter into a public career, which he had been avoiding for the first thirty-six years of his life.

¹⁸Pole to Contarini, Siena, 10 Oct. 1536; Quirini, I, no. 45; 'The first of the letters, which Cromwell, whose will rules the king, wrote to me, was full of threats of all sorts, also that which he wrote in the king's name. The second one, which Tunstall, bishop of Durham wrote, did not contain anything but an argument against the authority of the pope ... Thirdly, others, which moved me very much, were written by my mother and my brother in such a pitiful way, that I almost succumbed ... when I read them.'

II. 2. Pole's Elevation to the Cardinalate

The work on church reform started almost immediately after Pole's arrival in Rome. Together with eminent Italian prelates he produced the famous *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, which was to become of prime importance for the thinking of certain catholic reformers in the sixteenth century.¹⁹

Disquieting news reached England in mid-November when Cranmer informed Henry that Pole was being considered for the cardinalate.²⁰ At that time the English monarch was in a precarious domestic situation because of the Pilgrimage of Grace. Thus Pole's cardinalate was most undesirable for Henry, because Pole appeared to be the most dangerous potential ally for the insurgents of the north. Although Pole's political influence on the Continent was not strong, he might have provided the insurgents with a useful link to military support from catholic rulers across the Channel. As a figurehead for the English catholics he was undoubtedly a powerful symbol.²¹ Indeed, the northern insurgents must have at least tried to contact Rome for help in their fight against Henry. In a letter - we do not know whether it ever reached Rome or whether it was intercepted by the English government - they expressed their interest in support from Pole and

in nomine populus insurgentium instatur apud pontificem, ut velit creare supra dictum [Polum] in Car[dina]lem et mittere legatum in anglia[m], est aliquis, qui sentiret ut pontifex mitteret eum, et cum pecuniis.²²

The government's concern about the possibility of Continental support for the insurgents must have been quite obvious to the curial politicians. The nuncio in

¹⁹The *Consilium de emendanda ecclesiae* is discussed by H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, (London, 1957) I, p. 423-33.

²⁰Cranmer to Henry VIII, Knoll, 18 Nov. 1536; J. E. Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (Parker Society, XXIV, 1846) no. 180.

²¹Pole's political and military significance is rather exaggerated by A. Zimmermann, *Kardinal Pole, sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Regensburg, 1893) p. 86-7.

²²Anonymous notice about the letter, *s.l.*, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/113, f. 3; *L&P XI*, 1353,2; 'implored the pope in the name of the insurgent people to create the above mentioned [Pole] a cardinal and send him to England as legate, and there is someone, who thinks that the pope should send him and provide him with money.' This is the only source to document a contact between the insurgents and Rome. The original letter seems to be lost and the above quoted document is a note about this letter from the insurgents to Rome. It was most likely written in the last months of 1536 when the Pilgrimage was on its height.

France, in those days Rome's main source of information about England, reported that the English king feared the possibility of Pole's promotion to the cardinalate.²³ Indeed, Henry even tried to influence Pole in Rome directly. He commissioned Pole's friend Thomas Starkey to write to Pole to encourage him to decline the cardinalate.

For if you shuld accord that waye and take such a place with him that is enemye to the kinges maiestie and the hole realm We cannot otherwis iudge you then to be of the same faction that he is and so consequently as great an enemye to his highnes to your litle power as he whom therby you shuld chuse for your hed and capitain.²⁴

The letter finishes by assuring Pole that if he recanted and returned to England, Henry would still be willing to forgive him his past conduct. This letter is different from Pole's earlier correspondence from England. It is true that Cromwell had threatened Pole before - apparently with attacks on his life. In this letter, however, the tone changed. Starkey warned that if Pole accepted the cardinalate he would be regarded as an enemy of the realm and a traitor. Thus, for the first time Pole was confronted with political consequences which would affect him. Pole may have dismissed Cromwell's threats as a simple trick in political bargaining, or, at least, at this early stage he could have done so. However, if he was to be attainted he would lose his benefices in England and his royal stipend, upon which he depended. The threats were no longer empty. He would not only stain his family name, but put his family's lives at the king's mercy. He would not only be in royal disfavour, but also his peers would turn against him. If, however, he wanted to work for the reduction of England to Roman obedience successfully he would have to rely on the co-operation of the nobility. As it was pointed out above, Pole had already made his choice when he refused to be impressed by the letters which he had received in Verona; now Henry stated his terms. Beyond the personal consequences Pole was now faced with the political consequences of his choice. Pole could still reasonably hope that he might retain some political influence in England as a more or less anonymous exile on the Continent, but that any constructive dialogue with him would become absolutely impossible for the English

²³Pio to Ricalcati, Blois, 26 Nov. 1536; Baroni, no. 237.

²⁴[Starkey to Pole], *s.l.*, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/111, f. 134; *L&P XI*, no. 1101; the date is likely to be soon after 18 Nov. 1536, cf. footnote no. 20 above.

policy makers if he chose to accept a prominent public position with the pope. Unfortunately, Pole's answer to this letter is not extant. We can only deduce from Starkey's next letter that Pole rebuked his friend for allowing himself to be used by Henry, but none of the reasoning concerning this new situation has survived.²⁵

Pole's reluctance to accept the cardinalate in December 1536 shows that he had definitely been impressed by the content of Starkey's letter. According to Pole's first biographer, Ludovico Beccadelli, Pole implored the pope not to promote him, both for the safety of his family and with respect to his political standing in England. The pope accepted Pole's reasons at first, but then he changed his mind and decided to elevate Pole despite his scruples. Pole apparently received the tonsure, which was the outward sign that he now was a clergyman, unwillingly, yet he was humble enough not to protest, so that Beccadelli compared him with a sheep under the shearer's hands.²⁶ Thus on 22 December 1536 Pole was elevated to the purple in public consistory.²⁷ Now a decision was taken and Pole had made a public stand against Henry VIII.

It is difficult to determine how fast the news of Pole's new title reached England, but it might have taken longer than is generally assumed. It is most likely that the earliest date on which the news became known in England was after 9 January 1537, when Sir John Wallop, Henry's ambassador in France, reported to Lord Lisle, 'from Rome is news come that the Pope hath made ix cardinals ... of which number of ix Master Pole is named, whereof I am right sorry, for I know well the King cannot take it well.'²⁸ On 16 January 1537 Starkey wrote in an almost apologetic way to Pole expressing the hope of not having offended his old friend by his last letter. Starkey wrote that he refused to believe a rumour that Pole had been created a cardinal.²⁹ After his failure to procure a positive answer from

²⁵Starkey to Pole, London, 16 Jan. 1537; BL: Cleo. E vi,2, f. 233-3^v; *L&P XII*,1, no. 105.

²⁶L. Beccadelli, *Vita del Cardinale Reginaldo Polo*, in Quirini, V, 355-91; p. 364-5. Schenk, *Reginald Pole*, p. 161, points out that one of Pole's characteristics was a strong fear of public office. This aspect must also be taken into account when it comes to assessing Pole's reluctance to accept the cardinalate.

²⁷Consistorial decree, Rome, 22 Dec. 1536; BL: Add MS 22 837, f. 25^v; *L&P XI*, no. 1353,1.

²⁸Wallop to Lisle, Paris, 9 Jan. 1537; *Lisle Letters*, IV, no. 911. Since the mail to and from England generally went via Calais, it is to be assumed that Wallop informed London of this news by the same post.

²⁹Starkey to Pole, London, 16 Jan. 1537; BL: Cleo E. vi,2, f. 377-7^v; *L&P XII*,1, no. 105.

Pole he had somewhat fallen into Henry's and Cromwell's disfavour. Thus, it is not altogether surprising that Starkey speaks of a rumour as late as mid January, for he may indeed have been ill-informed. It is also possible that, out of esteem for his friend, Starkey chose not to believe that Pole had taken the final step. Indeed, he may have been trying to be politic about the affair in order not to lose the contact with Pole.

When there could be no more doubt in England that Pole had taken the cardinalate Stokesley and Tunstall wrote a joint letter to Pole. They expressed their disappointment with the new cardinal's action, accused him of vainglorious behaviour and of fostering sedition and rebellion in England. They also presented him with a lengthy theological argument as to why the pope should have no authority over the churches outside papal domains, and finally they entreated Pole to surrender his red hat and return to the dutiful service for his king.³⁰

Another hint that the government in London did at first not know how to react to the news from Rome is the fact that Lord Lisle's characteristic attempt to use the new situation for the benefit of his family was not met with success for several weeks. On receiving the news Lisle instructed his agent in England, John Husee, to secure Pole's benefice in Harting for one of his stepsons. Soon Husee reported back that

as for the benefice in Harting, I shewed Mr. Popley your lordship's letter, who ... said that Mr. Pole is like to do well and that the matter is not so heinously taken as it is spoken of; and said further that Throckmorton should be dispatched with the King's answer shortly; and thinketh not the contrary but that all shall be well in that behalf.³¹

This mention of Michael Throckmorton introduces into the controversy one of the most interesting characters of Pole's household. Throckmorton had already been a

³⁰Stokesley and Tunstall to Pole, *s.l.*, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/113, f. 4-11; *L&P XI*, no. 1354.

There can be no question that this letter was written at the same time or soon after Starkey's letter (cf. footnote no. 29 above). Thus, it must be pointed out that the order in which the letters are arranged in *L&P* is incorrect, because there Starkey's letter is placed in *L&P XII, I*, no. 105, whereas the one from Starkey and Tunstall is placed in *L&P XI*, no. 1354, directly following the official account of Pole's elevation. It is evident that the editors did not think that this letter was written so soon after the elevation and that it was placed there out of contextual considerations. To avoid confusion, however, it should be placed somewhere between *L&P XII, I*, no. 105 and no. 249 (*i.e.* between 16 and 20 Jan. 1537).

³¹Husee to Lisle, London, 14 Jan. 1537; *Lisle Letters, IV*, no. 915.

gentleman in Pole's service during the years in Padua, but we hear of him only when Pole got into contact with England or - later - when the cardinal went on diplomatic legations. He was apparently neither involved in the scholarly life which had dominated Pole's house in Padua, nor in any of Pole's endeavors in church reform, which was to be one of the cardinal's main concerns from 1536 till 1552.³² Throckmorton had been in England as Pole's emissary before 1537. It was he who had taken on the dangerous task of presenting *De Unitate* to the English king. What he in turn brought back to his master was Henry's summons, which Pole so boldly rejected. He also carried this rejection to England, from where he was in turn dispatched to carry the king's answer to Italy.³³ In a way he was forced to keep returning to England, because after he had delivered *De Unitate* he had been allowed to rejoin his master in Venice only under condition that he would return. The fact that Throckmorton actually kept this promise prompted Cromwell to trust Pole's servant.

Towards the end of 1536 Pole dispatched Throckmorton to England again. We do not know what letters he carried this time; possibly Pole's reaction to Starkey's harsh warning against accepting the cardinalate. The main reason for this dispatch, however, was without doubt Pole's desire to have an observer in England, who knew the country better than any other trustworthy person, at a time when Henry's position was endangered by the insurrection in the north. This journey must have been far more important to curial politics than the dispatch of an ordinary courier, because the nuncio in Paris reported home whatever news he could get about Throckmorton's movements.³⁴ But it was not only papal politicians who were interested in Throckmorton's safe arrival in England; Cromwell himself showed great anxiety to see Throckmorton unharmed, believing that he was spying on Pole

³²This may be why W. G. Zeefeld assesses Throckmorton's role in Pole's household completely wrongly. In his study *Foundations of Tudor Policy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948) p. 44 he says that 'Pole tolerated him as a messenger.' In the course of this study it will become obvious that Throckmorton was much more to Pole than that.

³³This is also suggested by M. Haile, *The Life of Cardinal Pole* (London, 1910) p. 180, however, no evidence for this assertion is given there.

³⁴Pio to Ricalcati, Blois, 26 Nov. 1536, Melun, 4 and 13 Dec. 1536, Paris, 27 Dec. 1536 and 6 Jan. 1537; Baroni, nos. 237, 243, 245, 250, 254.

for him. When Throckmorton was arrested by French soldiers in Picardy under suspicion of being an imperial spy, Cromwell ordered the English diplomats in Paris to procure his release as fast as possible.³⁵ This, however, had not been the only delay to the journey. Fearing that Cromwell might suspect him of negligence, he wrote a letter from Calais. He was - rather conveniently - prevented from entering England by illness. He asked Cromwell to trust him and explained his long delay:

The fyrst was 5 dayes that I lay syke in the countrey off grysony [Graubünden] and 4 dayes taryeng the openyng off the wey in the montaynes off sewyzzerlande and 9 dayes thatt I was pertaynyd prisoner in montrell by the capteyn ... and 4 dayes taryeng passege att Calles.³⁶

Soon Throckmorton was informed that Cromwell did not hold any suspicions against him,³⁷ so his malady passed quickly and during the first days of January he arrived in England.³⁸ By that time the Pilgrimage of Grace had already been suppressed. There was no longer any purpose to the journey and Throckmorton will have wished to leave England as soon as possible. He knew that his master's name was down for the cardinalate, although he was not informed that the promotion had already taken place. In any event, the Continent must have seemed a safer place for a servant of Reginald Pole than England. However, soon after his arrival in England news about Pole's cardinalate reached the country and for a short while Throckmorton seriously feared for his safety. The fact that he had foreseen this danger is documented in a letter dated 14 January 1537 in which Pio, who was nervously waiting for Throckmorton's return in Paris, expressed his concern that he had not had news from Pole's emissary, since Throckmorton had left for England.

L'huomo del rev[erendissi]mo Inglese ha mai scritto; del che mi meraviglio assai, essendo restato seco, ch'in ogni evento mi darebbe avviso, havendo

³⁵Cromwell to Gardiner and Wallop, London, 24 Dec. 1536; R. B. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, (London, 1902) II, no. 174.

³⁶Throckmorton to Cromwell, [Calais], *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/105, f. 1; *L&P XI*, no. 4; this letter is wrongly placed in *L&P*. It cannot be connected with any other of Throckmorton's journeys than this, hence it must have been written shortly before 30. XII. 1536, at which date an answer to this letter was dated in London.

³⁷G. Collins to Throckmorton, London, 30 Dec. 1536; PRO: SP 1/113, f. 41; *L&P XI*, no. 1387.

³⁸Pio to Ricalcati, Paris, 6 Jan. 1537; Baroni, no. 254.

ben concertato tutto, che quando anche fosse stato ritenuto da quel re, ne havrei havuto raguaglio. E esso mi disse che quando partì da Roma haveva detto a Sua Signoria Rev[erendissi]ma che per modo alcuno, quando Sua S[anti]tà lo volesse creare Cardinale a Natale, la non si pubblicasse sino al ritorno suo, perché altrimenti lo mandava a manifesto pericolo della vita.³⁹

On the very same day in London, however, the immediate danger to Throckmorton was already over, as he was regarded as trustworthy enough to carry Henry's answer to Pole.⁴⁰ What had certainly helped him in this situation was the fact that he had succeeded in convincing Henry and Cromwell that his loyalties would ultimately lie with the English cause. He was allowed to leave the country again on condition that he persuaded Pole to abandon his new title and brought him back to England.⁴¹ Throckmorton left England around 20 January, carrying with him the letters of Tunstall and Starkey, and an angry attack on Pole's conduct, signed by the king's councillors. He had very little intention of fulfilling the promise which he had made in England, but he did see great potential in exploiting the trust which had been placed in him by the king's chief minister. Approximately half a year later Thomas Cromwell was to discover that for once it had been he who was playing but a part in the elaborate scheme of another cunning individual.

³⁹Pio to Ricalcati, Paris, 14 Jan. 1537; Baroni, no. 255. 'The man of the English cardinal has never written; I am rather amazed about this as it was agreed with him, that he would give me news through well devised channels, so that even if he was retained by that king, I should have had news about it. He told me that when he left Rome he had said to his eminence [Pole] that, if his holiness deigned to create him [Pole] a cardinal at Christmas, it should by no means be made public before his return, because otherwise he [Throckmorton] would be sent into great peril of life.'

⁴⁰Cf. p. 16 and footnote no. 33 above.

⁴¹This commission becomes apparent from Throckmorton's letter to Cromwell, Rome, 15 Feb. 1537; PRO: SP 1/116, f. 34-6^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 429. For the commission see f. 34 and 36^v.

III. The Legation of 1537

III. 1. Preliminaries and earliest stages of the legation

When Throckmorton rejoined Cardinal Pole in Rome on 13 February 1537, he brought his master news of the reactions to his acceptance of the cardinalate. We do not know what Henry or Cromwell had written to Pole, but a letter from the king's councillors is extant. The councillors rebuked Pole for his ingratitude towards the king, who had paid for his education and been his patron in every possible way. However, it seemed that England was still interested in regaining control over Pole, for the councillors offered to hold a disputation in Flanders, at which Pole could discuss his views with English scholars who supported Henry's cause; the councillors said that this olive branch was offered not only because they still saw a hope that Pole might change his views but also out of consideration for his family in England. Only one condition was stipulated: Pole should come to Flanders as a private traveller, without any foreign commission or titles.¹ The prospect of a disputation on neutral territory may have greatly appealed to Pole's scholarly spirit, but he could not accept the government's stipulation. On 7 February Pole had been created *legatus a latere* to France and Flanders,² commissioned to negotiate questions of European peace, and to discuss heresies, and the onslaught of the Turkish armies.³

Pole's answer to the councillors of 16 February started with a lengthy justification of his acceptance of the cardinalate, in which he tried to combat the reproaches of having been ungrateful or vainglorious. Then he protested self-righteously that in sending his *De Unitate* to Henry and thus making the king privy

¹Henry VIII's Council to Pole, London, 18 Jan. 1537; PRO: SP 1/114, f. 144-5; *L&P XII,1*, no. 125.

²*Legatus a latere* is the highest possible title for a papal emissary. He is the direct vicar of the pope in matters temporal and spiritual in those parts where his legation leads him. Ideally, the office is confined to cardinals. K. Walf, *Die Entwicklung des päpstlichen Gesandtschaftswesens in dem Zeitabschnitt zwischen Dekretalrecht und Wiener Kongreß (1159-1815)* (Munich, 1966) p. 18-28. For a brief summary on the varying degrees of papal legates cf. A. Abbo, 'Papal Legates', *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, VIII (Washington, 1967) p. 607-8.

³Consistorial decree, Rome, 7 Feb. 1537; C. Baronius (ed.), *Annales Ecclesiastici denuo et accurate excusi* (Paris, Fribourg, 1878) XXXIV, p. 425; the implications of Pole's commission will be discussed further below, cf. p. 23 and footnote no. 15 below.

to his opinion he was indeed the one and only faithful subject on whom the king could dare to rely. After these attacks on the king's other subjects Pole declared that Paul III was in no way Henry's enemy. He admitted that previous popes may have been ill inclined, but argued that to Paul the dialogue with Henry, whom he regarded as a prodigal son, was of utmost importance. Towards the end of the letter a certain pride or even a contempt for Henry's councillors prevails. Pole rebuked the councillors for meddling with his affairs, for which they had just as little understanding and training as he had for warfare, on which he would have never dreamt of advising them. The letter finishes with Pole's answer to the invitation. He informed the council about his legateship to France and Flanders. Pole did not want the dialogue with England to grind to a halt, but his loyalties were redefined and he wanted this fact acknowledged.

Quod autem scribitis, si privatus essem, vos a Rege impetrasse, si in Flandriam venirem ut ad me mitteret, qui de his controversiis in rebus religionis, quae in Regno ejus vigent, conferrent, id certe hoc ego pro mea parte a Pontifice impetravi, ut vobiscum agere liceret in Flandria, sive in Gallia, ut commodius Majestati Regis, et vobis videbitur. Nec certe ita nomen Cardinalis refugere debitis ... Vos nunc deliberate, quid sit agendum.⁴

The English had not proposed a discussion on neutral territory rather than in England simply out of consideration for Pole's anxieties about entering England. Now that Pole was a cardinal Henry would have had greater difficulty in dealing with him than before his promotion. It is true that in the beginning of 1537 England was quiet again, but the presence of a cardinal, openly defying Henry, may have easily fuelled the rebellious spirit of the discontented English, both noble and common. Moreover, after the executions of More and Fisher, Henry could not risk provoking European opinion against him again by luring Pole to England just to create another martyr. Thus, the government preferred to deal with Pole *incognito* on the Continent. The news which Pole conveyed to England now, however, was almost worse than having him in England for a disputation. He was

⁴Pole to King's Council, Rome, 16 Feb. 1537; Quirini, I, p. 179-87 (quotation from p. 186-7). 'But now you are writing that, if I come to Flanders as a private traveller, you could implore the king to send a delegation to me to discuss the religious controversies, which are thriving in this realm. On my part I have procured a licence from the pope which allows me to treat with you either in Flanders or France, whichever will seem better suited to the king's majesty and you. ... Now it is for you to decide what is to be done.'

coming to France and Flanders as legate and plenipotentiary of the pope, as an all too obvious sign for the Englishmen who looked to Rome in hope.

The legation had certainly not come as a surprise to Pole. Even before he was made a cardinal the English insurgents, and papal and imperial diplomats had advised sending Pole northward. During the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace the nuncio in Paris, Rodolfo Pio, urged the curia time and again to dispatch Pole to England, so that he could force Henry back into the catholic fold with the help of the insurgents,⁵ whilst the imperial diplomats in London informed the emperor that the insurgents were in financial difficulties and were looking to Rome for help. They also discussed the possibility of sending Pole to England as a papal envoy.⁶ It has already been mentioned that the insurgents directly intervened in Rome and asked to have Pole sent to England as legate provided with money.⁷

The curia felt that the time was not yet ripe to dispatch Pole. However, the papal censures against Henry were sent to Pio to whose discretion the pope left the decision whether or not to publish them.⁸ Rome also called on Francis I of France to enter into open opposition against Henry VIII,⁹ and instructed Pio to discover whether other catholic rulers would be prepared to support a papal initiative against Henry. Pio was able to sound out the inclinations of two potential allies for the pope. Most members of the Scottish court were staying in France at that time, because of the marriage between James V and Francis's daughter, Madeleine, and on 4 December Pio reported to Rome that there was hope of influencing the course of affairs in England by way of her northern neighbour. Even more encouragingly he added that he had discussed the papal censures with Montmorency, who suggested '*che Sua S[anti]ta, con il mezzo dell'Inglese che è a Roma, ben ne potrebbe far pubblicare in Inghiltera, dove quello haveva gran credito*

⁵Pio to Ricalcati, Blois, 26 Nov. 1536; Baroni, no. 237.

⁶Sample of imperial correspondence, London, November 1536 (various dates); BL: Add. MS 28 589, f. 102-2^v; *L&P XI*, no. 1143.

⁷Anonymous account of the insurgents' letter to the Curia, *s.l., s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/113, f. 3; *L&P XI*, no. 1353,2; for the value and credibility of this source cf. p. 12, footnote no. 22 above.

⁸These papal censures were the bull of excommunication against Henry VIII and possibly a papal brief for the English nation to depose the monarch. Since the contemporary sources always use the vague '*censuri*' rather than '*bolla*' the term will be employed in the present study.

⁹Ricalcati to Pio, Rome, 10 Nov. 1536; Baroni, no. 235.

e che credera quei popoli finalmente ammazzerebbero il loro re.'¹⁰ Pio agreed. He advocated Pole's dispatch to England even after the English rebellion had been crushed by Henry, arguing that England would rise again if the people saw a noble leader like Pole.¹¹

Why did Rome hesitate to send Pole on a legation? It would have been infinitely more effective to dispatch him at the height of the insurrection, or immediately after his elevation. It is possible that Pole's inexperience in diplomatic matters was a reason for the delay; it is also conceivable that his general reluctance to act publicly was a factor taken into consideration. He may also have been indispensable for the commission for church reform, which was sitting in conference in the autumn of 1536. The most likely explanation, however, is that the legation itself was met with resistance on the imperial side. We learn of this opposition from a letter written by the imperial ambassador in Rome, the Count of Cifuentes, in which he informed Charles V that the pope had after all decided to dispatch Pole. On the emperor's behalf Cifuentes had then insisted on absolute secrecy, because Charles disagreed with the pope's plan.¹²

Despite this impediment the news about the French and Scottish attitude towards the prospect of Rome moving against England was encouraging. Pio reported that the French were eager to see the papal censures against Henry published.¹³ Shortly afterwards another correspondent informed Rome about James V's zeal to serve the pope and his readiness to publish the censures in Scotland. Moreover, Francis I had agreed to publish and to observe the papal censures in his realm provided that Charles V would do the same thing.¹⁴

¹⁰Pio to Ricalcati, Melun, 4 Dec. 1536; Baroni, no. 243; Montmorency suggested that 'his holiness could have them published in England through the Englishman, who is in Rome and who where he is in high esteem there [England] and he [Montmorency] thought that these people [the English] would then finally kill their king.'

¹¹Pio to Ricalcati, Paris, 6 and 19 Jan. 1537; Baroni, nos. 254 and 258. For Pio's further role in the legation it is worth mentioning that Paul III must have already been determined to send Pole on a legation to northern Europe during the first days of 1537 although he confirmed Pio's power to publish the censures. Paul III to Pio, Rome, 9 Jan. 1537; A. Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum* (Rome, 1864) no. 1154; surprisingly this letter is not incorporated in Baroni's edition of Pio's correspondence.

¹²Cifuentes to Charles V, Rome, 17 Jan. 1537; BL: Add. MS 28 589, f. 185^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 123.

¹³Pio to Ricalcati, Paris 2 Feb. 1537; Baroni, no. 262.

Even before these messages reached Rome, the pope created Pole a legate on 7 February 1537. Officially, he was to go to France and the Netherlands to negotiate a peace within Christendom, a joint action against the feared assault of the Turkish armies, and the most propitious way to counteract the northern European heresies. Unofficially - and this must have been obvious to his politically minded contemporaries - he was commissioned to try to enter England and either bring Henry back to Roman obedience or depose him.¹⁵

Shortly after Pole had been made a legate he wrote an interesting memorandum for the pope. The tone of the memorandum is not very optimistic. He advised the pope that the whole enterprise would not be easy. Reading between the lines one can discover that the cardinal had his reservations from the start, because the legation had not been very carefully planned by the curia. Yet Pole saw the necessity for speed. He reminded Paul that Henry was thinking of calling a free parliament to York and he pointed out that it would be expedient to arrive in England in time for that. He also urged the pope to announce the legation to Charles and Francis. These rulers should be told that Pole was coming to negotiate about the general problems of Christendom. The advice Pole gave on England impressively witnesses his talent for grasping the significance of political situations and for designing proper ways of dealing with them. He asked the pope for credentials to the English people and for full faculties to act in England with papal power and authority, in order not to jeopardize any possible success by having to ask Rome to sanction his decisions there, which he might have to take in a hurry. Thus Pole was trying to create maximum flexibility for himself and made sure that

¹⁴Messer Dionisio to ?, *s.l.*, 4 Feb. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 130-30^v; I have not been able to identify the author of this letter. It is likely that he was not a regular correspondent of the curial State Secretariat, because this original letter is filed in a collection which mainly holds copies, whereas the regular mail from the nuncios (which is applicable only if Dionisio held some official post) would either be filed in the relevant *nunziatura* collection, or with the private papers of the current Cardinal Secretary of State, which in this case would be the Carte Farnesiane. For the peculiar history of this collection cf. p. 4-5 above.

¹⁵T. F. Mayer points out in his article, 'A Diet for Henry VIII: The Failure of Reginald Pole's 1537 Legation', *Journal of British Studies*, XXVI (1987) p. 306, that the fact that the diplomats travelled with two different sets of instructions - one official and one unofficial - was normal practice in Pole's time. He also notes that this trick did not work on the English, who took the potential danger of Pole's legation seriously from the start.

his mission would not be thwarted by bureaucratic and communicational shortcomings. This did not alter his stringent views on the conditions for reconciliation. Pole firmly stated that Henry would have to return the entire confiscated property of the church. He was also not willing to concede any more privileges for the English church than her ancient liberties. A discussion with Henry on current ecclesiastical matters, such as the General Council, was to be postponed until after the monarch's submission. Even when it became clear that Pole would not be able to fulfill his mission he did not change his views on this point nor did he ever show any more readiness to compromise with Henry VIII.

When Pole was writing the memorandum he was still assuming success, but he did not forget to look at the English problems realistically:

Ma Padre Santo una cosa non voglio omettere che mi pare importantissima e puotria esser ripreso da V[ostra] Santità de aver puoco pensato al suo servitio quando la pretermettessi. Puotria essere che vedendosi il Re a mal partito con tanta furia di populi adosso, avesse cercato con dimandar le loro petitioni e mostrato di giudicarle honeste e promettendo di volere accettare di levarsele de dosso con animo di non osservar cosa alcuna quando si vedrà fuor di pericolo, et col tempo andarsi levando gli auttori della seditione hora con una occasione hora con un altra. A questo quando i Popoli non stessero saldi, overo essendo inutili per suscitarli, penso che saria un gran provisione se ci fosse chi in nome de V[ostra] S[antità] li confermasse o sollicitasse non solo con le parole, ma ancora con fatti, i quali bisognaria che fossero di quella quantità di danari che bisogno portasse.¹⁶

In order to be in a position to counteract the schemes of King Henry, Pole asked Paul to deposit readily accessible funds for him in the large banks in the Netherlands. It is interesting to see that Pole obviously did not regard his mission to France and Flanders as very important. Almost dismissively he asked the pope to inform the rulers of these countries that he was sent to them as well. It is very likely that the legation to France and Flanders was only an official cover for Pole's

¹⁶Pole's memorandum for Paul III, Rome, *s.d.*; Quirini, II, p. cclxxiv-ix; 'But, Holy Father, there is one thing which I do not want to omit, which seems to be of the highest importance and your holiness might think that I have thought but little of this service to you if I omitted it. The king now sees himself confronted with the rage of the people. It could be that he tried to get them off his hands by asking to see their petitions and showing that he judged them honestly and promising that he wanted to accept them. Yet he may have no intention of keeping any of these promises when he feels safe again. And as time goes by he may arrest the leaders of the sedition for all kinds of reasons. Then, when the people will not stand firmly, yea, will be useless for any kind of agitation, I think it would be a great advantage if I was there to confirm them and urge them on not only with words, but also with deeds. There should be a sum of money available as the case will require.'

commission to England, that is to say, that Rome did not publish Pole's real intentions, but let him travel to northern Europe as papal legate for the peace. Once Pole had reached France or the Netherlands he then had the opportunity to surprise Henry with his commission for England. It must, however, be pointed out that the peace legation was not purely *camouflage*, because at least the bishop of Verona, who accompanied Pole, actively entered on negotiations with both Habsburg and Valois in an effort to mediate between the two warring houses.¹⁷

Paul III did not follow all the English cardinal's advice. He was not prepared to make large sums of money available for the enterprise, but he did provide Pole with adequate powers for England and with the necessary briefs.¹⁸ In mid-February the pope officially announced Pole's legation to Francis I, James V, Mary of Hungary, Charles's sister and governor of the Netherlands, and to Cardinal Erard de la Marck, prince bishop of Liège and one of the most influential members of the Flemish council.¹⁹

On Pole's insistence it was decided that Gian Matteo Giberti was to accompany him, for he was an experienced diplomat and had been a respected politician in both France and England before he retired to his diocese of Verona to supervise personally the reform of the church there.²⁰ It is not clear when Pole and his entourage left Rome,²¹ but the first letters which Pole and Giberti wrote from their

¹⁷T. F. Mayer states in his article 'Reginald Pole in Paolo Giovio's "Descriptio": A Strategy for Reconversion', *Sixteenth Century Journal* XVI (1985) p. 439, that 'the true purpose of Pole's legation was to stir up the rebels'. As far as Pole alone is concerned this point can be argued, although it must be pointed out that Giberti's role is not taken into consideration in this interpretation.

¹⁸Brief of Paul III to the English nation, Rome, *s.d.*; Quirini, II, p. cclxvii.

¹⁹Paul III to Francis I, James V, Mary of Hungary, Marck, Rome, 15 Feb. 1537; Quirini, II, p. cclxvii-lxxii. The briefs differ very little from each other. It is interesting that an official brief was sent to James of Scotland, although - strictly speaking - the legation did not concern him or his domains.

²⁰For Giberti cf. A. Prosperi, *Tra evangelismo e contrariforma: G. M. Giberti (1495-1543)* (Rome, 1969) with most recent bibliographical augmentations in the same author's 'Giberti, Gian Matteo, év. Verone', *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, XX (1984) column 1241-1246. The best account in English still is M. A. Tucker, 'Gian Matteo Giberti, Papal Politician and Catholic Reformer', *EHR*, XVIII (1903) p. 24-51, 266-86, 439-69.

²¹Pole's last extant letters Rome are dated 16 Feb. 1537; Pole to Henry VIII's Council; Quirini, I, p. 179; and to Cromwell; J. P. Collier (ed.), *Nine Historical Letters of the Reign of Henry VIII*, (London, 1871) p. 6-8. Contarini's first letter to Pole, however, was dated Rome,

mission were dated 27 February. By that time the party had reached Bologna, travelling via Siena and Florence. From these letters it becomes apparent for the first time how different the roles of the two envoys were going to be. While the tone of Pole's letter is somewhat anecdotal, Giberti gave an account of the political work he had done so far. He reported his discussions with the rulers of Siena and Florence. These conferences were directly concerned with the peace making aspect of the legation, because they were mainly dealt with the vexing Milanese problem, which was one of the major impediments for a peace between Charles V and Francis I.²² Pole does not appear to have taken part in these discussions.

His concentration was taken up by England, to which he sent another messenger from Bologna.²³ On 28 February he wrote to Contarini. If one compares this letter with Giberti's of the previous day, one is tempted to think that the men were travelling together merely by coincidence. Pole did not mention the political talks in Siena and Florence at all. He complained about the slow progress of the journey, which had been caused by his being ill. The only consequence of this, which concerned Pole, was that his arrival in England might be delayed till after the parliament in York had started. He was, however, still optimistic that he would reach England in time.²⁴ The discrepancy in the contents of both diplomats' letters was to develop into a characteristic pattern for the entire legation. Whereas Giberti worked very hard for the continental part of Pole's commission, the legate himself never pursued this part, but concentrated exclusively on England. It will be shown in the course of this chapter that Pole's apparent lack of interest in these problems did not change even when the plans for England had fallen through and he had time to devote himself to Europe.

15 Feb. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 13. Since it becomes apparent from Contarini's letter that he already had some news about the progress of Pole's journey, we must allow at least two days between Pole's departure and this letter, thus the date for the departure must be between 7 Feb. (Pole's appointment as legate) and 12 Feb.. Pole's letters to England may have been dated wrongly on purpose in order to suggest to the English that he set out a week later than he actually did. G. B. Pighi, *Gian Matteo Giberti* (Verona, second edition, 1924) p. 146, states in his rather fallacious account of the legation that the party left Rome on 18 February, which date is accepted by G. M. Monti, 'La legazione del Polo e del Giberti in Francia e in Fiandra nel 1537', in: Monti, *Studi sulla riforma e sul papato nei secoli XVI-XVII* (Trani, 1941) p. 5.

²²Giberti to Ricalcati, Bologna, 27 Feb. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 178-80.

²³Pole to Pio, Bologna, 27 Feb. 1537; Baroni, no. 269.

²⁴Pole to Contarini, Bologna, 28 Feb. 1537; Quirini, II, no. 14.

The journey was slow and on 4 March the party was no further than Piacenza.²⁵ There seems to have been some tension between Pole and Giberti over the question of how to conduct the journey. Pole had not been willing to break his Lenten fast during the journey and consequently jeopardized his health. Giberti gave advice which Pole was unwilling to accept. Thus Contarini exhorted Pole to obey Giberti in his letter of 15 February.²⁶ In answering this letter from Bologna, Pole actually admitted to having fallen ill, but also jokingly pointed out that the graveness of the Veronese bishop was starting to annoy everyone; even Pole's horse 'quo ille [Giberti] utitur, quasi praesentens voluntatem meam, et quod facere conveniret, nudius tertius eum e fella excussit, non sine periculo quidem, sed sine damno, tantum ut superbia ejus retunderet.'²⁷ The next sentence of the letter emphasizes that all that was only written in jest, but Pole apparently still did not willingly follow the advice of his older mentor. From his letter from Piacenza it becomes clear that the pope himself had been troubled about this problem. Paul's secretary, Ambrogio Ricalcati, had conveyed an express papal command to the stubborn cardinal to abandon his fast and obey Giberti.²⁸ The entire episode has hitherto been considered merely as a humorous interlude. There was, however, more to it than that. There may not have been open animosity between Pole and Giberti, but the tension between the two men must have been tangible. In all his writings Pole displayed remarkably little humour, so that this unique outbreak is interesting. Pole must have been genuinely annoyed with Giberti and tried to conceal his satisfaction over Giberti's injured pride with harmless jest. However, the tensions must have been more complex than this, otherwise exhortations from Rome would have been unnecessary. Pole may have resented Giberti's patronizing attitude, since this was the first time in his life that he faced a guardian figure to whose commands obedience bound him. This position was a distinct change from

²⁵Giberti to Bini, Piacenza, 4 Mar. 1537; T. Porcacchi (ed.), *Lettere di XIII huomini illustri* (Venice, 1571) p. 64^v-5^v. Analogously the date of Pole's letter to Contarini from Piacenza, Quirini, II, no. 15, can be substituted as 4 Mar. 1537.

²⁶Cf. footnote no. 21 above.

²⁷Cf. footnote no. 25 above. Pole's horse 'which was carrying him [Giberti] did the obvious, almost fulfilling my wishes. Three days ago it threw him out of the saddle, which could have been dangerous, but actually no damage was done; only his pride decreased.'

²⁸Pole to Contarini as in footnote no. 25 above.

his position as lord of a diverse household in Padua. It is true that during Pole's academic years he had had to accept his teachers' guidance through the syllabus, but in contrast to his new situation one of the academic virtues was discussing problems and methods. Apparently, Pole learnt his lesson in humility, for we do not find any further complaints about the problem.

III. 2. The political situation at the outset of the legation

From Piacenza the party slowly proceeded to France. How slowly the cardinal and his entourage travelled can be seen from a letter which Roberto de Nobili sent to Rome. De Nobili was a Roman nobleman who went to France as internuncio, because Pio had been recalled and a new nuncio not yet been appointed.²⁹ He had either left Rome in Pole's company or caught up with him somewhere in Italy and then travelled together with the legate for a while. On 16 March he reported from Lyons that he had decided to leave Piacenza on 2 March and not to wait for Pole, who had then been three days behind him.³⁰ Pole's train fell back behind de Nobili even further, for the cardinal's party did not reach Lyons before 23 March.³¹

From there Giberti reported back about his negotiations with the Cardinals Tournon and Bourbon, two of Francis's councillors. They had talked about the chances for a peace between Valois and Habsburg. Giberti had to recognize that a new outbreak of hostilities in the Franco-Flemish border region was imminent. He also reported that France was uneasy about alienating Henry VIII in these crucial

²⁹For de Nobili's mission *ANG, I*, p. xxxvi-vii.

³⁰De Nobili to Ricalcati, Lyon, 16 Mar. 1537; *ANG, I*, no. 224.

³¹This can be seen by a letter from Giberti to Ricalcati, Lyons, 24 Mar. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 181-2^v; *L&P XII, I*, no. 722. The calendars of Giberti's correspondence in the *L&P* were taken from modern copies of ASV: Fondo Borghese I, 36, f. 42-83^v. Both sets of letters, Principi and Fondo Borghese, are copies of originals, which I have not been able to find. I prefer using the Principi, because they seem to be closer to the original. Fondo Borghese I, 36 is a volume entitled 'Lettere di uomini illustri', which was compiled for stylistic and literary reasons, whereas the Principi are an original State Secretariat collection, designed chiefly to preserve information given in correspondence. (Why Giberti's letters ended up in the Principi collection rather than the Vescovi is a question I cannot answer.) The records in the Principi are also more complete than those in the Fondo Borghese, where Giberti's letter from Bologna (cf. footnote no. 22 above) and his letter to Francis I (cf. footnote no. 74 below) were left out. Consequently these letters are also missing in the *L&P*.

weeks, lest the English should be encouraged to support Charles V.³²

This certainly corresponds to Pio's information that the French had agreed to publish the papal censures and send them to England, provided that they would not have to disclose a French press on the flyleaf, but would be allowed to change the place of publication.³³ Unfortunately, Pio did not reveal in his letter which place of publication they had proposed to put down. They may have planned to name a Flemish printer as origin in order to trick Henry into an alliance with France against the Habsburgs. It is also conceivable that they wanted to pretend that the censures had come from a press in the Papal States with licence from Paul III. This, however, is unlikely, because Pio would not have had to worry about an estrangement between the pope and the English king and might in fact have enthusiastically agreed to this possibility. He was, however, not sure what to do and asked Rome for new instructions. He may have been concerned that the papacy might risk its neutrality in the European conflict if he allowed the censures to be published under the pretence that they had come from Flanders. Alienation between Charles and Paul would have been the inevitable result. We can only speculate on what became of the French offer. Some action must have been taken, because soon after the above cited letter, Pio informed Rome that part of the censures were already in England and that James V would take the rest to Scotland in order to have them smuggled into England from there.³⁴ This information is altogether puzzling. There is no trace of papal censures appearing in England at this time. It is hardly imaginable that Pio deliberately misinformed Rome, yet other explanations are difficult to defend. No evidence can be found for the printing of the censures in 1537. If, however, Pio did have them printed, in all likelihood at least one specimen would have survived to our days. The part which he claimed to have sent to England could have been destroyed in a shipwreck, but we know that James safely returned to Scotland and supposedly he had the censures against his royal uncle with him. If we assume that this information is true, the question is why we never hear of these censures again. James may have thought it inopportune to use or circulate them. However, it is inconceivable that all of them were destroyed. On the other hand it is difficult to imagine why Pio should have

³²*Ibid.*

³³Pio to Ricalcati, Compiègne, 28 Feb. 1537; Baroni, no. 270.

³⁴Pio to Ricalcati, Compiègne, 5 Mar. 1537; Baroni, no. 272.

passed on wrong information to Rome, because in doing so he potentially put a spanner in the policy making works of his own head quarters, to which he was definitely loyal. The only conceivable motive for such an action would be Pio's eagerness to direct Rome's attention to English affairs, for as Pole left Rome, the prevalent opinion in the curia concerning the enterprise may have been that the legation was untimely.³⁵ The Pilgrimage of Grace was defeated and the European war was breaking out again. It will be remembered that Paul III had not followed Pole's suggestion that he should set aside a large sum of money for the support of the English catholics. Pio on the other hand certainly regarded Pole's legation and the solution to the English problem as part of his responsibility. He had been the first to champion Pole's promotion to the cardinalate and the support of the Pilgrims.³⁶ Now that Pole's and Pio's endeavor was sailing under an ill star, Pio started campaigning for the fullest possible support for his aims. It is noticeable that, even after the English uprising had been suppressed, Pio continually sent encouraging statements about the imminent new outbreak of the rebellion to Rome.³⁷ These reports need not necessarily mean that Pio was ill informed about the real state of affairs in England,³⁸ but they can be interpreted as a call for die-hard policy in Rome towards Pole's legation. In other words, these reports may have expressed Pio's hope that things might, after all, change for the better in England, if only Pole was to exert some influence. In this context it is possible that Pio had the papal censures copied, but not in print: he may have had them copied by hand a few times only. Consequently Pio may have sent very few copies to England and Scotland, which did not have any impact. But the nuncio could report that the censures were under their way before the legate, very belatedly, arrived anywhere near England.

Whether or not Pio's mode of reporting was ultimately destructive; whether or not Paul III would have recalled Pole at this early stage under the influence of

³⁵See Pole's memorandum for Paul III (footnote no. 16 above), where Pole presses for time to such an extent as to suggest to conduct all further briefings by mail rather than personally in order not to lose any more time.

³⁶For Pio's role in the legation see Mayer, 'Diet', p. 307-9.

³⁷Pio to Ricalcati, Compiègne, 18 Feb.; Amiens, 16 Mar. and 12 Apr. 1537; Baroni, nos. 266, 279, 290.

³⁸This is suggested by Mayer, 'Diet', p. 309.

different information; whether or not Pio inadvertently manoeuvred the curia into one of the most embarrassing diplomatic disasters in its history; all these questions are matters for further speculation. What has to be reported here is the palpable result of Pio's reports. In mid-March the curia was still very optimistic about Pole's prospects for success. The papal secretary informed the nuncio in Vienna accordingly: 'Le cose de Inghilterra [secondo] gli avisi che avemo, vanno malissimo per il re, onde il legato, chi si è mandato, potria fare qualche buon frutto, che Dio gli ne dia gratia.'³⁹

This generally optimistic feeling in the curia was certainly also generated by the belief that Henry's neighbours, Francis, Charles, and James, would support Pole's quest. In the event, only one of these rulers was prepared to do so. This was the Scottish king. It was in his general political interest to pursue whatever political machinations might endanger his uncle on the English throne. This traditional Anglo-Scottish antagonism was recognized in Rome, where Scotland was certainly counted among Pole's potential allies during the time when the legation was being prepared. Paul III had expressed his delight in the marriage between Madeleine of France and James of Scotland, with a clear glance at future action against England.⁴⁰ Rome was anxious to show James its appreciation for his loyalty to the Holy See. After all, he was the ruler of the only northern country where catholicism was still firmly entrenched. A very clear sign of Roman expectations was sent to James in January 1537 in the form of a sword, which Paul III had consecrated on the preceding Christmas Eve. If the symbolism of this gift was already close to Henry's title of *Defensor Fidei*, the accompanying brief made it clear to anyone that this was no coincidence. Paul exhorted James to use the sword to protect the church and the faith against their heretical enemies.⁴¹ This papal favour had the desired effect on James. Shortly after the gift reached him in France he promised Pio that he would publish the papal censures in his domains.⁴² This was more than either Charles or Francis had so far indicated to be willing to do.

³⁹Ricalcati to Morone, Rome, 11 Mar. 1537; *NB*, II, no. 28. 'According to our information the affairs of England are in a very bad state for the king, so that the legate, who was sent there, might have some good success. God grant him mercy for that.'

⁴⁰Ricalcati to Pio, Rome, 10 Nov. 1536; Baroni, no. 235.

⁴¹Paul III to James V, Rome, 19 Jan. 1537; Quirini, II, p. cclxix-lxx.

⁴²Pio to Ricalcati, Compiègne, 18 Feb. 1537; Baroni, no. 266.

Of course, James was not strong enough to take up the Roman cause on his own and when the papal designs had to make room for national and dynastic interests of the warring parties James carefully withdrew his unconditional pledge to co-operate with Rome. In April 1537 when Pole was expelled from France, Pio turned for help to James, who was then ready to sail back to Scotland. He asked the king whether he would be willing to take Pole with him, so that Pole could enter England either on the way or via Scotland. James declined, because he feared an overt challenge to Henry.⁴³ James's close ties with France and his determination to keep up the catholic faith in Scotland were a matter of concern for the English government, which led to some estrangement between England and Scotland in the 1530s.⁴⁴ Clearly, James saw that he could hardly expect French help against Henry, while France was engaged in a war against Charles V. At first sight Scotland appeared as a natural ally for the papacy and it has been shown that the curia saw James V as such, humouring him accordingly.⁴⁵ In Pole's own thinking, however, Scotland played but a marginal role. In neither of his early legations, 1537 and 1539, is there any evidence that he ever contacted Scotland for help.⁴⁶ Pole understood that as soon as Scotland's ally, France, took action against England, James V would not fail to do his share in the fight against his uncle on the English throne.

It has been shown that James V was sympathetic to Pole's legation. It can be argued that this was true more for political reasons than because of a distinct religious zeal on the king's part. James's motives, however, are less important here than the fact that he definitely showed more interest in the legation than both Charles and Francis. On the one hand any alienation of the English king was most undesirable for these two monarchs at a time when their struggle for European

⁴³Pio to Ricalcati, Amiens, 12 Apr. 1537; Baroni, no. 290.

⁴⁴D. M. Head, 'Henry VIII's Scottish Policies: A Reassessment', *Scottish Historical Review*, LXI (1982) p. 13-4.

⁴⁵R. K. Hannay, *The Scottish Crown and the Papacy, 1425-1560*, (Historical Association of Scotland, new series, VI, 1931) shows that these relations normally consisted almost exclusively of financial dealings and the control over benefices.

⁴⁶Pole's dedicatory preface to his *De Unitate* to James V will be discussed in a later chapter of this study. Here it suffices to say that it was never sent to Scotland. No trace of Pole's efforts to obtain support from Scotland can be found in R. K. Hannay, D. Hay, *The Letters of James V (1513-1542)* (Edinburgh, 1954).

hegemony was at its height. On the other hand neither of them was in a position to design his policies without paying minimal regard to the pope. It was Paul III's policy to stay neutral at all cost in the ongoing conflict between the houses of Habsburg and Valois. Thus, he was hoping to restore the political integrity of the papacy, which had suffered much damage under his predecessors.⁴⁷ At the same time he was also trying, with limited success, to re-establish the papacy as a moral force in European politics. Earlier in the sixteenth century the European monarchs could risk crossing the papacy quite safely, because of its lack of credibility. As Paul III's reign carried on, this was no longer the case. Francis had already annoyed the pope through his open alliance with the Turks. He was a ruler who used the title 'Most Christian King' but supported the infidels in their wars against Christians, harboured their fleets in his ports, and exploited their military actions in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans to his advantage in Flanders, Piedmont, and Navarre. Paul also thought it quite unforgivable that Charles, the 'Catholic King' of Spain and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, tolerated the German heresies and the English schism, whilst at the same time fighting Francis. Furthermore, Charles tended to pursue his dynastic interests, mainly in Italy, much more vigorously than that he lived up to his role as defender of the church. By keeping up their war both monarchs stood in the way of the convocation of a General Council. That is why, on the one hand, neither of them could afford to tax Paul's patience over Pole's legation, while on the other hand neither of them was prepared to risk openly declaring themselves against Henry VIII and thus driving him into an alliance with their respective opponent.

It has been pointed out that Charles had had reservations against the legation from its outset.⁴⁸ However, once the legation had been announced, Charles was in no position to stop it. All he could do was order his diplomats in Rome to play for time. Paul's initial design had been to send Pole to Flanders on the direct route via Trent and Germany. The imperial ambassadors persuaded him to change his plans on the grounds that the emperor could not guarantee Pole's safety during the cardinal's passage through Germany. At the same time they managed to dissolve

⁴⁷The decay of the political role of the papacy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has been outlined by J. G. Russel, *Peacemaking in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1986) p. 21-47.

⁴⁸Cf. p. 22 and footnote no. 12 above.

Paul III's fears that the passage through France would be unsafe for the legate.⁴⁹ While effectively playing the ball into the French court, the imperial policy makers also decided to keep their options open. In this situation it was relatively easy for them to do so, because the French would have to deal with Pole before them. The emperor, who would not leave anything to chance, informed his sister in the Netherlands that Paul had asked for support and a safe conduct for Pole. In his instructions he left it to her to take final decisions depending on the political situation on the legate's arrival. Personally, he did not believe in the success of the legation, since Pole had not been provided with adequate funding. That is why he ordered his ambassadors in England, Mendoza and Horton, to support Pole only if he or the insurgents proved successful.⁵⁰ This flexibility provided plenty of scope for all representatives of the Habsburgs all over Europe, so that their reactions in the course of Pole's legation were precise and fast, despite the disadvantage of having to endure the slow communication between the various courts of the dynasty in Europe.

Whereas the imperial politicians could bide their time and wait for the outcome of Pole's legation, the French policy makers had no choice but to react on it. They had been put in an embarrassing situation when it was decided that the legate should take a route through France, because they could not forbid Pole to enter the country for fear of alienating the pope. However, they were bound to appear as Rome's allies if they allowed him passage, which might bring about the feared Anglo-imperial league. An alliance between Henry VIII and Charles V was looming on the horizon in 1537. The close ties between Scotland and France, which had been strengthened by the Franco-Scottish marriage at the beginning of the year, were equally disturbing to both rulers. The traditional balance against this alliance had always been an Anglo-Burgundian (now Habsburg) league. The papal favours conferred on James of Scotland had made Henry doubly suspicious of his northern neighbour and his French link.⁵¹ Indeed, Charles V was making advances

⁴⁹Aguilar and Cifuentes to Charles V, Rome, 22 Feb. 1537; BL: Add MS 28 589, f. 216^v-7; *L&P*, XII,1, no. 1141. *L&P* give various dates for this sample of correspondence, however the passage dated 22 February in the manuscript contains the relevant information for this aspect of the legation.

⁵⁰Charles V to Mendoza and Horton, Valladolid, 21 Mar. 1537; BL: Add MS 28 589, f. 257-7^v; *L&P* XII,1, no. 696.

towards a league with England because of the renewed war with France. He had sent Mendoza and Horton to England especially to treat for a marriage between his brother-in-law Dom Louis of Portugal and Mary Tudor. Following the tradition of his family he tried to substantiate the possible alliance with a Habsburg-Tudor marriage. Although Henry also displayed an interest in matrimonial ties with France,⁵² the probability of England finding herself forced into the imperial camp was high. Thus the French embarked on a remarkable, double-faced policy, in order to safeguard their good relations with both England and the curia.

It has been pointed out that the French had encouraged Rome to take action against England at the height of the Pilgrimage of Grace and, to a lesser extent, after it had been defeated. They had urged Rome to publish the censures and offered to print them in France, however without acknowledging a French press.⁵³ As the war was flaring up anew and an Anglo-imperial *rapprochement* was in the offing their enthusiasm for the Roman quest died away. When it became obvious that Pole was travelling via France, Francis reacted angrily.

J'ay consideré la raisonnable volonté, que N[otre] S[aint] P[ère] a de reduire le Royaume d'Angleterre en l'obeissance de l'Eglise: ce que je desire de ma part aussi bien que luy, mais quant à envoyer le Cardinal Pole en mon royaume, ce seroit mettre en grande difficulté la reddition de Boulogne, laquelle le Roy ... et son Conseil declarent et assurent me vouloir rendre en bref. ... et que cela pouroit aussi advenir que l'Empereur me remettroit en guerre avec lesdits Anglois.⁵⁴

Pio had to face accusations that the legation was a Habsburg design, launched only to alienate France and England.⁵⁵ This evident displeasure was accompanied by

⁵¹On 16 Mar. 1537 Pio informed Ricalcati from Amiens that Henry was annoyed that the pope had sent Henry's sword to James V ('Henry's sword' because the same gift had come with Henry's title *Defensor Fidei*); cf. Baroni, no. 279.

⁵²Pio to Ricalcati, Blois, 19 Jan. 1537; Baroni, no. 258.

⁵³Cf. p. 29-30 above.

⁵⁴Francis I to Mortier, French ambassador in Rome, 13 Mar. 1537; G. Ribier (ed.), *Lettres et mémoires d'estat des roys, princes, ambassadeurs et autres ministres sous les règnes de François I, Henri II et François II*, (Paris, 1666) I, p. 623; in Ribier's edition this letter is dated 13 Mar. 1547, which is impossible, because in that year Pole did not travel outside Italy. 'I acknowledge the reasonable wish of our holy father to reduce the kingdom of England to the obedience of the church. This is my desire as much as his. However, sending Cardinal Pole to my realm may jeopardize the return of Boulogne, which according to the king's ... and his council's declarations and assurances, they want to return to me soon. ... and this might also have the effect that the emperor would involve me again in a war with the said English.'

secret French contacts with England. On 10 March, when Pole and his train had just entered France, Francis sent Jean de Dinteville, the Bailiff of Troyes, on a secret mission to England. The envoy was instructed to inform Henry about Pole's legation, and also to make him aware of Pole's secret commission. Whether Francis was badly informed about the true nature of the legation or whether he aimed at exaggerating the importance of the service he was rendering to the English king we do not know. Dinteville's commission tells us that the envoy was to make the threat posed to Henry sound much more serious than it was. Dinteville was to advise Henry that Pole had been sent

en intention que ou ledit Roy d'Angleterre ne se voudroit reduir par l'amyable à l'obeissance de l'Eglise Romaine et du saint Siege, de faire deliurer audict Cardinal par la voye des Marchans vne bonne somme d'argent pour donner secour au peuple contre ledict Roy, affain de le contraindre de venir à ladicte obeissance par le moyen de la force, chose pour toucher si auant quelle fait audit Roy d'Angleterre son bon frere, qu'il ne luy veut celer, mais l'en aduertir et le prier que s'il cognoist que en cecy il puisse faire quelque chose pour luy, et le bien de ses affaires, il le luy vueille priuement faire sçauoir.⁵⁶

How secretive Francis was about Dinteville's mission is illustrated by the fact that Pio, who found out about the dispatch, was unable to learn for what reason the special envoy had gone to England. He was told only that the mission took place in order to get some first hand information about the current situation in England and to humour the English.⁵⁷

Although Francis could not be sure that he was the first to pass on word to

⁵⁵Pio to Ricalcati, Amiens, 17 Mar. 1537; Baroni, no. 281.

⁵⁶Francis I's instruction for Dinteville, Moussi, 10 Mar. 1537; N. Camusat ed.), *Melanges Historiques ou recueil des plusieurs actes, traités et lettres missives depuis l'an 1390 jusque à l'an 1580* (Troyes, 1619), second part, sig. Bv^v. Pole had been sent 'with the intent that if the afore mentioned King of England would not amicably reduce himself to the obedience to the Roman church and to the Holy See, a large sum of money would be delivered through the merchants to the cardinal in question, to help the people against the afore mentioned king, in order to oblige him by force to revert to his former obedience. The matter of force is to be touched upon because he wishes to let his good brother, the King of England, know in private that he does not wish to hide [anything] from him, but to warn him and to ask him to let him [Francis I] privately know if he knows anything he [Francis I] could do for him or his good in that matter.'

⁵⁷Pio to Ricalcati, Amiens, 13 Apr. 1537; Baroni, no. 274. It should be noted that in the only French biography of Pole by R. Biron and J. Barennes, *Un prince anglais Cardinal légat au XVI^e siècle, Reginald Pole* (Paris, s.d. [but 1922]), Dinteville's secret mission has been left out completely. In their description of Pole's stay in France, *ibid.* 124, the authors draw a very apologetic picture of Francis's conduct towards the legate.

England about Pole's legation, he still could claim that he was acting loyally toward his fellow prince.⁵⁸ Henry certainly was grateful for the intelligence from France; and he was determined to make use of Francis's offer of help. He was in a position to play his cards boldly, as he could be sure that it would not be easy for Pole to reinstate rebellion in England.⁵⁹ The English ambassador in France was commissioned to demand Pole's extradition to England.⁶⁰ This was a cunning move by the English, because, regardless of the French answer, they could only gain. If the French extradited Pole, Henry would get his "pound of flesh"; a refusal to fulfill the English request, however, could be regarded as a breach of the Treaty of Amiens, under whose terms neither Henry nor Francis were supposed to shelter and support the other's rebellious subjects.⁶¹ A breach of the treaty would then render Henry's obligations towards Francis null and void, so the English king would have been in a position to give up his neutrality in the conflict between Francis and Charles.⁶² Again the French found themselves forced to react, while all other participants in this diplomatic affair could sit back and contemplate their next move. When Gardiner presented the extradition request to Francis, the French king was naturally reluctant to grant it. To keep Henry humoured he offered to expel Pole from France on the legate's arrival in Paris. Francis reasoned that he could not apprehend Pole, because he had entered France with a safe conduct.⁶³

⁵⁸Indeed, the English ambassador in the Netherlands, John Hutton, had already written to Lord Lisle, Berghen op Zoom, 28 Feb. 1537, that Pole was coming to England as papal ambassador; *Lisle Letters*, IV, no. 932. It is strange, though, that on 3 Mar. 1537 he wrote to Cromwell from Berghen op Zoom that he had had news from Venice the preceding day that Pole was coming as papal ambassador; PRO: SP 1/117, f. 182; *L&P XII,1*, no. 562. A possible explanation for this inconsistency in Hutton's mode of reporting is that he had heard an unqualified rumour only when he wrote to Lisle, but treated the news with more regard for its importance when the letter from Venice arrived.

⁵⁹Norfolk to Henry VIII, Newbury, 2 Apr. 1537; 'As to the [news] of m[ister] pole his malicious and traytorous practises, the same can not be so soone brought on hande in these partes, but that I may be long tyme enformed befoure any thing can be attempted.' PRO: SP 1/117, f. 233; *L&P XII,1*, no. 809.

⁶⁰Sadler to Cromwell, Amiens, 28 Mar. 1537; *StP*, V, no. 314.

⁶¹The relevant passage of the treaty is printed in Ribier, *Lettres et memoires*, I, p. 402-3.

⁶²This is not to say that Henry was eager to join the war on one side or the other. If, however, Charles had proved successful against Francis, Henry might have entered the war later on the grounds of Francis's negligence in observing the treaty, and thus acquired his share of the spoils of war.

⁶³This becomes apparent from a letter by Henry VIII to Gardiner and Brian, Westminster,

Henry took this as good news, interpreting it to mean that the French king was anxious to stay within the treaty; thus his hopes of getting Pole into his power increased, and he sent a second ambassador to France, Sir Francis Brian.

Brian's commission is not extant, but in the above cited letter Henry exhorted his envoys to point out to Francis that the text of the treaty did not allow for exceptions for safe conducts. Furthermore, Gardiner and Brian were not to agree to any suggestions by the French to deliver Pole, in any other way than by formal extradition.⁶⁴ These, of course, were only the official instructions; Brian was certainly commissioned to ensure Pole's detention by any possible means. It will be shown below that Brian engaged in various plots to kidnap or kill Pole. It is curious that in the beginning Brian seems to have been rather negligent in following up his commission. Henry's first letter to both his ambassadors was dated 8 April. This shows that Brian must have been appointed before that date and that the king must have assumed that he was already in France, otherwise Brian could have taken the letter with him. We know, however, that Brian left England only on 8 April and took his time in proceeding to the French court.⁶⁵ This delay in the English intrigues may have been the reason why Pole succeeded in escaping from France unharmed.

III. 3. Pole and Giberti in France

While all these machinations were taking place Pole and Giberti were still on their way to Paris. The slow speed of their journey gave the English enough time to take precautions. When the papal envoys reached the French capital they were quite unprepared for the political turmoil which greeted them. At first everything seemed to be going well.

Siamo giunti hoggi in quella diligenza che per l'impedimenti ci e stata concessa in Parigi, dove essendo piacciuto a Sua Maesta di comettere che io fossi ricevuto solenemente così non mi e passo di rifiutar questo honore che nella persona mia era fatto a Sua S[anti]ta in questo loco, come quanto ho potuto ho fuggito in ognialtro, parendomi che l'intendessi in Inghilterra ... non portan favore alla causa, et de qui non mancherà chi del tutto dia pienamente ragguaglio nel regno, trovandosi in questa Città molti di quel paese.⁶⁶

8 Apr. 1537; BL: Add MS 25 114, f. 255; *L&P XII,1*, no. 865.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, f. 255^v.

⁶⁵Brian to [Cromwell], Calais, 9 Apr. 1537; PRO: SP 1/118, f. 104; *L&P XII,1*, no. 884.

Pole's unwillingness to add to Henry's annoyance shows that he still thought that talks with the English king, which might even lead to reconciliation, were within the range of possibilities. Immediately after his arrival he started gathering information about England. What he heard was not encouraging. Henry kept postponing the promised parliament in York, while Norfolk in the north 'faceva gravissime essecuzioni.'⁶⁷ As Pole was writing this report to Rome he was interrupted by a messenger from Francis I. He was informed that Francis was regrettably forced to expel the legate from France. The messenger gave Pole a full account of Henry's request for extradition, which Francis thought was 'molto assurda', but the only safe way for Pole would lead him out of France as soon as possible.⁶⁸

The legate decided without hesitation to leave France for Cambrai on the next day. It is interesting to see that Pole's letter to Farnese, which was evidently completed immediately after the interview, betrays very little emotion. Pole's disappointment must have been great, yet the calm tone of his letter makes it appear as if he had already started looking for different means of achieving his aim. Pole did not see himself as defeated yet. He realized that there was no help to be expected from France and that he must hope for support from the Habsburgs. It was also clear to him that speed was of the utmost importance, because Henry was likely to be lobbying against him at all European courts, which were concerned with the legation. Since Pole was still exclusively dealing with his commission for England, he made no further attempt to start negotiations with the French court about his public commission. He left this to his companion, Giberti. All that Pole did before turning his back on France was write a letter to Francis I. Here he gave full vent to his anger. After protesting that he was no traitor and that the legation was staged only for the benefit of Christendom and the King of England, he frankly

⁶⁶Pole to Farnese, Paris, 10 Apr. 1537; ASV: Carte Farnesiane 1,2, f. 664; As fast as all impediments allowed us, we arrived in Paris today. His majesty deigned to order that I should be received in solemn entry, so I could not refuse this honour which was done here to his holiness through me. If possible, I would have rather avoided it, because it seemed that if it was reported to England ... it might harm the cause. And there is no lack of people here who transmit abundant intelligence about everything to England, because there are many Englishmen in this city.'

⁶⁷*Ibid.*; Norfolk in the North 'was carrying out terrible executions.'

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, f. 664^v-5.

pointed out the dishonourable character of Francis's actions.

Ma non gia che non mi desse audientia, ed essendo questo officio d'Amb[asciato]re sempre stato al secolo libero, et tanto piu deve esser libero appresso à un Re Chr[istianissi]mo di nome et effetti, et essendo io per benignità di N[ostro] S[igno]re l'Dio, et della S[anti]ta di N[ostro] S[[igno]re in questo ordine del Cardinalato che dopo l'Dio et la Beat[itudi]ne Sua non ricognoscevan altro superiore et nessun puo avere arbitrio ni di nominare ni di declinare ribelli ni trad[itori] quando ben le cause ci fassino.⁶⁹

This was stronger language than may have been diplomatically wise, because Giberti was still trying to get an audience with Francis in order to discuss topics which did not pertain to England. The French were equally outspoken towards the papal diplomats about the reasons for Pole's expulsion. The day after Pole had been officially asked to leave the country, de Nobili wrote to Rome that Montmorency had informed him about the English extradition request. The French minister had made it clear that Francis had no intention of breaking with England and risking an Anglo-Spanish alliance for the sake of Reginald Pole.⁷⁰

When Pole was asked to leave France, the king's messenger also forbade Giberti to go to the French court, which was at that time camped in Picardy close to the battlefields between the Habsburgs and the Valois. As pointed out above, Giberti was more concerned than Pole with the public matters of the legation. It was of real importance for him to discuss the questions of peace, heresy, and a Council with the French monarch. Giberti had been officially appointed by the pope as a co-negotiator to support Pole. In this context it is interesting that the pope apparently wrote only one letter of credence for the Bishop of Verona. Giberti was officially accredited only to Francis I.⁷¹ Paul III may not have thought it wise to give Giberti an official commission for the imperial court in Brussels because the

⁶⁹Pole to Francis I, [Paris, 10 Apr. 1537] ; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 28^v-9; 'But it is not only that you do not give me an audience; the liberty of the ambassadorial office has always been honoured, and it should even be held in greater liberty at the court of a king who is called and who is the Most Christian King. By our Lord God's and his holiness's power I am one of the cardinals, who, except for God and the pope, do not accept any superiors, and nobody has the right to call or brand us traitors or rebels, when our causes are good.'

⁷⁰De Nobili to Ricalcati, Amiens, 11 Apr. 1537; *ANG*, I, no. 225.

⁷¹Paul III to Francis I, Rome, 17. Feb. 1537; ASV: Arm. XLI 5, f. 142; *L&P XII*, I, no. 454; the *L&P* source is Ribier's, *Lettres et memoires* who printed the brief as it was received by Francis I, the cited Vatican manuscript is the draft for Paul's brief. A comparison of the two shows that there are only minor differences between draft and original.

bishop was notorious for his pro-French and anti-Habsburg leanings. Pole by contrast was ranked among the pro-Habsburg cardinals.⁷² Thus, it was assumed in Rome that Pole would have few problems with his negotiations at the court in Brussels, whereas for France Giberti's support was essential, because the bishop was greatly respected there. One day after Pole had been ordered to leave France, Giberti reported to Rome that he had written to Francis to seek permission to travel to the court. Pole, who had left Paris early that day, agreed with Giberti that neither of them would act without licence of the French king, because in their situation it would have been folly to provoke him into hostility against them.⁷³ In his letter to Francis, Giberti used a double strategy. He sent Paul's brief of credence to the French king, but in his address to the king he was eager to appear as a private traveller. He assured Francis that he was only accompanying Pole because

sapendo la S[anti]ta di N[ostro] S[ignore] quanto io son sempre stato
amorevolissimo et fidelissimo s[ervitore] di V[ostra] Maesta si e confidato
che alchune commissioni che mi ha dato da negociar ... per cose che
spettano al servizio al servizio de Dio et ben publico.⁷⁴

Giberti not only emphasized the semi-private nature of his presence in France, he also carefully avoided any mention of England. His strategy was to bypass any possible protest from the English diplomats concerning his presence at the French court, if he succeeded in getting an audience with Francis. The opportunity of receiving Giberti was a welcome compromise to Francis, and he allowed the bishop to come to court. After having shown his goodwill to Henry by Pole's expulsion, he now was glad to be able to display goodwill to Paul by receiving Giberti. With Pio's help Giberti succeeded in obtaining an audience at once. The interview

⁷²At the beginning of the legation Cifuentes and Aguilar had reported to Charles V, Rome, 22 Feb. 1537, 'Sue eneste legado se debe tener toda confidenza segund todos ques es servirar de V[ostra] M[aesta]d y que si Veronano le engaña se ne hara cosa en deservicio de V[ostra] M[aesta]d.' In this legate you can have full confidence, because he serves your majesty in all his deeds, and if that Veronese starts some efforts he will not allow anything that would be a disservice to your majesty.' BL: Add MS 28 589, f. 217; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1141.

⁷³Giberti to Ricalcati, Paris, 11 Apr. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 183-3^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 908.

⁷⁴Giberti to Francis I, [Paris, 11 Apr. 1537]; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 183^v-4; (this letter is not calendared in *L&P*, cf. footnote no. 31 above); 'because his holiness, our lord, knew to what degree I have always been a most favourably disposed and loyal servant of your majesty. Thus, he entrusted me with some commissions to negotiate ... about things which pertain to the service of God and to the common weal.'

between the bishop and the king was very long. A comprehensive account of it is preserved in Giberti's report to Rome.⁷⁵

Giberti delivered a long speech before Francis in which he listed all the papal grievances. Firstly, he assured Francis of the pope's neutrality in the ongoing conflict with Charles. He explained that Pole's legation was taking place only because of the poor state in which Christianity found itself.

Non essendo mai stata la povera Christianità in tanti travagli in quanti hora si trova per le heresie chi sono cominciate tanti anni sono et perseverano di mal in peggio per le preparationi che ha fatto il Turco di assaltare molto parti per mare et per terra, et per il miserabil disordine in che e intrato il povero Re d'Inghilterra con il quale è per tirare a ruina il suo regno si nobile et gran parte della Christianità è in facultà della Maesta sua di rimediare a tutto, perche cessando dalle armi, si faria subito il concilio. Il Turco, o non veneria, o, se venisse saria il mal venuto per lui come delle altre volte quando non si è havuto altre occupatione che de risponderli. Il Re d'Inghilterra il quale trionfa nella sua ruina nella discordia che vede essere tra quelli che potriano aiutare a riprimerlo o si ridurra da se medesimo o se non se riduressa saria facil cosa a farlo ridur per forza la faculta di far tanto beneficio alla Christianità, et gloria all'honor de Dio essendo posta in mano o di sua Maesta o dell'Imp[erato]re.⁷⁶

Thus Giberti joined the general call for peace between the two most powerful catholic rulers. The bishop pointed out the vanity of the glory of war and called on the king to enter into negotiations with the emperor on the major subjects of dispute. He suggested talks between the two parties on the Duchy of Milan, Piedmont, Lombardy, Navarre, and a common strategy against the Turks. These talks, he concluded, should be conducted at a conference at which the neutral

⁷⁵Giberti to Renna, papal secretary, Amiens, 20 Apr. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 187^v-203^v; part of this letter is calendared in *L&P XII, I*, no. 987, yet the entire passage on the audience is left out there.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, f. 189-9^v; 'Never before was Christianity in such turmoil as today. This is because of the heresies, which started many years ago and continue from bad to worse; because of the Turks' preparations to attack many countries by land and sea; and because of the miserable disorder into which the poor King of England entered, thus bringing to utter ruin his realm, which is a noble and important part of Christendom. It lies in your majesty's power to redeem all this; for if arms were laid aside, one could begin with the Council at once; the Turk would either not come at all, or, if he came, it would be an ill coming for him as it was previously when there were no other preoccupations but to fight him off; the King of England, who now triumphs in his ruin, because he sees those in discord who could help to force him back, would either relent, or, if he did not, it would be easy to force him into return to obedience. The power to do so much good for Christianity, and glorify the honour of God, is put into the hands of both your majesty and the emperor.'

papacy would take the role of arbitrator.⁷⁷

Francis in his turn thanked Paul and Giberti for their concern and professed his willingness to co-operate. But then he started a long verbal attack on Charles, whom he portrayed as the real aggressor. It was not he, he said, who impeded the General Council, but the emperor, who was now waging war against him again, and this time he would have to learn his lesson. Francis's *realpolitik* went so far as to point out that he would be ill advised to listen to the papal peace initiative, because Charles's troops were numerous and well trained and 'quando l'Imperatore venne ad assalir sua Maesta nel suo Regno contra ogni dovere lei [Paul III] non possette revocarlo.'⁷⁸ However, the French ruler agreed that there might be a possibility of a separate truce for the hostilities in northern Italy, which could be mediated by a conference. The result of Giberti's negotiations on grand politics with the French king was discouraging with the exception of Francis's last statement about Italy. This concession opened the way to the *rapprochement* between Charles and Francis, which finally led to the celebrated Truce of Nice of 1538. However, the interview between the two politicians was not over yet. Giberti was determined to discuss the situation in England and also to complain about the treatment to which Pole had been subjected. Francis expressed his deepest regrets but emphasized that he had had no choice but to act as he did; he asked Giberti 'che io exhortassi il Legato a non si fidar per niente di lui [Henry VIII] et che haveva inteso, che haveva mandato per il fratel maggior di sua S[igno]ria R[everendissi]ma et che l'haver posto in la torre di Londra.'⁷⁹ Francis also talked about the unrest and discontentment in England. Giberti used this remark to ask him whether this was not a good opportunity to support Pole and, in doing so, also force Charles to do the same. Francis replied that he did not think it would be too difficult to convince Henry of his mistakes in view of the papal censures, the help he could give, and the support of the King of Scotland. After this he dismissed Giberti emphasizing that he did not wish to discuss this topic any

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, f. 190-1^v.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, f. 192-4^v, (quotation f. 193); 'if the emperor came and invaded his majesty's realm [France] right unjustly you [Paul III] could not call him back'.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, f. 195^v; 'that I exhort the legate not to trust him [Henry] under any circumstances. And that he [Francis] had heard that he [Henry] had sent for his excellency's elder brother and put him into the Tower of London'.

further. When Giberti summed up his negotiations he did not find anything to conclude from them, but to admit resignedly that there was very little hope for peace, let alone support for Pole's cause.⁸⁰

Giberti had been confronted with a negotiator who was eager to fight his enemy, whom he had come to hate personally over the years. Giberti's argument about the vanity of martial glory and his appeal to the idea of universal and united Christendom went unheard and unappreciated. Francis did not only think himself in the right, he also considered he stood a good chance of gaining the upper-hand over his arch-rival this time. The Turks were his allies and they were advancing against the Habsburgs in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans; the rivals were an even match in the Italian war; Charles could not leave the German protestants unguarded, which weakened his defence lines on all other fronts; Francis had a firm hold over Piedmont, whose Duke was Charles's ally; his army was well trained and equipped and he was affluent enough to finance his war. As long as England remained neutral he was in a definitely more promising position than Charles. This is precisely why Francis did not support Pole's mission in any way, although he showed himself sympathetic to it. He had managed to extricate himself elegantly from the complicated situation between Henry VIII and Paul III by expelling Pole and granting audience to Giberti. Yet the audience was no more than a mere political politeness; Francis was not prepared to negotiate.

The fact that he only expelled Pole rather than apprehend and extradite him almost led to an estrangement between England and France. When Henry heard that Pole had succeeded in leaving France unharmed he ordered Brian and Stephen Gardiner, who was the English ambassador in France, to inform Francis of his annoyance. However, Henry was more discontented with his ambassadors than with Francis. He scolded Brian for not having gone to the French court with greater alacrity and letting a chance to influence the French king against Pole pass him by. Gardiner found himself in a more dangerous situation. The French ambassador in England, Castillon, had claimed that Gardiner had agreed that it would be sufficient to expel Pole rather than extradite him. Whether or not this was true, and it is not very likely, Henry was now suspicious that his emissaries had not only acted negligently, but subversively. He demanded an explanation and that

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, f. 196-7 and 199.

Francis acquit Gardiner of the accusation. Henry was also interested in finding out whether Pole had had any secret access to the French king and he ordered his ambassadors to find out about the cardinal's whereabouts and to keep a close watch on him.⁸¹

Before Giberti joined Pole in Cambrai he had an interesting encounter in France. On his way back from the French court he found out that he was passing not far from the English ambassadors' lodgings. As he had met both Gardiner and Brian on his earlier missions to England he tried to revive old contacts and use them for his current mission. His message to them, however, met with the answer that they preferred to avoid direct contact with him. They reasoned that since they both were public persons and Giberti was travelling with Pole, a meeting would leave room for wild range of speculations in England.⁸² This was certainly a prudent decision by the ambassadors, because in their current standing with their sovereign they could not allow themselves to be caught in any compromising situation. After Henry had been given reason to accuse his envoys of negligence he had sent Peter Mewtas of the Privy Chamber to France to keep Gardiner and Brian under surveillance. At the time when Giberti tried to get an interview with the English representatives Mewtas was already there, hence they were indeed well advised not to enter into too close contact with Pole's companion.⁸³

Giberti was not yet willing to accept the rejection and again he emphasized the almost private character of his presence in France. He also pointed out to the ambassadors' messenger Pole's love for King Henry. He explained Pole's mission not as a hostile act against England, but as a friendly attempt to rectify Henry's errors. After praising Pole for his honest intentions towards England he suggested that the papal briefs of instruction which the legate was carrying could be sent to Henry in order to vindicate Pole. On the messenger's return Giberti was to find out that Henry's envoys still declined to see him. They had, however, been content

⁸¹Henry VIII to Gardiner and Brian, Westminster, 15 Apr. 1537; BL: Add. MS 25 114, f. 257-8^v; *L&P XII, I*, no. 939.

⁸²Cf. footnote no. 75 above, f. 201; this part of Giberti's letter is calendared in *L&P XII, I*, no. 987.

⁸³Mewtas to Cromwell, *s.l.*, 16 Apr. 1537; BL: Calig. E ii, f. 233-3^v; *L&P XII, I*, no. 953; Mewtas's role in spying on Pole and, possibly, attempting to assassinate the cardinal will be discussed further below.

with Giberti's suggestion that Pole should send the briefs to England, because their king had not had any reliable first-hand information. In his letter to Rome Giberti showed himself contented with his contact with Gardiner and Brian. Giberti thought to examine the briefs with Pole on his arrival in Cambrai. If they would not vindicate Pole in Henry's eyes, at least Pole would have the option of writing to Henry in order not to lose contact. He also saw a chance for Pole to distance himself from the papal censures which he lamented that Pio had given 'a quel scozzese ... che li ha permesso publicare ad ogni modo.'⁸⁴

Giberti's thoughts about the significance of this exchange of messages was somewhat optimistic, but it had positive effects for both sides. Brian and Gardiner could exonerate themselves through their diplomatic handling of the contact with a papal emissary; Giberti had opened up a way for Pole to revive his direct communication with England. This had been interrupted ever since the beginning of the legation. The only real information which Giberti gained from this exchange was that Francis had given him false news about the imprisonment of Pole's brother. Gardiner and Brian assured him that Lord Montagu had not been committed to the Tower.⁸⁵ When Giberti joined Pole in Cambrai they examined the briefs closely in order to find out whether they might satisfy Henry and decided against sending them.⁸⁶ If the briefs were at all similar to those which Paul had entrusted to Pole for the English people, the legate and his counselor were well advised not to send them. In the brief to the English nation Paul openly welcomed the insurrection of the north as an expression of popular discontentment with Henry's policies and of devotion to the Holy See. He exhorted the English people to welcome Pole in a reverend way and to support him.⁸⁷ It is conceivable that the briefs addressed to Francis were phrased in an even more hostile way against Henry; in any event, it is understandable that Pole and Giberti decided against disclosing them.

⁸⁴Cf. footnote no. 75 above, f. 201-3; 'to that Scotsman ... whom he allowed to publish them in whatever way he thought apt.'

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, f. 203^v.

⁸⁶Giberti to Ricalcati, Cambrai, 27 Apr. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 207-7^v.

⁸⁷Paul III's brief to the English nation, Rome, *s.d.*; Quirini, II, p. cclxvii.

III. 4. Pole in Cambrai

Giberti rejoined Pole in Cambrai, which was the only place in the region that could offer the cardinal relative security. As a free city of the Empire it belonged neither to Charles's nor to Francis's dominions. It was ruled by its prince bishop, Robert de Croy. He tried to stay neutral in the war which was raging around his city, since declaring for either side would have spelt the city's ruin. This is why Pole's safety there can be called only relative. Cambrai was free only as long as both contestants respected its neutrality. Furthermore Giberti later remarked that Cambrai

non è sicuro per non si poter prohibere l'ingresso a chi va, et vene essendo necessitati a servir neutralità, et gia ci son depresi spioni et gente che vanno interno osservando li andamenti del S[igno]re Legato et cercando de intrudersi a far qualche colpo.⁸⁸

Shortly after his arrival in Cambrai Pole wrote a letter to Rodolfo Pio, in which he expressed his regret for having not had an opportunity to confer with the nuncio in France. In this letter he also introduced the opinion that the most effective way to counteract the English schism would be a trade embargo against England imposed by Charles V. Pole hoped that the embargo would affect England in such a way that the English merchants would either force their king back into Roman obedience or depose their ruler altogether.⁸⁹ When Giberti reported about Francis's reservations about England and the question of European peace, Pole was convinced that no support could be expected from the French, and he put his hopes

⁸⁸Giberti to Ricalcati, as in footnote no. 86 above, f. 205; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1053; Cambrai 'is not safe, because it is impossible to forbid access to the city to whoever comes and goes, because this is necessary to keep up the neutral status. Already spies and people who observe the movements of the legate have arrived here and they try to intrude upon him to strike a blow.'

⁸⁹Pole to Pio, Cambrai, 21 Apr. 1537; Baroni, no. 294; Mayer, 'Diet', p. 309-10, points out that the idea of a trade embargo had existed in Pole's thinking as early as 1531. His interpretation, however, that Pole only feigned his preference for a trade war to a war in arms in order to deceive whoever might intercept his letter to Pio is unconvincing for two reasons. Firstly the idea of an embargo is still very much alive in Pole's thinking in 1539, at a time when Pole would have had a much more personal axe to grind against Henry than in 1537. Secondly, we may assume, as Mayer does, too, that Pio was well informed about Pole's commission and also about his frame of mind. Accordingly it is more likely that he indicated in this letter what he projected as a result of his negotiations with the court in Brussels, with regard to what was politically feasible in view of the European war, the financial provision made by the pope, and the defeated insurrection in England.

on the imperial side.⁹⁰ These hopes, however, diminished considerably when shortly after Giberti's arrival Pole tried to contact the court in Brussels. He sent a messenger to the Cardinal Bishop of Liège, Erard de la Marck, in order to present his credentials and seek permission to proceed into Flanders. The messenger, however, was refused entry into the Netherlands since Mary of Hungary had decided to close the Franco-Flemish border because of the war. Pole protested in a letter to the Cardinal of Liège. He insisted that the legation had started only because imperial diplomats in Rome and England had urged the pope to take an active role. They had arranged for him to go through France and agreed that he could enter the Netherlands if he was unable to cross into England from France.

Quoniam vero non unum tantum caput mea Legatione continebat, de rebus Anglicis componendis; sed illa etiam de Pace inter Caesarem, et Regem Galliae, et de Concilio generali, de quibus cum omnibus Principibus mihi agendum erat, quorum ditiones attingerem, sic etiam constitutum fuit, ut per Galliam transiens, sin minus res Angliae ita ferrent, ut commode Regem adire possem, Episcopum Veronensem ad eum mitterem, qui de Pace et Concilio, cum eum ageret, ipse interim aliquo in loco consederem, ubi, quantum rerum Anglicarum ratio patetur, Episcopum ipsum expectarem, qui cognito Regis animo in duabus illis causis ad me rediret.⁹¹

Pole also claimed that he could not understand why his messenger had been detained by imperial troops, since his presence in northern Europe directly resulted from the insistence of imperial politicians. The role played by the imperial diplomats during the preparatory period of the legation has been discussed earlier in this chapter, and from that we can see that Pole now greatly exaggerated their influence. It is true that during the time of the English insurrection imperial diplomats had suggested that Pole should be sent to England, but now the legate presented a very one sided version of the story to Marck. Pole finished his letter expressing his hope to see Marck soon, for he was eager to leave Cambrai because

⁹⁰Cf. footnote no. 86 above, f. 204.

⁹¹Pole to Marck, Cambrai, 27 Apr. 1537; Quirini, II, no. 18; 'And what is more, my legation does not only have one commission, which is to work on the English affairs. I also have to negotiate with every prince whose domains I reach about a peace between the emperor and the King of France and about a General Council. If it was to happen that the things in England went so badly that I could not easily cross from France to England, it was agreed that I should send the Bishop of Verona to the King [of England], so that he would treat with him on peace and the Council. I would have waited for the bishop in a place where news from England is easily accessible until he returned to me after finding out about the king's [Henry VIII] opinion on these two questions.'

he did not feel safe there. However, this hope was not to be fulfilled soon. The Flemish court was by now involved in a dispute with Henry's representative about Pole's presence. Now the imperial party found itself in a delicate situation between England and the curia, not wanting to alienate either of them. Thus Pole had to wait for more than a month before he was allowed to continue his journey.

Pole spent this time eluding various attempts on his life by the English. It would be wrong to see Pole as hysterical due to his fear that hired English assassins might either kill him or kidnap him to England. Henry's special envoy to Francis, Sir Francis Brian, had been sent for reasons other than negotiating about Pole's presence in France. Pio wrote to Rome that after Pole's escape to Cambrai, Brian openly threatened to kill the English cardinal.

Sono certificato che Brian, nuovo amb[asciato]re anglico, e che per essere mignione di quel re, non viene mai qui che per cosa molto importante, era venuto per fare l'ultimo conato d'havere nelle mani il sig[nore] Legato e condurlo in Inghilterra, per condurlo nel catalogo degli altri Martiti, e non li essendo riuscito, ne sta disperatissimo e mal contento al possibile di costoro, e brava dicendo, che se lo trovasse in mezzo Francia lo ammazzarebbe di sua mano con simili altre parolaccie, per le quali ancora si vede più chiaramente l'animo di quel re e quanto bisogno che Sua Signoria Rev[erendissi]ma si guardi la vita per tutti li versi, havendo a fare con pazzi e cattivi, e che temono più senza dubbio alcuno per quanto ritraggo da Sua Signoria Rev[erendissi]ma, che d'altra cosa di Roma.⁹²

It is of course no great wonder that Brian paid lip service to harming Pole. He and his colleague, Gardiner, had just been accused of negligently letting Pole get away without securing him for the King of England. However, Brian's words were not mere propaganda to avoid suspicion: the diplomat was actively involved in plots against Reginald Pole. Indeed, Henry had instructed his envoys in France to arrange for Pole's detention. Gardiner was to suggest Francis should use his

⁹²Pio to Ricalcati, Amiens, 21 Apr. 1537; Baroni, no. 293. 'I am convinced that Brian, the new English ambassador, who never comes here but for very important matters, because he is one of the minions of that king [Henry VIII], has come here to make a last attempt to get the legate into his hands in order to have him conveyed to England, and have him added to the list of martyrs. Since he has not succeeded he is very desperate and shows himself utterly dissatisfied; he brags that if he found him in France he would kill him with his own hands and he says other big words, which show again the intentions of that king more clearly and also how much his eminence [Pole] must be careful to protect his life, because he is dealing with crazy and wicked people, who doubtlessly fear any effort undertaken by his eminence more than anything else coming from Rome.'

influence with the Bishop of Cambrai to get Pole expelled from that city. Under no circumstances was the ambassador to let Francis know that he had been commissioned to insinuate this. Henry could not afford to ask Francis officially to break international conventions. It was he who had insisted that in Pole's case all treaties were to be minutely observed; officially he was still on the verge of breaking with France, because Pole had not been extradited. Henry was hoping that Francis lived in constant fear of an imminent Anglo-imperial alliance. In this situation he could not suggest anything unlawful without discrediting himself. If, however, Henry's ambassador suggested it to Francis as if it had been his own idea, at the same time strongly hinting that this was Francis's chance to appease the English king, the scheme had good prospect of success. Once Pole was expelled from Cambrai, Henry ordered him to be

by some mean trussed up and conveyed to Calais we desyre and pray you to consulte and devise between you therupon. And if you shal upon mature deliberations think it fisible ... then we woll that you Sir Fraunces bryan shal secretely appoint suche felowes for the enterprise of his apperhension.⁹³

Francis was little inclined to accommodate the English in this matter. During his interview with Giberti he had warmly suggested that the bishop should exhort Pole not to trust Henry. In view of this fact he may have even informed Pole about this new danger. It is apparent from a letter by Cromwell to the two English envoys that Pole knew about the scheme. He informed them that Henry was not willing to advance any money for Pole's apprehension, because the cardinal had been warned. They were, however, still encouraged to work on some possibility of apprehending the legate and Henry offered to reward whoever would actually be successful.⁹⁴

Unfortunately, none of the English representatives' letters are extant for this period. It is therefore impossible to find out how close they came to success. Pole did not mention this particular plot in any of his letters either; he usually reported only general threats to his life. In the same way as Cambrai was surrounded by warring parties, Henry surrounded Pole with potential assassins. In France, there

⁹³Henry to Gardiner and Brian, Greenwich, 25 Apr. 1537; BL: Add. MS 25 114, f. 263; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1032.

⁹⁴Cromwell to Gardiner and Brian, Hampton Court, 18 May 1537; R. B. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, (Oxford, 1902) II, no. 187.

was not only Sir Francis Brian at work: Peter Mewtas had been sent there not only to check up on Gardiner and Brian, but he was also commissioned to assassinate Pole.

The information about Mewtas was communicated to Pole directly from England. The cardinal's younger brother, Sir Geoffrey Pole, sent a messenger to Pole in Cambrai. This messenger was a certain Hugh Holland with whose arrest the tragedy of the Poles in England was to begin a year later. It is uncertain when exactly Holland met Pole in Cambrai; he may have met the cardinal only when he and his train were *en route* from Cambrai to Liège at the end of May 1537. Since this, to our knowledge, is the only contact bypassing the official English channels which Pole had with his family between his elevation and their destruction in 1538-41, the account of Holland's interview with the cardinal will be quoted in detail. The report was given by Holland himself when he was under examination in the Tower in 1538.

Sir Geffrey Pole sent for hym [Holland] and sayd, I here say you entend [to go] in to flanders, my brother, I here say is in those partes, wyll you doo me an errant unto hym ... said this examinat [Holland] thatt I wyll yf you commaunde me, merry said the said Sir Geffrey, I pray you commend me to my brother and shewe hym I wold I were with hym and wyll come to hym yf he wyll have me ... and shewe hym further thatt there be send from England dayly to dystroy hym, and that much money wold be given for his hedd. And that the lord privy seale saide openly in the Courte that he speaking of the said Cardinall should destroy hym selfe well enough; and that M[iste]r Brian and M[iste]r Meotes [Mewtas] was send i[n]to Fra[n]ce to kyll hym with a hangonne or othe[r]wise as] they should see best.

Holland then described how he had travelled to Pole and, after being questioned by Throckmorton, was finally given an audience by the cardinal. There, Holland duly delivered his message and Pole answered.

Wold my Lord privy seale soo fain kyll me, well, I trust it shall not lye in his powre. The king is not contentyd to beare me malice hym self but provoketh other agenst me, and hathe written to the French king that he should not receyve me as Cardynall or Legate. Butt yett I was receyvvd in to parys better then some men wold, and he said that he had knowlege before that M[iste]r Brian and peter meotes were send for that purpose b[ut he trus]tyd in god that it should not lye in there powre.

Pole also commissioned Holland to convey messages to his relatives in England. This is one of the few instances when Pole's own inability to compromise becomes apparent. He was a man who fought for mutual understanding between protestants

and catholics, he has been celebrated as one of the few tolerant characters in an age of intolerance and fanaticism, yet here we see that his understanding for others' dissent stopped when it came to the private beliefs of his family.

And after the said Cardinall said commend me to my Ladye my mother by the same token that she and I looking appon a wall togethers ridd this, Spes mea in deo est, and desire her blessing for me. I trust she wylbe gladd of myne alsoo. And if I wist that she were of the opinyon that other bee there, mother as she is myne I wold treade appon her with my feete.

Commende me to my Lord my brother by this token, in *domino* confido, and to my brother Sir Geoffrey and byd hym medle lytle, and let all thynges alone.⁹⁵

The information which Geoffrey Pole sent to his brother shows how openly the government in England prepared Pole's apprehension. Even if Holland's statement that people left England daily in order to join the hunt for Pole, may have been exaggerated, Henry had more men involved in the operation than those who were operating in France. The Deputy of Calais, Lord Lisle, engaged in the search for Reginald Pole. Calais, as England's foothold on the Continent, was an ideal base camp for any such operation. In mid-May Sir Thomas Palmer, a knight retained by Lisle, reported back to Calais that 'the man you wot of [Pole] doth not come out of his lodging, nor intends not as I can learn, for I take the French king too much to be his friend.'⁹⁶

The degree of interaction between Henry's various agents in this affair is a matter of speculation. It is likely that there was some co-operation between Brian and Palmer, and Palmer certainly was in contact with Hutton, the English ambassador in Brussels. However, it would be difficult to ascertain how closely the men worked together, as there are hardly any sources extant for this affair. One reason for this is that the men who were involved in the hunt were reluctant to commit very detailed information to writing. The chances of letters being intercepted were high, and undoubtedly it would have caused embarrassment to

⁹⁵Hugh Holland's examination, 3 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 199^v-200 and 200^v-1; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 797, 1. This message from Pole is corroborated by Geoffrey Pole in his examination in the Tower, where he stated that the cardinal even more fiercely said that he would tread on any member of his family if they conformed with the religious changes in England; Geoffrey Pole's second examination, 2 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 215; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804. I could not find any indication in the sources that Holland went back and forth between Geoffrey Pole and his brother several times in 1537, as Mayer, 'Diet', p. 314, states.

⁹⁶Palmer to Lisle, camp near Cambrai, 16 May 1537; *Lisle Letters*, IV, no. 953.

Henry VIII if it had been disclosed that England had actively tried to strike against a diplomat who was staying on neutral territory.⁹⁷

It may have been Palmer's fault that Pole was reasonably well informed of the dangers facing him. It was difficult to keep anything secret in Calais at any time, but apparently Palmer had made his preparations to catch Pole in such an obvious manner that word about his intentions had spread rapidly. Information of this kind travelled swiftly so that Pole would have heard about it in Cambrai. This assumption is supported by the chronicle of Elis Gruffudd, a Welsh chronicler who lived and worked in Lisle's household.

Henry VIII sent Sir Thomas Palmer to Cambray to take Cardinal Pole to see if he might take him when walking or riding unwatchfully, and do it as secretly as possible. The Cardinal got to know of this intent, prevented anyone at all coming near him, and short time after he departed for the bishopric of Liège. Sir Thomas Palmer then got a number of men to kill Sir Reginald by deceit ... and [he was] so well publicising it abroad that the talk got to the Cardinal's ears and so that he just went his way out of the region.⁹⁸

Palmer's efforts proved to be as fruitless as Brian's. Their colleague in the Netherlands, John Hutton, was certainly the most able of Henry's agents on the Continent, who were involved in dealing with Pole's presence in northern Europe. During Pole's stay in Cambrai, however, Hutton was concerned only with keeping the cardinal under close surveillance. Later, when Pole was in Liège, Hutton searched for ways to jeopardize Pole's safety. Until then he only transmitted information about Pole's daily life in Cambrai to Cromwell and Palmer. One of his spies returned from Cambrai with the most comprehensive information the English had been able to obtain about his environment there. Hutton's spy reported that

the cardinal [these two words are crossed out in the manuscript] polle is logid
at a abbey callid mobbrey at cambray withe in the Subpriors lodgyng, and and

⁹⁷M. St. Claire Byrne gives an account of the English attempts to apprehend Pole in her edition of the *Lisle Letters*, IV, p. 216-25 and 301-2; the account is persuasive and I do not wish to enter into criticism of it, because I largely agree with her viewpoints. It must be pointed out, however, that some of her line of reasoning is based on assumption and circumstantial evidence, which is not easy to be distinguished from some of the proof she presents. This does not diminish the probability of her account, in which she manages to draw a convincing and entertaining picture of Henry's machinations against Pole.

⁹⁸Gruffudd's chronicle, cited in *Lisle Letters*, IV, p. 223. The chronicler also claimed that Palmer fell into disfavour in London, because of his incompetent handling of his commission; this information is rejected as fallacious by the editor of the *Lisle Letters* and, thus, omitted in the quotation above.

[sic.] not that he can gane none ynglisheman in his sarvis but ytalyans and Frenchmen to the number of xxj and syxe moylettes [mules]. The bruyt is ther that he taryethe to have a save condyt to com into yngland and that he wold speke withe the cardynall of leige. He hathe apoyntid his lodgyng ther for vj weekes.⁹⁹

Even if the part of Hutton's information that there were no Englishmen among Pole's train was wrong, for we know that Throckmorton was with his master, Hutton was the most promising of all the English agents who masterminded some part of the hunt for Pole. It may appear that all the English attempts against Pole were rather pathetic and unlikely to lead to success. The truth is that the constant feeling of pursuit took its toll on the cardinal. Quite simply, Pole feared for his life. The above quoted passage from Gruffudd's chronicle which stated that he did not let anyone approach him, is substantiated by Holland's account that he was questioned and frisked by Throckmorton before he was given access to the cardinal.¹⁰⁰ In a letter to the pope, Pole stated that he was terrified by this dangerous situation. In the letter he argued against being recalled to Rome immediately, although he knew

me Regis, et mihi inimicissimi, et potentissimi (utrumque enim declarant Legationes ejus ad Principes contra me missae) iram me, et potentiam lacessere, quemadmodum jam lacessivi, eumque, si ... in his locis me manere intellegat, multo magis tentaturum, atque omnes vias persecuturum, ... quo Philippus omnia castella, quamvis munita, expugnari posse dicebat, quocumque onustus auro asinus mitti posset. Hic vero multos asinos se contra me oneraturum ostendit; centum enim aureorum Anglicorum millia se profusurum jactant, ut me in sua potestate vel vivum, vel mortuum habeat.¹⁰¹

The amount stated may have been exaggerated,¹⁰² but, although there are no English records concerning the price of Pole's head, it does not appear that the

⁹⁹Hutton to Cromwell, Brussels, 28 Apr. 1537; PRO: SP 1/119, f. 46^v; *L&P XII, 1*, no. 1061.

¹⁰⁰Cf. footnote no. 95 above, f. 200^v.

¹⁰¹Pole to Paul III, Cambrai, 18 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 19; he knew 'that the king's wrath against me, though he is already most hostile to me and very forceful (as his representatives declare, whom he sent out against me) will be excited even more than it is now, when he hears ... that I am staying in these parts. He will try much harder to pursue all possible ways [to get me]. ... As Philip [of Macedonia] once said that he could conquer every castle, however well it may be armed, if he managed to send an ass laden with gold there. It seems as if lots of asses are being burdened [to go] against me here. He [Henry] promised a reward of 100 000 English gold coins, if I was delivered, alive or dead, into his hands.'

¹⁰²Beccadelli, *Vita*, p. 366, states that Henry offered 50 000 pieces of gold.

mention of it is a product of Pole's fear. Geoffrey Pole's message to his brother contained a warning about it, too. Even if Henry did not publicly announce it, the offer must have circulated in England.¹⁰³ The situation in Cambrai affected Pole greatly. Giberti later wrote to Rome that Pole had been so depressed in Cambrai that he had refused to carry on with his legatine duties and also declined to write any letters.¹⁰⁴ Dejection also affected the cardinal's entourage. This small group of men, who accompanied Pole and Giberti on their mission, deserves some further attention.

It has been mentioned above that Hutton reported that there were twenty-one Italians and Frenchmen with Pole.¹⁰⁵ Throckmorton must be added to this list. Apart from him no Englishmen can be identified among Pole's train. It is conceivable that Hutton's information is incorrect. His spy may have erroneously counted various people who belonged to the monastery, where the legate was staying, as members of his train, because the presence of French people among Pole's or Giberti's following is unlikely. Also, the number of twenty-one for the total of their train must be questioned. Although both Giberti and Pole took some servants with them, the number appears to be rather high. One of the dogging problems of the legation was the shortage of money. As it will be shown further below, Pole must be called a impecunious cardinal, which makes it unconvincing that he should have travelled with a rather large train. We can find no hint in the sources to the amount of money, if any, the pope paid Giberti for his part in the legation. The bishop may have been expected to pay the lion's share of his expenses, or else it would have been Pole's duty to support his companion. Another argument against too much staff on the legation is their need for flexibility. It is true that the legate could always abandon his train and travel to some place in haste if the necessity arose, as indeed Giberti did on two occasions, but even when speed became a question of almost life and death, as Pole transferred from Paris to Cambrai, he seems to have travelled in the company of his train.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³Less credible is Beccadelli's account that Marck informed Pole that Henry 'haveva fatto offerito al Consiglio di Fiandra ... di dargli dieci millia Fanti, se gli volevano dare il Cardinal Polo in mano.' Beccadelli, *Vita*, p. 366. (Henry 'had offered the Council of Flanders ... that he would give them 10 000 infantry, if they delivered Cardinal Pole to his hands.')

¹⁰⁴Giberti to Ricalcati, Brussels, 1 June 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 208.

¹⁰⁵Cf. footnote no. 99 above.

Unlike during other legations Pole used exclusively other people's couriers. It was, however, common practice for papal diplomats to send confidential letters by papal couriers only, or if none was available, to dispatch their own messenger. The fact that Pole never did that in 1537 indicates that he had so few men in his service that he could not afford to send any one of his men away. All these points lead us to the assumption that Pole's and Giberti's travelling party contained about a dozen people rather than over twenty.

Apart from Michael Throckmorton we can identify only four Italians among them. Francesco della Torre, Adamo Fumano, Bartholomeo Lombardi, and Alvise Priuli. Priuli was Pole's oldest and most loyal friend.¹⁰⁷ He accompanied Pole on all his journeys and after the cardinal's death in 1558 he saved many of Pole's writings from destruction in England and brought them back to Italy.¹⁰⁸ Priuli, who was of noble Venetian birth, had met Pole during his student days at Padua. The two remained in contact for the rest of their lives and actively worked together not only on Pole's diplomatic tasks, but also on the big matter of church reform. Priuli avoided positions of prominence, never embarked upon a career of his own, but was an important force behind Pole. During this legation, as for the rest of their lives, Priuli was Pole's private secretary and best friend. Towards the end of the legation Pole wrote about his friend, 'Priolus noster alter Achates a latere nusquam descedit.'¹⁰⁹

Della Torre, Fumano, and Lombardi were part of Giberti's entourage. We know very little about them. These are the only identifiable members of the small group which accompanied the papal envoys on their journey. They shared Pole's life in the monastery in Cambrai and they also shared his frustration, evident in one of della Torre's letters: 'Vorrei dirvi qualche cosa di nuovo del nostro viaggio et dello stato delle cose presenti, ma perchè non c'è cosa, che vi potesse essere grata,

¹⁰⁶In no part of the correspondence do we find any special provisions for the train mentioned, whereas that was generally the case in Pole's later legations whenever he left his entourage for some period of time.

¹⁰⁷For Priuli see P. Paschini, *Alvise Priuli. Un amico del Cardinale Polo* (Rome, 1921).

¹⁰⁸In ASV: Misc. Arm. II 79, f. 363^v, there is a list of writings which came to the papal archives after Pole's death. It may be safely assumed that these were part of what Priuli saved from England.

¹⁰⁹Pole to Contarini, Trent, 30 Sep. 1537; Quirini, II, no. 37; 'Our Priuli, like another Achates, never leaves my side.'

sarà meglio, che ... faccia qui fine.'¹¹⁰ The constant fear of the English assassins was not the only reason for dejection in the Pole entourage. The legate's impoverished state was another factor which added to their feeling of insecurity. Even before the party reached Cambrai Pole had made Rome aware of this problem. It was not a question of financial support for the English insurgents any longer, Pole was not even in a position to pay for his own living expenses. After his elevation to the cardinalate the sequestration of his English benefices had gradually begun, and Pole's royal stipend was no longer sent to him. Pole complained from Lyons that he was in financial straits and he also warned Rome that if he were obliged to travel across Europe like a pauper it would reflect on the pope's image much more than his own. He also pointed out that he did not have a fortune of his own, with which to augment his stipend.¹¹¹ This was the only occasion on which Pole discussed the matter at length. He ended the above cited letter by referring all dealings concerning money to Priuli. Although he kept hinting at the problem in his subsequent correspondence, it was Priuli, the majority of whose letters we have not been able to locate, who kept the books.¹¹² The pope regretted Pole's troubles, but saw himself in no position to help, because he did not want to create a precedent by augmenting the stipend of one ultramontane legate. Contarini assured his friend, however, that the Cardinal of Liège and the Flemish bankers would help him once he reached their countries.¹¹³ This, of course, was of little consolation to Pole as long as he was trapped in Cambrai and was not allowed to proceed neither to Flanders nor to Liège.

Even before Contarini wrote his letter in Rome, Pole appealed directly to the pope's nephew, Alexander Farnese, Cardinal Secretary of State. The fact that he did this in the same letter, in which he reported about his expulsion from France, which had just been announced to him hours earlier, illustrates how pressing the

¹¹⁰Della Torre to Bini, Cambrai, 9 May 1537; Porcacchi, *Lettere*, p. 78^v; 'I would like to tell you something new about our journey and about the present state of affairs, but since there is nothing for which you might be grateful, I think it will be better if ... I end this letter here.'

¹¹¹Pole to Contarini, Lyons, 24 Mar. 1537; Quirini, II, letter without number between nos. 15 and 16.

¹¹²Some of Priuli's letters to Beccadelli from 1537 are kept in the Bodleian Library: MSS Italian, f. 138-41 and 146-62.

¹¹³Contarini to Pole, Rome, 12 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 16.

need for additional funding was.¹¹⁴ Yet, however tenaciously Priuli and Pole pursued this question, the answer from Rome remained unchanged. While Pole was still in Cambrai, Contarini wrote a letter to Priuli, in which he exhorted him to keep expenses as low as possible, because the pope was now engaged in defending his own domains against the Turks, a task which was straining the papal finances considerably.¹¹⁵ During his long stay in Cambrai Pole was unable to pay for the hospitality he received from the bishop and cathedral chapter of this city. His only opportunity to show his gratitude lay in using his legatine powers and pronouncing various favourable decisions for the church of Cambrai.¹¹⁶

It was not until Pole and his party reached Liège that the financial pressure eased. After his arrival there Pole praised not only Marck's hospitality, but also his generosity.¹¹⁷ This adds substance to the repeated reports by Hutton that the Cardinal of Liège did not only shelter his English colleague, but also provided him with considerable sums of money.¹¹⁸ However, while the party was held up in Cambrai their financial straits only added to the gloom and frustration caused by Henry VIII's attempts to endanger the safety of Reginald Pole.

Giberti's letter stating that Pole's frustration was so great that he refused to write letters from Cambrai has been cited above.¹¹⁹ However, Pole's apathy extended only to his legatine duties towards the imperial court in Brussels and, to a limited extent, to his reports back to Rome. Indeed, as far as England was concerned, he even took the initiative. Encouraged by Giberti's contact with Gardiner and Brian he wrote a long letter to Cromwell, which apparently was his first official communication to England since his letter from Rome in February at

¹¹⁴Pole to Farnese, Paris, 10 Apr. 1537; ASV: Carte Farnesiane 1,2, f. 665.

¹¹⁵Contarini to Priuli, Rome, 22 May 1537; F. Dittrich (ed.), *Regesten und Briefe des Kardinals Gasparo Contarini, 1483-1542* (Braunsberg, 1881) p. 267-8.

¹¹⁶H. Boone, 'L'infructueuse ambassade du Cardinal Pole et son séjour à Cambrai', *Mémoires de la Société d'Emulation de Cambrai*, LXXXV (1937) p. 243-4. The passage of this article which deals with Pole's stay in Cambrai, p. 236-45, reveals some interesting details of Pole's daily routine in this city.

¹¹⁷Pole to Paul III, Liège, 10 June 1537; Quirini, II, no. 21.

¹¹⁸Hutton to Cromwell, Brussels, 3 June 1537; PRO: SP 1/121, f. 44^v; *L&P XII*, 2, no. 26; and Antwerp, 19 Sep. 1537; *StP VII*, no. 475. Priuli reported to Beccadelli from Liège on 21 Aug. 1537 that de la Marck had given Pole and Giberti financial presents amounting to 2000 *scudi*; Bodleian Library: MSS Italian 25, f. 161-2.

¹¹⁹Cf. footnote no. 104 above.

the outset of the legation. This document is very interesting, because here Pole unwaveringly continued his policy of concealing his true intentions towards England. There is no mention of the northern insurgents in the letter, nor even a protest against Norfolk's course of action in the north. On the contrary, Pole protested that the legation took place only to serve Henry's honour. Before he commenced with his reasoning he rebuked Cromwell for the various forms of persecution he was suffering. He complained bitterly about the manifold attacks on his life and attempts to kidnap him.

And off thys mynd off the Kyng toward me, I had furst knowledge att my
arryvenge in fraunce; off the which, to show yow the furst mocyon off my
mynde herin, I was more ashamed to here for the compashion I had to the
Kynges honour, then moved by ony indignation thatt I, comyng nott
onelye as imbassatour, butt as legate, in the highest sort of embassages that
ys used amongst chrysten prynces, a prynce of honour, should desyer off an
other prynce off lyke honour, betraye thyne imbassatour, betraye the legate,
ande gyve hym in to myn embassatours hondes, to be brought unto me. This
was the dyshonorable request, as I understond, off the kyng ...

Pole carried on to point out that he was almost glad to be persecuted, because thus Henry was almost fulfilling in Pole what the cardinal saw as the ultimate role of the cardinalate: namely martyrdom. Pole claimed that the cardinals must be among the first and foremost to die for their belief, thus credibly re-enacting the position which they had inherited from the apostles. Then Pole's argument took a new and interesting direction.

... butt touchyng the thyng, yff we had no other religioun, but lyved
as paganys and infydells, yet *Jus gentium* shold so teache us: whatt
demaund thys was the lawe off Nature alonely myght declare, howe
abhominable ytt were to graunt unto such a request, and no lesse
to desyer ytt.¹²⁰

Thus Pole took up the gauntlet of heresy and put the argument on new grounds. Until this letter, he had always argued from staunchly catholic premises. It may even be stated that he had refused to acknowledge the existence of the English schism in his reasoning. At first this seems incongruous with the man, who two years earlier had written a four volume book on the despicable character of the changes in England. The argument is not, however, that he disregarded the fact of the schism, but that he had never been open to discussing this schism within any other framework but canon law, according to which the actions of the English

¹²⁰Pole to Cromwell, Cambrai, 2 May 1537; Collier, *Nine Letters*, p. 14-6.

government were wrong and evil. In this letter to Cromwell, however, for the first time Pole left the ground from which he had been accustomed to argue. By setting aside reasoning supported by canon law, that is, by putting his line of argument outside religious parameters, he potentially opened a new line of communication with the English. He stated that Henry's action against him was outside natural law, irrespective of religion. Thus he was trying to establish common ground with the English again, for all his reasoning about the immunity and the superiority of his legatine office had been easily rejected by the English. They denied papal supremacy, hence Pole's title of cardinal and legate did not impose any obligation on them. Now, with religion put aside, Pole put the pope in line with all other temporal rulers, whose ambassador he was. Thus he claimed that the extradition request was an insult to all civilized nations and a breach of the conventions by which international exchange operated. Pole did not abandon his own convictions, but for the sake of opening dialogue he proved flexible enough to discuss his case on a temporal rather than ecclesiastical basis. This move may be seen as a desperate attempt to salvage common ground for discussion, before all communication between England and the Roman church should break down.

If Cromwell ever answered this letter, we do not know how he met Pole's new argument: no letter is extant. Any possible answer, however, would have had to reduce the struggle about the legation between Rome and England to a personal conflict between Henry VIII and Reginald Pole. Since the English government could not deny the position of the pope as a ruler temporal, his diplomatic representatives were entitled to immunity. Consequently, the extradition request narrowed down to Pole's position as an English subject in papal service. According to English law, Pole was definitely guilty of *praemunire* and hence liable to prosecution in England. In response to Pole's statement Cromwell would have had no choice but to label Pole as a "traitor". Once this had happened, however, Pole could have insisted that England might well refuse to accept him as a negotiator because he was a treacherous subject of the English king, but that the English government then put themselves in the wrong if they refused to negotiate with other papal representatives.¹²¹ It appears that the legate was eager to get

¹²¹In this context it is irrelevant that Pole would have - and always did - vehemently denied the charge of being a traitor.

exactly this answer from England, for Pole's letter carried on to introduce Giberti into the affair. He informed Cromwell that he had asked Giberti to go England as papal emissary.

For thys cause I dyd rehearce the mo thynges to enduce hym hereunto; and amongst other thys cheffelye, the chieffe purpose off hys comeng wythe me, which afore god was this: that the pope entending by all meanes off benygnytie to practyse with the kyng, and wyth hys sanctytie also devyseng for a mete instrument betwene both, yff my persone for this degre newlye taken were not acceptyd the bisshop off Verona was thought moste meatest, beyng for hys old deserts to both prynces [Francis I and Henry VIII] ... whereapon the pope bound hym to take the jornaye wyth me. ... To which bond he made answer, ... yff my trew and faythfull dealyng were all well intymate to the kyng, he wold be content att all tymes, the waye onys founde afore, howe with commodytie he might comme to the kynges presence to take thys charge apon hym.¹²²

It becomes apparent that the purpose of the letter was to find out whether Henry's government solely refused to treat with him, or whether they declined any direct contact with papal emissaries. This was a question of interest at this stage of the legation. On the one hand Pole saw that the English were too hostile to him, so that he was unable to achieve anything. On the other hand he could not be sure whether it would not be more prudent for the cause if he withdrew to Italy in order not to irritate the English government any longer and let Giberti attempt to save the situation; he was also faced with a dilemma as to whether or not the English were disinclined to treat with Rome rather than with him, in which case he ought to stay on somewhere near England as a visible sign of irritation for Henry and sign of hope for those English people who still adhered to the Holy See.

England had never officially declined to treat with Rome, so there was some hope that if Pole withdrew, Giberti might negotiate successfully. An indicator as to how the situation had deteriorated was the fact that Pole could not find a courier prepared to take his letters to England. English diplomats would not forward them, because they refused any official contact with him, and both the Habsburg and the Valois lines of communication were closed to the legate. Finally, he fortunately found a Venetian diplomat willing to take it upon himself to deliver the letter to Cromwell.¹²³ Apart from sounding out the ground for further contacts with

¹²²Pole to Cromwell, as in footnote no. 120 above, p. 16-20 (quotation p. 19-20).

¹²³Pole to Ricalcati, Cambrai, 18 May 1537; PRO: PRO 31/9/65, f. 164; *L&P XII.1*,

England, Pole was also interested in vindicating himself in his letter to Cromwell. Repeatedly he pleaded that the legation took place only to save and increase Henry's honour. Pole also implied that he was indeed a useful servant for the English king in Rome. He claimed to have stopped or delayed various curial pronouncements which would have been disfavourable to the English king. He also stated that he was in possession of the papal censures against Henry and that the only reason why he had not published them yet was his old loyalty to his king.¹²⁴

This letter to Cromwell shows Pole's determination not to let relations with England come to a standstill. At this point, however, the English were not interested in negotiating with Pole. They were content while Pole was immobilized in Cambrai and there was still hope that one of their attempts against the cardinal's life would meet with success. Only later, when Pole had managed to reach Liège and was safely out of the reach of the assassins, would Cromwell and Henry signal their readiness to negotiate again. For the moment the English used all diplomatic ploys to prevent Pole from leaving Cambrai.

III. 5. Pole's negotiations with Brussels and his transfer to Liège

The English politicians pressurized the Governor of the Netherlands, the Dowager Queen of Hungary and Charles V's sister, as they had already done Francis I. Shortly before Pole reached Paris, Henry commissioned Hutton to suggest to Queen Mary that it was the ambassador's private opinion that Pole should be forbidden entry into the Netherlands. Henry also provided Hutton with letters to the queen in which he officially requested her to bar Pole from the country. However, Hutton was to retain these until he heard from Gardiner as to what had happened in France.¹²⁵ Until then it was sufficient for the English interests if the imperial politicians knew Henry's mind about the legate, without laying official strain on Anglo-imperial relations; for in London it was not yet known which route Pole was going to take from France. This caution must be seen in connection with the marriage negotiations, which were being conducted in order to arrange a match

no. 1243.

¹²⁴Cf. footnote no. 120 above, p. 21-3.

¹²⁵Henry VIII's instructions for Hutton, [Westminster], 8. Apr. 1537; PRO: SP 1/118, f. 70-2^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 866.

between Mary Tudor and Dom Louis of Portugal. On 15 April, however, when news reached London that Pole had arrived in Paris, Henry ordered his agent to take immediate action. The approach of the English to the negotiations followed a familiar pattern. Hutton was to exhort Mary that according to Henry's treaties with Charles, Pole was to be forbidden to enter the Netherlands. If he had already done so, Mary was to expel him at once.¹²⁶ Hutton lost no time in presenting his commission to the queen, who informed him that Pole had arrived in Cambrai. However, she claimed that her contact in Cambrai

"writethe nothing what jorney he intendeth to take, soo that I knowe not, whither he will come into theis parteis or not, nor whither he have any legacion from the Popes Holynes" (calling Hym by those termes) "to me or not; whiche if he have, I cannot aperceyve hoe to avoid hym not hering his message." And with that She stayed, and after a pause, said, "if he intende to come hither, it is only the procurement of the French Kyng, that hath suffred hym to passe through his hoole domynion, to dryve Me to thestremyte, either to displese the Kyng myn uncle [Henry VIII], or the Pope."¹²⁷

Mary of Hungary played for time and exercised the art of diplomacy in a masterly fashion. It is true that Pole had not contacted the court in Brussels immediately on arrival in Cambrai, because he first wanted to hear the results of Giberti's audience with Francis I, but this fact does not warrant her stating that she did not know whether or not Pole had been sent to her. Paul III had announced the legation to her and to her chief counselor, Erard de la Marck.¹²⁸ Her claim that Pole had been sent by Francis in order to compromise her was a politic lie as well. She must have known that it had been the imperial diplomats in Rome who had insisted that Pole should take the route through France, in order to embarrass Francis rather than Mary.¹²⁹ She dismissed Hutton from the audience promising to let Henry know if Pole said anything against the king, in case she was to receive him at a later date, for ostensibly, she could not possibly decline to see a papal legate, if this legate indeed came with a commission to her.¹³⁰

Mary was to adopt a similar line of argument towards Pole and Giberti. After Pole had requested access to Flanders, she sent him her regrets that she was unable

¹²⁶Henry VIII to Hutton, [Westminster], 15. Apr. 1537; *StP VII*, no. 463.

¹²⁷Hutton to Henry VIII, Brussels, 21 Apr. 1537; *StP VII*, no. 464.

¹²⁸Cf. p. 25 and footnote no. 19 above.

¹²⁹Cf. p. 33-4 and footnote 49 above.

¹³⁰Hutton to Henry VIII, Brussels, 21 Apr. 1537; *StP VII*, no. 464.

to co-operate. The emperor, she claimed, had sent no instructions on this matter.¹³¹ It should be remembered that Charles had instructed her to take decisions, according to whatever the current political situation dictated.¹³² Thus, Mary tried to rid herself of all responsibilities, while at the same time leaving the international relations of the house of Habsburg unstrained.

Without Hutton's knowledge, however, Mary ordered Pole to be prevented from entering the country. The war against France was a welcome pretext for this, because she had already closed the Franco-Flemish border to all traffic. It has already been mentioned that Pole's messenger to the court in Brussels had been turned back at the border, and that Pole complained about this to the Cardinal of Liège.¹³³ In order to be able to communicate with Brussels, he used the Bishop of Cambrai's men as couriers. They were allowed to cross the border, the only disadvantage being that it usually took them rather a long time to return to their city with an answer.¹³⁴ For Pole, it was clear that the Flemish refusal to admit him into the country had not been prompted by the hostilities between French and imperial forces, but had been engineered by Henry's agent in Brussels.¹³⁵ However, Giberti suspected that the reason for the Habsburg politicians' attitude was 'che io rimasto a dietro a venire de poi del S[igno]re Legato et [mia] andata dal Chr[istianissi]ma ha aggitato sospition.'¹³⁶ This is the first instance when Giberti's anti-Habsburg bias finds expression. His view that his contact with Francis I discredited Pole in the eyes of the court in Brussels is surely exaggerated. As all other politicians involved in the legation, he knew that it had been agreed with the imperial diplomats at the outset of the legation that Pole was to go to both Francis I and Mary of Hungary.

While Pole was trying to establish a line of communication with Brussels, Hutton was assiduously working to keep him out of Flanders. That is to say, the

¹³¹Pole to Ricalcati, Cambrai; as in footnote no. 123, but f. 161; even as late as 1. June 1537 she stuck to this pretence, Giberti to Ricalcati, Brussels; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 218^v.

¹³²Cf. p. 34 and footnote no. 50 above.

¹³³Cf. p. 48 above.

¹³⁴Pole complained about this in a letter to Paul III, Cambrai, 18 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 19.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*.

¹³⁶Giberti to Ricalcati, Cambrai, 27 Apr. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 204; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1053; 'because I stayed behind and came here after the legate, and my going to the Most Christian King has stirred up suspicion.'

idea was not so much to prevent him from entering Flanders, as to detain him in Cambrai. Pole could not return to France, and as long as Mary forbade him to enter the Netherlands, he was trapped in Cambrai. Henry's assassins were assembling around this city, so that their chances of striking a successful blow rose with every day that Pole was unable to move away from there.

Hutton managed to keep the case undecided for over a month. He threatened that his king would regard the treaties with Charles V as void if Mary received Pole. The queen was now caught in the same situation as Francis before her. She did not wish to alienate the pope, but the thought of Henry entering the war on the French side was abhorrent for the governor. The consequences for Charles's Flemish provinces would have been disastrous. Thus, she kept assuring Hutton that the treaties would be observed under all circumstances whilst at the same time she and her council looked for a possibility of amending the situation for the legate.¹³⁷ It was obvious to the English ambassador that the imperial court kept contact with Pole; this contact, he was told, was only to find out about the nature of Pole's legation. In May Hutton reported to London that the Flemish were apparently prepared to acknowledge the ecclesiastical character of Pole's legation.¹³⁸ This was the only way for them to accommodate Henry and pay their respects to Pole's office.

Pole had already given up hope of being allowed to proceed to Brussels. What he was interested in doing, was leaving Cambrai and reaching Germany. His plan was to go to the bishopric of Liège, from where it was possible to conduct negotiations with Brussels and where his life would be safer than in Cambrai. On about 28 April, Pole received a message from Marck by word of mouth that it would be much safer for the legate to go to Liège. The only problem was that he could not reach Liège without crossing Flemish territory. Mary's councillor suggested that he should travel *incognito*, because then the Flemish council could state with impunity to the English that he had slipped through Flanders without their knowledge and license. Pole considered his dignity as the only thing of which he

¹³⁷Hutton to Cromwell, Brussels, 28 Apr. 1537; PRO: SP 1/118, f. 45-8^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1061; Hutton to Henry VIII, Brussels, 3 May 1537; *StP VII*, no. 466; and 9 May 1537; PRO: SP 1/124, f. 19-20^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1167.

¹³⁸Hutton to Henry VIII, Brussels, 9 May 1537, as in footnote no. 137 above.

had not been deprived in the course of the legation, and he flatly declined the offer. He had to wait for another eleven days until he heard from Brussels again. Finally he had his way; the Cardinal of Liège sent word that the queen had agreed to give him an honorable armed conduct through Flanders, so that he could travel to Liège without disguise.¹³⁹

Pole's adamant insistence on an honorable safe conduct made it necessary for Mary of Hungary to resort to tactics adopted by Francis I. Like him she found it impossible to accommodate both Henry VIII and Paul III, thus she decided to accommodate the English ruler as much as possible whilst giving Pole token recognition so as to not create friction between the papacy and Habsburg. By giving recognition to Pole's legatine office she paid her respects to Rome, but as she had refused to acknowledge Pole as a political negotiator, Henry would find no legitimate reason to side with France. The English argued that, according to the existing treaties, Mary would have to extradite Pole if she allowed him to enter the country. In return the Flemish pointed out that the question as to whether legatine immunity could be applied to Pole

tochid the Bisshope of Romes auctoritie, and that the debatyng therof cold take no place, onles ther were Commiscionars apoyntid by Hym to make answare therunto, and that the Councell [of Flanders] thought ther was exstremetie ussid that he [Pole] myght not be suffrid to declare his legacie, wich was only done to satisfy Your Highnes [Henry VIII]; trustyng that Your Grace did soo myche tender the Emprors prosspertitie, that You wold not procure a utter breche between Hym and the Bisshop of Rome.¹⁴⁰

The English were dissatisfied with this reasoning and Hutton protested strongly in an audience with Mary. How seriously Henry's annoyance was taken is illustrated by the fact that Mary kept reiterating her faithfulness to the treaties and the argument that by letting Pole only pass through the country, without allowing him to have the legatine insignia carried in front of him, the treaties could not possibly have been broken. Even the Cardinal of Liège, who was technically a neutral sovereign, took a very careful line and protested that he would not even talk to Pole, let alone go back to Liège now. He declared that as long as Pole stayed in his city he would accompany Queen Mary to the front.¹⁴¹ Mary even sent one of her couriers, who

¹³⁹Pole to Paul III, Cambrai, 18 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 19.

¹⁴⁰Hutton to Henry VIII, Brussels, 16 May 1537; *StP VII*, no. 467.

¹⁴¹Hutton to Cromwell, Brussels, 26 May 1537; *StP VII*, no. 468; and 30 May 1537; PRO: SP 1/120, f. 231-2^v; *L&P XII,1*, no. 1306.

was going to her brother in Spain, via England in order to apologize for the affair and to explain why she had had no choice but to act as she did. Henry accepted the explanation and professed to bear no grudge against the queen.¹⁴² Henry had not seriously considered breaking his relations with either the King of France or the emperor. He had used his political and military weight to try and trick them into delivering Pole to him. Now that the legate was in safety in Liège it was no use to him to continue with harsh and unpleasant threats. What is more, the marriage negotiations for his daughter's Portuguese match were continuing, and the English monarch was not willing to jeopardize them for the Pole affair. He already regarded the legation as defeated, and since it did not pose a threat to him any longer, there was no reason for him to let his foreign relations deteriorate in its aftermath. In any event, his ambassador in Spain was instructed to get Charles V to agree that in the future he would not support any man

directly or indirectly against the King; whether the Bishop of Rome, or any other would attempt any thing against him: but that in case of any invasion in England, or any other the King's Highnesses dominions, the Emperor may aid his Grace against the said Bishop and all others.¹⁴³

An unreasonable request to which the emperor would have never agreed. To him one of the most important aspects of administering his scattered domains was flexibility. It is hardly surprising that he expressed his approval and delight on the way his sister had dealt with Pole.¹⁴⁴

The journey from Cambrai to Liège, over which the parties had been quarreling for over a month, took Pole and his train merely three days.¹⁴⁵ Pole arrived there on about 24 March.¹⁴⁶ The safety of their new abode was a great relief to all members of the travelling party. Giberti commented how much strain was taken off

¹⁴²Cromwell to Wyatt, London, 6 June 1537; Merriman, *Cromwell*, II, no. 189.

¹⁴³Wriothesley to Wyatt, [London], 6 June 1537; G. F. Nott (ed.), *The Works of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt, the Elder*, (London, 1816) II, p. 421 (text modernized by Nott).

¹⁴⁴Charles V to Mary of Hungary, *s.l.*, 11 July 1537; K. Lanz (ed.), *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V.*, (Leipzig, 1845) II, no. 685.

¹⁴⁵The journey, which is remarkable only for its uneventfulness, is described in Giberti's letter to Ricalcati, Brussels, 1 June 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 280v, 1v.

them and how much more at ease Pole felt.¹⁴⁷ Priuli has left a vivid account of the daily routine which established itself among the legate's following during their stay in Liège. The contrast to their frustration in Cambrai is striking.

La mattina ogni si sta nella sua camera fino a un hora e mezza innanzi pranzo nella qual hora convenimo in una chiesiola domestica ed insemie cantiamo le hore more theatinico senza canto Monsignor di Verona e il nostro maestro di capella detto le hore si ode messa e poco dappoi si disna a parte della mensa si legge S[igno]r Bernardo poi si ragiona ... il Vescovo lege ordinariamente un Capitolo di Eusebio de demonstratione evangelica si continua e ripiglia dappoi qualche honesto e grato ragionamento che dura fino a una, o doi hore da poi mezzo giorno ed alhora ogni uno ritorno alla sua camera ove si sta fino a una hora e mezza inanci cena a quella hora cantiamo vespero e compieta insieme e da poi il R[evrendissi]mo Legato si ha tandem lasciato exorare di leggerci le epistole di San Paulo alternis diebus e ha cominciato da la prima a Timotheo, con summa satisfazione del Vescovo e di tutti noi.... Alquanto da poi la lezione si cena si va per una o doi hore in barca per il fiume o in quel horto passeggiando e ragionando ... O quante volte mi replica il Signor Legato certe deus nobis haec otia fecit quanto li siamo obligati etiam hoc nomine ed aggiunge sempre perche non e Monsignor Contarini con noi¹⁴⁸

Pole gained new strength from this lifestyle in Liège. However, even this seeming bastion of security occasionally saw an English assassin. Among Henry's emissaries on the Continent, Hutton had the easiest access to Liège. Shortly after Pole's arrival there he reported to London that he was trying to infiltrate one William Vaughan into the cardinal's household.

¹⁴⁷Cf. footnote no. 145 above.

¹⁴⁸Priuli to Beccadelli, Liège, 20 July 1537; Bodleian Library: MSS Italian, f. 158-9. This letter is also printed in Quirini, II, p. civ-v, but with the wrong date of 28 July. D. Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy* (Cambridge, 1972) p. 44, footnote no. 2 already pointed out this error. 'Everybody stays in his room in the morning until one and a half hours before lunch, when we gather in a chapel in the house and we recite the office after the Theatine fashion. The Bishop of Verona is our master of services. After the office, we hear mass, and then we disperse. During lunch there is reading of St. Bernard and conversation ... the bishop [Giberti] usually reads us a chapter of Eusebius's *De Demonstratione Evangelica*. We stay together and have some good and pleasant talk until one or two o'clock. Then everyone retires to his room where we stay until one and a half hours before supper. Then we sing Vespers and Compline, and then the legate, who has finally allowed himself to be persuaded to do this, expounds the letters of St. Paul to us every other day. He started on 1 Timothy and he does it to the complete satisfaction of the bishop [Giberti] and of us all. ... After the lecture we have supper and then we go out on the river on a barge for an hour or two, or we go for walks in the garden and talk. ... How often has the legate repeated to me: surely God has prepared this rest for us! Oh, how grateful we have to be to Him, praise His name! And he always adds, Oh, why is Monsignor Contarini not with us?'

Vaughan approached Hutton in the Netherlands and told him that he had had to flee England, because he was wanted there for manslaughter, and that he was now trying to procure a pardon. One Philipps, who lived in Louvain had told Vaughan that

"Mychael Trognorton shalbe sent into Yngland assone as the Cardynall Poole shalbe settlid in Leige, with letters to dyvers of M[iste]r Poolis frendes, and ther is great dowt how to convey the sayd letters, but I [Philipps] have devysid to do, as I did by sarten letters that I sent to my father, wich was, I cawssid them to be baken within a loffe of bred, and soo ar we appoyntid to do with theis, and yf wee may, we wilbe set alande in Cornwall; and you [Vaughan] shall goo withe us yf you will." ... Syr Thomas Palmar ... hard reportid that Frognorton was gone in to Yngland with letters frome the Cardynall Pool.¹⁴⁹

As far as we can see, Throckmorton did not go to England and we very much doubt the credibility of the account of the letters baked into bread. Indeed, Throckmorton was absent from Pole's train after their arrival in Liège, but this was because he went to Brussels with Giberti, who turned there immediately after the arrival in Liège;¹⁵⁰ and apparently Throckmorton stayed there for about the first half of June.¹⁵¹ It is not even likely that he had taken a short trip to England, because Hutton himself reported later that Pole's servant had not been sent there, but had travelled with Giberti.¹⁵²

In spite of this erroneous information Vaughan returned to Hutton with some valuable news. He reported to the ambassador that Throckmorton had told him that in Henry's lifetime 'his master had no trust ever to come into England; for that, all be it Your Grace [Henry VIII] shuld graunt hym his pardon, he wold have no trust therunto.'¹⁵³ Vaughan also reported that Throckmorton had given him some letters for William Peto, an English Augustinian in Louvain and Throckmorton's cousin; then he delivered the letters to Hutton. These letters are not extant but they may have contained incriminating material, because Hutton forwarded them to London. Vaughan's report damaged Throckmorton's image with Henry and Cromwell. It will be remembered that Pole's servant had worked hard to establish an image of loyalty to Henry VIII and he was still trying to exploit the fact that the English

¹⁴⁹Hutton to Cromwell, Brussels, 26 May 1537; *StP VII*, no. 468.

¹⁵⁰His letter from Brussels is dated 1 June 1537; cf. footnote no. 145 above.

¹⁵¹Pole to Contarini, Liège, 10 June 1537; Quirini, II, no. 24.

¹⁵²Hutton to Cromwell, Antwerp, 17 June 1537; PRO: SP 1/121, f. 137-8^v; *L&P XII.2*, no. 108.

¹⁵³Hutton to Henry VIII, Antwerp, 17 June 1537; *StP VII*, no. 470.

trusted him. With this report from the Netherlands the first suspicions against Throckmorton may have arisen in Cromwell's mind.

Pole reported about Vaughan to Rome stating that the man had no good intentions and only escaped imprisonment because he left Liège before he could be apprehended.¹⁵⁴ Pole pointed out in one of his letters that he was constantly being watched in Liège, but that he did not feel imminent danger.¹⁵⁵ He and Giberti felt secure enough to concentrate their energies on the purpose of their mission again.

In Brussels at the beginning of June 1537 Giberti continued his negotiations about the European questions which he had started at the French court. His anti-Habsburg bias made it difficult for him to see the conflict between France and the emperor from an impartial point of view. He did not negotiate successfully. In his report he devoted much space to the marriage negotiations between Habsburg and Tudor, expressing his bewilderment that Charles should negotiate so freely with a schismatic king. Here the bishop's bias becomes most apparent. After his interview with Francis, Giberti had not found it necessary to comment on the French king's alliance with the sultan. Concluding on Charles's friendship with England, however, he made the pertinent, but discouraged, remark that it was obvious 'che le necessità delli stati portan queste cose.'¹⁵⁶

This remark is interesting, because it places Charles V among those politicians whose decisions were ruled exclusively by *raison d'état*. We may safely assume that Giberti's usage of *necessità delli stati* can be equated with the term which, in his time, was developing into the catchphrase of a whole system for applied politics, *ragione di stato*. It is interesting that even before the great battles in the Machiavellian controversy were fought, the whole world of ideas which Giberti described with *necessità delli stati* could be used with a definitely negative connotation. As this particular problem will be further discussed in the context of Pole's views on the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, it suffices here to point out the significance of Giberti's phrase. Giberti obviously accepted that all rulers of his time, including the pope, arrived at their decisions by keeping the interests and

¹⁵⁴Cf. footnote no. 151 above.

¹⁵⁵Pole to Contarini, Liège, 29 June 1537; Quirini, II, no. 25.

¹⁵⁶Giberti to Ricalcati, Brussels, 1 June 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 210^v-11 (quotation f. 211); 'that the necessities of statesmanship bring about such things.'

advantages of their state in mind. However, by choosing to label Charles's actions as devoted to *necessità delli stati* and, at the same time, leaving Francis's policies unqualified, he branded the imperial side as ethically despicable. Thus, he did not use the term as a descriptive comment, but as a means of qualification, because the theory according to which policy making functioned already bore a stigma. By introducing his report of the Flemish council's statement in this particular manner, he ensured that these statements lost credibility and acquired a ring of deceit.

However, the imperial politicians' reasoning was not easily dismissable. First, they pointed out that it had not been Charles who had started a league with the infidels and who had resumed the war in this year. Then they started to defend their interest in the English match for Dom Louis. They also drew Giberti's attention to the traditional friendship of the reigning houses of Burgundy and England, which had always served to balance the alliance between France and Scotland. However, from what the councillors said about the advantages of the marriage for current policies it dawned on Giberti

che si stia in su li disegni de far questo S[igno]re [Dom Louis after marrying Mary Tudor] instante Duca di Milano, et a questo modo havendo il Re d'Ingh[hilter]ra maritato una figlia duchessa di quel stato hebbi a far doi grandissimi effetti in beneficio dello Imp[erato]re uno di far rimuovere in tutto il Chr[istianissi]mo designarli piu ... l'altro de condurre il Re d'Ing[hilter]ra a pigliar la protettione di questi paesi di Fiandra.¹⁵⁷

The idea of disposing of the Milanese problem in this way was interesting. Charles would have given his claim to this duchy to a couple who could have potentially founded a new dynasty there. It is true that the rulers of Milan would then have been more favourably inclined towards the Habsburg than towards the Valois, but the idea of both Francis and Charles relinquishing claims to an independent ruler would have been a positive move towards the solution of one of the most contentious objects of dispute between them. Again, Giberti arranged his report in a way which made Charles appear in a disfavourable light. The notice of the possible answer to the Milanese question was very short but preceded by a lengthy

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, f. 211^v-12; It dawned on Giberti 'that the marriage arrangement was underlaid by the plan to make this Lord [Dom Louis after marrying Mary Tudor] at once Duke of Milan, thus, the fact that the daughter of the English king would marry to become duchess of that state would benefit the emperor in two ways. Firstly, the Most Christian King will not be able to scheme any longer ... secondly, the King of England could be held to take it upon him to defend these Flemish provinces.'

evaluation of the idea that Charles might want Henry to take over the defence of the Netherlands, so that he could concentrate his forces against Francis elsewhere.¹⁵⁸

Although Giberti admitted that Francis was allied with the sultan, he insisted that Charles's overtures to Henry were detestable. He reasoned that the Turks might attack Italy any day and that Charles had not enough troops there to fulfill his role as protector of the church. He also pointed out that Henry VIII was effectively excommunicated, and asked whether Charles could still justify being in league with England. His account is a mixture of reproducing his interview with the politicians in Brussels and of offering his own strong opinions on the problems. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the two. The report finds its climax in Giberti asking Rome to petition Charles to abstain from his English policies.¹⁵⁹

It is true that Charles V certainly does not count as the victim in this struggle with Francis I. Both monarchs had for the past fifteen years pursued aggressive foreign politics and both had committed atrocities and broken conventions more than once. However, Giberti, who ever since the Sack of Rome had been the most ardent enemy of Habsburg policies, was the worst possible negotiator for the papacy to send to Brussels. He also touched on the topic of the General Council, and obtained the same answer as at the French court in inverse order. As far as the Habsburg party was concerned the Council could commence, obstacles were being placed by the French. Giberti was told that Pole may have to go to Spain to see the emperor himself, if he wished to continue negotiations. The bishop considered the legation at an end and pleaded to be recalled to Italy.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸The passage on Milan is quoted in the above passage almost in full, whereas Giberti used a whole folio to illustrate Henry VIII's possible involvement in the European war.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, f. 212-13^v.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, f. 213^v-15^v.

III. 6. The recall and the journey back to Italy

By this time the curia was also admitting defeat in terms of Pole's legation. While Pole was on his way from Cambrai to Liège, Contarini wrote to him that tarrying in northern Europe for much longer without fulfilling his commission would be disgraceful for Pole and for the papacy.¹⁶¹ Pole denied this and argued against being recalled. He thought it important to stay on in close proximity to England as a sign of hope to the English faithful to Rome.¹⁶² From Cambrai Pole had warned earlier that it would be fatal for the Roman church to abandon the English cause. He reasoned that if the living generation were to tell the next generation that the Roman cause was lost because of negligence, England would be lost for the church for ever.¹⁶³ But as news from England became increasingly hopeless for his cause, he finally agreed to a return to Rome.¹⁶⁴ The recall was substantiated with the fact that Paul III was planning to convoke a General Council to Mantua for the spring of 1538, for the preparation of which he desired Pole's assistance.¹⁶⁵

It was important to minimize the risk to Pole's safety during the journey to Rome. Ever since he had been expelled from France it was clear that the only way back which remained open to him would take him through Germany. This is why Giberti had already suggested from Cambrai that Rome should negotiate a safe conduct through the Empire with Charles V's brother, Ferdinand, King of the Romans.¹⁶⁶ Papal diplomats in Vienna and in Paris were in the meantime at work trying to procure a safe conduct for the legate's journey. The French refused to allow Pole to re-enter the country. If Pole was unable to travel through the Empire, they were prepared to let him pass through Lorraine, technically not part of France,

¹⁶¹Contarini to Pole, Rome, 22 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 20.

¹⁶²Pole to Contarini, Liège, 29 June and 21 July 1537; Quirini, II, nos. 25 and 28.

¹⁶³Pole to Paul III, Cambrai, 18 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 19.

¹⁶⁴On 29 June 1537 he wrote to Ricalcati from Liège that Henry had kept the upper hand by betraying the people 'con non havere servato fede alcuna alle large promesse che haveva fatte et publica et privatamente, et non tenuto conto alcuni de'salui condotti ch'ha dato' ('by not keeping any of the grand promises he had made publicly and privately, and by not honouring any of the safe conducts he had issued'); ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 11.

¹⁶⁵For the official recall see Paul III's brief to Pole, Rome, 30 June 1537; Quirini, II, p. cclxxiii. Pole's accepted it in his letter to Contarini of 21 July 1537; as in footnote no. 163 above.

¹⁶⁶Giberti to Ricalcati, Cambrai, 27 Apr. 1537; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 207; *L&P XII, I*, no. 1053.

into Switzerland.¹⁶⁷ It was out of the question for Pole to go via French territory, and in addition to this he insisted on having his passport from Ferdinand in his hands prior to leaving Liège, although Rome urged him to set out immediately.¹⁶⁸ The negotiations with the Habsburgs in Vienna proved fruitful. The nuncio there, Giovanni Morone, one of the most gifted papal diplomats, reported to Rome that he had dispatched Ferdinand's writs of safe conduct to Pole even before the pope officially asked for them to be issued.¹⁶⁹ Thus, on 10 August Giberti informed Cardinal Farnese about the imminent departure of the party. They had received Morone's writs of safe conduct and Giberti had succeeded in procuring a safe conduct which would take them from the bishopric of Liège to the archbishopric of Cologne. He also reported that a little earlier Mary of Hungary and Francis I had agreed on a truce for the Franco-Flemish border region.¹⁷⁰ Although this truce was not a result of Pole's and Giberti's mission, it allowed the envoys to leave more content.¹⁷¹

It had proved relatively easy to procure the safe conducts for the journey back. The far greater problem, however, was to avoid the English assassins, who were expected to waylay Pole in various places on his journey. In order to achieve this it was necessary to create the hope among the English policy makers that Pole might be willing to conform with Henry after all. This was not an easy task, because Pole had written a very sharp letter to Cromwell from Liège before it was decided that the party would return to Italy. In this letter he gave vent to his anger about the difficulty he had had in finding someone to deliver his earlier letter to Cromwell. It

¹⁶⁷Ferrerio, new nuncio in France, to Ricalcati, Paris, 30 July 1537; *ANG, I*, no. 255.

¹⁶⁸Pole to Contarini, Liège, 21 July 1537; as in footnote no. 162 above.

¹⁶⁹Morone to Ricalcati, Prague, 16 July 1537; *NB, II*, no. 50; Paul III's request for the writs is in his brief to King Ferdinand, Rome, 21 July 1537; Quirini, II, p. cclxxiii. This was only the first time that Giovanni Morone worked together with Reginald Pole. The two cardinals were to become close friends later on. A concise study on Morone, who was not only a political genius, but also the man who saved the Council of Trent from failure is still missing. For a short orientation see H. Lutz, 'Kardinal Morone. Reform, Konzil und europäische Staatenwelt', in M. Csáky (ed.), *Heinrich Lutz. Politik, Kultur und Religion im Werdeprozeß der frühen Neuzeit* (Klagenfurt, 1983) p. 183-92.

¹⁷⁰Truce of St. Omer, 23 July 1537; the text of the truce is in BN: Fonds français 3916, f. 221-5. This truce was incorporated in the general truce between Charles V and Francis I, which was concluded in Nice in 1538.

¹⁷¹Giberti to Ricalcati, Liège, 10 Aug. 1537; ASV: AA Armarium I-XVIII 6527, f. 149-50^v.

becomes obvious that Pole at this stage felt nothing but contempt for Cromwell. Scornfully he commented on the manner in which political business was run under his auspices.

Butt yff this be a new fashion in handlyng prynsys affayres off most assured
and faythfull hartes as may be founde in nature, reserveng theyr dewty to god,
by all meanes to provoke them to chaunge theyr loveng myndes to the kyng,
as such ways I have in practyse to be moche used wyth me, howe ytt may be
profytable to ony prynce to have hys affayres handeled after suche a manier,
I confesse to be ignoraunte.¹⁷²

In the second part of the letter it becomes apparent, however, that Pole's anger was aimed exclusively at Cromwell. While calling the minister incompetent in matters of statesmanship, he professed his affection for the king. He claimed that he still loved Henry, despite the numerous attacks on his life, which he clearly saw as Cromwell's machinations. Pole concluded pointing out that no answer Cromwell could possibly make to his letter would credibly testify against the cardinal. Thus, Pole still signalled openness for dialogue, although his lack of respect for Henry's minister was openly displayed. This offer for further discussion was the starting point for Pole's strategy with which he aimed at protecting himself on his journey.

As usual when such tasks had to be fulfilled, it was Throckmorton who masterminded and carried out the designs. Only two days before Pole and his train left Liège he wrote to Cromwell, trying his best to vindicate himself of all suspicion of disloyalty that might have fallen on him. Throckmorton started his letter with a lengthy description of how he had experienced Pole's journey, which also served as an explanation for why he had not returned to England. He wrote that he had taken the fact that Cromwell had not answered his letter from Rome as a silent consent to his accompanying Pole. When Pole reached Paris, he claimed, the legate would not let him go, so he went along to Cambrai and waited there for Cromwell's instructions. He pretended that he had learnt about the intent of the legation only there, thus assuring Cromwell that it had turned out favourably for England that he had stayed on so long, because now he was in a position to disclose Pole's mind fully. He professed that Pole had told him that the legation

had that ground, that reserving the dyfference off the opyneon consernyng
the unyte off the chyrche, wherein he sayd, that for feere, favor, or love off
ony creature levyng he wold never change; butt, in the rest, he seyde, he was
never that favoryd more the kynges trewe honor and welth ... And therunto

¹⁷²Pole to Cromwell, Liège, 29 May 1537; Collier, *Nine Letters*, p. 3-4.

he began to schewe howe, yff he had byne myndyd to the contrare, what occasyons he had to hynder the same, both nowe be fors of hys legace, and in thys specyally, whyche they cowlde never perswade hym to; whyche was that, att the poynte off hys departyng, they wolde have had hyme to have lefte the boke [*De Unitate*] in the poops hands, who, in hys absence, wold have putt hyt forth and publyshyd hyt.¹⁷³

Throckmorton carried on describing the disputes which Pole's resistance to this had caused in Rome. Of all attempts to exonerate Pole in Henry's eyes this was certainly the most successful one, because a publication of *De Unitate* was indeed greatly feared in England. Then Throckmorton embarked on a complicated argument trying to explain that Pole had never meant to treat with either Francis or Mary against the English king. Pole had only accepted the legation, because these had insisted that a legation should take place, and Pole had thought that he could work for Henry's honour more efficiently than anyone else. Throckmorton announced that he would give Cromwell reliable news about Pole's plans for the near future and about the next moves that Rome planned with regard to England. Interestingly, he resorted to the simple, but effective strategem of telling Cromwell the truth. He informed Cromwell that Pole was

revoked a geyne in to ytalie, agenst the generall counsell whyche ys poyntyd to be the fyrst off November: allso y perseve the poope was mynded that, lycke as he hath sente indolgence throgh all Chrystemdome to prey for the delyverance off the daynger off the Turcke, so in lycke manar he wyll sende throgh all Chrystemdome indolgence to prey for the Kyngs grace with the state off englonde to retorne to the unyte off the Chyrche.¹⁷⁴

All this was perfectly true. Throckmorton pointed out that if anything could change Pole's mind now it would be a discussion with Cromwell, for which he saw little hope to materialize. Although he claimed that his own prudence was insufficient to deal with the case properly, he indicated that he would stay with Pole for Cromwell's benefit. In the postscript of the letter Throckmorton even went so far as to inform Cromwell that they would set out on their journey within the next three days, which he professed not to have known earlier.

Cromwell could be more than content with this letter. Throckmorton had delivered a comprehensive intelligence report to him and the spy was still at work. Throckmorton had carefully avoided putting anything into the letter, which

¹⁷³Throckmorton to Cromwell, Liège, 20 Aug. 1537; Collier, *Nine Letters*, p. 31-2.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 33-5 (quotation, p. 34-5).

Cromwell could have detected as a lie immediately with the degree of information available to the minister. He took good care that the letter would not reach England for some time in order to give Pole the lead of his pursuers. He gave the letter to his cousin, Friar Peto, and commissioned the monk to deliver it to Hutton who would then forward it to Cromwell.

On 22 August Pole left Liège with great pomp. Word had been passed around that he was going to Maastricht, where he was to preside over the cathedral chapter, which was to sit on 3 September. From there, it was alleged, he would go on to Rome. This information was made publicly known so that Hutton's spies heard the news and related it to their master.¹⁷⁵ Within the first two days of September Peto delivered Throckmorton's letter to Hutton. Undoubtedly, Throckmorton had instructed his cousin not to go to Hutton too soon, so that Pole's party could gain some distance to England. It was Peto who dangled the bait for Cromwell. He was commissioned to inform the English that Henry's chaplain, Nicholas Wilson, would be an ideal negotiator to meet Pole, if the English king was interested in preventing certain things from being published.¹⁷⁶ Whether this was an allusion to *De Unitate* or to the papal censures against Henry is irrelevant in this context. Hutton sent Throckmorton's letter to Cromwell, who answered immediately. He believed Throckmorton's and Peto's messages without hesitation. He wrote to Throckmorton that Henry had agreed to send Wilson to Maastricht, if Pole was prepared to wait for him there. Of course, he pointed out that Henry did not do this to please the pope, but because he still held Pole in high esteem and it was his wish to bring about a reconciliation.¹⁷⁷

Indeed, the English intended to send Wilson and Nicholas Heath to meet Pole in Maastricht. Their instructions were drawn up immediately, but the two theologians were never dispatched.¹⁷⁸ On 11 September Hutton forwarded Cromwell's answer to Throckmorton and eight days later the truth was revealed; Hutton had the unpleasant duty of informing Thomas Cromwell that they been fooled. Hutton's messenger had returned from Maastricht without being able to deliver the letter

¹⁷⁵Hutton to Cromwell, Antwerp, 30 Aug. 1537; *StP VII*, no. 473.

¹⁷⁶Hutton to Cromwell, Antwerp, 2 Sep. 1537; PRO: SP 1/124, f. 167; *L&P XII,2*, no. 635.

¹⁷⁷Cromwell to [Throckmorton], [Mortlake], *s.d.*; Merriman, *Cromwell, II*, no. 216.

¹⁷⁸Cromwell's instructions for Wilson and Heath, *s.l., s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/124, f. 145-51; *L&P XII,2*, no. 620.

for that Thrognortun was departit with his master frome Speir in post
towards Rome, with wone other, levying the rest of his treyn to folo by
jorney. His sayd master made no tarians at Mastrik, but was conveid
thoro the Bisshope of Utreghes countre, clen owt of the way custommably
ussid by them that take ther journey thoro Almeyn for Rome.¹⁷⁹

Michael Throckmorton had succeeded in deceiving the English policy makers and their representatives on the Continent. Thus, he made it possible for Pole to escape his pursuers unharmed, because by the time Cromwell could react on this news, Pole would have already reached southern Germany. Cromwell was furious when he found out that, for once, he had not been moving the pawns on the chessboard, but without realizing it he had been reduced to a mere chessman. He knew that it was out of the question to have Pole pursued, but he wrote an angry letter in which he raged against both Pole and his servant.

I myght better haue Judged, that so dishonest a maister, cowlde haue but
even suche seruantes as you ar. No, no, Loyaltie and treason dwell seldome
togethers. There can no feithfull subiect so long abide the sight of so
haynous a traytour to his prince. You cowlde not all this season haue byn a
spie for the king, but at some tyme your cowntenance shuld haue declared
your harte to be loyall towards your prince, and uttlerly bent against his
trayterous dealinges.

After pouring out more abuse on Pole and Throckmorton, Cromwell boasted that most princes were convinced that Pole was a traitor, because it had been some of them who had warned Henry of 'the godly enterprises that this sely cardenall went aboute.' Disclosing this information may have politically unsound, but it reflects Cromwell anger when he wrote the letter. From abuse and political boasting he changed to threats.

Pi[ty it] is, that the follye of one braynesick Poole, or to say better, of one
witless foole, shuld be the Ruyn of so great a famylie ... these that letle
haue offended (sauyng that he is of theyr kynne) wer not the great marcie
and benygnytie of the prynce [they] shulde and myghte fele what it is to haue
suche a traytour to their kynsman ... And ye know that when so ever the
kyng will, his hieghnes may bring it easilye to passe, that he shall thinke
himself scase sure of his lyfe, althoughe he went tyde at his maisters girdell.

There maye be founde wayes ynow in Italy, to rydd a trayterous subiect.¹⁸⁰

Cromwell's rage did not help him much in 1537. It was only years later that assassins, paid with English money, arrived in Italy and made life difficult for

¹⁷⁹Hutton to Cromwell, Antwerp, 19 Sep. 1537; *StP VII*, no. 475.

¹⁸⁰[Cromwell] to Michael [Throckmorton], *s.l.*, *s.d.*; Merriman, *Cromwell, II*, no. 218.

The homebound journey was uneventful for the legate and his following. In Trent he received a letter from Contarini, in which he was informed that the pope had changed his mind about the recall. It was now left to the legate's discretion whether he wanted to winter in Liège or return to Rome. Of course, Pole was already too far advanced on his journey to consider the alternative seriously.¹⁸² On 18 October he was formally greeted in Rome by the College of Cardinals.¹⁸³ The following day he gave an account of his legation in consistory.¹⁸⁴ Undoubtedly, it was a gloomy account of frustrations and discouragements. Although Pole had been welcomed in Rome triumphantly there was not much reason for cheering.¹⁸⁵ Pole had essentially been lucky to have survived the whole enterprise.

Had the Pilgrimage lasted a little longer, had Paul III thrown a few *scudi*, and had Charles abandoned caution, Pole's legation would have been the most serious episode in the triad of coup, Pilgrimage, and Pole because it would have served as a catalyst to revive and unite the parties who made both coup and rebellion.¹⁸⁶ This recent, modern assessment of the potential of Pole's legation suggests answers to the question of why Pole's legation had failed. During the first four or five months of 1537 the legation posed a serious threat to England. It is interesting, however, that the legation does not seem to have been discussed very publicly in England. No mention of it was made in neither the French nor the imperial diplomatic correspondence from England.¹⁸⁷ It has been shown above that the English

¹⁸¹Various attempts on Pole's life in the 1540s have been described by G. B. Parks, 'The Parma Letters and the Dangers to Cardinal Pole', *Catholic Historical Review*, XLVI (1960) p. 299-317, and E. Harrison, 'Henry the Eighth's Gangster: The Affair of Ludovico da l'Armi', *Journal of Modern History*, XV (1943) p. 267-74.

¹⁸²Pole to Contarini, Bovenola, 30 Sep. 1537; Quirini, II, no. 37.

¹⁸³PRO: PRO 31/9/65, f. 193; *L&P XII*, 2, no. 944.

¹⁸⁴W. M. Brady, *The Episcopal Succession in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1400-1875*, (Rome, 1876) II, p. 281.

¹⁸⁵Hutton grudgingly commented on Pole's welcome in a letter to Cromwell, Antwerp, 31 Dec. 1537; *StP VIII*, no. 483.

¹⁸⁶Mayer, 'Diet', p. 306.

¹⁸⁷The legation does not figure in J. Kaulek (ed.), *De Castillon et de Marillac. Correspondance politique* (Paris, 1885). The same accounts for the correspondence of Charles V's diplomats in England, which I have been able to view.

attempts on Pole's life were known to the public, which proves that the cardinal's presence in northern Europe and also his intentions towards England were not treated as a state secret. The fact that the foreign ambassadors did not report about Pole may either show that the discussion about the political implications of his mission was carefully kept away from them, or that the continental powers ascribed so little importance to the mission that they neglected reporting about it. The apparent lack of interest of both Valois and Habsburg in supporting Pole has been discussed above. It may be concluded that the problem was not so much that Charles V would not abandon caution, but that he was not interested in upsetting the European balance of power at a time when he was at war with Francis I. This lack of interest on either side took the Roman politicians by surprise. The reason why Paul III sent Pole on the legation without proper financial backing to enable him to support the English insurgents was that he firmly counted on help from Francis I and Charles V.

Pole proved himself as an able diplomat during his first legation. His only active contribution to the failure of the enterprise was the slow speed with which he travelled north. It is true that the Pilgrimage had already been defeated when Pole set out from Rome, but through his slow progress he gave his opponents ample opportunity to take their precautions against him.¹⁸⁸ In every other respect he dealt with the numerous awkward situations in which he found himself rather well. His - and the curia's - mistake lay not so much in the implementation of the legation as in its planning. In this first attempt of the Roman church to unite the rulers of Europe against a country which had broken away from Rome the papacy had to learn that Europe's religious unity had ceased to be one of the major concerns of the men and women who decided on Europe's political fate.

It was certainly not a novelty to see temporal rulers openly defy the papacy. What was new in Pole's legation, however, was the disrespect shown towards a diplomatic representative. Members of the two most powerful catholic dynasties of

¹⁸⁸G. M. Monti, 'Legazione del Polo e del Giberti', p. 5-6, thinks that the delay was no reason for the failure of the legation. He also points out that the two diplomats were travelling rather speedily if their age and rank are taken into account. However, it will be remembered that it was not the aged Giberti, but the relatively young Pole who caused their delay; and since they were travelling with a small entourage their rank should not have been too much of an impediment either.

Europe felt unable to receive the pope's representative, because both had to accommodate a ruler who was an enemy of the church. This was certainly an unprecedented incident. For Pole the most terrifying experience of the legation was not the fact that he had been expelled from France and forbidden entry into the Flanders, but that the rulers of these countries tried to dispose of him for no other reason than Henry's satisfaction.¹⁸⁹ He perceived a complete shift in the political ethics of his time. It is true that before Pole's days as well as after them, political decision making was largely influenced by one's own advantage. However, this thinking had hitherto not been displayed so ruthlessly.

The papacy had traditionally been a political force in Europe which was morally aloof from others. Much through its own fault, it had lost this privileged position. Protestant princes in Germany and Scandinavia, and the King of England had broken with the popes, who had lost control over large parts of Europe. Yet, what happened in Pole's case took place in the dominions of princes who professed loyalty to the Roman church, where a legate was not only a diplomatic figure, but through his office also had ecclesiastical prestige. Pole's expulsion from France did not only have political significance: it was a milestone in the gradual separation of temporal and spiritual power; a cardinal was not revered any longer because of his title, and his political weight was reduced to the force which stood behind his master, or his master's enemy.

Pole resented this development as he came to understand it. When he was faced with the actual problems during the legation he reacted differently from the way in which he did after the event. His immediate reaction after his expulsion from France was to exonerate Francis and lay the blame on Henry. He judged that the French king had to send him out of the country against his will, because he had been forced to do so by Henry VIII.¹⁹⁰ Almost a year later, however, Pole's judgement had changed. He still complained bitterly about Henry's conduct, but now he also uttered critical remarks about Charles and Francis. He rebuked them for conforming with a schismatic rather than supporting the cause of the church and of God.¹⁹¹ At the end of his first legation Pole slowly started realizing that politics

¹⁸⁹Pole to Paul III, Cambrai, 18 May 1537; Quirini, II, no. 19.

¹⁹⁰Pole to Pio, Cambrai, 21 Apr. 1537; Baroni, no. 294.

¹⁹¹Pole to Orsini, Rome, 14 Jan. 1538; Quirini, II, no. 56.

were decided exclusively according to temporal considerations. With Francis's alliance with the sultan the infidels figured in European history for the first time not as the common enemy of united Christianity but as part of a system which was becoming increasingly subject to change. It is true that the French league with the Porte was frowned upon, but the Christians slowly realized that infidels were at times useful allies against their fellow Christians. When Christianity ceased to be one monolithic block in the sixteenth century, the natural consequence was that rulers who adhered to different denominations might form alliances, because they seemed politically opportune. The era of the wars of religion had not begun yet. Pole was witness to a time when religious considerations played a minor part in policy making. When in 1537 Pole sought support for the catholic cause, only for religion's sake, secular rulers like Charles V and Francis I, who were more concerned with the question of European hegemony, would not support him.

This development did not stop Pole from taking up the cause of his mission again. The impact of his quest on the political situation in Europe remained marginal, whereas his efforts had far-reaching consequences for Pole's personal life and for the welfare of his family. It is to the fate of the Poles in England that we must now turn our attention.

IV. The Destruction of the Pole Family

IV. 1. The Early Examinations of Geoffrey Pole and the Arrest of Montagu and Exeter

It has been pointed out earlier in this study that Reginald Pole had been reluctant to accept his elevation to the cardinalate in 1536.¹ Pole's unwillingness had its roots in his fear for the welfare of his family in England.² Even before the future cardinal reached Rome, he had received a first warning that his family might be endangered by his disobedience to Henry VIII. Pole's mother, the Countess of Salisbury, wrote during the first half of 1536 to entreat her son to return to England and serve the king. She also alluded to the potential danger into which she was brought by her son's disobedience and lamented that Reginald 'shuld be the cause that I beeyng towarde you so motherly and tender harted as I have done shuld for your folye receive from my sovereign lorde suche message as I hadd late done by your brother.'³ It is interesting to see that Pole in his answer did not appear to take notice of this aspect of his mother's letter at all. Indeed, his reaction as a whole reads very curiously; he scolded his mother for interfering with his life because

as from my childishe yeres I can remember ... that ever you had given me utterly to god. And thoughe you had so doone with all your children yet in me you had so given up all right from you and possession utterly that you never took any care to provide for my liveng, nor oodrewest [otherwise] as you did for oodre but committed all to god to whome you had given me.⁴

Pole went on to insist that he had to serve one master only, God, and avoided

¹Cf. p. 14 above.

²L. Beccadelli, *Vita del Cardinal Polo*, in Quirini, V, p. 365, recounted Pole's fear of the harm that might be caused to his family: 'Reginaldo ... s'oppose, dicendo ... che all'hora non era tempo di farlo Cardinale, ... che questo grado alli suoi portava pericolo manifesto.' (Reginald was all against it and said that at that moment it was not the time to create him a cardinal [and] that it would present a great danger to his family.)

³[Margaret Pole] to Reginald Pole, *s.l.*, *s.d.*, PRO: SP 1/105, f. 66; *L&P XI*, no. 93.

The letter is undated but the answering letter by Pole to his mother (cf. footnote no. 4 below) bears the date 15 July. In this context it is irrelevant whether the countess was forced to write this letter or whether she wrote it on her own accord, because either way Pole understood that the threat to his family's safety was real.

⁴Pole to Margaret Pole, Venice, 15 July 1536, PRO: SP 1/139, f. 132; *L&P XI*, no. 92.

mentioning the English king altogether. At the end of the letter he entreated his mother not to meddle with his life any more, because he would not come home, but go on serving God according to his own good belief. Perhaps the harsh tone of this letter is to be explained as an act of self protection by Pole, that is to say he already foresaw what was going to happen to the people he loved and tried to minimize his own grief. It may also have been a vicarious message to Henry VIII and the privy council, if Pole was certain that his mother had been ordered to write this letter: he answered harshly in order to make the government understand that it was useless trying to use his family to blackmail him. It could also be that the irreverent tone was genuine. It is, however, unlikely that the third possibility holds true; even if Pole had been genuinely annoyed with his mother and wanted to lecture her on her religious duties one cannot conceive that he would have reacted so severely.

Pole knew what he was doing when he went to Rome and it will hardly have been a surprise to him that the ensuing events in his career, such as his elevation to the cardinalate and his legation and passive support for the insurgents of the Pilgrimage of Grace, endangered his family even more. Henry VIII was not a pleasant enemy and since he could not have his immediate revenge on the cardinal it was only a question of time before Pole's next of kin would have to suffer in his place. That Henry was determined to have his revenge is evident in a remark of his quoted by the French ambassador in London, Louis de Castillon, in a letter to Montmorency. 'Il y a bien longtemps que ce Roy [Henry VIII] m'avoit dict qu'il vouloit exterminer ceste maison de Montagu, qui est encore de la Rose Blanche, et de la maison de Polle dont est le Cardinal.'⁵ Castillon came to England in 1537 - after Pole's elevation - so Henry must have made his remark under the immediate influence of his anger with the cardinal. The tragedy of the Pole family which led to the almost complete annihilation of the cardinal's relatives and friends in England was part of Henry's personal vendetta against

⁵Castillon to Montmorency, London, 5 November 1538, BL: Add MS 33 514, f. 5^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 753. 'Quite some time ago this king [Henry VIII] told me that he would exterminate the house of Montagu, which still belongs to the White Rose and to the house of Pole, of which the cardinal is.'

Reginald Pole.⁶ This process started with the uncovering of the so-called "Exeter Conspiracy". It is true that under the new Treason Laws of 1534 the scope of offences which could be called treasonable had been widened considerably, but it will be shown that the so-called "Exeter Conspiracy" is a misnomer.

It has been suggested that Henry planted spies in the households of Pole's brother, Henry Lord Montagu, and of the Marquis of Exeter, Henry Courtenay, before he had the families of both men imprisoned, tried, and - almost without exception - executed.⁷ No evidence for the existence of such spies can be found. The theory is, indeed, impossible because the evidence used against the Courtenays and Poles was mainly drawn from the confessions of the cardinal's youngest brother, Sir Geoffrey Pole. The final act in the drama of the Pole family - and for that matter of the White Rose - began with the arrest of Sir Geoffrey on 29 August 1538. He was accused of having corresponded with the cardinal without the king's knowledge - a treasonable offence.⁸ After the arrest we do not hear anything about Sir Geoffrey's fate for about two months. His first examination did not take place until 26 October. Apparently he was left to himself and to an ever growing uncertainty as to what would await him in the Tower. Prior to Geoffrey Pole's detention, Hugh Holland, Sir Geoffrey's emissary to Reginald Pole in the previous year, had been arrested and it seems that this man gave the authorities the first incriminating evidence about the Poles. In an examination of some men and women of Stoughton, Sussex, who had been gossiping carelessly about the arrest of the two men it was discovered that Sir Geoffrey had met Holland on the latter's way to prison and that Holland had told his former master that 'he shulde nott be longe after'.⁹ So it seems that

⁶T. F. Mayer, 'Reginald Pole in Paolo Giovio's "Descriptio": A Strategy for Reconversion', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XVI (1985) p. 432-3, seems to be doubtful about this point. It will be shown in the course of this chapter that the destruction of the houses Courtenay and Pole must be linked with Henry's grudge against Pole.

⁷R. Biron, J. Barennes, *Un prince anglais Cardinal légat au XVI^e siècle, Reginald Pole* (Paris, s.d. [but 1922]) p. 138.

⁸Chapuys and Mendoza, Imperial ambassadors in England, to Charles V, London, 31 Aug. 1538; *CalStP, Spain*, VI,1, no. 7. For Geoffrey Pole's contact with Cardinal Pole in the previous year cf. p. 51-2 above.

⁹Confession of Alice Patchet, 18 Sep. 1538, PRO: SP 1/136, f. 158; *L&P XIII*, 2,

Holland was determined to betray Sir Geoffrey in order to save his own neck, though he was on the other hand loyal enough to give him a warning.

Unfortunately we do not know the date of Holland's arrest; it would be interesting to know whether Sir Geoffrey was taken immediately after him, or whether he would have had time to flee England to avoid imprisonment.

Whatever the possible outcome might have been, he was left to brood over his situation in the Tower. For the youngest of the three Pole brothers, who was a rather unstable character, this must have been a dreadful period. Apparently he was in danger of going insane, at least this was his wife's impression,¹⁰ and under this mental strain it cannot have been very difficult for the examiners to wring the confessions from Geoffrey Pole which finally brought almost all his friends and family to the scaffold.

It is now time to take a close look at the charges against the Poles and Courtenays, the way in which the examinations were held and in which the sentences were decided, although it will be noted that the sentences had already been fixed before Sir Geoffrey's arrest. Geoffrey Pole's first examination took place on 26 October, and by the way the questions for the examination were set it is clear that the examiners were primarily interested in the relationship and contacts between the Poles and the cardinal. The only opportunity to prove treasonable offences by the Poles at this stage would have been evidence of communication between the king's subjects in England and the king's traitor on the Continent. Hence the first twelve questions - out of a total of fifty-nine - for this examination centred around Reginald Pole.¹¹ Although this examination bears the title 'The first examinacion of Sir Geffray Polle'¹² there must have

no. 392,2iii.

¹⁰Examination of Constance Pole, 11 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 189; *L&P XIII*,2 no. 796. In this examination Constance Pole confessed that she had uttered this opinion to Lord Montagu before the lord's arrest (4 Nov.), who in his turn had then called his brother a 'madman'.

¹¹Geoffrey Pole's first examination, 26 Oct. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 12-14; *L&P XIII*,2, no. 695,1.

¹²The same; PRO: SP 1/136, f. 16; *L&P XIII*,2, no. 695,2. There are two copies of the examination in the PRO. The one in SP 1/138 is the original and generally used for quotation in this study, whereas SP 1/136 contains a fair copy of all examinations where the individual

been some minor, preliminary questionings beforehand, because the first question that was administered to him was phrased,

First wher you say thatt yow have well lykyd the doings and proceedings
of yow brother the cardinal ... wher yow sayd thatt yow and many other with
whom yow have conferryd, have wysshid for a chaunge of this world.¹³

Similarly Hugh Holland must have been questioned prior to his first official examination on 3 November, because at Geoffrey Pole's first examination the interrogators seem already well informed about certain details of Holland's confession.¹⁴ The questions thirteen to twenty-eight of Sir Geoffrey's first interrogation concern John Heliar, vicar of East Meon and former chaplain to Pole's mother, who had gone into exile in 1536. Geoffrey Pole had arranged for him to flee the country and had told Holland to take him to France and bring him safely to Paris. Holland had readily fulfilled the task and carried letters between the two men whenever he went to the Continent. Pole's examiners, however, seem to have been in the dark as to what the immediate plans for the future had been. Questions twenty-nine to forty-five centre around his intentions of going abroad himself. In a tedious and tiring series of repetitive questions they were trying to find out whether he had wanted to go at all, what he was going to do there, who he would meet, who was taking him over, and with whom he had talked about these matters. Since Sir Geoffrey's communication with Reginald Pole in the previous year and his involvement in Heliar's flight would well have sufficed for a treason charge against him these questions must have had the sole function of exhausting Geoffrey Pole and puzzling him about what was to come. The last questions, numbers forty-six to fifty-nine, were all designed make him betray the names of as many other conspirators as possible. These tactics can also be discerned from the minutes of the actual examination. If we assume that the questions were administered to Geoffrey Pole as they appear in the above described manuscript, and there is every reason to do so, the result is rather astonishing. The deposition starts with Sir Geoffrey's confession 'thatt he hath lyked well doings and proceedings of his brother the ca[rdin]all and hath

questionings are numbered.

¹³The same; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 12 and 14; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 695, 1.

¹⁴Holland's confession, 3 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 198-203; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 797, 1, i.

myslyked the orders and proceedings in this Realm'.¹⁵ The very next answer that the examiners found worth recording represents an answer to question forty-six, in which he was asked about those who have 'wysshed for a chaunge of this world, [... and if he could] remember ... with whatt other then yow have declaryd all redy, yow have conferryd therin.'¹⁶ The second sentence recorded in his answers runs accordingly, 'thatt he and many other with whom he hath conferryd haue wyssh[ed for a chan]ge of this world, nott anythinge thatt he sayth w[as to] hurte the kinges person.'¹⁷ The fact that Sir Geoffrey's examiners did not even consider it worth the effort to note his answers to the questions two to forty-five shows very well how much they already knew and - what is more - that they were not really interested in any material to incriminate Geoffrey Pole, but wanted to get as many names out of him as possible. Thus their strategy lay in their wearisome method of interrogating the prisoner. It worked extremely well. During this first examination Pole gave away a total of ten names, some of whom the interrogators must have delighted in hearing. Among those whom he disclosed as discontented with the proceedings in the realm were the Lord Delawar and his own brother, Lord Montagu, the Marquis of Exeter, Sir Edward Nevill, his uncle, George Crofts, Chancellor of Chichester Cathedral, John Stokesley, Bishop of London, William Frende and William Langley, two clergymen from Chichester, and Mrs Clement and Mrs Roper.¹⁸ The last four names appear a couple of times in the records of this case, although no action seems to have been taken against them. Stokesley does not seem to have been molested either, though Geoffrey Pole mentioned his name quite frequently in the examinations. Whether he was left alone because of his *praemunire* pardon of 3 July 1538, or whether he was enjoying the special protection of a powerful friend we do not know. Stokesley's age and sickliness will hardly have protected him from prosecution as the cases of Cardinal Fisher and the Countess of Salisbury show. The other men Sir Geoffrey named were

¹⁵Geoffrey Pole's first examination; as in footnote no. 11 above, but f. 16.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, f. 14.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, f. 16.

¹⁸The last two characters named are doubtless Thomas More's adopted daughter Margaret Clement and his daughter Margaret Roper.

eventually all committed to the Tower and - with the sole exception of Lord Delawar - executed.

Geoffrey Pole did not utter very specific accusations in his first examination; he mainly talked about the discontentment of the others. Moreover, he even tried to weaken a possible charge against his brother by protesting that since the death of his sister-in-law Lord Montagu's unease at the proceedings in England had been decreasing and that 'he [Geoffrey Pole] hath found his sayed brother more indifferent'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the extent of his despair by the end of this first official encounter with his examiners is illustrated by an appeal he addressed to Henry himself; he entreated the sovereign

thatt he may have good keeping and cherishing and therby some whatt comfort himselffe and have better stay of himselffe and he then wold truly and fully open all thatt he did know or may remember, whom so ever it touch, whether it may be mother, brother, uncle or any other whatt soever it be.²⁰

It was rather easy for the Earl of Southampton, William Fitzwilliam, who conducted Geoffrey Pole's examination, to create the impression that he already knew a great deal about the case, because he had previously examined the above mentioned gossipers in Sussex and - what is more - Geoffrey Pole did of course not know how much Holland had already disclosed. Thus all Fitzwilliam needed to do was - as the Misses Dodds put it - 'perform the common lawyer's trick of making a desperate man believe it is useless to conceal what he knows, that he may save himself by confession but can save no one else by silence.'²¹

¹⁹Cf. footnote no. 11 above, but f. 16.

²⁰*Ibid.*, f. 16^v.

²¹M. H. and R. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536-1537, and the Exeter Conspiracy, 1538*, (Cambridge, 1915), II, p. 309. I come to a similar conclusion as the Misses Dodds on p. 308-9 of their work; however, it must be pointed out that their evidence is partly incorrect and carelessly put together: there is no evidence that Gunter disclosed his private conversations with Geoffrey Pole to Fitzwilliam; I have found no reference to the rumour that king and council would have burnt the Countess of Salisbury if she had been a young woman, and if there was such a rumour it can certainly not be traced to Lawrence Taylor; and finally, it appears that the authors combined the story of the poor man who resorted for help to Southampton with that of the countess's servants who were going off to the emperor's wars. These are two separate episodes that are held together only by John Gunter's involvement in both of them, and it is worth considering whether this was the 'sore spot' that Geoffrey Pole sought to avenge in 1540.

It is hardly surprising that Geoffrey Pole attempted suicide after this unfavourable turn of events and the strain to which he had been subjected. He was ashamed of betraying his friends and family and decided to seal his lips for ever. In this context it is of no great importance whether or not Sir Geoffrey had been threatened with the rack, since it was a possibility for all prisoners under examination.²² Sir Geoffrey's attempt on his own life failed, but it was known in London immediately. Two days after the examination John Husee wrote to Lord Lisle that

Sir Geoffrey Pole was examined in the Tower of my Lord Admiral [Southampton]; which Pole, as I hear say, was so in despair that he would have murdered himself; and hath, as it was told me, hurt himself sore. This it shall please your lordship to keep secret till it be more commoned of.²³

Richard Morison, one of the chief opinion makers of Henry's government, described this attempted suicide in a propaganda pamphlet, *An Invective against Treason*, which came out shortly after the execution of the Marquis of Exeter and the Lord Montagu. The description is of little value as far as Sir Geoffrey himself is concerned, but it provides us with a vivid picture of the way of thinking that led to the destruction of two noble families. It also illustrates how much the government sought to justify its actions after the downfall of the Poles and Courtenays was accomplished. For these reasons the passage deserves to be quoted at length. Morison claimed that when Geoffrey Pole was committed to the Tower, the prosecutors did not suspect anyone else of treason at all, but then

Geffreye beinge in the towre, hauynge his breste full of witnesses agaynste hym selffe, against his brethrene, ayenst the marquis was brought into such thronge of thoughtes, into such a conflicte of pensiers, that bloud, and nature, workynge on thone side, god and conscience on thother, he was caryed into suche a perplexitie, that he coulede neyther condescende to accuse his brother, his cousyn syr Edwarde Neuyll, and him selfe, chyefe of all, endaungeringe all foure, with the gylte of treason, nor yet utterlye withstande,

²²In his government pamphlet, *An Invective against the Great and Detestable Vice Treason* (London, 1539, *RSTC*, no. 18 111) sig. E 6^v, Richard Morison vehemently denies that Pole was under such a threat, whereas the author of the *Spanish Chronicle of King Henry VIII of England*, ed. and trans. M. A. S. Hume, (London 1889) p. 132, tells us that Sir Geoffrey was threatened with the rack during the examinations.

²³Husee to Lisle, London, 28 Oct. 1538, *Lisle Letters*, V, no. 1259.

the workynge of god and his conscience, within hym; whiche ofte put his mynde, rather to suffre theym and hym selfe to, bodely to be brought to dethe, then to goo body and soule to the duill. This motion ranne ofte in his heed, but the deuyll, continuall aduersarye to goddes honoure and mans welthe, put in his fote, and soo toste this wretched soule, that of manye euylles, he chose euen the worste of all, which was a full purpose to flee hym selfe.

The author goes on to describe how convenient death must have seemed to Sir Geoffrey, because it represented the only chance for him to save his friends' and family's lives. And so the inevitable happened:

See howe opportunitie made all thinges redye for hym, his keeper was absente, a knyfe at hande uppon the table, he ryseth out of his bed, and takyth the knyfe, and with full intente to dye, gaue hym selfe a stabbe with the knyfe upon the breste. The deuyll lackyth strength, where god hath any thyng to do, and can better begynne thynges, then brynge them to effecte. The deuyll had playde his parte. Nowe se, howe God, as he ofte dothe, tourned all the dyuels hole worke into his glorie, and Geffreyes saluation. The knyfe was blunte, and so dyd perse, but the wounde, as god wolde, was not mortall.

Sir Geoffrey now began to fear God's judgement and to fear for his soul and salvation. Thus he decided that his companions should rather lose their lives than they all their salvation.

And therupon his owne mynde, no man requyrynge hym to it, no manne thynkinge of any suche thinge, he desyred to speake with the lieutenant of the tower, and after to speake with somme of the kynges priuie counsell, to whom they came, he as a man styll lokinge, whom the wounde shulde haue ended his lyfe, disclosed all the hoole treasons.

The passage ends with a comparison of God's powers with those of the devil as a way of assuring the reader that the entire treason was discovered only through divine providence.²⁴

This piece of contemporary propaganda excellently illustrates the thinking and justification of the government. It is quite believable that Morison and all the other influential persons at court were convinced that the message of this story actually was the truth, that England and her king had been saved from treason by divine intercession. Henry's conviction of his divine right to rule necessarily connected all attempts to challenge his position - however real or imaginative they were - with devilish powers. The outcome of Geoffrey Pole's abortive attempt on his own life might well have been taken for a miracle, possibly even by the

²⁴Morison, *Invective*, sig. E 2^v-6.

prisoner himself, but this does not alter the fact that injustice was done to the Poles and Courtenays, even if it was done with the best of intentions.

The last paragraph of the above quoted passage cannot pass as anything but cheap political propaganda and historical forgery. Geoffrey Pole did not ask to see the Lieutenant of the Tower nor any members of the privy council. It took the examiners at least another six lengthy interrogations and Sir Geoffrey another attempted suicide before enough material was gathered to stage a trial against the king's "conspirators". But Geoffrey Pole's resistance had almost completely collapsed. Thus he tried to appeal to Henry's mercy immediately after his second examination. The humbleness and wretchedness with which he addressed the king in his letter reflects the state of mind in which the prisoner found himself.

Syre, I besech your nobyll Grace to pardon my wrechednes that I have not don my bounden deuty unto your Grace hertofo as I ought to have don but Sire grace coming to me to consyder your nobullness allways to me and now especyally yn the extreme necessitye ... your goodnes shall not be lost on me ... Your humbyll slave, Geffrey Pole.²⁵

At the same time as Geoffrey Pole underwent his first examination one of the servants of Lord Montagu, Jerome Ragland, gave evidence to Thomas Cromwell himself. It is uncertain whether these examinations took place in the Tower or elsewhere, even whether Ragland was detained or collaborated voluntarily.²⁶ The only certain information we have about Ragland is that he was one of Montagu's most trusted servants, that he was not prosecuted in the course of this case, and that he appears neither on Henry's nor Cromwell's payrolls. In his first examination, which took place roughly at the same time as that of Geoffrey Pole,²⁷ Ragland voiced some grave accusations against his master

²⁵Geoffrey Pole to Henry VIII, London, 2 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 92; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 743.

²⁶It is unlikely that Ragland was in the Tower, because Husee reported to Lord Lisle from London on 26 Oct. 1538 that Cromwell had been ill in bed for three days (*Lisle Letters*, V, no. 1258) and two days later we learn from the same correspondent that Cromwell had still not been to court (*Lisle Letters*, V, no. 1259).

²⁷The manuscripts do not bear dates. Only the one for Ragland's second examination says 'the xxiiij [...]' (PRO: SP 1/138, f. 36) for which *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 702, 2 substitute 'the 28th [day of October?]'. This assumption seems correct, because by the same day in November the investigation was already concluded and the indictments well under way; inserting an earlier

and the lord's chaplain, John Colins. He talked at some length about Montagu's discontentment with the political and religious situation and he also seemed to imply a strong sympathy on his master's part for the insurgents of the Pilgrimage of Grace. Thus he claimed that Lord Montagu said at the time of the insurrection, 'now yf my lorde Burgavynney [Lord Burgavenny, his father-in-law] were a lyve he were abbel make a gret number of men in Kent and Sussex.' At a later stage Ragland said that Montagu had been furious when Henry tricked the northerners with the promise of a parliament in York and said, 'in tymes past Kynges woord ... be belyved but now a dayes be used for ... wherfore yf the Commons do rysse again th[ey will] trust no Fair promise nor woordes.'²⁸ The first of the two quotations has been interpreted as a hypothetical offer of help for the rebels, that is to say, if the influential Lord Burgavenny had still been alive, Montagu would have partaken in the insurrection on the rebels' side.²⁹ It is surprising that nobody has ever pointed out that Montagu's words do not tell us on whose side he would have liked Burgavenny's men to fight. It is extremely unlikely that he would have joined the ranks of the rebels, while his friend and ally, the Marquis of Exeter, stayed loyal and fought on the king's side. The vagueness of Montagu's words permits us to interpret them either way. In this context it is interesting that they were not used for the indictments against the Lord Montagu. If, however, the prosecutors had been of the same opinion as modern historians, these words would have sufficed for a waterproof treason charge. Thus, Montagu's second remark seems much graver. His rashness and disappointment with the king allowed him to say things in a temper which were openly hostile against the monarch. Apparently Lord Montagu became irate very easily and in the course of examinations in the ensuing weeks a large number of his unfortunate remarks were reported.

Another interesting fact about Jerome Ragland's examination is that again the first questions he had to answer were connected with Cardinal Pole. Although he could not tell Cromwell much about Montagu's contact with Reginald Pole, the investigators were anxious - as in Geoffrey Pole's case - to find out about the

month than October would not make sense at all.

²⁸Examination of John Ragland, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 33^v and 35; *L&P XIII*, 2, 702, 1.

²⁹Dodds, *Pilgrimage*, II, p. 292-3.

dealings of the Pole family with their most prominent member and even to prove or - possibly - try to construct proof of a conspiracy of English nobles with the Roman church. Ragland did not know more than that Montagu had possessed letters that Reginald Pole had written to Tunstall in 1536 and that he had eventually burnt these letters. He also insinuated that John Colins had been much more intimate with the lord than himself. During his second examination, however, Ragland told Cromwell, 'that he hath herd the lord M[ontagu] within thys xij monthes praise hys brother the Cardynall yn hys lernyng and yn hys lyvyng sayng ... that he thought that hys brother the cardynall was ordeanyd of gode to do good.'³⁰ He even stated that as far back as 1535 Montagu had received a letter from Reginald Pole. Weak evidence, if we consider that the future cardinal had then not yet even been in Henry's disfavour. But Ragland did utter some very severe accusations against Montagu in his second examination. According to his servant, Montagu disliked the new treason laws, thought the punishment of the northern rebels had been too severe, disliked many of the new bishops, feared a lack of honest men for the day when a change would come about, and he had an especially bad opinion of Henry VIII and the councillors. Thus Ragland reported that Montagu had said that the king was getting crueller and that the councillors who 'ruled about the kinge' were 'knaves', who were to be punished after a change.³¹ Further Ragland heard his master say that

the Kyng ys Full of fleshe and unweldly and that he can not long contynue with hys sowre legge ... that hys brother Sir Jeffry Pole shall not serve the kyng ...[and]... abowte ij yeres last past that the Kyng never made man but he distroeth hym agen ether with displeasure or with the sworde.³²

These direct attacks on the king's person certainly put Montagu in a precarious position; his friendship with the Marquis of Exeter - in which the prosecutors also saw treasonable potential - would not have been enough to keep him in prison, let alone take him to the scaffold. Illegal contacts with the cardinal

³⁰Ragland's second examination, 28 [Oct.] 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 37; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 702,2.

³¹*Ibid.*, f. 36.

³²*Ibid.*, f. 37-7^v.

seemed impossible to prove anyway. Had it not been for Montagu's rash tongue he might have survived the assaults of Henry's rage and revenge. But now he had insulted the king and in doing so added to his crimes of being a Plantagenet and the brother of a Roman cardinal; he could expect little mercy.

Ragland's last examination, which probably took place on 30 October,³³ did not incriminate Montagu much further. The only new information was that Montagu had obviously been informed about Henry's attempts to have Cardinal Pole assassinated during the latter's stay at Cambrai and Liège in the previous year. Ragland's last testimony, however, was very embarrassing for Geoffrey Pole and John Colins, because Cromwell found out that 'Colyns was sent abowte Corpus Ch[risti] day last past to Sir Geoffrey Pooles house to burn certayne let[ters] in the studie ther, and he [Ragland] thinking that the Lord Montacute was privyie of thatt sending.'³⁴

At this stage of the investigation almost all the future convicts were sufficiently incriminated, and thus the prosecutors were ready to strike. The only two persons against whom nothing had been found out yet were the Countess of Salisbury and the Marchioness of Exeter. The countess, with whom the investigators dealt in a rather different manner, joined the others relatively late in the Tower, and we do not know exactly when the marchioness was arrested. Her first examination took place on 6 November and was presumably held in the Tower. Geoffrey Pole said in his third examination on 3 November that she had kept Montagu informed about what she knew about the proceedings at court and in the council. For example, when asked who had told Montagu about the cardinal's escape from Henry's assassins, Sir Geoffrey pointed in her direction.³⁵ This bit of information might have sufficed for the prosecutors to arrest Gertrude Courtenay together with her husband, Lord Montagu, and Sir Edward Nevill on 4 November. One day later the French ambassador informed Montmorency of the arrest of the three men, but was silent about the

³³This date is an assumption arrived at by applying the usual two day rhythm which the examiners seemed to follow with the other interrogations.

³⁴Ragland's third examination, [30 Oct. 1538]; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 40; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 702,3.

³⁵Geoffrey Pole's third examination, 3 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 216; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804,3.

marchioness; even so it would be reasonable to assume that she was imprisoned at the same time as her husband.³⁶ There is also some uncertainty when John Colins and George Crofts were committed to the Tower; their examinations started around 12 November, so that it is conceivable that the order for their arrests went out at the beginning of November, but that it took a little while to get them prisoners to London.

IV. 2. The Trials, Convictions, and Executions

What followed the arrests was a slow and tedious series of examinations, questionings, re-examinations, comparing of notes, confessions and so forth. It would be very confusing and time consuming to follow these three weeks through every single detail, so we will look exclusively at the evidence which was subsequently used for the indictments and from there examine how the various pieces of evidence had come into the hands of the prosecution. It is surprising how little of the material which was actually gathered in the examinations, was finally used in the trials. All in all, well over twenty witnesses and suspects were questioned, but the evidence used in the end was taken from the answers of four or five of them only. It is true that some of the prisoners, such as Montagu and Nevill, did not give away anything grave enough for a treason charge, but important witnesses, such as Jerome Ragland, were not even cited for the juries. Another remarkable fact is that we do not possess any records of examinations of the Marquis of Exeter. Is it possible that he was never formally interrogated before being sent to the scaffold? This is very likely, because the prosecutors kept excellent track of their proceedings and, what is more, they compiled a file of all major depositions, which consisted of extracts and copies of all interesting evidence. This file must have either served to inform Henry of what had been discovered, or was sent to the sheriffs of those counties where the indictments were held.³⁷ The compilation or completion of this file cannot have taken place before 20 November, on which day the last

³⁶Castillon to Montmorency, London, 5 Nov. 1538, BL: Add MS 33 514, f. 5^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 753.

³⁷This file is PRO: SP 1/139, f. 37-73; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 830.

datable document in it was originally written, in other words at a time when the examiners had very much completed their work and the legal procedures were getting under way. The earliest dated documents of the trials are the special commissions for receiving indictments for London, Middlesex, Sussex, and Buckinghamshire, which are all dated 23 November.³⁸ So it can be assumed that the case was over for the examiners with the compilation of the file. But even in this impressive example of sixteenth-century bureaucracy no trace of an examination of the marquis can be found. There are various possibilities of what might have happened to the depositions of Henry Courtenay. If he was never questioned and there were no depositions, his conviction must be called a farcical judicial murder; it is, however, also possible that he refused to answer any questions; the minutes might have got lost; or he might have accused some influential people at court rather embarrassingly so that his depositions were suppressed. The first solution seems to be the most likely of all, because in any of the other cases the interrogation of the marquis should at least have been mentioned or alluded to. It is true that English law did not provide defendants with a right to be examined and thus, in a formal sense, the proceedings against the marquis were conducted strictly legally. However, if we are to compare the case of Montagu and Exeter with those of other nobles who met the same fate, the fact that Exeter was sent to the scaffold without having been given the chance to defend himself puts the government in an unfavourable light. In the Duke of Buckingham's case in 1521 the jurors allowed him to speak at some length during the trial and even confronted the witnesses with the defendant. In this case the law was clearly interpreted favourably for the duke; apparently the general feeling among the jurors in 1521 was that someone accused of high treason should be given an opportunity to plead his case.³⁹ Is it correct to claim that the verdict was found in a legally sound way, even if Exeter could not speak in his defence?

As nobles Exeter and Montagu had the privilege of being tried in the Court of High Steward by their peers. In this case the newly created Lord Audley was to

³⁸PRO: KB 8/11/1, m. 15,18,26, and 32; *L&P XIII*,2, nos. 986,7,15,21,24.

³⁹B. J. Harris, *Edward Stafford, Third Duke of Buckingham, 1478 - 1521* (Stanford, 1986) p. 192-202.

preside. According to custom the accused were indicted in their counties before the trial. At the subsequent trial in Westminster Hall the indictments were read aloud before the lords triers, the defendants pleaded not guilty and put themselves to the judgement of their peers. After a period in which the peers considered the case they re-assembled in the hall and - starting with the most junior present - they gave their verdicts individually.⁴⁰

The evidence against Henry Courtenay which was used at the indictments in London and Surrey and which cost him his life, came exclusively from Sir Geoffrey Pole.⁴¹ He told the examiners that the marquis had approved of Cardinal Pole, but was utterly opposed to what was going on in England.⁴² Further, the young man disclosed that his friend had said,

kneives rule abowt the king, and holding up and [shaking ?] his fist, sayd,
I trust to give them a buffet one day ...[and]... I trust to have a feast day
with those kanves wych rull abowt the kyng and I trust to se a dyv[erse]
world one daye.⁴³

The only other accusation against Exeter was that he knew that Montagu was a traitor and had stayed in friendly contact with him. During the investigation of the case the prosecutors seem to have started worrying about the small quantity of material with which they could accuse the aristocrat, so they started digging up old depositions against him that date as far back as 1531, when he had been in trouble because of careless talk among his men, who had been dreaming of seeing their master on the throne.⁴⁴ They were, however, never used against the marquis in the trial, because the new treason laws of 1534⁴⁵ enabled his

⁴⁰H. Miller, *Henry VIII and the English Nobility* (Oxford, 1986) p. 40.

⁴¹Indictments against Exeter, Surrey, 29 Nov. 1538, London, 30 Nov. 1538; PRO: KB 8/11/2, m. 18 and 25; *L&P XIII*, 2, nos. 979, 15, 17.

⁴²Geoffrey Pole's confession, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/140, f. 9; *L&P XIII*, 2 no. 962, i.

⁴³Geoffrey Pole's fifth examination, 7 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 217; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804, 5; and his confession, as in footnote no. 42 above, but, f. 11^v.

⁴⁴PRO: SP 1/140, f. 3-3^v, a document headed 'an abbre[viation] of the ol[d accusat]ion agenst the Lord Marques of Exeter'. This episode is not directly relevant for this study. An account of it can comfortably be consulted in F. Rose-Troup, *The Western Rebellion of 1549* (London, 1913) p. 20-46.

⁴⁵*Statutes at Large of England and Great Britain from Magna Charta to the Union*, 41 Geo. III, ed. T. E. Tomlins, J. Raithby (London, 1786) II, p. 204-5 (26 Hen VIII, cap. 13).

peers to declare Henry Courtenay guilty of high treason on 3 December 1538 on even such flimsy evidence.⁴⁶ Exeter's silence at this stage of the trial is noteworthy, because usually a convict would be allowed a plea directly after being confronted with the verdict. This plea, the *allocutus*, was the convict's chance to try to convince the jury of any reasons that would speak against sentencing him.⁴⁷ Evidently no such plea was heard at the marquis's trial. It looks as if the authorities were indeed desperate to prevent Henry Courtenay from speaking at all. One wonders what he might have said and who he might have attacked. The Marquis of Exeter had committed no treasonable offences, his crime was manifestly being the nearest person to the crown except for Henry's own children and saying some rather inoffensive things which were reported by a man whose mental stability was evidently not too strong.

Quite rightly had Exeter's friend, Lord Montagu, expressed his bewilderment at the fact that words were treason all of a sudden.⁴⁸ the treason charge against him was based on words only, most of which were again taken from his younger brother's confessions.⁴⁹ It will be noted that the Duke of Buckingham's conviction in 1521 was also based on words only, because a felony charge would have had to be preceded by a criminal act. The difference between the cases is, however, that Buckingham had allegedly gone as far as imagining to kill Henry, whereas the defendants in this case only went as far as imagining what might happen after the king's death.⁵⁰ There is however a big formal difference between the indictments that were taken against Montagu in London, Sussex, and Buckinghamshire and those against the marquis. Montagu's indictments start off with violent attacks on Reginald Pole and the Englishmen of his train and seem at first to have very little to do with Montagu at all.⁵¹ Only after

⁴⁶PRO: KB 8/11/2, m. 10; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 979, 19.

⁴⁷J. Baker, 'Criminal Courts and Procedure at Common Law, 1550 - 1800', in J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550 - 1800* (London, 1977) p. 41.

⁴⁸Examination of John Colins, 13 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/139, f. 32; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 829, 2.

⁴⁹H. Miller, *Henry VIII and the Nobility*, p. 65, is not entirely correct in claiming that all evidence against Montagu had come from Sir Geoffrey.

⁵⁰B. J. Harris, *Edward Stafford*, p. 183, and J. Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason* (London, 1979) p. 32.

describing the offences of these men at some length and claiming that they adhered to the pope and denied the royal supremacy, Montagu was accused of having said that he, like the marquis, approved of what Cardinal Pole was doing.⁵² The strong emphasis on Cardinal Pole's role as a traitor in the trials of Exeter and Montagu, although no direct contact between either convict and Reginald Pole could be proven, shows that one of the main reasons for the suffering of the Poles and the Courtenays was the actions of the cardinal. The different way, however, in which the indictments were phrased indicates that Montagu and Exeter did not suffer for exactly the same reasons. Exeter's proximity to the throne had apparently sufficed to make him appear like a threat to the Tudor dynasty. In Montagu's indictment the links between the Poles and the traitors on the Continent appear in a prominent place. Hence they were not regarded as ordinary traitors. To a large extent their suffering was meant as a punishment or act of revenge against the one man who infuriated Henry not only as a traitor, but also because he managed to keep out of the king's reach, Reginald Pole. The naming of the cardinal's fellow-exiles would not make much sense otherwise, for their names, with the exception of John Heliar, were not mentioned in any other proceeding of these trials. Hence the impact of their names here. The indictments were not only designed to hit home with Pole, but also to present him as a traitor who was dangerously establishing a community of dissenters outside England. Thus, another reason why the Poles had to suffer was to discourage discontented Englishmen from fleeing the realm and joining the cardinal, because after these trials it was unquestionably the case that the families of those who preferred exile to conformity were in acute danger.

Lord Montagu was also indicted for wishing to be in exile himself and moaning about a lack of honest men among the English.⁵³ Montagu's chaplain,

⁵¹Indictments against Montagu, Sussex, Buckinghamshire, London, 30 Nov. 1538; PRO: KB 8/11/2, m. 21-24 and 26-7; *L&P XIII.2*, no. 979,7,9,11.

⁵²Examination of John Colins, 14 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/139, f. 14; *L&P XIII.2*, no. 827,1; Colins actually claimed that the lord praised the scholarly qualities of his brother, however this is the closest surviving passage to bear evidence for the indictment.

⁵³Geoffrey Pole's third examination, 3 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 216; *L&P XIII.2*, no. 804,3; and his fourth examination, 5 Nov. 1538; *ibid.*, f. 216^v; *ibid.*, no. 804,4.

John Colins, confessed that his master had expressed contempt about the 'knaves' who were very influential with the king and that he had been optimistic to see things change and get his revenge on these 'knaves'.⁵⁴ Through the evidence of the same man Montagu was further indicted for saying that 'the Cardynall Wolseye was nott so evyll as men dyd take hym for thynges are done nowe farre worsse then that he dyd and that he had byn an honest man yf he had had a honest master.'⁵⁵ According to the confessions of Sir Geoffrey Pole some additional comments by Lord Montagu were taken as treasonable offences. Thus Montagu was reported to have preferred living in the western part of England, because of the strength of the Marquis of Exeter there, and also to have lamented Burgavenny's death for the loss of his father-in-law's military strength. Moreover, Montagu was also said to have felt that Lord Darcy should have shown more rigour during the Pilgrimage of Grace and should not have wasted time fighting the council, but should have gone straight for 'the head'.⁵⁶ Whether Montagu meant Henry or Cromwell with this remark is not quite clear, but it does not make much difference, because in either case remarks like this certainly qualified as treasonable talk. Montagu's wish that the king carry out his threat to leave the realm one day, his openly saying that he had never liked Henry since both of them had been children - a feeling which he claimed to be mutual - together with his opinion that the king would eventually go mad, rounded off the charges against him.⁵⁷ Finally Sir Geoffrey also reported that his brother had told him that he had

dreamyd now thatt the king is dedd ... ij dayes following the sayd Lord Montacute shewyd this examinatt [Geoffrey Pole] walking in his greatt chamber att Brockmar the king is nott dedd butt he wyll one day die sudenly hys legg wyll kyll hym and then we shall have jolly stirryng.⁵⁸

After all these charges had been read out aloud before Montagu's peers in the

⁵⁴Colins's third examination, 14 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/139, f. 14; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 827,1.

⁵⁵Colins's confession, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/139, f. 71; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 830,5ii.

⁵⁶Geoffrey Pole's fifth examination, 7 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 217^v- 218; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804,5.

⁵⁷Geoffrey Pole's seventh examination, 11 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 219^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804,7.

⁵⁸Geoffrey Pole's fifth examination, 7 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 218; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804,5.

Westminster Hall on 2 December 1538 there could be little doubt about the verdict. Montagu was led to the bar to face the charges and protested that 'in nullo est modo culpabilis quomodo de bono et malo iudicio de suos pares donat se.'⁵⁹ His peers, however, could not or would not but find him guilty, with the result that Henry Pole, Lord Montagu, was sentenced to share the fate of the marquis.⁶⁰

It is not surprising that the indictments against Montagu are by far the longest of all that were written during the trials. Not only was he burdened with and indirectly punished for Reginald Pole's conduct on the Continent, but the biggest share of evidence given in the course of the examinations turned out to be directed against him. It is true that some of the above quoted sentences by Montagu might have sufficed for a treason charge even before the new laws of 1534, nevertheless one has to ask whether the conviction can be explained as a wise step by government ridding itself of a dangerous traitor, or as a move premeditated and ordered by king and government and ought, therefore, to be called judicial murder. The crucial question in this context is whether Lord Montagu actually intended any mischief with his remarks. Did he say all these things to entice Geoffrey Pole and John Colins to any treasonable offences? If that was so, why did he not approach any more powerful prospective allies? True, he was in contact with the marquis and Lord Delawar, whose case will be examined further below, but there is no evidence that he tried to establish close ties with other conservative potentates.⁶¹ His demeanour during the Pilgrimage

⁵⁹Montagu's trial, 2 Dec. 1538; PRO: KB 8/11/2, m. 7, *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 979, 19. That he 'is not guilty in any way, but subjects himself for good or ill to the judgement of his peers.'

⁶⁰J. Baker, 'Criminal Courts', p. 23-4, points out that most juries worked under considerable pressure, which tended to influence verdicts. Although Baker is mainly concerned with criminal court proceedings his reminder is worth keeping in mind, as it finds a substantiation in Bellamy's remark that the roles of the juries and their influence on the outcome of the trials 'was considerably diminished' by the prosecution's ability to press suspect traitors into confessing or incriminating others before the actual trials; *Tudor Law of Treason*, p. 131. This case against two noble families presents us with the further problem that the lords triers were usually selected in such a careful way that an acquittal was next to impossible, as was pointed out by Miller, *Henry VIII and the Nobility*, p. 75.

⁶¹G. R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation. England 1509-1558* (London, 1977) p. 280, maintains that in conjunction with 'the Pole-Courtenay group ...[there is]... plenty of evidence that treason was contemplated even if not plotted'. The question is, however, not that the

of Grace, like that of the other catholic-minded nobles, does not brand him as a potential traitor. Although he showed sympathy when the leaders of the insurrection were cheated and cruelly punished by the king, he did not in any way support the rebels, either in deed nor word. So what did his fatal remarks really represent? Can we take it for granted that they were genuine and not invented by terrified Sir Geoffrey and Colins? Some of them might be mere products of the prisoners' imagination, who were becoming more and more desperate to save their own necks and - this holds true at least for Geoffrey Pole - whose mental state became increasingly unbalanced as the examinations went on.⁶² But since we have no means of finding out which of the remarks were genuine and which false, it is just as well if we assume that they were all authentic. It has been pointed out that Montagu was rash tempered; obviously his talent for making ill-considered remarks had been noted before his arrest. Lord Stafford, for example, had told Sir Geoffrey that he

was a fraide to converse with the lorde Montacute. I [Stafford] lyke hym not he dare speke so largely. And the said lord stafford at the same tyme shewyd this examynat [Geoffrey Pole] ye follow so moche the lorde Montacute that [he will be] your undoing one daye.⁶³

There can be no doubt that the Poles - and the Courtenays - were opposed to Henry's religious policies and felt alienated from the court, but that does not turn them into traitors. The true reason why Henry Pole had to die did not rest in the treasonable character of some words spoken by a temperamental lord, who - after all - was so little inclined to treason that he preserved his loyalty to the king during the Pilgrimage of Grace despite all his disagreement; the true reason must be seen in Henry's decision to have the Poles exterminated.⁶⁴ Castillon's above

convicts of these trials were potentially upsetting the stability of Henry VIII's reign, but whether the law was abused in these cases to function as a tool for the king's personal revenge. Elton lists among the evidence that there were 'highly suspicious dealings with the cardinal during his stay in Liège' (*ibid.*). I have been unable to find any evidence to uphold this statement.

⁶²If one reads through the minutes of Sir Geoffrey's seven examinations it is striking how rapidly the coherence and clarity of his answers decreased.

⁶³Geoffrey Pole's seventh examination, 11 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 220; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804,7.

⁶⁴Cf. footnote no. 5 above; Castillon's letter to Montmorency.

quoted letter has been interpreted as proof for the argument that Henry might not have been pulling the strings behind the scenes, because 'the ambassador did not connect Henry's determination to Pole's legation or indeed directly to Pole for any reason.'⁶⁵ As has been pointed out above, Henry must have talked to the ambassador in early 1537, at a time when Reginald Pole's *De Unitate*⁶⁶ and his elevation to the cardinalate had just annoyed Henry sufficiently and his legation even threatened the security of his position. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Henry did not even mention a connection between his determination to exterminate the Poles and the cardinal, because nothing could have been more obvious at that time. Henry's deadly hatred for the Poles, which originated in 1536-7, cannot but be seen in a direct relation to the cardinal. Castillon wrote in his letter that the Poles were up for extermination, because they still represented the White Rose. It is possible that the ambassador added this bit of information under the influence of the combined attack on the Poles and Courtenays in autumn 1538 and that Henry did not necessarily say it in the spring of the previous year, for it can be safely assumed that after the simultaneous condemnation of Exeter and Montagu talk about the old White Rose challenge to the throne was widespread in London.⁶⁷ Moreover, Sir Geoffrey Pole had been warned by Thomas Starkey that 'the Lord privy seall yf the kyng war not of a good nature for one poles [sake] would destroy all poles.'⁶⁸ With the knowledge of what was to happen afterwards the obvious conclusion is not that Henry mercifully protected the Poles against Cromwell, but that at the time of Sir Geoffrey's interview with Starkey, Henry had not yet given the go-ahead for action against the Poles. Thus, Montagu was not killed by his quick tongue, but simply because someone had to suffer for the annoyance caused to the king

⁶⁵T. F. Mayer, 'A Diet for Henry VIII: The Failure of Reginald Pole's 1537 Legation', *Journal of British Studies*, XXVI (1987), p. 328.

⁶⁶In this context it is of no great importance whether Henry saw the *De Unitate* or not, as Mayer suggests, *ibid.* p. 305. He knew of it and of its contents and that was quite enough.

⁶⁷Mayer, *ibid.* p. 328, speaks of a 'common Continental filter of the "White Rose" ', through which Castillon was seeing events. This speculation, however, is vague and rather anachronistic for a date as late as 1538.

⁶⁸Geoffrey Pole's second examination, 2 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 215^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804,2. Cromwell's role in this case will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

by the rebellious cardinal. His temperament and his imprudent remarks just provided a welcome aid to assembling sufficient evidence against him.

After the conviction of Exeter and Montagu the other offenders were tried. Sir Edward Nevill, Sir Geoffrey Pole, George Crofts, John Colins, and Hugh Holland appeared before their jurors on 4 December. All of them except for Nevill were broken men, who had already accepted their fates by the time they appeared at the bar. They heard their indictments, which consisted of similar charges to those against Exeter and Montagu, augmented by Holland's mission to Cardinal Pole in 1537, Crofts's denial of the royal supremacy, and Collins's offence in saying that Henry would 'hang in hell one day' for the dissolution of the monasteries.⁶⁹ Except for Nevill they all pleaded guilty and were duly sentenced to death.⁷⁰

Edward Nevill's case deserves closer scrutiny. He was indicted in Sussex⁷¹ for saying that that 'his hignes was a beast and worse then a beast'⁷² and that he was confident to see things change for the better.⁷³ Further the Marchioness of Exeter confessed that Nevill had been singing in her garden that 'knaves' would be put down and lords would reign again in their stead.⁷⁴ In his Middlesex indictment he was charged with the same things, but furthermore he was alleged to have said to Geoffrey Pole, 'Be mery man thys worlde wyll chaunge one day

⁶⁹PRO: KB 8/11/1, m. 16, 20-22 and 27-8; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 986, 10-1, 13, 18-9, 22 for the indictments. PRO: SP 1/138, f. 198-203^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 797, 1 for Holland's first examination, 3 Nov. 1538. PRO: SP 1/138, f. 214-215^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804, 2 for Geoffrey Pole's second examination, 2 Nov. 1538. PRO: SP 1/139, f. 7-7^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 822, 1 for Crofts's second examination, 13 Nov. 1538. PRO: SP 1/139, f. 14-14^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 827, 1 for Colins's third examination, 14 Nov. 1538 (quotation taken from f. 14). PRO: SP 1/139, f. 27-28^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 829, 1ii for appendix to Crofts third examination, 13 Nov. 1538. PRO: SP 1/139, f. 70^v-71; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 830, 5ii for Collins's confession, *s.d.*

⁷⁰PRO: KB 8/11/1, m. 11^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 986, 29.

⁷¹Indictment against Neville, Sussex, *s.d.*; PRO: KB 8/11/1, m. 19; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 986, 12.

⁷²Geoffrey Pole's seventh examination, 11 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 219-219^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 804, 7.

⁷³Geoffrey Pole's confession, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/139, f. 71^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 830, 5iii.

⁷⁴Gertrude Courtenay's third examination, 12 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 158^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 765.

and then we wyll be mery. We shall haue a daye apou thees knaves thatt rule about the king.'⁷⁵ This statement cannot be found in any of the confessions or examinations of Geoffrey Pole. There is no reason to believe that the papers concerning Sir Geoffrey are incomplete, so the only possibility for verifying this quotation would be the very mutilated document generally known as 'Geoffrey Pole's Statement',⁷⁶ hence it could be argued that the lost quotation was originally in this document. This solution, however, is very unlikely for two reasons: firstly all the surviving parts of the 'Statement' deal with the Lord Montagu, so it would at least be an odd coincidence if of all parts only those on Pole's brother should have survived, unless it dealt with him exclusively. Secondly there is another document, known as 'Geoffrey Pole's Confession',⁷⁷ which effectively presents us with a compilation of all the evidence Sir Geoffrey gave about Nevill. In this document - although it is almost un mutilated - the above quoted sentence cannot be found. At first sight it seems to be a rather minor detail whether the evidence can be verified or not, because Sir Edward could have been convicted only on the grounds of calling the king a 'beast'. It is however of utmost importance whether we are presented with forged evidence. The case of Sir Edward Nevill was quite complicated for the prosecution to begin with, because it seemed hardly possible to find anything treasonable against him. No jury - however intimidated they might be - would have convicted him for singing in the marchioness's gardens. More importantly, no evidence against him was not given before 12 November. This makes him the last of all convicts to be incriminated. If the above quoted piece of evidence can be accepted as a forgery it is another proof for the premeditated character of the trials. The suspicion is very strong that the prosecution - who had apparently been ordered to find incriminating material against all suspects - became very nervous and started producing evidence against Sir Edward, who was also related to the Poles. At the trial Nevill pleaded not guilty, but he was convicted alongside the others.⁷⁸ He seems to have been the only one who felt treated unjustly and

⁷⁵Indictment against Neville, Middlesex, *s.d.*; PRO: KB 8/11/1, m. 13; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 986,25.

⁷⁶PRO: SP 1/138, f. 206-7; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 800.

⁷⁷PRO: SP 1/139, f. 71^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 830.5iii.

wrote the following protestation shortly after his conviction.

I holy put me to the marsse of Gode and to my kyng and soveryn lord,
that I never dede nor seyde the thyng that scholde be contrary to my
ellegens nor harde no odder as Gode schalle joge me at my dethe, but that
I have reherssyd, wyche cleres me none conssyens for yffe I knu onny
more by my sellffe or ony oddar, I wolde as well expreste yt to axsse as
to damn my solle. By me, E[dward] Sir Nevyll.⁷⁹

It does not make sense that the prosecutors should have gone through all the trouble to get Sir Edward Nevill convicted. As far as we can see, he was a minor and rather inoffensive character whose only crime for those who wanted him destroyed lay in his close connection with Montagu and Exeter. The letter above shows that Nevill himself did not quite understand why he should be a traitor, being alone among the convicts to appeal to Henry after the trial, although unsuccessfully. The suspicion that the evidence given against him by Sir Geoffrey was false is quite strong. It is preposterous that Nevill should have been foolish enough to call Henry a 'beast' in anyone's presence. It is, however, conceivable that Geoffrey Pole was so hard pressed in his last examinations that he started telling the interrogators whatever they wanted to hear, either to make the mental torture stop or because he was really going out of his mind.

On 9 December Montagu, Exeter, and Nevill were beheaded on Tower Hill and Crofts, Colins, and Holland were hanged at Tyburn.⁸⁰ Geoffrey Pole was pardoned on 2 January 1539.⁸¹ It has been argued that Geoffrey Pole had been promised a pardon before the trial, that is to say he bargained his friends' and family's lives for his own;⁸² on the contrary, he was sitting in the Tower awaiting his execution just like the others. The reason why he was not executed was that the examiners were hoping to get some information out of him in connection with the impending Carew case.⁸³ It is also clear that Sir Geoffrey

⁷⁸Cf. footnote no. 70 above.

⁷⁹PRO: E 36/120, f. 138; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 987.

⁸⁰C. W. H. Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reign of the Tudors, 1485-1559*, ed. W. D. Hamilton (Camden, new series, XI, 1875) p. 92.

⁸¹PRO: C 66/683, m. 8; *L&P XIV*, 1, no. 191, 3.

⁸²This theory is amongst others maintained by W. D. Hamilton (ed.) in Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, p. 92 footnote f.

was not released immediately after his pardon, because Chapuys, the Imperial ambassador, informed Charles V that although Geoffrey Pole had been granted his life, he would - according to Chapuys's information - have to stay in prison for the rest of his life.⁸⁴ For once the imperial diplomat was wrong. We do not know when exactly Geoffrey Pole was discharged, but the earliest document from him in liberty, a humble letter addressed to Cromwell, is dated 18 June 1539.⁸⁵ It may be assumed that he was released soon after the Carew case was over or after the execution of Sir Nicholas Carew on 3 March 1539.

The connection of Sir Geoffrey with the Carew case takes us to the question whether or not the whole action against all those involved in the above discussed trials can be called lawful. When the Carew case was well under way and it became apparent that it was mainly staged to get more and better evidence against the Poles and Courtenays Chapuys remarked cynically,

La principale chose dont il [Carew] avoit este requis depuis son emprisonnement estoit de temoigner de quelque chose contre le susdit marquis; car puisque la tesmoinaige de jeusne Polo nest souffisant, ceulx cy ... vueillent former le proces apres l'execution.⁸⁶

The matter-of-fact way in which Chapuys stated that Geoffrey Pole's evidence was insufficient is surprising. Nobody seemed to have any doubts about that. It is true, the trials themselves had undoubtedly been conducted in a perfectly legal way. The treason laws of both 1352 and 1534 had been applied and - except for the fact that the marquis had not been given a chance to defend himself - the procedures had been carried out according to statute.⁸⁷ And yet apparently no

⁸³Sir Nicholas Carew was tried in January/February 1539, mainly for close ties with Exeter. Geoffrey Pole's importance as a witness is reported by Castillon to Montmorency, London, 31 Dec. 1538; BL: Add MS 33 514, f. 9^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 1163, at a date when Carew was not even taken prisoner yet, but as we learn from a letter by Chapuys to Charles V, London, 10 Jan. 1539, the action against him was premeditated, so Pole's further detention fits into the picture (Karl Lanz (ed.), *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V*, (Leipzig, 1845) II, no. 465).

⁸⁴Chapuys to Charles V, as in footnote no. 83 above.

⁸⁵PRO: SP 1/152, f. 80; *L&P XIV*, 1, no. 1127.

⁸⁶Chapuys to Charles V, as in footnote no. 83. 'The principal thing that had been required of him [Carew] since his imprisonment was to testify something against the Marquis; for since the testimony of young Pole [Sir Geoffrey] is not sufficient, these men ... want to stage the trial after the execution.'

⁸⁷Bellamy, *Tudor Law of Treason*, p. 40 and footnote no. 96.

one at the English court doubted that the men had been executed under insufficient evidence. It can be argued that Thomas More and Cardinal Fisher had been convicted on unsatisfactory legal grounds, though doubts about the justification of their deaths had not been widespread in England. The mere fact that Carew was examined, tried, and executed in early 1539, and that Morison wrote his *Invective* at the same time demonstrates the vast extent of the silent opposition to the recent executions in England, and the government's quest for justification of its actions at home and abroad. Thus, it can be maintained that in the cases of the houses Pole and Courtenay the government had used English law as an instrument with which to commit judicial murder.

IV. 3. The Women and Children in the Tower

It is now time to turn away from those who had their trials staged against them and direct our attentions towards those who were held in the Tower, but without ever being confronted with any charges. The first in this group is Thomas West, Lord Delawar, a religious conservative, who was friendly with both Montagu and Exeter. As we have already seen, Geoffrey Pole had named him among the discontented in his first examination.⁸⁸ From then on his name was mentioned in various examinations, mainly by George Crofts, and Henry ordered a special investigation. On 1 December the lords of the council reported their results to the king. They could 'fynde no sufficient grounde to committe hym to prison into your graces towre.' They had, however, put him under house arrest till they would receive further orders. Finally the lords suggested dropping the investigation, because of 'your graces honour that wold not have hym upon a weak grounde (wherof he might clere hym self afterwarde).'⁸⁹ Henry's integrity could have been hardly more stained by this case than it already was and hence it is not surprising that he did not follow the lords' advice. One day after the council had written to Henry, Delawar was committed to the Tower.⁹⁰ We possess a letter in which a certain William Ernele tells a friend of his about

⁸⁸Cf. p. 88 above.

⁸⁹The lords of the council to Henry VIII, London, 1 Dec. 1538; BL: Tit. B i, f. 70; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 968.

⁹⁰Thomas Warley to Lord Lisle, London, 3 Dec. 1538: *Lisle Letters*, V, no. 1299.

Delawar's arrest. This letter proves that it was no coincidence that Delawar was taken to the Tower on the very day of Montagu's trial, because 'lord delawar was commandyd to the tower For no thyng helssse but that he wold not be the Fore man off the quest to my lord montegew.⁹¹ We can trust Ernele enough to believe that his timing is correct, however it is not likely that Delawar would have been chosen to preside over Exeter's and Montagu's trials.⁹² Apparently Delawar could clear himself of all suspicions, as the lords had assumed, or he was spared, because the government wanted to avoid unrest among the nobility. In any case on 21 December John Husee informed Lord Lisle that Delawar had been discharged.⁹³ So much for the example of another peer whose friendship with the Poles had almost cost him his life.

The other prisoners who were held in the Tower on small or no legal grounds were two women and two children. Courtenay's wife, Gertrude Marchioness of Exeter, and the Countess of Salisbury, Margaret Pole, mother of the Pole brothers, who was taken into custody in the middle of November, but not committed to the Tower right away. The children were Montagu's son, Henry Pole, and Edward Courtenay, son of the marquis, who was to spend the next fifteen years of his life in the Tower, until he was freed on Mary Tudor's accession to the throne. Little is known about the two children. It cannot be determined when they were taken to the Tower. The first time they were mentioned as prisoners of the Tower was in a set of Cromwell's remembrances, which bear no date, the contents of which, however, suggest that they were written in October 1539.⁹⁴ It may be assumed that they were taken to the Tower together with their parents in November 1538.

The marchioness was subjected to three examinations shortly after her imprisonment and in the course of the investigation she was incriminated as severely as her husband.⁹⁵ However she was not included in the trials of early

⁹¹Ernele to Hyberdyn, Cuckham, 15 Dec. 1538; PRO: SP 1/140, f. 107; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 1062.

⁹²The letter is also full of rumours that cannot possibly be true, for example that Cardinal Pole had been at Lord Delawar's and Crofts's houses in 1537.

⁹³Husee to Lisle, London, 21 Dec. 1538; *Lisle Letters*, V, no. 1316.

⁹⁴PRO: SP 1/153, f. 219; *L&P XIV*, 2, no. 287.

⁹⁵Examinations of Gertrude Courtenay, 6, 9, 12 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 158;

December. The examiners showed great interest in the Countess of Salisbury right from the beginning. Geoffrey Pole was asked several questions concerning his mother's religious views and her contact with Cardinal Pole. But no matter how hard they pressed they could not move him to incriminate his mother, or to say anything compromising about her at all. The aged countess - she was sixty-five years old in 1538 - must have sensed that everyone bearing the name Pole was in danger after the arrest of her youngest son, because in September 1538 she made a new will, thus invalidating her previous one of 1528.⁹⁶ It almost looks as if she wanted to put her house in order and was preparing to leave this world. In the beginning of November a certain Gervase Tyndale, who was in the countess's service in some medical function, gave evidence about the lady's religious conservatism and her determination to keep the new learning out of her sphere of influence. Apparently she she was kept informed about her servants' thoughts by priests, who would bring to her attention whatever they learnt in the confessional.⁹⁷ Of course that would not have sufficed to charge her with anything, so Cromwell dispatched the Earl of Southampton, and Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely, to her estate in Warblington, Hampshire, in order to have her examined. In these examinations on 12 and 13 November the countess was faced with whatever evidence had so far been found during the interrogations in the Tower. Fitzwilliam, who had conducted most of Geoffrey Pole's examinations, seemed to be the meet man for this task, but very soon he reported frustratedly:

Surely if it like your Lordship, we suppose, that there hath not been seen or he[ard of a] woman so earnest in her co[...] manlike in her continuaunce, an[d ...] and so precise, aswell in gest[ure as in] wordes that wonder is to b[e ...] For in her aunswers and declara[tion] she behavith her self so, and s[o ...] all thing sincere, pure and up[right] on her part that we cannot have conceyved and needs must deem and think the one of ij thinges in her, that [either] her sonnes have not made her privy ne participant of the bottom and pitt of their stomakes, orelles is she the [most] errant Traytress that ever [lived].⁹⁸

L&P XIII,2 no. 765.

⁹⁶The wills themselves are lost. The information is derived from a letter by Fitzwilliam to Cromwell, Cowdrey, 16 Dec. 1538; PRO: SP 1/140, f. 110-1; *L&P XIII,2*, no. 1070.

⁹⁷Tyndale's statement, *s.d.*; BL: Cotton Appendix L, f. 82-85; *L&P XIII,2*, no. 817.

What the earl and the bishop were trying to do was to prove Margaret Pole's privity to her sons' crimes. However she vigorously denied all knowledge, showed her amazement at what they told her about her sons, and even remarked that she thought that Montagu had been maligned with all these accusations.⁹⁹ She also protested that she had never had any contact with either Cardinal Pole or Throckmorton of which the king had not known, and she asserted that the messages conveyed by Hugh Holland in 1537 had never reached her.¹⁰⁰ The only thing that she did admit to was that she knew that Henry was plotting against Reginald Pole's life - when asked how she knew that the cardinal had escaped she said, 'that both her sonnes [told her] wherefore for motherly pietie she culd not but reioyse and in so doing she ... offended not the king.'¹⁰¹ This confession did certainly not incriminate the countess - she could even claim that she had publicly pronounced Reginald a traitor¹⁰² - and so Southampton's frustration becomes understandable. In a manipulated case like this, however, it had been decided well in advance that something against the Countess of Salisbury had to be found. Thus, Southampton transferred the countess to his own estates in Cowdrey, Sussex, and ordered her house to be searched for evidence from bottom to top. All that was found among the old woman's belongings were a couple of outdated papal bulls, some correspondence with Reginald Pole, of which the king had already known and approved, and a copy of a letter by the countess to Lord Montagu. The contents of it were not compromising and the countess assured the examiners that she had written it between Sir Geoffrey's and Montagu's imprisonment.¹⁰³

Son Montague, I send you hertely goddes blessing and mine. This is the gretest gift thatt I can send you for to desire god of his helpe wich I perceve is great nede to pray for, and as to the case as I am enformed, that you stand in mine advise is to [commend] you to god principally,

⁹⁸Fitzwilliam to Cromwell, Warblington, 14 Nov. 1538; *ibid.*, f. 77-77^v; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 835.

⁹⁹Examinations of Margaret Pole, 12, 13 Nov. 1538; PRO: SP 1/138, f. 245; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 818.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, f. 243-243^v and 244.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, f. 243^v.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, f. 246.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, f. 246^v.

and upon thatt ground so to order you both in word and deed to serve
your prince not disobeyeng goddys commandments as far as your powre
and lief woll serve you ...¹⁰⁴

If there were not any treasonable offences in the part of the letter which is now lost - and that is not very likely - the prosecution was still without evidence against the Lady Salisbury. Her examiners, however, took the discovery of the letter as a good sign and promised to carry on with the interrogations, although the countess was still adamant in her denial of any knowledge of her sons' proceedings.¹⁰⁵ The Countess of Salisbury stayed at Southampton's for quite a long time. It is possible that the examinations went on, but after the trials were over and the executions carried out she would have led the life of an ordinary prisoner, only slightly more comfortable than those who were in the Tower, although - as in the case of those in the Tower - there were no legal grounds for her detention. We know that she still was at Cowdrey in March 1539. A letter by Southampton shows that she was not interrogated any more, but she definitely endured certain humiliations. Southampton described how he went to see the countess simply in order to tell her that,

I and my wief ... wuld not find in our hertes to see her as long that that errant
hooreson Traitor, her sonne the cardinall was aboute from prince to prince to
work suche troble to our sovereign lorde his realme. With many oodre worde
of like effort wherunto she made me aunswer with a wonderfull sowrefull
cauntenaunce that although he were most unhappy and an il man to behaue him
self so unkindly and trayterously unto his sovereign lord and master who hath
ever beene so good and gracious lord to him and his friend, yet was he no hoorson,
for she said she take god to witnesse she was both a good woman and a true woman,
wishing him to be in hevin, or else that she were of powre to bring him hither unto
the kinges presente, whom she hopes [...that he] wold not importe his haynousse
offens unto her.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Margaret Pole to Montagu, *s.l.*, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/139, f. 131; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 855, 2ii. The letter carries on on, f. 131^v, but is so faded that it is impossible to read, except for very few words. Hence it must be pointed out that the presentation of this letter in *L&P* is incomplete and misleading.

¹⁰⁵Fitzwilliam and Goodrich to Cromwell, Cowdrey, 16 Nov. 1538; BL: Cotton Appendix L, f. 79; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 855, 1. They wrote about the examinations, 'We assure your Lordshippe, we have dealid with such a one as men have not dealid withal to fore us. We may call her rather a strong constaunt man than a woman.'

¹⁰⁶Fitzwilliam to Cromwell, Cowdrey, 14 March 1539; BL: Cleo. E iv, f. 210-210^v; *L&P XIV*, 1, no. 520.

The earl concluded the letter by entreating Cromwell to rid him of the awkward prisoner, because she cost him too much and troubled his mind. However it took the government at least another two months to accommodate the troubled earl. Margaret Pole was still detained, but not yet legally sentenced and the authorities were determined not to let her go free. The chance to legalize her detention and that of the marchioness arose in the parliament of 1539. As Chapuys had remarked before, it was as if trials were held after executions.¹⁰⁷

A massive act of attainder was brought into parliament. Fifty-three offenders found inclusion in this bill which more than a third of all people attainted in the entire Tudor period;¹⁰⁸ the leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace, some rebellious clergymen, Exeter, Montagu, Carew, Nevill, and all the others who had been sentenced alongside with them, except for Sir Geoffrey Pole. Furthermore we find Reginald Pole and the English members of his train, Throckmorton, Heliar, Peto, Goldwell included and finally Gertrude Courtenay and Margaret Pole.¹⁰⁹ One might say that this act was a fatal blow to religious conservatism in England,¹¹⁰ but then it must be pointed out that this had already been achieved, for most of the people mentioned were either already executed or they had fled the realm before the law could reach them. Thus the bill effectively touched only a fraction of the people whom it outlawed, the marchioness and the countess being the most eminent of those. It seems as if the inclusion of the Lady Salisbury caused some resistance in the Lords, who were reluctant to hand a guiltless member of their order over to the mercy of a vengeful king. She was

¹⁰⁷Cf. p. 108 and footnote no. 86 above.

¹⁰⁸S. E. Lehmberg, 'Parliamentary Attainder in the Reign of Henry VIII', *Historical Journal*, XVIII (1972) p. 685.

¹⁰⁹PRO: C 65/147, m. 23-5. For biographical and bibliographical information on Thomas Goldwell, who later on became one of Pole's most important assistants and, after the cardinal's death, the only English bishop at the later sessions of the Council of Trent, see R. Aubert, 'Goldwell, Thomas, év. St Asaph', *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique*, XXI (1985) column 496-498.

¹¹⁰E. W. Ives, 'Faction at the Court of Henry VIII; The Fall of Anne Boleyn', *History*, LVII (1972) p. 180, calls the 'Carewe-Exeter group' the only grand political faction of the 1530s. This seems to be a much exaggerated view of their political significance. As a grand faction they would have needed a political programme for action and not only coincidental similarity in their dislikes for Henry's religious policies.

included at last after a cunning political manoeuvre by Cromwell. On 18 May Lord Lisle was informed by John Worth about what had happened in the Lords:

Pleaseth your lordship, so it is that there was a coat-armour found in the Duchess [*sic.*] of Salisbury's coffer, and by the one side of the coat there was the King's Grace his arms of England, that is, the lions without the flower de luce, and about the whole arms was made of pansies for Pole, and marigolds for my Lady Mary. This was about the coat-armour. And betwixt the marigold and the pansy was made a tree to rise in the midst; and on the tree a coat of purple hanging on a bough, in tokening of the coat of Christ; and on the other side of the coat all the Passion of Christ. Pole intended to have married my Lady Mary, and betwixt them both should arise the old doctrine of Christ. This was the intent that the coat was made, as it is openly known in the Parliament house, as master Sir George Speke showed me. And thus my Lady marques, my Lady Salisbury ... with divers others today were attainted today by act of Parliament.¹¹¹

It cannot be proven whether the coat of armour was actually found during the careful search of the countess's house or whether it was a forgery, made to incriminate the lady. However, it is more than unlikely that an experienced woman like Margaret Pole would have kept in her possession such a compromising piece, which so strikingly resembled the banners of the Pilgrimage of Grace after the failure of the insurrection or after Geoffrey Pole's arrest. What seems very odd is that the discovery of the coat of arms had been kept secret by Henry and Cromwell to the very day when Cromwell unrolled it in the Lords. No record of the finding of the fatal piece of cloth survives, although Southampton reported minutely about less spectacular pieces that came to light during the search. In any case, why did Cromwell wait so long with the revelation, if it was not for doubts of its authenticity? Had it been a genuine, honest item of evidence he could have displayed well before opposition was voiced in the Lords, but apparently he had taken it with him as a last minute resort only and would have probably preferred not to display it at all. This secrecy on Cromwell's part makes the whole incident rather dubious.

The fact that the two ladies were attainted without trial or chance to defend themselves - a fate which they shared with sixty-six others during Henry's reign, including Cromwell - leads us to the question whether this procedure was within

¹¹¹Worth to Lisle, London, 18 May 1539; *Lisle Letters*, V, no. 1419.

the frame of the law. The question was discussed by Henry's contemporaries and never answered sufficiently.¹¹² It is interesting that it apparently never occurred to members of parliament that the majority of those who were attainted without trial would have actually been readily available for a trial at common law and were no traitors in flight, whom English justice could not reach. Hence parliament allowed crown and government to abuse it cynically as a means to circumvent the law, by which some of the so-called offenders might have been acquitted.¹¹³ Another puzzling aspect of the act of attainder is that the two children were not included in it at all. It was certainly not common practice to commit minors to the Tower when their parents were attainted. It is true that Henry might have regarded the two boys as a potential danger to a safe Tudor succession to the throne, but they were held prisoner on no legal grounds, so that the detention of these children is just another incident in the long series of injustices that happened in connection with this case.

One of the few people who was relieved and content with the result of the parliament was the Earl of Southampton. After all, the countess was now officially a state prisoner and he could be sure that his troublesome hostage would leave his house soon and be taken in custody in the Tower. Although there is no evidence for when she was transferred there, it may be assumed that she took up her confinement in London in June or July 1539. We can see from Cromwell's earliest remembrances after the act of attainder that the future fate of the two attainted ladies was paramount on his agenda. The first two items on the remembrances are, 'To remember what shalbe done with the Lady of Sares [Salisbury] and where she shalbe kept', and, 'Item what shalbe done with the Lady marchiones.'¹¹⁴ We can say with certainty that the countess had joined Gertrude Courtenay in the Tower by November or December 1539, because

¹¹²Miller, *Henry VIII and the Nobility*, p. 68-9.

¹¹³The severity and extent of the abuse of attainder by Henry VIII has been pointed out by W. R. Stacy, 'Richard Roose and Parliamentary Attainder in the Reign of Henry VIII', *Historical Journal*, XXIX (1986) p. 1-15. Unfortunately he almost completely dismisses the 1539 act of attainder, but quite rightly concludes that such a vast number of people who were condemned without trial suffices 'to challenge the assertion that the period was a triumphant age of legalism', p. 15.

¹¹⁴Cromwell's remembrances, *s.d.*; PRO: E 36/143, f. 113; *L&P XIV.1*, no. 1050.

there is an undated letter from their keeper in the Tower to Cromwell, in which he asked the viceregent for certain favours for the ladies. He stated that the marchioness feared that 'she stand in dyspleasure of the kyngth most gracyous hyghnes, and consequenth wantyth your lordshyppes favor'. He went on that the ladies were short of money to pay their servants and of clothes. Especially the old countess 'maketh grat moane for that she wantethe nessessary aparell bothe for to change and allso to kepe her warme'.¹¹⁵

The marchioness's appeal to Cromwell's favour showed some effect. She was pardoned on 21 December 1539 and within the next three months she was discharged and granted a rather generous annuity.¹¹⁶ After her release the new French ambassador, Marillac, reported home,

Je présume Monseigneur qu'avez entendu la délivrance de prison de la femme du feu Marquis qui eust la tete tranchée l'outrefois son fils est demeuré en la Tour et la mère et le petit nepveu du Cardinal Pol, qu'on dit aussi, sortira bientost; toutefois les enfants masles y demeurent pour ester l'occasion de suseiter un jour nouveau trouble à cete couronne. ¹¹⁷

The rumour which Marillac reported about the immediate release of the countess proved wrong. Margaret Pole was never set free and when the parliament of 1540 issued a general pardon she and the two boys were amongst others expressly excluded.¹¹⁸ It is strange that the two boys who had not been mentioned in the original act of attainder in the first place and had so far never been charged with anything, were all of a sudden excluded from the king's pardon. So the time of anxiety went on for the last three prisoners in the Tower.

¹¹⁵[?] to Cromwell, London, *s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/140, f. 221; *L&P XIII*, 2, no. 1176. This letter is misplaced in the *L&P* and in the folio volume of the Public Record Office. *L&P* place it December 1538, at which time the countess was not yet in the Tower and the marchioness not yet long enough to owe her servants more than a year's wages. For that last hint the date of the letter is most likely December 1539.

¹¹⁶For the pardon see PRO: C 66/692, m. 21; *L&P XIV*, 2, no. 780,32; for the annuity PRO: C 66/690, m. 2; *L&P XV* no. 436,87.

¹¹⁷Marillac to Montmorency, London, 10 Apr. 1540; PRO: PRO 31/3/10 m. 99-100; *L&P XV*, no. 487; 'I assume, Sir, that you have heard of the discharge of the wife of the late marquis, who had his head cut off some time ago, his son is [still] held in the Tower, as well as the mother and the young nephew of Cardinal Pole; it is also said, that she will come out soon; however the male children will be held there lest they present a new danger to this crown in the future.'

¹¹⁸*Statutes at Large, II*, p. 291 (32 Hen VIII, cap. 49).

The difference in the treatment of the marchioness and the countess appears to be incomprehensible at first sight. After all, the marchioness had been involved much deeper in what the government had seen as a treasonable offence. She had been incriminated from various sides whereas the evidence against the Lady Salisbury was - as has been pointed out - dubious and sparse. And yet it was Gertrude Courtenay who came to enjoy Henry's mercy. This difference is only explicable when one takes into consideration the impact of Cardinal Pole's antagonism to Henry VIII. Even if it might have been possible to argue that political reasons and the safety of the realm dominated over the king's revenge on the cardinal at the outset, at this stage it is blatantly obvious that Henry meant to punish Reginald Pole with his policies towards the prisoners.

Margaret Pole remained in the Tower for just over another year, when in April 1541 a conspiracy in Yorkshire was discovered, in which some members of the Nevill family were involved. Henry took this "White Rose" threat to the throne as a pretext to have the countess beheaded. This gruesome spectacle took place in the early morning of 28 May 1541. Chapuys wrote to the Queen Regent of the Netherlands that the countess said her prayer after expressing her surprise at Henry's decision, for apparently she could not understand the charges; then she commended the royal family to the prayers of the English people and was literally hacked to pieces by a young man who had stepped in because of the usual executioner's absence.¹¹⁹ The letter in which Marillac informed his sovereign about the decapitation deserves to be quoted at some length, because it was written under the immediate impression of the event and it contains much more than just information about yet another execution under Henry's regime.

Sire, ce qui est ici avvenu depuis mes dernières du xxii^e de ce moys, m'a donné matière de présentement escrire, en commencer par ung cas plus digne de grande compassion que des longues lettres. C'est la mort de la Comtesse de Saalberi, mère du Cardinal Pol et du feu Seigneur de Montaigut, laquelle environ vers sept heures du matin, fut byer dans la Tour décollée d'une coignée en présence de si peu de gens, que j'usque au soir, l'on doubtait encores de la véritée, ... d'autrefois plus difficile à croire, que j'estimois, pour l'avoir longtemps détenue prisonnière, estre Dame extraiete de si noble lignée, femme si agée, comme de quatre vingt ans et plus, et au demourant, très aigrement punia en ce qu'elle pourroit avoir délinqué et forfaict pour

¹¹⁹Chapuys to Mary of Hungary, London, 10 June 1541; *CalStP.*, *Spain*, VI,1, no. 166.

la perte de l'un de ses filz, bannissement de l'autre et total ruyne de sa maison, que toutes ces choses l'exemptassent de prendra fin contraincte puisque la naturelle estoit si prochaine.

Toutefois, Sire, ny le Sexe, ny l'Age ny le Sang, ny la longue prison, ny les aultres considérations n'ont empercté qu'on ne luy ayt abrégé ce peu de jours qu'elle avoit à vivre, non pas à vivre, mais à languir: car en tent de malheurs et désolations elle devoit avoir plus de volonté qu'on luy accélérast sa mort que prolongeast sa vie. Eh bien, Sire, il semble que pour cest regard on ayt fait beaucoup pour Elle: toutefois le cas donne à penser au monde qu'on ne peut interpréter à bien le façon dont l'on a procedda.¹²⁰

There is not very much to add to Marillac's account.¹²¹ He also mentioned in his letter that the heads of those who were executed (the countess was not the only one to suffer on that day) were not as usual exhibited on Tower Bridge. Thus - he concluded - the government must have been apprehensive about the unpopularity of its action and wanted to keep the whole incident as secret as possible. Not only Margaret Pole herself was surprised at her execution, but apparently everyone else as well. It must have been a lonely decision by Henry to have her beheaded, because as close to her execution as 1 March the privy

¹²⁰Marillac to Francis I, *s.l.*, 29 May 1541; PRO: PRO 31/3/12, m. 333-4; *L&P XVI*, no. 868. "Sire, what happened here since my last letters of the second of this month, gives me reason to write at once. I will begin with a case worthy of great compassion rather than long letters. It is the death of the Countess of Salisbury, mother of Cardinal Pole and the late Lord Montagu. It happened yesterday morning at about seven o'clock, she was beheaded in a corner of the Tower in the presence of so few people that even in the evening people doubted that it was true ... it was even more difficult to believe since I thought that, because she had been held prisoner for so long, a lady with such a noble pedigree, a very old woman, about eighty years old or older [she was actually sixty-eight], and she had already suffered and forfeited so much, by the loss of one son, the banishment of the other, and the complete ruin of her family, that after all these things she should have been spared a violent death, the more so because her natural death was not far ahead.

However, Sire, neither her sex, nor her age, nor her blood, nor her long imprisonment, nor the other considerations prevented her life from being shortened of the few days that she would have had to live - not even to live, but to languish: after all her misfortune and sorrow she must have wanted people rather to accelerate her death than to prolong her life. Well, Sire, it seems that under this aspect she has been done a favour: however, this case gives the world a lot of things to think about, because one cannot quite understand the way in which it was handled.'

¹²¹Bellamy, *Tudor Law of Treason*, p. 196, goes back to the seventeenth-century myth that the countess refused to put her head on the block and was virtually chased around the scaffold by the executioner. This account is as fallacious as the year Bellamy quotes for the execution, 1539.

council ordered to have some furred garments made for the old lady - an investment that would have hardly been considered worthwhile if the execution had been discussed in the council.¹²² Cardinal Pole, who had evidently been supporting negotiations to get his mother released from the Tower ¹²³ and for whom the news of his mother's death was as unanticipated as for anyone else, reacted in a rather subdued and strange manner. According to his biographer he said on receiving the news,

In fino a qui ho creduto che'l Signor Dio mi havesse fatto gratia di esser figliolo d'una delle migliori e più honorate Signore d'Inghilterra, e me ne sono gloriato, e rendutone gratie a Sua Divina Maestà, ma qui mi ha voluto honorar, e crescer l'obbligo, perche mi ha anco fatto figliolo d'una martire.¹²⁴

After that - according to Beccadelli - Pole retired to his study and prayed for an hour, and then he went straight back to his daily routine duties with admirable composure. Whether this passage of Beccadelli's biography is historical, or whether it was added to Pole's *vita* by the author in order to increase the cardinal's saintliness, is difficult to determine. Pole certainly felt more grief than Beccadelli admitted. Cardinal San Marcelli's letter of consolation, in which Pole was reminded that he also had to say prayers for King Henry's soul, met the answer that Pole very much doubted that the English monarch was beyond a point where prayers could help him at all.¹²⁵

The last surviving Pole in the Tower was now young Henry Pole, the son of Lord Montagu. After the countess's execution a lot of speculation went on in London's diplomatic circles about the boy's fate. From the sparse information we have about his life and the life of young Edward Courtenay in the Tower, we can see again how differently the Poles and the Courtenays were treated, although both families were initially charged with the same crime. Marillac

¹²²*Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council, 1386 - 1542, VII*, ed. N. H. Nicolas (London, 1837) p. 147.

¹²³Pole to George de Selve, French ambassador with Charles V, Rome, *s.d.* (but end of 1540); Quirini, III, no. 47.

¹²⁴Beccadelli, *Vita*, p. 388; 'Until now I have thought that God was gracious to me, because I am the son of one of the best and most honoured ladies of England, and I was grateful and gave thanks to the Lord, but now He wanted to honour me and increase my gratefulness, because He has made me the son of a martyr.'

¹²⁵Pole to San Marcelli, Capranica, *s.d.* (but August 1541); Quirini, III, no. 44.

thought it was almost impossible that Henry Pole would eventually be pardoned, despite his innocence.¹²⁶ By the end of June it even looked as if he would soon have to follow his grandmother to the scaffold.¹²⁷ But soon the immediate danger for Henry Pole's life was over, although no relief of his living conditions was to be expected. On 18 July the French ambassador reported to Francis I:

Le Fils du feu marquis est plus au large qu'il ne souloit, et si luy a esté baillé ung précepteur pour l'apprendre et endoctriner: ce qu'on ne faict pas envers le petit nepveu du Cardinal Pool qui est pauvrement et estroictement détenu: et ne veut l'on permettre qu'il sache rien.¹²⁸

As in the case of the marchioness and the countess, young Courtenay received preferential treatment over Pole. This inequality is quite unaccountable if it was not for the inextinguishable hatred of Henry's for whoever bore the name of the cardinal.¹²⁹ This is the last bit of information we possess about Henry Pole. He is mentioned in the king's payment accounts for 1542 whenever money was spent for the maintenance of the state prisoners.¹³⁰ From 1543 onwards his name does not appear on this list any more. Whether the boy fell victim to an even more secret execution than that of his grandmother, or was treacherously murdered in the Tower, or whether he simply died of a natural cause is unknown and it would be futile to speculate. However, Henry's revenge on the man who had dared to defy and oppose him openly was complete. Margaret Pole, Lord Montagu, and his son had lost their lives, Reginald Pole was attainted and had to beware of assassins, and the unhappy Sir Geoffrey Pole could not enjoy his pardon, because he was psychologically unstable after he was discharged and he spent the rest of his life haunted by his bad conscience for the betrayal he had

¹²⁶Marillac to Francis I, London, 14 June 1541; PRO: PRO 31/3/12, m. 338; *L&P XVI*, no. 903.

¹²⁷Same to same, London, 30 June 1541; PRO: PRO 31/3/12, m. 340^v; *L&P XVI*, no. 941.

¹²⁸Same to same, London, 18 July 1541; PRO: PRO 31/3/12, m. 344; *L&P XVI*, no. 1011.

'The son of the late Marquis is more at large than he used to be, and he has a preceptor to teach him lessons and to indoctrinate him; a thing which is not done towards the little nephew of Cardinal Pole, who is poorly and strictly kept and they [the government] do not want to allow that he knows anything.'

¹²⁹It must be mentioned, however, that Reginald Pole's sister, Ursula, and her family remained unmolested.

¹³⁰BL: Stowe MS 554, f. 43^v; *L&P XVII*, no. 880; the last time he is mentioned in September 1542.

committed against his family.¹³¹

IV. 4. The Roles of Cromwell and of Henry VIII

I herde you say wons, after you had seene [that] furyous invectife of
cardynall Pole [that you] wold make him to ete his owne hartt, w[hic]h
you haue now [...] brought to passe, for he must [...] knowe, eue his owne
hartt and be [...] harden[ed] as he ys growe close.¹³²

Hugh Laimer wrote these lines to Cromwell shortly after the execution of Exeter and Montagu. Yet it has been suggested earlier in this chapter that the main reason for the destruction of the Pole family was Henry's quest for revenge. It will be shown that Cromwell went along with Henry in the proceedings against Montagu and Exeter - although for different reasons. However, Henry's intentions and aims departed from those of his minister after the execution of those two men. Laimer's letter ascribed the glory for the conviction of two religious conservatives and traitors to Cromwell; it should be remembered that this letter to the viceroy was otherwise packed with requests for favours which Laimer asked of Cromwell. There was certainly some calculated flattery involved in Laimer's writing. Cromwell's remark that he would make Pole eat his heart was a serious threat, but the great difficulty lies in assessing how much influence he had - and actually exercised - in this day's episode of Henry's reign. The viceroy was of course not opposed to prosecuting the Poles, but the rigour and fierceness with which the actions were carried out against the Poles rather than against the Courtenays seem to point in the king's direction. Moreover, the people who were involved in the so-called 'Exeter Conspiracy' did not qualify for one of the faction fights of different parties at court, like that which finally brought about the downfall of Anne Boleyn, in which Cromwell had been heavily involved. Cromwell did conduct some of the examinations, but on the whole it appears that he showed rather little interest. It is true that there might have been overt dislike for Cromwell on Exeter's part, although we are reluctant to accept the rumour of Exeter's attempt to stab Cromwell in December

¹³¹ For Geoffrey Pole's later life see J. E. Paul, *Catherine of Aragon and Her Friends* (London 1896) p. 246.

¹³² Laimer to Cromwell, *Monichary*, 15 Dec. 1538; BL. C100. E.10. f. 267; LSP X/II.2 no. 1036.

1537.¹³³ All this was not enough in itself to induce Cromwell, the careful and calculating politician, to initiate a risky manoeuvre like the destruction of two powerful and popular noble families.¹³⁴ No convincing motive for action can be found on Cromwell's side. Even if Cromwell had wanted to destroy the Poles and Courtenays, he would not have been powerful enough to go all the way with it.

It might be argued that Exeter and Montagu - as well as their male issue - had to be disposed of for dynastic reasons. So Henry and his conscientious civil servant would have had a joint motive to take action against them. But when it comes to the case of the countess, dynastic reasons hardly matter.¹³⁵ It was not to be expected that Margaret Pole would outlive Henry VIII and then - even less likely - claim the throne for herself. The fact that she was attainted at all and eventually executed points in Henry's direction. Had it not been in his personal interest to harm her, he would have prevented action against his cousin altogether. The only reason, however, that offers some coherent explanation for the countess's fate is Henry's wish for revenge. It is true that by displaying of the coat of arms in the Lords Cromwell helped to have the countess attainted, but there is no reason why he should not have done it on the king's orders. However, Cromwell himself was well out of favour and beheaded by the time Margaret Pole was executed. This unwarranted act of cruelty was decided by the king alone, who had the right to dispose of the attainted countess's life at his discretion. What is more, the above discussed disparity in the treatment of the members of the houses of Pole and Courtenay is another indicator that the man behind the scenes was not Cromwell. What interest should he have had in such differences? It is true that Reginald Pole was Cromwell's sworn enemy, but Cromwell did not usually persecute his enemies' families. There was one thing, however, that Henry VIII would never tolerate: disobedience. This was the only

¹³³Cromwell to Exeter, Stoke, 7 June 1537; PRO: SP 1/121, f. 67; *L&P XII*, 2, no. 51.

¹³⁴A letter by a certain John Marshall to Cromwell, South Carlton, 15 Feb. 1539, PRO: SP 1/143, f. 81; *L&P XIV*, 1, no. 295, shows that the executions were discussed not without sympathy for the executed in some Northern parts.

¹³⁵G. Elton, *Policy and Police* (Cambridge, 1972) p. 390, footnote no. 2, assumes that 'Henry's dynastic fears must take the blame' for her inclusion in the 1539 attainder. The high age of the countess makes this theory very questionable.

case of his entire reign in which he could not lay hands on the offender himself, so he took to victimizing the Poles in England.

The relationship between Reginald Pole's activities on the Continent and the government's actions against the Poles in England is obvious. When Reginald Pole was on his first legation the king told Castillon that he intended to destroy the Poles. He waited, because the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace presented him with more pressing problems and his assassins on the Continent might yet be successful. A year later, however, he struck. When Pole accompanied the pope to the conference at Nice in the summer of 1538, Geoffrey Pole was taken prisoner. And when the political situation was becoming precarious for Henry in the aftermath of the Truce of Nice, all the Poles were taken hostage in England. This happened because Pole was the obvious mover of political action against England on the Continent. The news of the execution of Montagu reached Pole as he was on his way to the emperor in 1539, while Margaret Pole was not officially charged until her attainder in May 1539, when the cardinal had enraged Henry again with his second legation. Thus, Henry tried to use the Poles as hostages to secure reasonable conduct by Reginald Pole, and he destroyed them as his policies did not work with the cardinal.

The Misses Dodds have argued that this would merely be 'to say that he [Henry] was a blood-thirsty tyrant, and that, however useful as abuse, this is not a really satisfactory explanation for any human being's actions.' They go on to point out Henry's conviction of his divine right to rule and the fact that the monarch equated mental opposition with armed insurrection.¹³⁶ This is the perfect justification for any kind of judicial murder. No government could ever take the right to police its subjects' thoughts without being scolded by posterity.

¹³⁶Dodds, *Pilgrimage, II*, p. 277-8. Interestingly Mayer, 'Diet', p. 328-331, takes the very same quotation by Dodds as a point for Cromwell's stronger involvement. He also points out that Cromwell had taken 'an interest in Pole and his family' before (p. 329). This only extends to Sir Geoffrey Pole, who had before sought contact with the court and had even been in Henry's favour for a while. What is more, Cromwell knew that the easiest way to keep a group of people of questionable loyalty under surveillance was to maintain bonds with the weakest character of that group.

The question is not whether Henry VIII was a 'blood-thirsty tyrant', but whether the way in which he handled the law and legal understanding can prevail in the eyes of his contemporaries and in ours. Even if the treason laws under which the Poles and Courtenays were sentenced were just in Henry's understanding, the discussion of the trials has shown that the evidence was on most occasions flimsy if not dubious. That is to say, even if the prosecution of the Poles was justifiable, their conviction was certainly not.

However, if Henry had intended to prevent the cardinal from persevering in his diplomatic efforts, his endeavours met with complete failure.

V. The Legation of 1539

V. 1. Prerequisites of the legation

In the summer of 1538, at the same time when the tragedy of the Poles began in England with the arrest of Sir Geoffrey Pole, the political situation in Europe changed to such an extent that the papacy gained enough breathing space to contemplate seriously an attack on heresy and schism in northern Europe. In June 1538 Paul III succeeded in uniting the arch-rivals Charles V and Francis I at a peace conference at Nice. The pope travelled there himself in order to mediate personally between the two monarchs on whose accord the fate of Christianity depended.

With other cardinals, Pole accompanied the pope to Nice. He seems to have been in the representative part of the pope's train, because no reference to him can be found in the context of the peace negotiations. Beccadelli informs us that the English cardinal was ostentatiously highly honoured by Charles V, but apart from this, Pole's role in Nice remains obscure.¹

The negotiations did not prove fruitful enough to procure a peace treaty between Habsburg and Valois, but thanks to Paul's mediation Charles and Francis agreed on a truce for ten years. On 18 June 1538 the Truce of Nice was signed.² The content of the truce cannot be a subject of the present study; it suffices to point out that it provided solutions to the major causes for war between the two rulers. For the first time since the Ladies' Peace of Cambrai in 1529 there was an agreement between Habsburg and Valois which interrupted the constant warfare between the most powerful monarchs of Europe. The treaty bore even more far reaching results than this; in some points, such as the fight against the infidels and the northern heresies, Charles and Francis pledged co-operation.

Thus a new constellation in European politics had been created, which

¹L. Beccadelli, *Vita del Cardinale Polo*, Quirini, V, p. 367.

²The French copy of the truce with the ratification is in BN: Fonds français 2951, f. 19-44. The efforts which led to the conclusion of the Truce of Nice are described in L. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, (London, 1953) XI, p. 281-92.

necessarily also must affect England. Until the Truce of Nice - and Pole's 1537 legation is the best example of this - neither of the continental powers could afford to alienate England, because an English alliance with either Habsburg or Valois would have undoubtedly proved disastrous for the other rival. Thus England had been able to pursue her own politics without interference from the Continent; what is more, she had constantly been wooed and courted by both Charles and Francis. Amity between Charles and Francis was a dangerous constellation for Henry VIII's policies. Since England had now lost her decisive role as the power which could tip the scales between Habsburg and Valois, the emperor and the French king were not bound any more to make allowances for their English colleague. Years later, in a completely different political context, Henry once admitted to what must have greatly troubled him in the summer of 1538. In 1545 he told the imperial ambassador that he would not fear facing any enemy as long as there was no perfect amity between the emperor and the French king.³

With the papal success in peace making at Nice and the consecutive personal *rapprochement* between Charles V and Francis I at Aigues-Mortes Rome had gained new political weight which the curia was determined to use in an active fight against the heresies in the north. Especially in the case of England Rome hoped to achieve much through the new political climate. England appeared to be the easiest target of those countries which had broken with Rome, because the German protestants were more firmly entrenched in their rejection of the Roman obedience, and the rather complex political situation and machinations in the Empire made it more difficult to deal with the problem in Germany. England, however, was already surrounded by catholic neighbours and now that these were not at war with each other any longer she was naturally isolated. England was also seen as the key to the problem in Germany. The importance of the financial aid which the German protestants received from England was rather overestimated in Rome, and the curia hoped that it would be easier to overcome the German heresies once they were cut off from their English support.⁴ Not

³Chapuys to Charles V, Boubourg, 15 July 1545; *CalStP, Spain, VIII*, no. 95.

⁴One example of this overestimation is Farnese's letter to Aleander, nuncio with King Ferdinand, Rome, 19 Jan. 1539; *NB, III*, no. 117; where Farnese expresses the suspicion

only had Charles and Francis ceased to depend on Henry, they were also well inclined to use their new political freedom to proceed against the English king, who had in recent years annoyed them with his unreasonable requests in foreign policies and whose measures against the Roman church also mobilized European public opinion against him. The hostility towards England for religious reasons was to reach its peak in Europe later in 1538 after Henry had ordered the desecration and destruction of the grave of Thomas Becket in Canterbury.⁵ In answer to these atrocities Paul III decided to publish the bull of excommunication against Henry VIII.⁶ This move seemed to be justifiable in the current political climate, because the diplomatic wheels had started turning against England in August 1538. The nuncio in France, Filiberto Ferrerio, Bishop of Ivrea, reported that there was a general feeling of hostility towards England coming into existence which had great potential for serving the Roman cause.

Io mi son trovato con una bon personaggio che non vuol esser nominato
il quali puo sapere, et fa molte cose, et mi ha detto che hora era il tempo che
Sua S[anti]ta poteva fare li fatti suoi à castigare Ingh[ilter]ra perche lo vedeva
in mal gratia con l'Imp[erato]re et del Re. Et la via era questa, di servir un
breve al una et l'altra Maesta conforme dimostrando che alla quietà che
Chr[istiani]ta non manca, che un bono concilio, qual non poteva essere
universale, non intervenendoli Ingh[ilter]ra che lo ha ricercato per tante vie, et
modi et trovandolo obstinato senza ragione et tanto inclinato alla avaritia che
confondeva non mancano le cose divini che l'humane non piu scandalato che non

that the most recent onslaught of the German protestants had been funded with English money.

⁵When the news of this event became known in Rome Pole wrote to Granvelle, chancellor of Charles V, asking him to use his influence with Charles in order to direct the emperor's attention towards the injustice committed in England and also to create an interest at the imperial court in finding a remedy for the situation there. Pole to Granvelle, 30 Nov. 1538; Quirini, II, no. 54. This letter must be seen in combination with the preparations for Pole's new legation.

⁶C. Capasso, *Paolo III (1534-1549)*, I (Messina, 1924) p. 685. Capasso also points out that the pope had sounded out the opinion of the nuncios in France and at the imperial court as to whether it would be expedient to publish the bull. Apparently the nuncio in France counselled the pope to be cautious, because the French king might be reluctant to support this move. This information cannot be verified, because Capasso used the section of the Carte Farnesiane which was destroyed in Naples during World War II (cf. p. 4-5 above). It is, however, highly questionable whether Capasso's assertion is correct, because it does not tally with any of the information still extant.

facevano li Lutherani proprij dequali sperava miglior fine che di lui exhorti
ognuno di loro a voler se li intender et aiutar Sua S[anti]ta in beneficio publico
a farlo venir à quella obedientia si conviene.⁷

In his next dispatch to Rome Ferrerio could prove that these ideas were not merely the machinations of ambitious courtiers, but that the French king himself was open to suggestions concerning England. Ferrerio had put the idea of starting a Roman initiative by sending identical briefs to Charles and Francis. The French king showed great interest and promised the nuncio instantly that the church need not doubt his loyalty in this matter.⁸ The fact that Ferrerio reported the initial idea of castigating England through France and Spain jointly to the nuncio at the imperial court, Giovanni Poggio, much more comprehensively than he reported it to Rome underlines a new development in European politics.⁹ Undoubtedly Ferrerio wanted Poggio to sound out the

⁷Ferrerio to Poggio, Romorantin, 20 Aug. 1538; ASV: AA Arm. I-XVIII, 6530, f. 75. 'I had a conversation with a good person, who does not want to be named, who has access to a lot of information and does many things; and he told me that it was now the time that his holiness could get those who are loyal to him to castigate England, because he saw her in disgrace with the emperor and the king [of France]. The way to do it would be the following: one should send out identical briefs to both majesties that despite the [current] quiet state of Christendom a good Council could not be universal, if they did not intervene in England, which he [Paul III] tried in so many different ways and found him [Henry VIII] obstinate without reason and highly inclined to embarrassing avarice, so that there are enough divine reasons and the human [mind] cannot be scandalized more by him than by what the proper Lutherans do. For these reasons he [the informer] hoped that if they both [Charles V and Francis I] exhorted him [Henry VIII] that they wanted to help his holiness for the public benefit they could make him return to this very convenient obedience.' (Text in cipher.)

The person who did not want his name disclosed was most likely Charles de Hémard, Cardinal of Mâcon. In a letter of the same day to Farnese Ferrerio pointed out that the cardinal provided him with valid information frequently, but did not want to have his name disclosed; *ANG, I*, no. 373. In this context it ought to be mentioned that the above quoted letter to Poggio has been completely ignored by the editor of the *ANG*, although numerous letters quoted in the *ANG* are in the same folio volume in the Vatican as the above quoted letter. Whether or not this may be justified by the editors' principle of reporting the correspondence nuncio - curia - nuncio only, and not that between various nuncios at different courts, it must be pointed out as a grave omission, because the rare case that a letter from one nuncio to another is extant would have warranted at least a mention of this letter in the *ANG*.

⁸Ferrerio to Farnese, Blois, 28 Aug. 1538; ASV: AA Arm. I-XVIII, 6530, f. 81^v. This letter appears as a calendar in *ANG, I*, no. 374, however the relevant passage on England has been left out there.

⁹For the comprehensiveness compare the above quoted passage (footnote no. 7 above) and

ground for a joint action at the imperial court. The attitude behind this step in which the headquarters were initially excluded from the process of decision finding is not an indicator for papal diplomats trying to throw off their shackles and creating their own policies, but it impressively demonstrates the new possibilities contemporary politicians saw behind the truce between Habsburg and Valois. The papal diplomats were trying to co-ordinate Charles and Francis fast in order to activate effectively the two most powerful princes against the enemies of the papacy.

If Ferrerio's report created hopes in Rome of successfully launching a diplomatic campaign against England with the aim of isolating her and ultimately regaining control over the kingdom, these hopes were certainly strengthened by the reports which reached the curia from the imperial court. Poggio informed the Roman policy makers that Charles's chancellor, Antoine de Granvelle, had promised to have the papal censures against Henry VIII published in the emperor's domains. The imperial politicians had even consented to impose an embargo on England.¹⁰ It is true that it was also known in Rome that Charles was at the same time preparing an attack on the Turks in the Mediterranean and that it would have been very much out of character for the emperor to leave his northern flank open to aggression while he was campaigning in the south. However, Rome's priorities were different from the emperor's. The curia was determined to use the unity between Charles and Francis to regain control in northern Europe rather than against the Ottoman Empire. The general feeling was that it should be possible to dissuade the emperor from his Turkish plans. In view of all these reasons the last months of the year 1538 saw a build-up to a grand and sophisticated diplomatic initiative against England.

Since the last Roman initiative in this direction, Pole's legation in the previous year, had ended in complete disaster, the strategy of this attempt was

Ferrerio's letter to Farnese, Romorantin, 20 Aug. 1538; *ANG, I*, no. 373.

¹⁰I have been unable to find a report from Poggio in which these concessions are laid down. However Pole reported in 1539 that Granvelle had admitted to having made them in the previous year, and it is beyond doubt that Poggio informed Rome about them during the second half of 1538. Pole to Farnese, Toledo, 22 Feb. 1539; *ASV: SS Principi 12*, f. 17.

planned much more carefully than in 1537. This time Rome employed two diplomats to work at the European courts against England. Reginald Pole was to be sent first to Charles V and then to Francis I. His official reason for going was to bring the bull of deposition against Henry VIII to these rulers in order to have them published in their domains as they had already promised. The real projective behind this new legation in 1539 was, however, to co-ordinate the action of Charles and Francis against England. At the same time as Pole left for Spain another papal diplomat of lesser rank, Latino Giovenale, was to go to France directly. There it was his commission to prepare the ground for Pole's arrival, in order to avoid any unexpected political embarrassment as it had happened in 1537. From France he was to go on to Scotland, officially to deliver the red *biretta* to the newly created Cardinal of Scotland, David Beaton; Giovenale was also supposed to work for the publication of the papal censures in Scotland and to co-ordinate the country with the economic and military sanctions which France and Spain were expected to impose on England.

In December 1538 the Roman initiative finally got under way. Instructions were drawn up for both diplomats. Giovenale was given two different sets of instructions before he set out on his mission, one of which was intended for France the other for Scotland. The instructions for France were more comprehensive than those for Scotland. England was not the only item on Giovenale's agenda in France, but by far the most important. From the instructions it appears that he was carrying the bull of excommunication with him to France and that he was to work for its publication there even before Pole's arrival. Giovenale was also to ask the French king to forbid all commerce between the countries and to break up diplomatic relations with England. The initiative, he was to tell Francis, had been started by the pope because Charles had agreed to publish the bull and now French support was needed. After numerous other items in Giovenale's instructions Pole's legation is mentioned briefly. Giovenale was to do nothing beyond recommending Pole to the French court.¹¹ If this instruction was not very strong and outspoken on the English problem, this must be ascribed to common diplomatic practice between the Holy

¹¹Instruction for Latino Giovenale for the French court, Rome, 24 Dec. 1538; A. Pieper, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der ständigen Nuntiatoren* (Freiburg, 1894) p. 160-2.

See and France. Rome could not expect France to act at the papacy's command, thus all the curia could do was suggest modes of action to the French court.

The commission which Giovenale was carrying for Scotland was much more outspoken and provocative. It was written in a tone which would have been totally unacceptable for the French court. In Scotland Giovenale's first duty was to announce Beaton's cardinalate to the court and then confer insignia and consecration on the new cardinal. His instructions for Scotland read as follows:

Appresso parlare con la debita caldezza e maniera della causa pubblica
d'Inghilterra per la quale principalmente siete mandato, monstrando quanto sia
a cuore à Sua S[anti]tà e quanto come a buono Padre e Pontefice ch'è doglia
vedere la tota rouina d'un cosi fatto Regno, e quanto si sente stomacchato
dall'impietà et opera che ha fatta e di continuo fa con gli altri Principi christiani
per la riduzione e sanità di detto Regno, dechiarandole la buona inspiratione
che li detti Principi mostrano d'hauer havuta da Dio, d'adoperarsi etiam per
ogni via per la detta riduzione e non senza dar intentione di lasciar non solo
publicar la Bolla che portate e leuare ogni commercio de lor popoli, ma etiam
ogni pratica et intelligenza delle Maestà loro particolari e passar più oltre.¹²

The interesting aspect of the instructions for Scotland is that here the papacy could only use the disposition of both Francis and Charles as a justification for the initiative. Evidently, Scotland had not been consulted before Rome started her activities. It is true that Rome could count on Scottish support as a matter of course if Habsburg and Valois were in on the initiative together. Hence all Rome

¹²Instructions for Latino Giovenale for Scotland, Rome, 24 Dec. 1538; A. Bellesheim, *Geschichte der katholische Kirche in Schottland*, (Mainz, 1883) II, p. 490. 'Next you are to talk about the public causes of England, for which you have chiefly been sent there, in the necessary vigorous way, showing how much his holiness takes it to heart and how much it hurts him as a good father and pope to see the complete ruin of such a realm, showing how much he feels nauseated by this impiety, and showing what he has done and continues to do with the other Christian princes for the reduction and the sanity of the said realm. Explain to them [the Scottish court] the good inspiration which the said princes received from God, so that they will also work for the said reduction in every way. Do this not without making known that we intend to have this bull published and to have all commerce lifted between their [Henry VIII's and James V's] peoples, but that we also intend to have all exchanges and intelligence cut off between the two majesties themselves.'

There are numerous manuscript copies of Giovenale's instructions. Apart from the quoted printed versions I noted ASV: Nunziature Diverse 246, f. 108-9 (instruction for France only) and Misc. Arm. II, 49, f. 22-3^v, and BN: Fonds italien 1177, f. 71-5^v. The fact that these instructions, as well as those for Pole, were copied quite widely indicates how great the interest and hopes for this papal initiative were in Europe at that time.

needed to do in order to secure Scottish co-operation was to convince James V that Charles and Francis were determined to proceed against Henry VIII. It would have been of little use, however, to exaggerate the degree of certainty in this matter, because this would have meant actively jeopardizing the last remaining Roman catholic foothold in northern Europe. So we can see from these instructions that Rome already took it for granted that both Charles and Francis were determined to publish the bull and to sever economic and diplomatic ties with England. The phrase that James should join his continental colleagues in their work for England's reduction 'per ogni via' leaves ample scope for interpretation. At this stage it suffices to point out that the possibility for joint military action against England was given. It will be discussed later whether or not the papal initiative of 1538-9, and notably Pole's legation, was ultimately aimed at unleashing a European war against England.

Giovenale's mission to France and Scotland must be seen in close connection with Pole's legation, but it was also clearly subsidiary to it. This is to say that the success of the papal initiative depended on the outcome of Pole's legation, and even if Giovenale's mission were to be successful, this success would be rendered worthless if Pole failed to achieve positive results.

Pole's instructions for his second legation tell us only what the pope expected him to achieve at the imperial court. The second part of Pole's commission, that he should travel to France in order to co-ordinate the efforts of both monarchs, was not mentioned in his instructions. The reason for this may be that the Roman policy makers wanted to await a report from Giovenale before commissioning the legate, or that they wanted to be informed about Pole's achievements in Toledo first. It could also be the case that they thought that Pole's commission for France was self-evident and thus it was neglected to specify it in written form.

The instructions for Spain - unlike those for Giovenale for France - dealt exclusively with the measures to be taken against England. Pole was instructed to work towards the publication of the bull and to call on the emperor to impose an embargo on England. The most important part of his commission, however,

was to dissuade Charles from his expedition against the Turks.

Et quoniam expeditio quae paretur in Turcas, obstat plurimum huic Angliae reductioni, et Concilio celebrandi pro rebus fidei, et pro Haeresi Lutherana extirpanda etcetera D[omine] V[ostra] R[everendissi]ma conabitur omnibus viribus persuadere Suae Majestati longe prestare, ne praesens occasio restituendae Religionis Nostrae in pristinam formam omittatur, fieri a liga univera inducias (et incluso etiam Christianissimo Rege) cum Turcis ad aliquod tempus, quam propter expeditionem in eosdem Turcas (quae non nisi diuturna et dubia et dispendiosa esse poterit) amittere occasionem bene gerendae rei Angliae, et Lutheranae.

Furthermore Pole was to advise Charles that even if the fight against the Turks was successful and the league strong enough to turn to the heretics afterwards

Daturos interim eos ipsos operam, ut conspiratione facta Italiam invadant et pecunia Regis Angli qua is maxime abundat, et Germano milite quo Lutherani pollent, Provincias ob Bellum Turcam praesidio maxime nudatas devastunt, ac diripiant.¹³

So Pole's task for his negotiations with the emperor was quite delicate. The only obstacle which created a degree of uncertainty for the positive outcome of the

¹³Instruction for Reginald Pole for Spain, Rome, [24 Dec. 1538]; Quirini, II, p. cclxxx; There is neither a date in Quirini nor in the manuscripts of this instruction in ASV: Nunziature Diverse 238, f. 156-60 and Misc. Arm. II, 49, f. 79-9^v; nor in the manuscript in BN: Fonds italien 687, f. 205-6^v, where the piece is erroneously placed among other manuscripts which all pertain to the Council of Trent. The above given date was substituted analogously to the dates of Giovenale's instructions, because it is highly likely that they were drawn up at the same time, since the two emissaries left Rome on the same day. 'It is namely the case that the pending expedition to Turkey is the greatest hindrance to the reduction of England, the celebration of a Council in the matters of the faith, and the extirpation of the Lutheran heresies. Your excellency will know how to persuade all the long-serving councillors of his majesty, that they will not miss the present opportunity to re-establish our religion in its former form, thus to arrange a universal truce with the Turks for some time (which should also include the Most Christian King), so that we will not miss the opportunity to put the English and the Lutheran affairs right because of the said expedition to Turkey (which might not only be lengthy and doubtful, but also costly). ... One would give them [the Lutherans] the opportunity to conspire in the meantime to invade Italy, and with the money of the English king, which is plentiful, and the German soldiers, whose ranks are stacked with Lutherans, they would utterly devastate the provinces which would be left unprotected because of the Turkish war.'

P. Van Dyke published this instruction, having copied the above cited Misc. Arm. II, 49 manuscript in the Vatican, in his 'The Mission of Cardinal Pole to Enforce the Bull of Deposition against Henry VIII', *EHR*, XXXVII (1922) p. 423, and claimed that it was an 'unpublished letter'. This is rather curious in a scholar who in the very same article uses Quirini's edition of Pole's letters and who in his *Renascence Portraits* (New York, 1906) had shown expertise in certain aspects of Pole's 1539 legation.

Roman initiative was Charles's preparation for a campaign against the Turks. The emperor was in league with the Venetians and Rome against the Porte and it had been agreed to strike against the Turks during the campaigning season of 1539. If Charles was determined to stick to this plan he would certainly not be prepared to move against England at the same time. For Rome there were two reasons for trying to influence the emperor to change his mind. Firstly, there now was the first promising opportunity to strike against the northern heresies since the beginning of the reformation. Rome's interest in regaining complete control over Christianity was greater than in fighting a war against the common enemy of all Christians. According to Roman reasoning this should be postponed until Christendom itself was reunited and ready to strike against the Ottoman Empire with combined forces. Secondly, an attack on the northern protestants would be much more economical for Rome than a risky and costly war in the Mediterranean. If the campaign against the Turks was launched, the papal fleet would be expected to partake in the fighting alongside with imperial and Venetian ships. The possible gain from this financially hazardous and strenuous enterprise would have been prestige only, because nobody could seriously expect the Christians to inflict a definitive defeat on the Turks. If, on the other hand, Spain, France, and Scotland launched a joint attack on England under Roman auspices, the whole campaign would cost relatively little for the curia, because Italy was too remote from the British Isles for the papacy to be expected to take an active part in the campaign, but the possible gain in prestige and in having one kingdom return to Roman obedience would have been infinitely greater. Thus it was not only religious zeal which prompted the curia to rally the catholic princes of Europe against the protestants, it was also cool calculations about the cost and profit of each possible option for the year 1539.¹⁴ It was well known in Rome that the emperor had set his mind on the

¹⁴The strain on papal finances caused by the ongoing warfare had already caused problems for Pole's legation in 1537 (cf. p. 57-8 above). Apparently the papal finances were stretched to such an extent that the curia became increasingly dependent on cardinals' private wealth to pay for their curial duties, thus an inexpensive gain of prestige in northern Europe would have been highly welcome to the Roman policy makers. Pole's instructions for Spain also made the point of emphasizing that an expedition against the Ottoman Empire would prove rather costly

Turkish enterprise and that the Venetians would use all their diplomatic weight to prevent Charles from changing his mind. This is why Pole's legation to the imperial court attained crucial importance for the political schemes of the curia. It is true that Charles V had encouraged Rome to publish the censures against Henry VIII, but unless Pole succeeded in persuading the emperor to drop the Turkish campaign and in uniting Charles and Francis against the English king, there was very little hope in obtaining the emperor's permission to publish the censures in his domains, let alone expecting any active moves against England.

At the beginning of Pole's legation it looked as if he was likely to fulfill his task. The political climate between Spain and France on the one hand and England on the other hand deteriorated rapidly while the legate was *en route* from Rome to Toledo. On 19 January 1539 the French and the Spaniards concluded a secret treaty in Toledo, in which they agreed that neither side should have any dealings with England without keeping the other side informed about it, and that neither party should enter into any alliances with England.¹⁵ This treaty reflected more the frustration which French and Spanish politicians had experienced with English foreign policies in previous years, namely that the English had used their position as a possible ally in the ongoing war between Habsburg and Valois to keep a hold over both warring parties, than it reflected the readiness of the two contractors to take action against England. In any event, the Treaty of Toledo was another move towards the goal of the Roman initiative, and that was the isolation of Henry VIII's kingdom.

Even after Pole's arrival in Toledo the Spanish politicians taught the English a rather sharp lesson in how far England had manoeuvred herself into the political off-side. An English delegation, which was in Toledo to negotiate the possibilities of a marriage between Henry VIII and Charles's niece, Christina, Duchess of Milan, was told that a marriage alliance between the two houses was impossible as long as Henry would not procure a dispensation from the pope.¹⁶

(cf. p. 134 and footnote no. 13 above).

¹⁵There is a copy of the Treaty of Toledo in BN: Fonds français 3916, f. 242-4^v. The details and the text of this treaty can be neglected for the present study.

¹⁶A note about this conference, dated 18 Feb. 1539, can be found in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris: Mémoires et Documents, Espagne 219, f. 85-6. According to

Although this treatment of England by the French and the Spanish clearly showed a potential for hostility, Pole was to experience the difficulty of his task when he arrived in Toledo. He was faced with the problem that after England had been effectively isolated, it was to prove virtually impossible to persuade the emperor to exploit the situation by taking action against England.

V. 2. Pole in Toledo and Giovenale in Paris

Pole and Giovenale left Rome around Christmas 1538. The intents and purposes of Pole's journey were kept secret, and for fear of English attempts on his life he travelled *incognito* and with a very small train.¹⁷ Giovenale made rapid progress and reached Paris on 15 or 16 January, bitterly complaining about the bad travelling conditions in winter.¹⁸ Pole's journey took much longer. He reached Bologna on 6 January,¹⁹ but as he was in ill health he could not travel very fast.²⁰ By 10 January he had gone only as far as Piacenza. The winter, his health, and the psychological torment which he experienced after he had had news that his brother had been sentenced to death in England made it impossible for Pole to travel with greater speed; the news of the verdict against Lord Montagu had reached Pole *en route* from Rome to Bologna, and in his letter from Piacenza he informed Contarini that Giberti, his old mentor and companion during the legation of 1537, had met him there to comfort him.²¹ It

canon law Henry needed this dispensation, because Christina was the great niece of Catherine of Aragon, hence she was related to Henry in the same affinity as Catherine of Aragon had been.

¹⁷It was not even publicly known in Rome that he was going to Spain as a papal legate. In a letter from Francesco Casali to Cromwell, Rome, 6 Jan. 1539; *StP*, VIII, no. 523, it was mentioned that Pole was going to see the emperor on behalf of his brothers. Casali was a Roman merchant who had previously been one of Henry's agents in Rome. It is difficult to determine whether he now acted as a spy in Cromwell's service, or whether this letter is explicable as a merely friendly gesture. For Casali see G. P. Brizzi, 'Casali, Francesco', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXI (1981) p. 80-1.

¹⁸The sources give two different dates for the arrival in Paris. Ferrerio to Farnese, Paris, 18 Jan. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 418, reported that Giovenale arrived on 16 January, whereas Giovenale to Farnese, Paris, 21 Jan. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 420, claimed to have reached the French capital on 15 January.

¹⁹Pole to Contarini, Bologna, 6 Jan. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 62.

²⁰Farnese expressed his concern about Pole's health in a letter to Aleander, Rome, 8 Jan. 1539; *NB*, III, no. 107.

took Pole more than one month to travel from Piacenza to Carpentras near Avignon, where another old friend of his, the Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto, resided as bishop. Either in Carpentras itself, or on his way there, news reached Pole that his brother had been executed. Pole's composure and the tranquility with which he received the news amazed and impressed the people who were with him during these days. Sadoletto was astonished that Pole showed so little grief and seemed to be giving comfort to the people around him rather than *vice versa*.²²

Meanwhile Poggio was still urgently expecting news from Pole. Although one of the most vexing problems of the entire legation was the inefficiency and delay in communication, it may be assumed that Pole in this case simply neglected to inform the nuncio of the progress of his journey.²³ As Pole had not travelled any further than Barcelona by early February he decided to abandon his small train there and to ride the last part of the journey in post. Pole took this decision because both men and beasts were exhausted after the crossing of the Pyrenees and he saw that there would be little hope for a speedy journey.²⁴ He finally arrived in Toledo on 11 February 1539.²⁵

By that time Giovenale's negotiations in Paris were already over. When he

²¹Pole to Contarini, Piacenza, 10 Jan. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 63.

²²G. B. Parks, 'Italian Tributes to Cardinal Pole', in: D. B. J. Randall, G. W. Williams (eds.), *Studies in the Continental Background of Renaissance English Literature* (Durham, N. C., 1977) p. 46-7. Pole's apparent calm reaction is in contrast to the fear of both Charles V and Francis I that Pole may be mixing his official commission with personal passion.

²³On 2 Feb. 1539 Poggio complained in a letter to Farnese from Toledo that he had not had any news from Pole whatsoever; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 201^v. Apparently, this situation did not change until Pole's arrival in Toledo.

²⁴Pole to Farnese, Toledo, 22 Feb. 1539; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 15^v.

²⁵There is some uncertainty about this date. Farnese informed Aleander from Rome on 23 Feb. 1539; NB, III, no. 151, that Pole had been in Barcelona on 10 Feb.. Obviously, he could not have been in Toledo on the next day then. However, both Pole (in the above cited letter, cf. footnote no. 24 above) and Poggio claimed that Pole arrived in Toledo on 11 Feb. (Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 28 Feb. 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 210^v.) On 15 Feb. one Robert Blage informed the Chancellor of Scotland, Gavin Dunbar, from Toledo that Pole had arrived on 13 Feb. (PRO: SP 1/143, f. 85; L&P XIV, I, no. 297), whereas Antonio Mocenigo, the Venetian ambassador in Toledo, wrote a letter to the Council of Ten on 14 Feb., claiming that Pole had reached the court that very day (M. Büdinger (ed.), *Venetianische Depeschen vom Kaiserhof*, (Vienna, 1889) I, no. 68).

had set out from Rome, Farnese announced the mission to Ferrerio emphasizing that the part of Giovenale's commission concerning England and Pole's legation were to be treated as top secret.²⁶ The nuncio informed the French court of Giovenale's coming and of the English implications of his mission on 8 January still keeping Pole's legation secret, and little later he could report that Francis was expecting Giovenale, thus indicating that the French king was still prepared to talk about England with a representative of the pope.²⁷ Very soon after his arrival in Paris Giovenale had an audience with Francis. From his report it becomes apparent that Pole's legation had not yet been mentioned. We have no evidence to indicate when Giovenale informed the king about Pole's legation. However, we can be certain that by January 1539 no official communication of it had been made from Rome to the French court.

Nevertheless, England was the central topic of discussion during Giovenale's conference with Francis. The monarch expressed his concern about the deterioration of the state of religious affairs in England and about the fact that the actions of Henry VIII, whom he now called for the first time a heretic and schismatic, were becoming increasingly savage. For these reasons Francis agreed to publish the bull in France, to forbid commerce with England, and to recall his ambassador from London. This agreement, however, was conditional on Charles's co-operation. Francis made it quite clear that he had no intention whatsoever of proceeding against the English king on his own. As far as the embargo and the interruption of diplomatic relations was concerned Francis had very definite ideas as to how this co-operation should work. He demanded that Charles instruct Mary of Hungary to forbid all commerce between the Netherlands and England. Then, he suggested, the emperor should write to his ambassador in England to arrange for both the French and the imperial ambassador to depart from the English court on the same day and leave the country together.²⁸

²⁶Farnese to Ferrerio, Rome, 24 Dec. 1538; *ANG, I*, no. 407.

²⁷Ferrerio to Farnese, Paris, 8 and 14 Jan. 1539; *ANG, I*, nos. 414 and 417.

²⁸Giovenale's report presents various problems. The original letter was kept in the State Archives in Naples as part of the Carte Farnesiane collection which was destroyed (cf. p. 3-4 above). A summary of the report was sent from Rome to the nuncio in Vienna. This

These were very far reaching stipulations, but to maximize these peaceful measures it was important that they were well co-ordinated between Francis I and Charles V. The impression which a joint walk-out of the most important ambassadors would have left on the English court would certainly have been greater than that, for instance, of the imperial or the French fleet cruising off the English shores. The impact would have been greater still if the diplomatic walk-out had coincided with an embargo imposed by the two monarchs who ruled the coastline from northern Germany to Portugal. Henry VIII and, indeed, all Englishmen could not have remained unimpressed by this.

It must also be taken into account that the new *entente* between Francis and Charles was still young and relatively fragile. Thus there is a possibility that Francis insisted on these measures to safeguard himself against the possibility that Charles might abandon the enterprise at the last minute and leave the French king in an embarrassing situation. Worse still, Charles might liaise with Henry again and take up the old fight Habsburg's against Valois. This latter possibility was not very likely early in 1539, but it is not astonishing that the confidence in one another was not established quickly between the former enemies. It is, however, beyond doubt that Francis was in principle prepared to support Rome and proceed against Henry VIII.

In all the papal correspondence pertaining to this initiative it is quite apparent that the papacy was looking for amends to be made with regard to the person of the King of England rather than the English nation. In the interview with Francis, Giovenale was to find out that the French king had rather different motives. Since his feud with the emperor was now over or dormant and the campaign against the Turks, of which he was not even part to begin with, showed no prospect for profit or gain for the French crown, Francis looked to

summary survived in ASV: Nunziatura di Germania 2A, f. 180-0^v, which was published in *NB, III*, no. 121. A nineteenth century copy of the Roman document can be found among the Roman Transcripts in the PRO, from which the calendar in *L&P XIV, I*, no. 115 was taken. A twentieth century copy of the original letter is kept in the Ecole Française in Rome and was published in full in *ANG, I*, no. 420. This edition will be used for the present study, because it is more comprehensive than the others and because it is likely to be closest to Giovenale's original.

England with an eye to possible spoils of war and on the opportunity of relieving his country of its most persistent and frequent enemy. He told Giovenale quite frankly

che con dare centomila scudi a Re di Scotia se li spingería addosso con sessantamila homini, et l'imperatore da la banda di Fiandra et Sua M[aesta] da la banda di Piccardia montaríano sul isola con l'ordinanze di lanzchenech contra le quali il Re d'Anglia non si potrà in alcun modo difendere perché non l'havea che non solo riduríano a quanto volessino ma lo metteríano in termine di non saría sicuro né de la persona, né de la vita, et qui discorse tutto che si poteva fare una divisione di quel regno, et dare al Imperatore la parte settentrionale di là da la Tamisa, et la parte di qua verso la Piccardia a Sua M[aesta] et al Re di Scotia una parte verso la Scotia che li fosse commoda et in fine ne ragionó a lungo come di cosa factibile et che havesse poca difficoltà; io visto questo discorso di Sua M[aesta] le dissi che Sua S[antita] anchor giudicava oportuno la creatione d'un altro Re de la patria et lassarne la electione a li popoli ... a finché li popoli fossero desiderosi di mutar Re et rifare di questa tirannide, et non si unissero tutti alla difesa del regno come era da credere che fáciano contra scozzesi et franzesi et tedeschi loro naturali nemici, et che forse questa via saría stata ancho più presta et più sincera.²⁹

For the 1539 initiative this overtly aggressive streak against England was unique to Francis I. None of the other powers involved thought or openly talked about invading England. Giovenale's answer to the French king, which did not please Francis much, was typical for someone who came out of the tradition of Italian politics. It could not be in the interest of any decisive power in one area to have one of their rivals completely destroyed, because this would either lead to the

²⁹Giovenale to Farnese, Paris, 21 Jan. 1539; *ANG, I*, no. 420; He told Giovenale quite frankly 'that giving 100 000 *scudi* to the King of Scotland would cause him to push in from above [the north] with 60 000 men, and the emperor from Flanders and his majesty [Francis I] from Picardy would descend on the island with troops of *lanzknights* against whom the King of England would have no chance of defending himself, because he would have no means of doing it; that they would not only reduce him to whatever they wanted, but they would make him fear for his life and limbs; and there is talk here that one could divide that realm, and give the part south of the Thames to the emperor, and the part there which faces Picardy to his majesty, and a part towards Scotland to the King of Scotland, whichever would suit him; and finally they were talking about it for a long time as if of something feasible and not very difficult. As I had heard this discourse from his majesty I told him that his holiness had already deemed it opportune to elect a new king who is a native of England and leave the election to the people ... because the people will be desiring to change their king and stop that tyranny, and will not unite in the defence of the realm, as they were to be expected to do against Scots, Frenchmen, and Germans who are their natural enemies; and that this way was also perhaps faster and more promising.'

total hegemony of the occupying power over the entire region or, if there was more than one power involved in the conquest, the former allies would promptly start fighting over the spoils of war, thus throwing the entire region into utter ruin. Before Italy had been invaded the peninsula had had a stable system where five rivaling powers of roughly equal strength had ensured that a certain *bilancia*, or balance-of-power, was guaranteed at all times. This system failed only after the French and Spanish invasions. The notion of a region operating almost like an organism, which was then destroyed from outside, thus bringing constant warfare and devastation of the region, was very much a reality for an Italian politician. Hence it is not surprising that the pope would have given preference to the election of a new King of England over a combined takeover of the country by her neighbours. With an independent and strong England the *bilancia* between Habsburg and Valois would be by far more secure than with these two establishing yet another common border on English soil at which they would continue their struggle eventually, moreover now without the King of England who had always kept a certain check on these two powers through his politics of alliances. The pope was not interested in seeing the power of either Charles V or Francis I grow, nor did he have strong feelings about castigating the English nation. The sole aim of the initiative of 1539 was to reverse the religious situation in England and to reduce the kingdom to Roman obedience. If in the course of this campaign Henry VIII was to lose his throne, Rome was prepared to sanction this, but by no means would the curia allow England to deteriorate into an occupied territory. This is not to say that Rome would have condemned the use of force against Henry VIII. The instructions of the emissaries of 1539 solely spoke of the publication of the bull, an embargo, and the severing of diplomatic ties. These measures were designed to unleash a revolution against Henry in England and it was hoped that the English would chase their king out of the country, repent, and return to Roman obedience. If the measures were to prove insufficient to achieve these aims Rome would certainly not have tried to restrain France, Spain, and Scotland from military intervention, but the curia would agree to it only under the condition that England

would retain her sovereignty.

It has been pointed out above that Francis had not been very happy with Giovenale's reply. It may have been a disappointment for the French king that the pope was unlikely to support his schemes of wishing to enrich himself and France. Nevertheless, Giovenale was very optimistic towards the end of his report, where he expressed his certainty that Francis would take action against Henry, and that Charles would not very well be able to refuse to join, once he saw Francis's determination and eagerness. Giovenale concluded his report that Paul III could hope to make good progress in the English affairs.³⁰

These negotiations in France took place while Pole was still on his way to Toledo. Early in January 1539 Paul III officially informed Charles V of the publication of the censures and the measures to be taken against England, and he also announced Pole's legation.³¹ With the same post Aguilar, the imperial ambassador in Rome, briefed his master more comprehensively about the Roman initiative. He pointed out the French implication of Pole's commission and also gave news about Giovenale's mission to France. He also passed the message on to Toledo that Francis was not intending to do anything if the emperor did not act.³² With this information Charles could calmly wait for Pole to reach Toledo. The emperor knew now that Pole would not be able to pressure him into any decisions. If Charles determined to proceed against England he could be sure of Franco-Scottish support, if however he decided to pursue his expedition to the Levant he was equally certain that no embarrassing action would be instigated from France. While Pole was travelling to Toledo it had also become known that France was contemplating a war and a partition of England. Cornelius Schepper, Charles's ambassador in Paris, wrote to Toledo that his French counterpart in England, Castillon, had suggested such plans in his latest letter from London.³³ A similar communication was passed to Poggio from

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Paul III to Charles V, Rome, 2 Jan. 1539; *Cal.StP, Spain, VI,1*, no. 33.

³²Aguilar to Charles V, Rome, 2 Jan. 1539; *Cal.StP, Spain, VI,1*, no. 34.

³³Schepper to Charles V, Paris, 10 Jan. 1539; *Cal.StP, Spain, VI,1*, no. 35. This initial idea Castillon's was most likely the root of the elaborate plan which Francis presented to Giovenale.

Rome. It is also interesting to see how indefatigable the Roman politicians were in continually providing their diplomats in Spain with good reasons why the emperor should champion the Roman cause against England. In the same letter in which Poggio was advised about the French hostility towards England, we also read that Francis was opposed to the campaign in the Levant. Furthermore

nessuno ha maggior causa di castigare quel mal Re, che Sua Maesta Cesarea
essendone stata più offesa, che altri nel'honore et conoscendo che solo per
causa sua la sede Ap[ostoli]ca se l'ha perso: si che concludendo questa occ[asio]ne
di castigarle non sarebbeno da perdere.³⁴

Rome was also trying to influence opinion at the imperial court through Charles's ambassador. The pope offered an opinion in an interview with Aguilar which was to become one of the most striking points of the 1539 legation. Paul III told the ambassador that he saw greater priority for the reduction of England than for an enterprise against the Turks because Henry VIII was a fiercer enemy than the infidels.³⁵

It will be argued at a later point in this study that this opinion was held by the Roman politicians largely because it was politically opportune.³⁶ The English policy makers, however, could not dismiss it as a political ploy, because it rang of an appeal for a crusade against England. It is true that Rome had called on catholic princes before to act against heretics, and it was also in line with catholic doctrine of the time to argue that the soul of an apostate was further beyond salvation than that of an infidel. However, the comparison between the Turks and the English as enemies of Christianity and the assertion that the English were more dangerous was new in 1539. The ferocity of Henry's attacks on those Englishmen who were still loyal to Rome had certainly helped bringing about this

³⁴State Secretariat to Poggio, Rome, 21 Jan. 1539; ASV: SS Principi 14A, f. 57-7^v.

Furthermore 'nobody has better reason to castigate that bad king than his imperial majesty, because he was more offended in his honour by him than others and he knows that the apostolic see only lost him [Henry VIII] because of his [Charles V's] cause: you are to conclude that this opportunity to castigate him should not be wasted.'

³⁵Aguilar to Mary of Hungary, Rome, 19 Jan. 1539; *Cal.StP, Spain, VI,1*, no. 37. Later on Pole was to argue on exactly the same line. It is difficult to determine whether this point of view had been prevalent in Rome before Pole had set out on his legation, or whether pontiff and cardinal arrived at the same conclusion independently. Since this must be regarded as a major change in curial political thinking I prefer the former of the two explanations.

³⁶Cf. p. 195 below.

change of opinion. It is also to be pointed out that this new language from Rome coincided with particular religious changes in England. This was the time when England tried to escape her isolation by closer ties with the German and Danish Lutherans. From the point of view of heresy and anti-Roman activity the continental movements posed a greater threat to Rome than what had been happening in England. An ideological combination of the continental and the English movements would have greatly strengthened the position of the protestants. Thus Rome tried to prevent this from happening. It has been pointed out above that England was considered an easier target in the 1539 initiative than Germany and also held a key position in the fight against religious dissent. It was in line with these deliberations that Paul III advised abandoning the crusading enterprise against the Porte in favour of taking up the more pressing challenge from within Christianity.

About the same time as Pole started his negotiations at the imperial court, the papal politicians were still confident that the initiative would bring about the desired aim. Aleander reported from Vienna that the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs was eager to support Pole and the reduction of England.³⁷ The opinion of the Austrian part of the dynasty, it was hoped, should carry a lot of weight with the emperor, because it was the Habsburgs' possessions in Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary which were mainly threatened by the Turkish onslaught. Poggio reported from Toledo that nothing was decided at the imperial court yet, and that Charles still maintained an open mind about the Turkish and English possibilities for 1539.³⁸ The politicians in the curia had been optimistic since Giovenale's report from Paris had arrived. The contents of the report were related to Poggio in such terms that it can be ascertained that in Rome it was almost taken for a fact that Charles would follow Francis's suggestions about the simultaneous withdrawal of ambassadors and imposition of an embargo. England was already seen as recovered for the Roman obedience and the new accord between Charles and Francis was seen as divine intercession.³⁹

³⁷Aleander and Mignanelli to Farnese, Vienna, 28 Jan. 1539; *NB*, III, no. 126.

³⁸Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 5 Feb. 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 201.

³⁹State Secretariat to Poggio, Rome, 12 Feb. 1539; ASV: SS Principi 14A, 115^v-6.

All these hopes had to be revised after Pole's first diplomatic encounter with the emperor. Pole's report on his negotiations in Toledo is relatively short and not very detailed. He met Charles on 13 February and introduced his commission to the monarch. Right at the start of their conversation the cardinal suffered his first disappointment. Charles complained that the censures had been published without his knowledge and pointed out that any campaign against England was very easy to begin, but infinitely more difficult to end. With the impending attack in the Levant he foresaw being on the defensive on all fronts rather soon. Charles also made the point that a joint action against England was potentially harmful to his newly concluded truce with the King of France. Not heeding Pole's reply that the co-operation was designed to strengthen the amity between the two monarchs and to prevent Henry VIII from bringing them at variance in the future, the emperor declared further that he had to make allowances for the German Lutherans, who would not suffer an attack on England.⁴⁰ This report from Pole's hand does certainly not inform us about the full interview. Pole did not pass on various details of this encounter which can be found in various other reports about Pole's time at the imperial court.

An English agent in Antwerp reported that Charles had said to Pole that the cardinal would give rather different advice if the church owned cities near England such as the emperor did.⁴¹ Although this detail could be ascribed to gossip it seems to have a grain of truth in it; the discussion between the emperor and the cardinal must have been very lively and passionate. Charles suspected later that the pope might not have chosen the legate wisely, because Pole appeared to be personally too involved in the matter.⁴² What is more, Charles's point about the pope's remoteness from England was also corroborated by the Venetian ambassador in Toledo, Alvise Mocenigo. The Venetians had a vested interest in seeing the campaign against the Turks take off, because they were also preparing for it and they were hoping to improve their trade conditions in the Levant. Thus the Venetian representative, and not as one might assume the

⁴⁰Pole to Farnese, Toledo, 22 Feb. 1539; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 16^v-7.

⁴¹News from Antwerp (I have been unable to establish the identity of this agent.), *s.d.*; BL: Galba B x, f. 114^v; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 902.

⁴²Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 28 Feb. 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 212.

English,⁴³ was Pole's main opponent at the imperial court. Mocenigo gave a concise report of the interview between the cardinal and the emperor. Since Mocenigo obtained his information directly from Charles V, and since there would have been no reason for the ambassador to edit the emperor's words, this report presents us with a close account of how Charles perceived Pole's legation. Mocenigo verified Pole's report that the emperor did not want to be rushed into a campaign against England, because he had doubts whether he would be able to bring it to a successful end. Furthermore, Charles expressed his astonishment at the pope's change of opinion, because he remembered that half a year before this encounter the pope had urged him in Nice that nothing should be given a higher priority than the campaign against the Turks. To this Pole gave quite an elaborate answer, which resembles the argument that Paul III had used in his letter to Charles V.⁴⁴ Pole said

che essendo la cosa d'Hinghilterra uno male intrinseco et quella de Turchi estrinseco et che però li pareva più necessaria cosa et più debita attendere à curare questo male intrinseco prima et di poi lo estrinseco, li rispose Sua Maestà che voria sapere da Sua Santità, se li venisse il Turco in Italia et fino in Ancona, come senza dubio veniria, se reputasse cotal male estrinseco over intrinseco.⁴⁵

Of course the emperor had evaded Pole's argument with his witty answer. Pole was not arguing that the problem was intrinsic because of geographical proximity, but because of its religious implications. He was saying that as long as Christianity did not put its house in order there was no use in attacking the external enemies of all Christians. With this point he was closely following the prevalent political opinion in the curia. Paul III had introduced the thought in his letter to Charles V. Charles made it quite clear that he was not willing to commit himself to such schemes. There were various reasons why he felt that he could

⁴³The role of the English ambassador will be dealt with later in this chapter.

⁴⁴Cf. 141 and footnote no. 31 above.

⁴⁵Mocenigo to Pietro Lando, Doge of Venice, Toledo, 18 Feb. 1539; *Venetianische Depeschen*, I, no. 69. Pole said 'that the English problem presented an intrinsic evil and the Turkish an extrinsic one and it seemed to him that it was the more necessary and dutiful thing to attend to, in order to cure the intrinsic evil before the extrinsic one; to this his majesty responded that he would like to learn from his holiness, if the Turk came to Italy and as far as Ancona, which he doubtlessly would, whether he would regard such evil to be extrinsic or intrinsic.' (Text originally in cipher.)

not do it. Firstly, he could not be sure of his allies. His experience taught him that allies tended to be fickle and were usually looking for their own personal gain in every campaign. The emperor had lost his idealism and was too cynical to assume that anyone might possibly fight for a common cause without searching for a personal reward in it. Secondly, he was the only of the European potentates who was vulnerable on all fronts. The Turks did not only threaten the Papal States and Venice, but also the Habsburg domains in Italy and on the Balkans. In his answer to Pole, Charles might have substituted Ancona, which belonged to the pope, for Naples or Sicily, where there were Habsburg interests at stake. He was also vulnerable in the north. If he had agreed to the enterprise against England, not only would Flemish trade suffer, but the emperor would also have had to face the consequences in the Empire. In the case of a religiously motivated attack on England the Lutheran princes of Germany might have rallied to Henry VIII's help, thus diverting imperial forces in Germany, which at that time would have been urgently needed to keep the Turks in check in the Mediterranean and on the Balkans. It is true that Francis had offered to mediate a truce with the Porte in order to spare the emperor a confrontation on all fronts,⁴⁶ but nobody could guarantee Charles that Francis's effort would be met with success, or that the protestants would not turn to the Porte for help once they saw their position threatened. For all these reasons the emperor was little inclined to comply with the wishes of the curia.

An outright refusal to do so would have been politically unwise. Firstly, because Charles could hardly refuse to defend the Roman church against her enemies, which was his duty as emperor and Catholic King of Spain, and more importantly, because Francis I had already professed his readiness to act on Rome's behalf. Thus a refusal would have damaged Charles's political image too much. This is why the emperor decided on playing for time and creating misunderstandings with Pole. The above quoted witty reply from Charles can be read on these lines. The tactics become even more obvious from another part of Mocenigo's report. The emperor told the ambassador that

non bene ancora sa lei quello che lui [Pole] li propogna, perchè da una

⁴⁶Giovenale to Farnese, Paris, 21 Jan. 1539; *ANG, I*, no. 420.

parte pare che'l li vogli fare come uno monitorio per levare il comercio
à esso Re d'Hinghilterra, dall'altra pare che'l voglia che si faccia guerra
contra di lui [Henry VIII].⁴⁷

If these tactics served the emperor's purpose in the interview with Pole, they were certainly not good enough to deal with the papal initiative on the whole. Pole was referred to the emperor's council for further consultation and had negotiation.

These negotiations with the councillors did not lead to much more than the interview with Charles had done. Although Granvelle admitted that the imperial court had previously encouraged Rome to take action against England and signalled its readiness to support Rome, he now took his master's line that the political situation had changed drastically and that an attack on England was untimely.⁴⁸ It appears that Pole made one last, desperate attempt to end his legation successfully. He threatened the councillors that he would travel to Paris to persuade the King of France to take action against Henry VIII without the emperor's support or consent. The cardinal pointed out how much the prestige of the emperor as the protector of the Christian church would suffer if England was successfully reduced without Charles's participation. This announcement met a frosty reception from the councillors who retorted that such procedure by the French king would be regarded as an unfriendly act against the emperor. Since the highest priority on the political agenda of the curia was the sustenance of the accord between Valois and Habsburg Pole withdrew this threat immediately and protested that he would not do anything that might jeopardize the *rapprochement* between the French and the Spanish ruler.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Mocenigo to Lando, as in footnote no. 45 above. The emperor told the ambassador that 'he does not yet know what he [Pole] was suggesting to him, because on the one hand it appeared that he wanted him to set up a system by which to stop the trade with this King of England, on the other hand it seemed that he wanted him to start a war against him [Henry VIII]' (text originally in cipher). It is interesting that the very fact that Pole and Charles did not understand one another seemed to be the only point on which the two negotiators agreed on hindsight. In a letter to Farnese from Carpentras, 25 Mar. 1539, Pole admitted that he had not been able to grasp the emperor's mind (PRO: PRO 31/9/65, m. 269; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 603). This very fact was corroborated by Charles himself in a letter to Mary of Hungary, Toledo, 23 Mar. 1539; HHStA: Belgien, Private Akten 29/3, f. 135.

⁴⁸Pole to Farnese, Toledo, 22 Feb. 1539; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 17.

⁴⁹Pole to Farnese, Carpentras, 25 Mar. 1539; as in footnote no. 47 above, but m. 274.

The only positive result which Pole could report from his negotiations in Toledo was a new suggestion which had been made by Charles's council. Well aware of the emperor's duties towards the Roman cause they agreed that something had to be done about the situation in England. Since Charles did not see himself in a position to divert any substantial forces for a campaign against England the council presented a new plan to the legate. They suggested that if both Charles and Francis could agree on this,

mandariano a visitare il Re [d'Inghilterra] del instantia qual fa Sua S[anti]ta
di farla publicare le censure nelli loro stati, allaqual cosa non possono
mancare d'obedire, se non che lui li faccia ritornare all'obedientia della Sede
Ap[ostoli]ca infra alcun breve tempo et termine prefisso.⁵⁰

Thus Charles could prove his sympathy for the Roman cause and for the catholic faction in England without actually straining his forces, endangering the Flemish trade, and possibly stirring up a religious war in Germany.⁵¹ Pole accepted this suggestion as a possible minimal solution and took his leave from the imperial court, intending to travel on to Paris in order to see to the second part of his legation.

While Pole was negotiating in Toledo the papal politicians in Rome were still full of euphoria about Giovenale's positive report from Paris. It was evidently not taken into account that Pole might encounter any difficulty in Toledo, and thus Farnese and the Roman State Secretariat proceeded to engineer further steps necessary for the reduction of England. Although the French had made it clear again that they would not act against England before they knew the emperor's mind on the subject,⁵² the Roman court instructed the nuncio in France to thank Francis for and accept his offer to mediate a truce with the Porte, because they assumed that both Francis and Charles would direct their attention towards

⁵⁰Pole to Farnese, Toledo, 22 Feb. 1539; as in footnote no. 48 above. They suggested that if both Charles and Francis could agree on this, 'they would send to the King [of England] to report about the insistence of his holiness that they should publish the censures in their states, which they could not fail to obey, if he [Henry VIII] would not return to the obedience of the apostolic see within short time and by a set date.'

⁵¹It will be suggested later in this chapter that Charles indeed tried to convey the message to England that the continental potentates were not prepared to tolerate the religious policies of Henry VIII much longer.

⁵²Ferrerio to Farnese, Melun, 9 Feb. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 423.

England in 1539.⁵³ The bad news about the outcome of the negotiations in Toledo, which would necessitate serious rethinking of the curial plans, was known in Rome by 7 March, at which time Pole was already on his way to France.

V. 3. England and Pole's legation in 1539

Unlike Pole's previous legation in 1537 the present one succeeded in causing real concern in England. The lines of communication between the English representatives on the Continent and their headquarters were less efficient than two years before and the distances their dispatches had to cover were longer, so that information did not travel as fast as it had done previously. The new understanding between Charles and Francis also made it more difficult for Henry's representatives to thwart Pole's diplomatic efforts, because the continental rulers need not treat their English colleague as a potential ally in 1539.

It is not quite clear when the English court received notification of Pole's legation, but even before Henry and Cromwell took any action in this direction alarming news about the hostility towards England on the Continent had reached them. Parallel to the Franco-imperial *rapprochement*, which influenced English relations with the European courts negatively, there had been a radicalization of religious policies in England, which was not conducive to a friendly atmosphere on the Continent. The desecration of the shrine of Thomas Becket, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the trials and almost complete extinction of the Courtenay and Pole families had made Henry VIII's reputation among his contemporaries reach a point where he was regarded as evil incarnate. It was not so much the anti-Roman nature of these actions but the viciousness with which they were carried out which led to Henry's ill fame. Alongside these actions there was another development which greatly concerned the policy makers who were surrounding Charles V and Francis I. England, apprehensive about her sudden isolation, was looking for new links and alliances, and was thus forced into closer contacts with the protestant rulers of the Empire and Denmark. The marriage between Anne of Cleves and Henry VIII and closer Anglo-Danish

⁵³Farnese to Ferrerio and Giovenale, Rome, 17 Feb. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 424.

relations were to be a direct result of this. What in England was a natural development out of pure political necessity was interpreted in Paris, Brussels, Rome and Toledo as a merger of the forces of the reformation, the impact of which, both theologically and militarily, would have been dangerous for the catholic Europe.

For all the above mentioned reasons the English representatives abroad were subjected to rather frosty treatment by their hosts. The ambassadors in Spain and France reported that Henry was being publicly denounced in the pulpits as a heretic and tyrant. When the news of the condemnation of the Courtenays and Poles reached Spain the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Wyatt, bemoaned the fact that this and the incident at Thomas Becket's tomb were made topic of sermons rather than Henry's harsh policies against the anabaptists.⁵⁴ Cromwell demanded of the French ambassador in England, Castillon, that he use his influence with the French government to have anti-English preaching stopped in France. Cromwell complained further that English bibles which he had commissioned to be printed in France and paid for had been sequestered by the Sorbonne after completion.⁵⁵ Castillon also reported to the French court how much Henry was still trying to revert the new configuration in European alliances.

Le Roy d'Angleterre m'a ce jourd'huy envoyé querir pour parler à luy à part, comme de coustume, en sa maison de Wastmestre où il m'a tesmoigné assez par ses discours qu'il estoit en peine de me déguiser la fin où il vouloit tomber, qui est tousiours, comme ie vous ay par ci devant escrit de tout, qu'il puisse trouver moyen de faire une brèche de bien loin à cette fascheuse et mal plaisante amitié pour luy, qui est entre le Roy et l'Empereur, me priant, ... que ie ne dois point craindre d'en advertir le Roy, et ce qu'il m'en dit, ce n'est pas comme à un Ambassadeur, mais comme à son bon et vray amy qu'il est certain que ie suis; et commence tousiours par la bonne amitié et inclination qu'il a depuis long-temps portée au Roy plus qu'aucun autre Prince de la Chrestienté.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Wyatt to Cromwell, Toledo, 2 Jan. 1539; G. F. Nott (ed.), *Poems of Henry Howard, Styled Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt*, (London, 1816) II, p. 342-3.

⁵⁵Chapuys to Charles V, London, 10 Jan. 1539; K. Lanz (ed.), *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V.*, (Leipzig, 1845) II, no. 456. The fact that the imperial ambassador reported an audience of his French colleague impressively demonstrates the new cooperation between the French and the imperial politicians.

These reports speak for themselves and it should be added only that the deterioration of the political climate was not only felt by politicians at home and abroad, but also by Englishmen who lived and worked on the Continent. Rumours about the possibility of the emperor and the Kings of France and Scotland declaring war on England greatly troubled the English merchants in Spain. They had been warned that the pope was trying to persuade these monarchs to take action against England. The rumours must have been persistent enough to warrant the Spanish merchants to suggest to their English partners that they should safeguard their goods, because it was to be expected that the English would soon be subjected to the same treatment as Jews and infidels.⁵⁷

The only place whence Henry and Cromwell received news contradictory to this was Flanders. The ambassador in Brussels, Thomas Wriothesley, reported that there was a lot of gossip and rumours about new papal censures against England and the hostility of Spain, France and Scotland towards England. However, he discounted this news as a false alarm which should not be believed, and, incidentally, on the same day that Giovenale was informed of Francis's plans for the partition of England, he wrote that there was no imminent danger and that Pole was rapidly losing his influence in Rome.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Castillon to Montmorency, London, 16 Jan. 1539; G. Ribier (ed.), *Lettres et mémoires d'estat des roys, princes, ambassadeurs et autres ministres sous les règnes de François I, Henri II et François II, 1537 - 1559*, (Paris, 1666) I, p. 357-9. 'The King of England sent for me today to ask me to talk to him separately, at usual at his house in Westminster, where he flattered me abundantly with his speeches so that it was difficult for him to conceal from me the aim at which he was striving, which is always, as I have written to you before, that he would like to find a means to achieve a breach in this amity between the king [Francis I] and the emperor, which he finds vexing and displeasing; he kept asking ... whether I could not think of something to dissuade the king [Francis I] from it, and whatever he said to me was not to be said as to an ambassador, but as to his good and true friend which he is certain that I am; and he keeps talking of the good friendship and inclination which he has so long borne for the king [Francis I], much more strongly than for any other prince in Christendom.'

⁵⁷William Ostrych, governor of the English merchants in Spain, to Richard Abbs, merchant in London, Cadiz, 28 Jan. 1539; PRO: SP 1/142, f. 173; *L&P XIV, I*, no. 158.

⁵⁸Wriothesley to Cromwell, Brussels, 21 Jan. 1539; *StP*, VIII, no. 524. It is true that Wriothesley had the most difficult assignment of all English diplomats, because Flanders at that time must be called the main gossip factory of Europe. It will, however, be shown below that Wriothesley had an extraordinary talent for constantly taking gossip for truth and *vice versa*.

Information on Pole's legation and its intents and purposes reached England at a relatively late stage. The Roman policy of keeping the legation secret was effective. As late as 21 January Cromwell had no idea about Pole's whereabouts, because on that day he commissioned one of his agents in Italy to inform him of the pope's policies and also suggested keeping close watch on Pole.⁵⁹ The news of the legation did not reach London before February 1539. It has been pointed out above that Casali had informed Cromwell about Pole's departure for Spain, but not about the cardinal's commission.⁶⁰ In February various English agents informed Cromwell about Pole's journey to Spain. A certain Guido Giannetto wrote on 5 February from Rome about Pole's legation and its full implications, but this letter certainly reached England too late to be the cause of Henry's and Cromwell's special instructions for Wyatt, which were dispatched from London on 13 February.⁶¹ Whether it was another letter arriving in London, or whether it was a note from Wriothesley's colleague in the Netherlands, Stephen Vaughan, that stirred up the English policy makers is impossible to determine. Vaughan took a very different attitude towards the gossip he heard in Flanders than did Wriothesley. He informed Cromwell that 'a merchant stranger told me here that Pole was rydden in post to the Emporer. I am bold to wryte to your Lordshypp what I here. When of these be any faults I humbly besech your lordshypp to pardon me.'⁶²

On 13 February Henry VIII finally reacted to the news of Pole's journey to Spain. The king wrote a letter to Wyatt with instructions on how he wanted the

⁵⁹Cromwell to Harvel, English agent in Venice, London 21 Jan. 1539; *StP VIII*, no. 525.

⁶⁰Cf. footnote no. 17 above.

⁶¹Giannetto to Cromwell, Rome, 5 Feb. 15[39]; BL: Vit. B xiv, f. 270-1; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 235. I have been unable to clarify the identity of Giannetto.

⁶²Vaughan to Cromwell, Berghen op Zoom, 9 Feb. 1539; PRO: SP 1/143, f. 62; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 265. Days later, after London had already reacted on the news that Pole was on his way to Spain, Wriothesley fell victim to yet another rumour. This time he reported that Charles had sent for Pole, and that the cardinal was now on his way to Toledo. Wriothesley to Cromwell, Brussels, 16 Feb. 1539; PRO: SP 1/143, f. 112; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 308. It is interesting that Wriothesley claimed that he had this information from one of Mary of Hungary's chief councillors, the Archbishop of Palermo. If this is true - Wriothesley's reports must be read with the greatest caution - it must be seen as an attempt by Habsburg politicians to mislead the English policy makers.

affair managed. From Henry's letter it becomes apparent that Wyatt himself had also written to London to convey the news of Pole's legation. Henry ordered Wyatt to request the emperor to forbid Pole entry into his domains, or, if Pole was already there, to expel him from Spain. This request was to be put forth with the same reasons as in 1537, namely that Pole was a traitor to the King of England and that according to mutual agreement neither sovereign was to shelter or support the other's rebels. From Henry's very elaborate instructions it becomes obvious that he was already foreseeing the complications of this line of reasoning.

And if the Emperor shall answer unto you that Pole cometh unto him as a public and not a private man, and that, *De Jure Gentium*, Ambassadors have and owe to have special privilege to be admitted and in no wise thus rejected as we have required, then shall you persist in the words of the Treaty, which be general; and to his reason *de Jure Gentium* and other that he could make unto you, ye shall reply and answer yea, and reply and confute that same upon such reasons and allegations as upon the said Pole's arrival into France and the Low Countries, were made to French King and to the Lady Regent, the summary whereof for your better information ye shall also receive herewith.⁶³

Henry finished his letter commissioning Wyatt also to point out the conspiracy of the Pole family which had been instigated by Reginald Pole from the Continent. The king also sent a letter to Charles V along with Wyatt's instructions, but left it for the ambassador to decide whether or not to give it to the emperor.⁶⁴

Obviously, these instructions did not reach Wyatt before Pole arrived in Toledo, thus the ambassador had to handle the affair at his own discretion and without any official backing from his master, which considerably weakened his position. Wyatt was possibly the ablest of Henry's diplomats in 1539; he had to use all his dexterity to try and influence the development of events favourably for his king. This was not an easy task for Wyatt, for he had been one of the first who had been made to feel the hostile swing against England after the recent *rapprochement*. In January Poggio had gleefully reported to Rome that Wyatt was in trouble with the inquisition and expressed the hope that the inquisitors

⁶³Henry VIII to Wyatt, Westminster, 13 Feb. 1539; Nott, *Wyatt, II*, appendix no. 20 (text modernized by Nott).

⁶⁴Henry's letter to Charles V, Westminster, 13 Feb. 1539, can be examined, *ibid.*, no. 25. It is doubtful whether Charles ever received this letter.

would succeed in making him leave Spain.⁶⁵ Presumably before Pole's arrival in Toledo, Wyatt had demanded from the emperor that in accordance with the treaties Pole should be refused an audience and, indeed, banned from Charles's domains. The emperor's reaction was very different from that of Francis I and Mary of Hungary when English diplomats had voiced like requests two years earlier, during Pole's first legation. It was reported that 'thEmperour sayeth to the treties alleged agenst his reception, that if he [Pole] were his owne treatour, coming from the Holy (scilicet) Father of Rome, He cannot refuse him audience.'⁶⁶ The English ambassador could not argue with this answer, and short of official instructions from his king he could not pursue this matter further without jeopardizing his own position at the imperial court. Poggio also reported that Wyatt had had a stormy interview with the emperor on the subject of Pole, and that the emperor had gone even further than Wyatt had reported. Charles threatened Wyatt with a ban from court if he did not alter his religious practices. The nuncio further reported the interesting detail that Pole was meticulously shielded from the Englishmen at the imperial court, and that Wyatt had been forbidden under pain of punishment to seek contact with the cardinal.⁶⁷

It has been pointed out above that it was the Venetian ambassador who was working most vigorously against Pole's legation. Thus, without intending to plead the English case, he was making amends for Wyatt's neutralized position and the English representative could see with relief that Pole had to leave the court in Toledo unsuccessfully. Since Wyatt was still uncertain whether the danger brewing in Spain was known to his master and whether Henry VIII had started reacting on Pole's legation, he arrived at a solution which was uncommon in diplomatic procedure. He wrote a letter to his colleague in Paris, Edmund Bonner, advising him that Pole was on his way there and suggesting that Bonner should handle the affair according to the precedents set in 1537

⁶⁵Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 25 Jan. 1539; PRO: PRO 31/9/64, m. 235; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 142.

⁶⁶Wyatt's report from Toledo is not extant; the quotation above was taken from a letter of Cromwell's to Wriothesley, *s.l.*, *s.d.*; *StP, VIII*, no. 531, where Cromwell summarized Wyatt's account.

⁶⁷Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 28 Feb. 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 210^v-1.

unless he would hear differently from Henry VIII.⁶⁸

Bonner was in effect in the same situation as Wyatt. He had not had any instruction or official communication concerning Pole, but was drawing his information from hearsay. On the same day as Wyatt wrote to him in Toledo he drafted a letter to Montmorency, which he did not dispatch, inquiring whether certain rumours concerning Pole and the publication of the papal censures were true.⁶⁹ It is curious why Cromwell and Henry were so negligent in advising Bonner. By the time Bonner received Wyatt's letter, on 4 March, he had still not heard from London. One reason may be that the particulars of Pole's commission were not known in England, but it would have appeared politically prudent for the English policy makers to make their reservations known at the French court, even if it was not clear from which side the danger was looming. The English negligence is even more surprising in view of the new development of the diplomatic climate between England and her neighbours. In mid-February both the French and the imperial ambassador were withdrawn from England simultaneously. We cannot determine whether this was a step premeditated by Francis I and Charles V jointly, but it certainly increased the worries in England that a hostile alliance was being forged on the Continent. Cromwell informed Wriothesley that grave doubts about the amity of the continental rulers towards England had been expressed in the king's council.⁷⁰

After this withdrawal of ambassadors the news reaching England became increasingly alarming, so that Cromwell, still not saying anything about Pole, instructed Bonner to find out whether there was a league against England, and if so, whether the French king was part of it and was ready to declare war on Henry VIII.⁷¹ Apparently Bonner received very much the same treatment by the French court as his colleague had experienced in Spain. The French were overly careful with the information they passed on to Bonner, so that the

⁶⁸Wyatt to Bonner, Toledo, 23 Feb. 1539; K. Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool, 1963) p. 88.

⁶⁹Undispatched letter Bonner's to Montmorency, Melun, 23 Feb. 1539; *StP VIII*, p. 172 footnote no. 1.

⁷⁰[Cromwell] to Wriothesley, London, 25 Feb. 1539; *StP*, *VIII*, no. 530.

⁷¹Cromwell to Bonner, London, 1 Mar. 1539; *StP*, *VIII*, no. 532.

diplomat was reduced to assumptions in his reply to Cromwell. He concluded that king and council would have to judge the situation for themselves, however he pointed out that he could see no reason for Charles V to be hostile towards England, unless he was secretly conspiring against England with Francis and Paul.⁷²

Meanwhile the rumours reaching England from Flanders were more and more strongly suggesting that Henry would have to face open hostility from his neighbours. All kinds of rumours were reported by Wriothesley who seemed to be losing his sense for what information was true or false. In the beginning of March there was talk in Flanders of an imminent invasion of England by the armies of Francis I, Paul III, and James V, who would act with the approval and support of the emperor. Further, Wriothesley had heard that Pole was on his way from Toledo to Paris, which prompted him to report that Pole was one of Charles's councillors and that he was travelling to France with the emperor's commissions.⁷³ Four days later Wriothesley hastened to report that Pole had ambitions for the English throne and that an attack on Calais was to be expected. He also alleged that Ireland was unsafe. However, the two latter points were common place enough for any ambassador to throw into a letter to England, irrespective of the political climate.⁷⁴ On the next day Wriothesley wrote, full of panic, that Pole was on his way to Flanders intending to proclaim himself king. He also related to Cromwell that he had already made plans and arrangements for poisoning Pole, if the cardinal came to Brussels while he was still there.⁷⁵ By the time these panic stricken notes, made up from hearsay, reached England, Henry and Cromwell already had more reliable information. Wyatt's report on Pole's sojourn in Toledo had reached them and the king could now see that even if the whole thing was not a storm in a tea cup, the situation was not quite as desperate as the news from Flanders had suggested.

Wyatt's report is lost, but from Henry's answer it appears that the ambassador had led his king to believe that it was only thanks to him that Pole

⁷²Bonner to Cromwell, Melun, 6 Mar. 1539; PRO: SP 1/144, f. 44; *L&P XIV*, 1, no. 449.

⁷³Wriothesley to Cromwell, Brussels, 3 Mar. 1539; *StP*, VIII, no. 533.

⁷⁴Wriothesley to Cromwell, Brussels, 7 Mar. 1539; *StP*, VIII, no. 536.

⁷⁵Wriothesley to Cromwell, Brussels, 8 Mar. 1539; *StP*, VIII, no. 537.

had left Toledo without positive results. Henry appreciated his diligence and ordered him to find out whether the alarming signs all around England were really pointing towards a war.⁷⁶ Following this letter it can be assumed that Henry was now in a position to form a picture of Pole's legation. That is to say, it was now clear that the papacy was trying to form a league against England, that Pole had had little success with his task in Spain, and that the cardinal had left Toledo for the French court. From this information and from the generally bad treatment which his representatives were receiving abroad, Henry could see the situation as critical, but not desperate.

How did the English government respond to the situation when it had a clear picture of the events? The reaction followed in three different lines of action simultaneously. Firstly, the English tried to thwart the progress of Pole's legation by directly approaching the French and Scottish courts. Secondly, Henry and Cromwell started sounding out the ground for closer co-operation and alliances with other rulers who had turned their backs on the Roman obedience; and thirdly, precautions were taken in England with regard to possible allies of the Roman cause within the country and with regard to the defence of the realm against attacks.

In a letter to Francis I the English king asked for Pole's arrest and extradition. Henry argued that Francis had reacted positively on the request to refuse Pole audience two years previously and that it was against the Anglo-French treaties to support one another's rebels.⁷⁷ Given the close co-operation between Charles and Francis and the fact the Bonner had previously been encountering difficulty in obtaining an audience with the French king, we can assume that Henry's letter did not impress his French colleague much.⁷⁸ What is more, we know that Francis was determined to receive Pole this time. Indeed, he had already sent an escort to the south of France who was to meet Pole there and give him an honourable safe conduct to Paris.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Henry VIII to Wyatt, Westminster, 10 Mar. 1539; Nott, *Wyatt, II*, appendix no. 21.

⁷⁷Henry VIII to Francis I, Westminster, 8 Mar. 1539; Ribier, *Mémoires et documents, I*, p. 401-2.

⁷⁸[Bonner] to Montmorency, Melun, 7 Mar. 1539; BL: Calig. E ii, f. 252, *L&P XIV, I*, no. 457.

Henry also started a diplomatic initiative towards Scotland. Whether this was just a general precaution, or whether Giovenale's Scottish commission had become known is difficult to determine. In the event, Giovenale did not proceed to Scotland, but waited for David Beaton to go to France. There is no record of the meeting between Giovenale and Beaton, but it must have taken place early in April 1539.⁸⁰

Henry prepared a mission to the Scottish court, the aim of which was to dissuade James V from any hostility towards England on the pope's account. Although it is very likely that the English envoy, Ralph Sadler, never left for Scotland, it is important to take a brief look at this intended diplomatic initiative. The instructions for Sadler reveal that the English king was hoping to achieve two things with the mission. Firstly, Sadler was to warn James of the deviousness of the pope, whose aim it was to abuse those princes who were loyal to him. Secondly, the English envoy was commissioned to use the example of Pole's legation as proof that neither Francis I nor Charles V were willing to face a great risk on behalf of the pope.⁸¹ The very fact that Pole's legation was to be used as an example might indicate that Henry already felt quite safe from the threat of an invasion by the time Sadler was about to be dispatched. It may, however, also be the case that Henry was trying to bluff James into believing that Pole's efforts had been thwarted, because in mid-April Henry could by no means be certain of the intentions of his continental colleagues. This uncertainty could be the reason why Sadler's mission never seems to have taken place.⁸² The other piece of evidence concerning this curious diplomatic

⁷⁹Ferrerio to Farnese, Moret, 18 Mar. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 429.

⁸⁰On 26 Mar. 1539 Ferrerio asked Montmorency in a letter from Sens whether Beaton would be spending Easter with the constable, because Giovenale was getting anxious to deliver the cardinal's hat to the Scotsman; Ribier, *Mémoires et documents*, I, p. 418 (this letter is missing in the *ANG* edition of Ferrerio's correspondence). We also know that Giovenale left France for Rome before the end of April (Ferrerio to Farnese, Troyes, 24-5 Apr. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 434,) thus a meeting between the two statesmen must have taken place in the meantime, during which the papal emissary would have briefed the Beaton on his commission to Scotland.

⁸¹Instructions for Ralph Sadler, *s.l.*, [15 Apr. 1539]; *StP*, V, no. 320. This piece has erroneously been placed in 1537 by the editors of the *StP* and by those of the *L&P* (*L&P* XII, I, no. 1313), however the mistake is corrected in *L&P* XIV, I, no. 771.

⁸²Apart from Sadler's oration to James, which will be discussed below, there are no acts or

interlude is generally referred to as "Sadler's oration to James V".⁸³ The Scotch king never heard this oration. It is possible that it represents a more elaborate draft of the instructions for the would-be envoy. In the "oration" it becomes apparent that Henry had indeed found out about Giovenale's mission to Scotland, but it remains unclear whether Henry knew just what Giovenale's commission was. A long passage in the "oration" is taken up by a warning against cardinals. Because of Beaton's elevation to the purple James was advised not to suffer any cardinals in his realm. The experiences with cardinal of both Henry VIII and his father were cited as a warning. The whole problem of the dual allegiance cardinals owed to both the secular prince and to the pope was portrayed as a reason for discouraging one's subjects from accepting this curial office. Although Pole's name was carefully avoided in the "oration" it is obvious that the whole passage was aimed at him. Trouble over allegiance had never been a problem for Henry VII, nor had there been any question about it for Wolsey. If Pole had not been the target of this passage, bishops and not only cardinals would have to be included in these deliberations. The way in which this treatise presented the case shows just how menacing Pole was for Henry VIII. The problem was also not that Pole's conscience was torn between two masters, but that Henry had lost the loyalty of this formidable church man. Although Sadler did not go to Scotland, the little evidence we have about this intended mission suggests that Henry had now grasped the complexity and dimensions of the threat posed to his position by Pole's legation and he was looking to keeping his back safe in the event of an attack from the Continent.

Henry and Cromwell also started to look for help and support among the protestant rulers of Europe. Now that it was becoming clear that political alliances might be dictated by denominational factors, it was only logical for England to safeguard herself against catholic aggression through closer ties with the other countries which had turned against Rome. Cromwell instructed the English envoys at the Diet in Frankfurt, Christopher Mont and John Paynell, to seek closer co-operation with the protestant princes. They were to inform the

papers pertaining to this mission, which suggests that it was aborted during its planning stages.

⁸³J. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, V (London, fourth edition by J. Pratt, 1877) p. 103-5.

protestants that the pope was conspiring to destroy all adherents of the new teaching and that therefore all anti-Roman forces had to work together more closely.⁸⁴ The representatives were to make the greatest effort in respect of the Duke of Cleves. They were to warn especially him that the emperor bore hatred towards all protestants.

For wheras Mr Wyat the ki[n]ges ambassadour ther [in Spain] hering tell of the com[ing] of the ... Pole Cardinal towardes themperour at the kinges command ... required hym, that he shuld in no wise admit the said rebell into his dominions ner geve accesse or audience to hym, ... he made a sharpe answer therunto, with token of grete vehemente grudge and indignacion, that seying his highnes had given audience to sundry oratours sent unto hym by the said Duke and Landisgrave [of Hesse], his Rebelles vassales and enemyes of the Catholike Church of Christendom, And also received le[tter]es and oratours from the Duke of Holtz [Holstein] usurpatour of Denmerke by whose meanes his brother in lawe king christierne is kept tyrannykly in prison, he could have no less libertye to give the said Rebell audience, then the kinges highness had to receive his oratours sent unto hym by those usurpatours and Rebelles aforenamed.⁸⁵

Obviously, Cromwell was following his vested interest in supporting the marriage prospects between Cleves and England by treating the duke with special consideration, but the tactical aspects cannot be overlooked. Cleves and England were both neighbouring the Habsburg possessions in Flanders, hence any religiously motivated aggression by Charles V would have struck these two countries before any other

The fact that this information was not exclusively made known to the Duke of Cleves, but also to the King of Denmark, shows that Henry and Cromwell were thinking in terms grander than a dynastic match. It was on Henry's initiative that Christian III was informed of the hostility towards the protestant rulers which Charles V had displayed in front of Wyatt.⁸⁶ In this case we also have proof that the information was appreciated. Christian III thanked Henry VIII and

⁸⁴Cromwell to Mont and Paynell, London, 22 Mar. 1539; R. B. Merriman, *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, (Oxford, 1902) II, no. 300.

⁸⁵Cromwell to Mont and Paynell, London, 10 Mar. 1539; *ibid.*, no. 295.

⁸⁶Information for Christian III, *s.l.*, [12 May 1539]; A. Samling, 'Danmarks forhandlinger med Frankrig, England og Skotland. I Frederik I's og begyndelsen af Christian III's regeringstid', *Aarsberetninger fra det Kongelige Geheimearchiv*, IV (1870) no. 132.

signalled his interest in closer ties with England.⁸⁷ The fact that Henry wanted Christian to be informed demonstrates that this aspect of English foreign policies had not solely been designed by Cromwell's religious conviction and his desire for more radically protestant policies in England. If pushed by political necessity, Henry was quite capable of overlooking his contempt for the protestant reformation and of drumming up support in whichever camp he could find it. In the event, the English overtures to the continental protestants proved unnecessary and once it became clear that no immediate danger would arise from Pole's legation, Henry did not pursue the matter further. The significance of the build-up towards a split of the political map of Europe according to denominational factors as early as 1539 should, however, not be underestimated.

In addition to the diplomatic efforts of the English government to keep the threat in check, Henry and Cromwell strove to prepare England for a conflict with her neighbours. An incident at the English northern coast gave evidence that at least in Ireland there was a faction which was ready to support Pole. A shipwreck had delivered an Irish monk to English custody; the monk was carrying letters which showed that the Irish catholics were either cultivating or seeking contact with the renegade cardinal.⁸⁸ Thus the blow struck at the catholic opposition in the previous year turned out not to have been quite as complete as its engineers had hoped. English propaganda retaliated with public sermons and treatises. Tunstall preached a sermon denouncing Pole and Paul III to stir up other nations against England. This sermon was printed in order to achieve maximum impact and a wide distribution.⁸⁹ Richard Morison also took up the quill again and wrote a short invective against Pole, in which he reproached his former patron for accepting office at foreign courts in order to harm England.⁹⁰ This propaganda was not only designed to discredit the Roman cause in England, but also served to create a belligerent mood in the

⁸⁷Christian III to Henry VIII, Hadersleben, 18 May 1539; *ibid.*, no. 134.

⁸⁸The Council of the North to Cromwell, York, 9 Mar. 1539; *StP*, V, no. 357; and Cromwell to Henry VIII, London, 14 Mar. 1539; Merriman, *Cromwell*, II, no. 297.

⁸⁹*A sermon of Cuthbert bysshop of Duresme, made upon Palme sundaye before kynge Henry the viii* (London, 1539), *RSTC*, no. 24 339.

⁹⁰Morison's treatise, [late April 1539]; BL: Tit. B i, f. 109-16v; *L&P XIV*, I, no. 869.

country, because it was effectively striking xenophobic chords. This atmosphere was needed by the government in order to prepare the people for the defence of the country in case France and Spain were going to attack.

Following a proclamation on the fortification of the coasts of England and Wales, which had been issued in mid February,⁹¹ Cromwell made a note to attend to the fortifications again at the beginning of April.⁹² This and other actions by the English government show that the threat of an invasion was taken very seriously by Henry and Cromwell for the better part of 1539. Henry gave orders to arrest all Spanish ships in English ports, until it was ascertained whether the emperor was still on friendly terms with England.⁹³

The English policy makers did not see the danger banned as late as May 1539, when the king ordered musters to be held throughout the country. The proclamation for the London musters read:

The Kyng's Highnesse whiche never ceassyth vygyllantly ... to provide for the defence of outward invasyons whiche myght happe to be moved or attemptyd ageynst the same [England] was lately enformyd by hys trusty and faithfull freends that the cankard and venemous serpent, Paule bysshoppe of Rome, by that archtraytor Reygnold Pole, enemy to God's worde and hys oune naturall countrey, has moved, excyted, and styrrred dyverse great prynces and potentates of Chrystendome, not alonely to invade thys realme of England with mortalle warre, but also by fyer and sworde to extermyn and utterly destroy the hole nacion and generacion of the same.⁹⁴

These musters were held in preparation for a defensive war although Henry had already received quietening news from the Continent. Wyatt had reported that the Venetian ambassador had confided in him that Charles was giving Pole's cause a very low priority and that he would not attack England despite Pole's efforts.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Bonner had notified his master that Pole did after all

⁹¹Draft of the proclamation for the defence of the coast; PRO: SP 1/143, f. 188-90^v; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 398.

⁹²Cromwell's remembrances, *s.l.*, [beginning of April 1539]; PRO: E 36/143, f. 129; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 655.

⁹³Mocenigo to Lando, Toledo, 28 Mar. 1539; *Venetianische Depeschen, I*, no. 74.

⁹⁴T. Lott and H. Ellis (eds.), 'Account of the Muster of the Citizens of London in the 31st Year of the Reign of Henry VIII', *Archaeologia*, XXXII (1847) p. 30-1. The muster was held on 8 May 1539.

⁹⁵Wyatt to Cromwell, 16/18 Mar. 1539; Muir, *Wyatt*, p. 89.

not go to the French court, but that the cardinal had been heard through his envoy, Vincenzo Parpaglia. Pole's delay in southern France was counted as a partial failure of his legation and prompted the English to feel under less pressure than before.⁹⁶

The impact of the diplomatic development in the first three months of that year on England was enormous. For the first time Pole proved not only to be an embarrassment for Henry's prestige, but also a manifest political menace. Despite the news received in England in March that Pole's legation was likely to be unsuccessful, the English government was heavily influenced in its decisions by the threat which was looming on the Continent. The new orientation in English foreign policies towards the German protestants and Denmark is one example for this, the preparation for the defence of the realm another. Charles and Francis might have been able to influence Henry's policies to a far greater extent if they had succeeded in combining their efforts more closely. The threat of these two rulers standing against England together was not taken lightly by Henry and his councillors, but the lack of common effort by the catholic rulers gave the English some sense of security. The new French ambassador in England, Charles de Marillac, summed up the political feeling when he reported that the English were nervous about the amity between Charles and Francis, but felt protected by the Turks.⁹⁷ This is exactly where Charles's and Francis's policies failed; they missed the opportunity of appearing determined to intervene in England. This intervention need not necessarily have taken place with force of arms, but the fact that both rulers declined to publish the papal censures, let alone impose the embargo on England which Paul III had demanded, showed the English that despite the unpopularity of the English policies on the Continent the risk of an open conflict could still be calculated. That is why the English found it sufficient to increase their defensive power in this diplomatic gamble, but did not deem it necessary to concede even the least token of goodwill to the European pressure. In the event, England was the only nation involved which showed

⁹⁶Bonner to Henry VIII, Sens, 28 Mar. 1539; BL: Calig. E iv, f. 1; *L&P XIV*, I, no. 620.

⁹⁷Marillac to Montmorency, London, 15 Apr. 1539; Ribier, *Mémoires et documents*, I, p. 437-9.

some degree of determination by holding musters and thus demonstrating a readiness to defend her policies.

It is futile to speculate what Charles and Francis could have achieved, with or without invading England, if they had made Henry understand that they were serious about their quest for change in England. We cannot know whether England would have yielded to international pressure, or whether Henry would have risked an armed conflict. The first three months of 1539 showed that England had to react to developments on the Continent and that England could not feel protected solely by virtue of her insular position. European politics and diplomacy were too developed by the mid sixteenth century for one part of Europe, however remote, to ignore the machinations of the European potentates. The year 1539 was the best chance for the Roman church to score a decisive point against the new learning. It would be unjust to claim that Rome had failed to seize this chance, as it would be unjust to ascribe to luck the fact that England escaped the threat unscathed. Henry's government reacted to the events on the Continent, because the modest reaction displayed by Henry and Cromwell was the only prudent answer to the indecisive attitude of Charles and Francis.

V. 4. Pole in France and Farnese's negotiations in Toledo

When Pole took his leave from the emperor in Toledo he intended to proceed directly to the French court. As far as can be established there had been no contact between the legate and the French monarch before Pole went to see Charles V. The French court had been informed of Pole's legation through Ferrerio and Giovenale and Francis I had cautiously expressed his interest. It will be remembered, though, that all the encouraging notes sent out by the French court had included one crucial stipulation: France was willing to act against England, but only if the emperor took action as well.⁹⁸ Since Pole did

⁹⁸Cf. p. 139 above. The only positive action which France took against England without waiting for anyone's cooperation was to freeze the payment of the annual rent which the English monarch received from the French. Ferrerio informed Cardinal Farnese that Francis wanted this move understood as a means of punishing Henry (Melun, 20 Feb. 1539; *ANG, I*, no. 426). It is interesting that Francis submitted a supplication to the pope in which he asked for an absolution from all obligation towards the English crown for himself and all his successors. BAV: Vat. Lat. 8 461, f. 140. The supplication is undated and it is questionable

not have a positive result from Toledo the answer he could hope to obtain at the French court was a rejection of the papal request on the grounds of a lack of imperial co-operation. In order to avoid this compromising situation and the public embarrassment of failing to achieve his ends at two European courts he resolved to delay his journey to Francis I and withdraw to papal territory near Avignon where he could wait for new instructions. Pole wrote a letter to the Constable of France, Anne de Montmorency, in which he excused himself from appearing for the time being. He summarized his commission and the results of his negotiations in Toledo and pointed out that he had been scheduled to go to the French court under the assumption that upon his departure from Toledo the censures would be published in Spain and that he would be going to France in order to coordinate and finalize the next measures against England. Pole further announced that he was sending Vincenzo Parpaglia, who was one of Pole's most loyal secretaries and helpers, to the French court. It was Parpaglia's commission to elaborate on Pole's letter and to keep the negotiations with Francis and his councillors alive.⁹⁹

It is to be expected that Montmorency and Francis were relieved at Pole's decision not to come to court. Since there was no agreement to be finalized and since Henry VIII was already demanding that Pole be treated as in 1537,¹⁰⁰ Pole would have been a political embarrassment for the French politicians. It is true that Francis was determined to give Pole audience and that he had already sent an escort to give Pole a safe conduct to court,¹⁰¹ but it becomes clear from Francis's subsequent letter to Pole that the king preferred and endorsed the cardinal's

whether it dates from 1539, because in it the English monarch is described as 'Henricus Rex Angliae haereticus publicatus et declaratus' ('Henry, King of England, who is a publicly declared heretic'). Technically Henry had already been excommunicated since 1533, but the bull against him had never been published anywhere else but in Rome. The above quoted document fits in the context of 1539, because at the beginning of 1539 it looked as if the bull was going to be published all over Europe. If the pope had then granted the French supplication, this would have been of value for the French king, because one possible outcome of the initiative of 1539 was the restitution of Roman obedience in England under a king who would not have questioned the papal ruling.

⁹⁹Pole to Montmorency, Gerona, 16 Mar. 1539; Quirini, II, p. 232-36.

¹⁰⁰Cf. p. 159 and footnote no. 77 above.

¹⁰¹Ferrerio to Farnese, Moret, 18 Mar. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 429.

decision to wait in Avignon.¹⁰²

Pole had arrived at his decision not only because of the dissatisfying result which he had brought with him from Toledo, but also because there was an apparent disruption in the communication between him and Rome. As late as 28 March Farnese did not have any news about Pole's negotiations in Toledo, but that the legate had been given an audience on 14 February.¹⁰³ Two days later some vague information on Charles's lack of co-operation must have reached Rome, because Farnese commented on the pope's annoyance with the emperor's attitude.¹⁰⁴ By this time Pole had already taken residence in Carpentras near Avignon, where he was enjoying the hospitality of his friend, Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto.¹⁰⁵ The astonishing factor in this confusion within the network of papal diplomacy is that Pole's letter which he had written to Farnese after the audience with Charles, did not reach its recipient before 7 April.¹⁰⁶ A total of about two months was lost for the papal diplomats in these communication problems. Pole had no other option but to ask for new instructions after the unexpected outcome of his talks in Toledo. His decision to avoid the French court and withdraw to papal territory was later endorsed by the pope, who expressed his astonishment at Pole's presence of mind.¹⁰⁷

As it was becoming increasingly likely that the papal initiative against England would not be met with success, Pole saw himself confronted with an additional problem. Both Francis and Charles were beginning to protest that they did not have to accept any responsibility for Pole's failure. Thus Pole now saw himself faced with reservations against him personally. The French politicians registered their worries that Pole, as an imperial cardinal, would certainly favour the Habsburgs in the negotiations about England.¹⁰⁸ Pole does not seem to have

¹⁰²Francis I to Pole, Nogent sur Seine, 24 Mar. 1539; HHStA: Großbritannien Varia 3/3, f. 43; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 602.

¹⁰³Farnese to Aleander, Rome, 28 Mar. 1539; *NB, III*, no. 173.

¹⁰⁴Farnese to Ferrerio, Rome, 30 Mar. 1539; *ANG, I*, no. 430.

¹⁰⁵Pole's first letter from Carpentras addressed to Contarini was dated 25 March; Quirini, II, no. 65.

¹⁰⁶This becomes apparent in a letter Pole's to Farnese, Carpentras, 17 Apr. 1539; PRO: PRO 31/9/65, m. 279; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 798.

¹⁰⁷Contarini to Pole, Rome, 12 Apr. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 69.

defended himself against this allegation, and there would have been little point in doing so, because they were standard reservations, which would have been brought forth against any envoy by either monarch. It will be remembered that one of the reasons why Giberti accompanied Pole in 1537 was that the Roman policy makers had hoped that Giberti's pro-French reputation would be useful in France, whereas Pole's role had been to negotiate primarily with the Habsburgs in Brussels.¹⁰⁹ The French politicians distrusted him, because he was an imperial cardinal, and he may have corrupted his credibility with the imperial politicians by the fact that he was conducting dual negotiations. Their imperial colleagues took a different approach to discrediting Pole. They claimed that he was not the right man for this mission, since he was engaged in a personal feud with Henry VIII. Thus Pole was accused of being subjective and of trying to combine the reduction of England with his personal revenge on Henry.¹¹⁰ The cardinal took good care to reject this allegation, because it was much more damaging for his prestige and political credibility than the French reservations. He wrote a long letter to Charles's chancellor, Granvelle, in which he protested that his work for the good of the church had nothing to do with his personal feelings about the English monarch.¹¹¹ If at all his quest against Henry VIII could in any way be connected with revenge, reasoned Pole, one would have to call it divine revenge rather than personal, because God was using him as a tool for His revenge.¹¹² He further elaborated that he had loved the English monarch more than anyone else, with the exception of his parents, and that he was convinced that he was still rendering service to Henry, because he was striving towards a situation that would ultimately allow the king's salvation.

Obviously, Pole had no means of vindicating himself conclusively from the

¹⁰⁸Ferrerio to Farnese, Melun, 20 Feb. 1539; *ANG. I*, no. 426.

¹⁰⁹Cf. p. 41 above.

¹¹⁰Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 28 Feb. 1539; *AGR: Papiers Gachard* 643, f. 212.

¹¹¹Pole to Granvelle, Carpentras, 11 Apr. 1539; p. 219 below.

¹¹²This statement is very much in line with P. S. Donaldson's observation that Pole identified himself with the prophetic theology of the Old Testament and saw himself as a tool in God's hand rather than an independent political being. 'Machiavelli, Antichrist, and the Reformation: Prophetic Typology in Reginald Pole's *De Unitate* and *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*' in R. L. Demolen (ed.), *Leaders of the Reformation* (London, 1984) p. 211-46.

imperial allegation and it is highly doubtful whether he was really able to separate the public service which he was performing from his private feelings about the fate of his family. Indeed, in the above cited letter he also emphasized that he thought it fitting that a member of his family should have gone to the emperor as papal and English envoy - for that is how he interpreted his own role - because it had been his family that had suffered most when the marriage between the Tudor and Habsburg houses was first concluded and the same family now continued to suffer due to their loyalty to the former queen, Catherine of Aragon, and to the old religion. From this statement we can deduce that to some degree family pride and frustration over the fate of his family added to Reginald Pole's energy in his quest against Henry VIII.

When Pole decided to withdraw to Carpentras, he did not want to let the negotiations come to a complete standstill. As was mentioned above, he therefore resolved to send his political secretary, Vincenzo Parpaglia, to the French court.¹¹³ Parpaglia was commissioned to report to Francis I and his councillors what had befallen in Toledo and to enquire about any suggestions from the French court as to how the legation could be brought to a successful end. We know but little about the outcome of Parpaglia's mission, because he did not leave any written evidence about it. He returned to Pole immediately after his talks with Francis and Montmorency and gave an oral report. The cardinal then sent him on to Rome to inform the pope about the current standing of affairs. Apparently the French policy makers had signalled their eagerness to proceed against England, provided that Charles would give his support, and they encouraged the cardinal through Parpaglia not to relax his efforts in trying to persuade the emperor.¹¹⁴

¹¹³Cf. p. 167 above. Pole informed Farnese of this from Carpentras on 25 Mar. 1539; PRO: PRO 31/9/65, m. 268-9; *L&P XIV, I*, no. 603.

¹¹⁴This can be grasped from the optimistic tone in which he announced Parpaglia's mission to Rome. Pole to Contarini, Carpentras, 8 Apr. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 66. We know that Pole employed Parpaglia repeatedly as emissary in the course of this legation. At least one more trip to Rome can be shown from a letter Sadoletto's to Paul III, Carpentras, 16 Aug. 1539 (A. Ronchini, *Lettere di Cardinale Iacopo Sadoletto e di Paolo suo nipote* (Modena 1872) no. 2). A closer knowledge of Parpaglia's missions would indeed cast an interesting light on this legation, but with Parpaglia's papers unavailable, there is very little we can find out about

Parpaglia's main result from his negotiations was that both France and Scotland were prepared to comply with the papal demand to lift commerce with England and publish the censures if the imperial side agreed to take the same steps. It also appears that Parpaglia's report effected a change in the political thinking of the curial politicians. They were interested in elaborating on the only positive result which Pole had brought away from Toledo, where Pole and the imperial councillors had developed the idea that Charles and Francis should send to Henry VIII jointly to admonish him to return to Roman obedience within a set time, failing which they could no longer postpone following the papal demand for the reduction of England.¹¹⁵ The curial politicians now decided that this idea was to be developed further between the legate and the courts of France and Spain.¹¹⁶

Although this was slightly against the advice Pole had given about future proceedings,¹¹⁷ he responded well to the idea of sending a joint mission to Henry and expressed optimism about its success.¹¹⁸ Thus the political initiative was taken away from Pole, because it was now essential to re-enter negotiations with the imperial court about the joint mission to Henry. Francis was not firmly approached on this subject yet as it was taken for granted that he would join any action against England as long as the emperor was participating in it.¹¹⁹ Pole's

them. Since Parpaglia was from Piedmont it would be worthwhile searching the archives of Turin or Nice for his papers, as I have been unable to find his correspondence in Rome or Paris. Even with his papers at hand, it is questionable whether we would gain a lot of new information, because Pole usually dispatched Parpaglia if he had to relate news that he did not want to entrust to written messages.

¹¹⁵Pole to Farnese, Toledo, 22 Feb. 1539; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 17.

¹¹⁶Farnese informed Poggio of Parpaglia's report, Rome, 16 Apr. 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 220-3.

¹¹⁷He had recommended that Parpaglia should be used as a travelling diplomat between himself, Francis and Charles, with the aim of arranging an accord between the monarchs towards the publication of the censures and the lifting of commerce, and that the legate would then come forward again to finalize this accord. Pole to Contarini, as in footnote no. 114 above.

¹¹⁸Pole to Farnese, Carpentras, 24 Apr. 1539; PRO: PRO 31/9/65, m. 289; *L&P XIV, I*, no. 849.

¹¹⁹Pole seems to have neglected contact with the French court ever since his arrival in Carpentras as Ferrerio was complaining as late as 23 April about not having heard from the

optimism was well founded at this stage, because Francis I had been advising Charles V against taking military action against the Turks as he could only see minimal chances for success. The French king had offered, and the emperor accepted, to send a delegation to the sultan to negotiate a truce with the Porte.¹²⁰

This change of approach to Pole's legation had not been brought about lightly in the curia, because the option of the joint mission presented a meek solution compared to the commission with which Pole had set out at the beginning of mission. Paul III reacted in a bewildered manner when he learnt how Pole had fared in Toledo. The French ambassador in Rome, Louis de Grignan, reported that the pope was displeased with the emperor and that he did not know what to think of the alleged amity between Charles and Francis.¹²¹ The pope tried to add a material incentive for Charles with regard to turning the emperor's attention to England. He hinted in the presence of Aguilar, the imperial ambassador, that he would be prepared to make financial concessions to the emperor for an enterprise against England.¹²² The curia was, however, becoming increasingly cautious with the promises of either of the involved monarchs. When Farnese briefed the nuncio in Vienna, Aleander, on the new approach in Pole's legation, he summed up:

Vedesi una volta che a quel tyranno è avuto rispetto et che non si vole
levarli d'appresso li ambasciatori, anzi se Alva se n'era partito, n'è stato
rimandato un'altro in suo loco. Piaccia a Dio indirizzar li cuori di questi
principi a quel che li sia servitio, perchè cio a Sua Santità stà in meza al
animo.¹²³

legate; Ferrerio to Farnese, Troyes, 23 Apr. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 433.

¹²⁰The situation in the preparation for a war in the Levant had changed after the Venetians had concluded a separate truce with the Porte in March 1539, thus abandoning the emperor in this venture. Pole to Farnese, as in footnote no. 118 above; and Farnese to Aleander, Ostia, 1 May 1539; *NB*, IV, no. 195.

¹²¹Grignan to Montmorency, Rome, 22 Apr. 1539; Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, I, p. 442-4.

¹²²Aguilar to Charles V, Rome, 16 May 1539; BL: Add. MS 28 591, f. 131-5^v, *L&P XIV*, I, no. 975. Charles had previously asked for concessions for the operation against the Turks.

¹²³Farnese to Aleander, as in footnote no. 120 above. 'It can be seen for once that this tyrant is respected and that one does not want to recall the ambassadors from him, even if Alva [I have been unable to establish to whom Farnese refers here] has left from there, another one has been sent there in his place. May God guide the hearts of the princes to the service to which they are called, because this matter is the main concern of his holiness.' It is interesting that Farnese

In the ensuing negotiations about the joint mission to Henry VIII Farnese's scepticism was to be proved right. At first, when the imperial court was approached on the subject of putting Henry under diplomatic pressure the reaction was quite promising. Poggio reported that English matters were much talked about again and that Charles agreed that an exhortation by the King of France and the emperor would make big impact on the English monarch.¹²⁴ When Cardinal Farnese was dispatched on a mission to Toledo on 19 May, the main point in his instructions was that he had to make sure that the joint mission would materialize.¹²⁵ By that time, however, the emperor had already modified his consent to the diplomatic initiative. Charles had heard that Pole was delaying his visit to the French court and protested that this was damaging to his own reputation, because now public opinion in Europe would lay the blame on him if Pole's mission ended in complete failure. Thus he insisted that Pole go and visit the French monarch before any new negotiations about alternative strategies against England could be taken up.¹²⁶ Poggio also related this news to Pole directly:

Et quanto alle cose di Anglia, mi risponde [Granvelle] che a Sua Maesta pareria che per reputation di quella causa et per redur meglio quel Re, intendendo che li principi non hanno a mancare alla obedientia di N[ostro] S[ignore] che saria bene che si conducesse V[ostra] S[ignoria] R[everendissi]ma alla presentia del Re Christianissimo per far la medesima instantia che feci qui con Sua Maesta.¹²⁷

wrote this passage in the impersonal style, thus indicating that he was getting weary of both Charles and Francis.

¹²⁴Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 9 May 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 234^v.

¹²⁵Farnese was sent to Toledo after the death of Empress Isabella, 1 May. His instructions can be found in A. Pieper, *Entstehungsgeschichte*, Analekt no. 4. L. Cardauns, *Von Nizza bis Cr py. Europ ische Politik in den Jahren 1534-1544* (Rome, 1923) p. 248 maintains that Paul had lost interest in the plan to reduce England by May 1539. However, he does not mention Farnese's mission and the ensuing struggle for a joint mission to Henry VIII. It must be pointed out that his account of the legation (p. 242-8) has so far been the only study of Pole's 1539 legation outside a Pole biography. The account is very inaccurate in places. For instance, Pole's christian name is given as John, rather than Reginald (p. 242).

¹²⁶Poggio to Farnese, Toledo, 15 May 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 250.

¹²⁷Poggio to Pole, Toledo, 17 May 1539; AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 254. 'As to the matter of England, he [Granvelle] answered that it appears to his majesty that your most reverend excellency should go before the Most Christian King in order to make the same

It is certainly more than a strange coincidence that the French politicians changed their tune at about the same time as the emperor demanded Pole's visit to the French court. Whereas Ferrerio had reported to Rome on 9 May that Montmorency had told him that Pole would be received politely and well at the French court if he came now, and that it would even be more desirable if the legate brought "una palma" from the emperor,¹²⁸ we find out from one of Pole's letters that the situation had changed a month later. The French court had made him understand that he would not be welcome if he did not bring new results from the emperor.¹²⁹ Obviously, Francis and his councillors wanted to avoid an embarrassing confrontation with Pole, because according to their policies they would have had to send him away as empty handed as Charles had done. For them the situation was politically preferable as it was arranged then. Charles was under pressure to act and concede some way of constructing a policy towards England. The French had committed themselves to support the emperor in any enterprise he would start against England, but they wanted Charles to commit himself before they would. Furthermore, Charles was in the awkward position of already having negotiated with Pole without success, thus putting himself in a unfavourable position with the pope, whereas the French could always refuse to accept any responsibility as long as they connected their actions with those of the emperor and as long as Pole did not suffer the same treatment at the French court as he had done in Toledo. For these reasons it was essential for the French politicians to keep Pole away from the French court as long as Charles had not invited them to engage in any action against England. Before Charles demanded that Pole had to go to see Francis this aim had not been difficult to achieve, since Pole had not shown the slightest inclination to visit the French court, both because there was not much point in negotiating with Francis at that time and because Pole avoided the proximity to England for fear of assassination attempts engineered by the English.¹³⁰ Now that the curia had started pressuring Pole to

demands as you made in front of his majesty[Charles V]. This is to be done for the reputation of this cause and in order to reduce this king [Henry VIII] better, so that he will understand that the princes are not to lack in their obedience to his holiness.'

¹²⁸Ferrerio to Farnese, Montargis, 9 May 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 436.

¹²⁹Pole to Contarini, Carpentras, 13 June 1539; Quirini, II, no. 78.

comply with the emperor's wishes the matter was becoming different for Francis I. It was known at the French court that Pole would not be hesitant in obeying orders from Rome and that he was also interested in furthering any proposal which might lead to a positive result for his legation.¹³¹ That is why the French politicians changed their tune suddenly and made Pole's reception at the French court subject to the results he would be bringing from the emperor.

The situation which was now created by Charles's demand and Francis's stipulation was to lead to a complete deadlock in the negotiations. While the imperial court was emphasizing again that no action at could be taken before Pole went to the French court,¹³² Farnese arrived in Toledo to start his negotiations with the emperor.¹³³ In their first conversation Charles and Farnese did not achieve anything but reiterated their respective points, that is Charles kept insisting on Pole's going to Francis. For the first time Charles said quite bluntly why he was so adamant about this demand: he did not want to leave Francis an opportunity ever to be able to claim that he had refused to give Pole an audience.¹³⁴ The pope had left Farnese full authority in this matter and had commissioned his nephew to decide whether or not Pole was to be sent to Francis. Thus Farnese informed Pole that he was inclined to send him to the French court provided that Ferrerio could ensure that the legate would be received honourably by the court and that his safety could be guaranteed.¹³⁵ Apparently Pole wrote to Ferrerio to enquire about the prospects of his proposed journey to the French court, but he got a discouraging reply. The nuncio

¹³⁰There were some minor incidents where Pole's life may have been in danger, but since he operated rather far away from England, Henry and Cromwell did not organize a head-hunt for Pole on the scale they did in 1537.

¹³¹The earliest letter that proves that Contarini was trying to persuade Pole to go to the French court dates from 13 June 1539 (cf. footnote no. 129 above), but as this letter is Pole's reply to Contarini's exhortation to go to the French ruler, Contarini must have written at about the time when Charles's demand became known in Rome.

¹³²Pole to Farnese, Carpentras, 24 May 1539; ASV: SS Principi 12, f. 23; and Poggio to Paul III, Toledo, 25 May 1539, AGR: Papiers Gachard 643, f. 262.

¹³³Farnese arrived on 16 June; Mocenigo to Lando, Toledo, 15/20 June 1539; *Venetianische Depeschen*, I, no. 86.

¹³⁴Farnese to Paul III, Toledo, 21 June 1539; Quirini, II, p. cclxxxi-vii.

¹³⁵Farnese to Pole, Toledo, 21 June 1539; Quirini, II, p. ccxciii-iv.

informed Pole that he had received a final answer from Montmorency on this question: Francis had committed himself again to take any action against England alongside the emperor, but he expressly said that he did not want Pole to come to court then, because everything had been said and nothing was to be discussed at this moment, and what is more, Francis indicated that he feared Henry VIII would start preparing for war if Pole proceeded to the French court, which would put any possible Franco-imperial alliance at a disadvantage.¹³⁶ This answer was certainly disheartening for Pole, much more so because the emperor had replied to Pole's letter of condolence on the death of the empress that he would not discuss the business concerning the legation with Pole any more, and that he was waiting to see what results the negotiations with Farnese would bring.¹³⁷ Thus Pole saw himself completely cut off from the political initiative, with the emperor unwilling to enter into further discussion with him and the King of France declining to receive him at the French court. The legate was now dependent on the outcome of Farnese's results from Toledo.

Farnese's main problem at the imperial court was that Charles and his advisers refused to see the problem of England isolated from the German protestants. They informed him that the Habsburgs could not afford to do anything about England before the problem of the reformation in Germany was settled.¹³⁸ The imperial politicians succeeded in convincing Farnese of the precedence that the Empire should take over England in the solution of this problem. He also came to an agreement with Charles V that the joint mission to Henry VIII should be carried out, once Pole had made an appearance at the French court. However, Charles did not commit himself to any follow-up actions if diplomatic pressure would not suffice to reduce England to Roman obedience.¹³⁹ Farnese agreed with Charles to send Pole to Francis with a different commission from the one with which the legate had originally set out, so that the joint mission could go under way. He was keen to achieve this end,

¹³⁶Ferrerio to Pole, Paris, 8 July 1539; Quirini, II, no. 74,

¹³⁷Pole informed Contarini of this in a letter from Carpentras on 18 July 1539; Quirini, II, no. 75.

¹³⁸Farnese to Paul III, Toledo, [22] June 1539; Quirini, II, p. ccxcii-iii.

¹³⁹Charles V to Aguilar, Madrid, 3 July 1539; *CalStP, Spain*, VI,1, no. 73.

because he saw the pope's honour at stake in Pole's legation, thus he wanted it to finish with some tangible result, in order to forestall the impression that Henry VIII wielded more influence with Charles V and Francis I than Paul III.¹⁴⁰

Pole did not comment much on the prospect of being sent to the French court after all; he merely petitioned the pope to exhort Francis I in case he had to go, so that the French king would not embarrass Pole as he had done in 1537.¹⁴¹ However, Paul III was little inclined to send Pole into France at all. After Farnese had returned to Rome and reported his results the pope stated that he was annoyed with Charles's and Francis's fickle policies, and with the fact that neither of them would commit themselves to taking further action against England if the joint mission proved unsuccessful. He concluded that under these circumstances there was little point in exposing Pole to the danger of going to see Francis and thus making himself more vulnerable for English attempts to assassinate him.¹⁴² The pope seems to have attributed more guilt for the failure of the legation to Charles than to Francis, because he kept in mind that the King of France had pledged his co-operation if the emperor would also take action against the English king. Paul III could not understand why Charles V had not agreed at least to install a commercial blockade on England, because this could hardly be called a military action.¹⁴³

If the imperial politicians refused to compromise on the one hand, their French colleagues were just as inflexible on the other. While Charles V was still demanding that Pole should proceed to the French court, Ferrerio could not report anything from there but the well known statement that Pole would not be welcome unless he had some results to present.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰Farnese to Paul III, Toledo, 25/27 June 1539; Quirini, II, cclxxxvii-xcii. The different commission would have been to help drawing up the instructions for the diplomats who were to go on the joint mission. This transpires in Charles's letter to Aguilar (cf. footnote no. 139 above).

¹⁴¹Pole to Contarini, Carpentras, 16-7 July 1539; Quirini, II, no. 73.

¹⁴²Aguilar to Charles V, Rome, 10 Aug. 1539; *CalStP, Spain, VI,1*, no. 80.

¹⁴³Aguilar to Charles V, Rome, 20 July 1539; BL: Add MS 28 591, f. 194-201; *L&P XIV,1*, no. 1292.

¹⁴⁴Charles V to Aguilar, Aranjuez, 15 Sep. 1539; *CalStP, Spain, VI,1*, no. 82; Pole to

The only direct result of all the negotiations involved was that the relations between the French and the Spanish rulers were put under strain again. Apparently the imperial side started suspecting the French of delaying the negotiations deliberately, because France was negotiating separate treaties with the German Lutherans and England. To dispel this suspicion Francis I sent a special envoy to Charles V who was instructed to confirm the French loyalty to the treaties with the emperor, especially to the Treaty of Toledo concerning England, and to inform the emperor that the French negotiations at the Porte about a truce had been lacking success.¹⁴⁵ This news would have certainly dispelled the emperor's enthusiasm for action against England, if there had been any, because now he had to expect having to fight a defensive war against the Turks in the Levant, although Francis I was still offering to renew negotiations at the Porte on the emperor's behalf.¹⁴⁶

Pole's legation had come to an end. He was in a farcical situation: the emperor refused to re-enter negotiations with him and the King of France refused to see him unless he brought some positive results from the emperor, which he could not do as long as the emperor declined to treat with him. Pole stayed in Carpentras for almost the rest of the year after having obtained leave from Paul III to do so in order to relax and put his mind to rest after this disappointment and the atrocious news he had had about the fate of his family in England. Again Pole had failed to convince the European rulers to act against Henry VIII. Again Charles's and Francis's *realpolitik* had outweighed their concern for the religious unity of Europe. Pole's failure does not ultimately reflect on his skills as a diplomat as his commission was clear cut and his approach determined by Charles's and Francis's indications about their eagerness to act against the King of England at the beginning of 1539. The changing of the

Contarini, Carpentras, 29 Aug. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 82; and Ferrerio to Farnese, Oulchy-le-Château, 1/3 Sep. 1539; *ANG*, I, no. 454.

¹⁴⁵Instructions for Sizesmes (special envoy going to Charles V), Chantilly, 5 Aug. 1539; Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, I, p. 467-8. Interestingly, Sizesmes's report which he delivered to Francis on his return (8 Sep. 1539) did not mention England at all, but was exclusively concerned with the Turkish negotiations; *ibid.*, p. 468-71.

¹⁴⁶This information is taken from a document in ASV: Carte Farnesiane I, II, f. 588^v, which is entitled 'Summary of a letter of the nuncio in France, 9 September'.

political constellation, Charles's determination to proceed against the Ottoman Empire and to give the Lutherans a higher priority than the English problem and his reluctance to take economic steps against England led to the failure of the legation. Francis contributed to this by his policy of making his actions subject to the emperor's decisions. This policy was generated by two factors: firstly, France could not afford to alienate England without the emperor's support, because in the case of a war the German Lutherans might have decided to support the English ruler, which could have been a disaster for France as long as the emperor's military strength was largely bound in the Mediterranean, and even if the King of France had decided to impose an embargo on England single handedly the only party to suffer under this would have been the French merchants, because the English commercial potential would have been nothing but diverted from France into the Netherlands, Spain and the German coastal cities. Secondly, the Franco-imperial alliance was still too little established to allow Francis to trust Charles too much. The French king simply wanted to safeguard himself from entering into action against England and then seeing himself suddenly abandoned by the emperor. This feeling was certainly mutual. That is to say, if Pole's legation would have gone to the French court first, the emperor could, and possibly would, have taken the same attitude as his French colleague actually did, namely, we will enter upon any action to which the King of France has committed himself.

Pole was caught up in an impossible situation. During his first legation he had learnt that neither Charles nor Francis could afford to alienate Henry, because of the important role England was playing in the balance of power in the European alliances. The experience of 1539 went one step further; even after an alliance between France and the emperor had been achieved, England was still important enough to be treated carefully, and the much celebrated Franco-imperial alliance was obviously not strong enough to allow the alienation of the third power in western Europe. The basic mistake in the legation of 1539 did not lie in Pole's negotiations or his poor performance as a diplomat, but in the fact that it had been started at all. The mistake was that the curial politicians had

overestimated the alliance between Charles V and Francis I and had been led to believe that after the traditional discord between these two rulers was out of the way, they would attend to the religious problems of Europe immediately. Again religion proved not to be the main concern of the European rulers of the 1530s. Charles saw his chance to proceed against the Turkish menace at the southern flank of his empire, and even Francis's initial enthusiasm for action against England was not motivated by religious deliberations, but by the prospect of annihilating France's traditional arch-rival.¹⁴⁷

Although Pole, and indeed the pope, blamed the emperor for the failure of the legation,¹⁴⁸ it should be pointed out that neither Charles V nor Francis I had the right attitude towards the papal initiative against England, as far as the curia was concerned. One of Pole's comments after he had left Toledo was that he had learnt over the years that it was more difficult to be successful in any mission pertaining to religion and God than in any other thing.¹⁴⁹ This conclusion expresses the basic mistake of the legation. We can believe Pole that he saw his efforts as a service of religion and God, whereas both Charles and Francis would not accept religion as the chief concern of their policies. Pole and his curial colleagues failed to see this reality, and this is the point where the papal diplomacy as a whole failed to stem the tide against the new teaching.

¹⁴⁷It will be remembered that Francis was little pleased by Giovenale's suggestion of replacing Henry by a catholic English ruler, rather than just conquering England and splitting it between Charles V, Francis I and James V. Cf. p. 141 above.

¹⁴⁸In a letter to Contarini Pole even went as far as saying that he did not trust the emperor any more (Carpentras, 13 June 1539; Quirini, II, no. 78).

¹⁴⁹Pole to Contarini, Carpentras, 25 Mar. 1539; Quirini, II, no. 65.

VI. Pole as a political thinker

VI. 1. Pole's Political Thinking before His Breach with Henry VIII

Most of the existing literature on Reginald Pole is concerned with the cardinal's career as an eminent theologian of the Catholic reformation.¹ Hitherto, Pole's political career has been dealt with mainly in the light of the reconciliation between Rome and England under Mary Tudor and of the conference in Marcq, near Calais, where Pole tried to mediate a peace treaty between Habsburg and Valois in 1555. In the light of these events Pole has generally been judged as an eirenic politician, whose genuine longing for European peace fits well into his efforts for peaceful dialogue between the Roman church and the northern protestants at the Council of Trent.² Recently, his political involvement in the 1530s has attracted some attention, however no assessment of Pole's political thinking has yet been

¹J. Fischer, 'Essai Historique sur les idées Réformatrices des Cardinaux Jean Pierre Carafa (1476-1559) et Reginald Pole (1500-1558)' (Doctorat-ès-lettres thesis, University of Paris, 1957); D. Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy. Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge, 1972); M. Trimpe, 'Macht aus Gehorsam. Grundmotive der Theologie des päpstlichen Primates im Denken Reginald Poles (1500-1558)' (Dr.theol thesis, University of Regensburg, 1972); P. Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole. Eresia e santità nelle polemiche religiose del Cinquecento* (Rome, 1977); H. J. Sieben, 'Eine "ökumenische" Auslegung von Apg. 15 in der Reformationszeit: Reginald Poles *De Concilio*', *Theologie und Philosophie*, LX (1985) p. 16-42.

²For the reconciliation see R. H. Pogson, 'Cardinal Pole - Papal Legate to England in Mary Tudor's Reign' (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1972); J. P. Marmion, *The London Synod of Cardinal Pole* (MA thesis, Keele University, 1974); Pogson, 'Reginald Pole and the Priorities of Government in Mary Tudor's Church', *Historical Journal*, XVIII (1975) p. 3-20; J. I. Tellechea-Idigoras, *Fray Bartolomé Carranza y el Cardenal Pole. Un navarro en la restauración católica de Inglaterra (1554-1558)* (Pamplona, 1977). For both the reconciliation and Pole's diplomatic initiative see R. Ancel, 'La réconciliation de l'Angleterre avec le Saint-Siège sous Marie Tudor', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, X (1909) p. 521-36 and 744-98. For Pole's political initiative in the 1550s see H. Lutz, *Christianitas Afflicta. Europa, das Reich und die päpstliche Diplomatie im Niedergang der Hegemonie Kaiser Karls V. (1552-1556)* (Göttingen, 1964) p. 276-305 and 384-398; on p. 292-300 Lutz started the modern tradition of seeing Pole as the prime example of an eirenic politician, whose sole driving force was his commitment to peace keeping; Lutz (ed.), *Friedenslegation des Reginald Pole zu Kaiser Karl V. und König Heinrich II. (1553-1559)*, equals *NB*, XV (1981); M. Firpo, 'Sulla legazione di pace di Reginald Pole (1553-1556)', *Revista Storica Italiana*, XCIII (1981) p. 821-37; P. Simoncelli, 'Diplomazia e politica religiosa nella chiesa della contrariforma', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, XVIII (1982) p. 415-60.

produced.

The question of Pole's political motivation and ideas, as well as the contrast to the well documented eirenic state of his later life will be discussed in this chapter. We will follow and evaluate the cardinal's two major political writings of the 1530s, his invective against Henry VIII *Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* (hereafter *De Unitate*) and his *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*, which remained unpublished until after Pole's death.³ Pole's first encounter with the world of politics had been in 1528 when he successfully tried to procure a positive pronouncement for Henry VIII from the Sorbonne in the divorce case against Catherine of Aragon.⁴ After this debut, in which Pole was apparently slow and reluctant in complying to his royal cousin's wishes, he retired so effectively from the political scene that we have no information about Pole's political thinking or even his opinions until he became active again the 1530s. The fact that he left England again in 1531 to continue his studies in Italy can be seen as a sign of alienation from the events in England, but Pole preferred to keep his opinion to himself as long as he possibly could. T. F. Mayer's statement that Pole was not in open opposition to Henry before 1530 is correct, but it must be emphasized that there is also no reason to believe that he was in accord with his sovereign before that date.⁵ Pole's contemporaries knew or suspected that he deliberately withheld his opinion, as is shown in a letter by Thomas Starkey, in which he reported that when Henry VIII had asked him about Pole's position concerning the divorce and the royal supremacy he could do nothing but speculate, because Pole had always

³The manuscript of *De Unitate* which Pole sent to Henry VIII is kept in PRO: SP 1/104. Early editions are *Reginaldi Polii Cardinalis Britannici, ad Henricum Octavum Britanniae Regem, pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione, Libri quatuor* (Rome, 1539, further editions Ingolstadt, 1587, and Rome, 1698). On the manuscripts and early editions of *De Unitate* see T. F. Dunn, 'The Development of the Text of Pole's *De Unitate Ecclesiae*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LXX (1976) p. 455-68; two modern translated editions have been presented by N.-M. Egretier, *Defense de l'Unité de l'Église* (Paris, 1967) and by J. G. Dwyer, *Pole's Defense of the Unity of the Church* (Westminster, Md., 1965). All quotations from *De Unitate* in this thesis are taken from the latter. The *Apologia* is in Quirini, V, p. 66-171.

⁴T. F. Mayer, 'A Fate Worse than Death: Reginald Pole and the Parisian Theologians', *EHR*, CIII (1988) p. 870-91.

⁵T. F. Mayer, *Thomas Starkey and the Common Weal. Humanist Politics and Religion in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1989) p. 78.

'usyd thys prudent sylence never to dysclose your sentence and mynd but in tyme and place'.⁶ Pole admitted in *De Unitate* that he had earlier withheld his opinion, because he had been afraid of repercussions against him and his family in England.⁷

An attempt to describe Pole's political thinking before he wrote *De Unitate* in 1535 must lead us to Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue between Pole and Lupset*, which Mayer recently dated between 1529 and 1531.⁸ It is difficult to know how far we can take Starkey's writing as an accurate expression of Pole's ideas or whether we have to treat them as ideas which Starkey would have liked his old patron to have. Mayer recently suggested that Starkey initially wrote the *Dialogue* in order to persuade Pole to enter a political career, and thus he maintains that it is unlikely that the author of the dialogue would have misrepresented Pole's actual views.⁹ In so far as Starkey was outlining Pole's opinions on secular affairs, such as Pole's high regard for the Venetian form of government, his insistence that the sovereign of a state should not stand above the law, his views on tyranny and corruption of the opinion of the people, we can accept Mayer's judgement that it is unlikely that Starkey misrepresented Pole.¹⁰ However, "Pole's" views on ecclesiastical matters in the *Dialogue* are hard to reconcile with the real Pole's documented views on these matters. Starkey lets "Pole" launch several attacks on the powerful position of the papacy; "Pole" is opposed to clerical celibacy, and he strongly criticizes the Roman establishment.¹¹ It is questionable whether these views can be called Pole's own, genuine opinion, or whether Starkey did not impose them on his

⁶Starkey to [Pole], London, 14 Feb. 1535; BL: Harl. 283, f. 131; *L&P VIII*, no. 218.

⁷*De Unitate*, p. 262.

⁸Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue between Pole and Lupset*, ed. T. F. Mayer (Camden 4th series, XXXVII; London 1989) p. x.

⁹Mayer, *Starkey*, p. 104-5. It should be pointed out, however, that the question as to whether the views expressed in the *Dialogue* are Starkey's or Pole's is of no concern for A. Fox and J. Guy in their discussion of the *Dialogue* they treat it throughout as Starkey's political thought without even touching on the idea that some part of it may have actually been prompted by Pole's influence (*Reassessing the Henrician Age* (Oxford, 1986) p. 47-50 and 140-3).

¹⁰Starkey, *Dialogue*, see amongst others p. 36-7, 68-70, 119, 123.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 82, 85, 132. The criticism on the establishment of the Roman church may be genuine as Pole was reportedly frustrated with what he had observed during his first visit to Rome in 1525, W. Schenk, *Reginald Pole, Cardinal of England* (London, 1950) p. 16.

"Pole" in order to present him as a trustworthy partisan of Henry's policies. "Pole's" ideas about secular politics as they are expressed by Starkey are hardly surprising for a young humanist and nobleman who spent a large part of his formative years in Venetian territory.¹² The idea of an oligarchic aristocracy who rule together without fighting each other in futile civil wars must have seemed attractive to a member of the order which had made England undergo the traumatic experience of the Wars of the Roses in the previous century. In this context it is noteworthy that Starkey's "Pole" asserts that although he feels great admiration for the Venetian system he would not recommend it for his own country.¹³

In his recent, thorough, discussion of the *Dialogue* Mayer pointed out that it is almost impossible to speak of dialogues as a literary genre. Very convincingly he linked Starkey's work to the dialogue *De' Veneziani* of the Italian writer Gianotti.¹⁴ The English tradition of dialogues and political writing in general does not help to link the *Dialogue* with any other works which might have influenced Starkey. The *Dialogue* conforms with other English dialogues of the time in so far as its author did not fully live up to the fictitious setting of the work. Once Pole and Lupset reach the main line of argumentation in the *Dialogue* their contributions become interchangeable and it becomes apparent that it is Starkey who from that point pursues his aim of convincing the reader of the correctness of his opinions.¹⁵ A feature of most dialogues of the time is also present in Starkey's work: there is a strong didactic impetus underlying the whole work. In one respect, however, Starkey's *Dialogue* does not fit the mould. The characters of the *Dialogue*, Pole and Lupset, were real persons.¹⁶ They are certainly not

¹²They may, however, also have been Starkey's own ideas as the *Dialogue* has recently been put in the context of the Erasmian humanist influence in England, A. Fox, *Politics and Literature in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII* (Oxford, 1989) p. 76-7.

¹³Starkey, *Dialogue*, p. 70-1.

¹⁴Mayer, *Starkey*, p. 63-76. One of the interesting parallels between Starkey and Gianotti is that both authors restrict the numbers of interlocutors to two, which is a smaller cast than that set by authors of most other dialogues.

¹⁵A. Fox, *Politics and Literature*, p. 227-8. Fox puts the *Dialogue* in the context of other dialogues and political propaganda pieces written in the 1520s and 1530s and comes to the conclusion that the dialogues of this period are to be called 'incomplete fiction' for this very reason, p. 218-28. In doing so he follows the conclusion reached by K. J. Wilson, *Incomplete Fictions: The Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington, DC, 1985).

comparable with More's *Hythloday* or with Elyot's *Pasquil*, or with the altogether allegorical interlocutors in Pace's *De Fructu*. The choice of Lupset and Pole is as interesting as it is puzzling. Both men were highly respected for their learning, thus their authority on many points would not have been doubted by the reader.

However, Lupset was dead or dying by the time Starkey wrote the *Dialogue*, and Pole was out of the country. Hence, an English reader could question neither of them on the accuracy of the views expressed in the *Dialogue*. Thus it is suggested that Starkey used both Pole and Lupset to present his own ideas with the automatic endorsement of two eminent thinkers of his time.¹⁷ That, in doing so, Starkey also tried to recommend Pole for a political career in England by emphasizing points which would become largely unimportant in Pole's actual, later career is to be seen as a byproduct of the *Dialogue*. In general the work must be seen as a showpiece of the author's own political skills and training, with which he strived to recommend himself for political service under Henry and Cromwell.

It is no great wonder that Pole is known to us mainly as a theologian and mover of church affairs. He was a man driven by a strong belief in the preservation and reform of the ecclesiastical body and he devoted his whole life to these ends. Pole's motivation to leave his sheltered world of books and studies was solely derived from the necessity of a *vita activa* in the service of his church. When he became an active politician in the papal service he would never regard purely political aims as a justification for his actions. His reasoning would always depend on the good of the church and the faith; if Pole saw the faith endangered he would advocate war and other overtly aggressive political means, however his political engagement would not go so far as to advocate these measures for the sake of *raison d'état* for either the papacy or his native England. That is why Starkey's information is not helpful for the historian who is trying to get to Pole's political ideas. Starkey wanted to make Pole appear as an able politician, fit for the service of a prince. In doing so he misunderstood Pole's motivation. It is true that Pole was interested in the welfare of his native land, but there is a wide gulf between this point and the readiness to embark on the pursuit of an active political career. Pole

¹⁶Again Gianotti is one of the very few cases where real persons are cast in a dialogue.

¹⁷This is supported by Fox, *Politics and Literature*, p. 227.

was willing to do this only if he saw his dearest matter at stake, which was the faith and the turmoil into which its representative, the church, had fallen. Rather than departing from the old established church, he saw it worthwhile to fight for reform from within and for a defence of the church against her enemies. This was the only motivation which was strong enough to make Reginald Pole give up his secluded life in the world of learning and to become a public figure in the service of the church.

Pole has been called an idealist in his approach to political problems, although this idealism was to be seen as inherently positive rather than negative.¹⁸ Pole's approach towards political problems has also been described as naive, a result of the fact that Pole was filled by 'Christian folly'.¹⁹ It is undoubtedly true that Pole followed an ideal in trying to achieve his ends and that he also used idealistic points of argumentation in his efforts to persuade the catholic rulers to intervene in England. This, however, should not lead to the assumption that Pole did not understand the intricacies of the political game of his time. On the contrary, Pole has also been judged as a shrewd politician who was a match for his contemporaries with whom he negotiated.²⁰ The image of a saintly man who was beaten by the trickery of the politicians of his time does not withstand close examination. Pole has been accused of wilfully misrepresenting encounters and actions of his if it suited his political aims later in his life, but it must be understood that he was as much a propagandist as any politician in the sixteenth century.²¹ One of the biggest dangers in assessing Pole as a politician is to assume that he was

¹⁸P. F. Macaluso, 'Regal and Legal Concepts of Kingship', *Cithara*, XVI (1976-7, no. 1) p. 46.

¹⁹P. F. Macaluso, 'The Kingship and the Papacy in the Thought of Reginald Pole, 1500-1558' (PhD thesis, New York University, 1973) p. 56-60.

²⁰F. Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli* (London, 1964) p. 32. Mayer asserts that although his image does not seem to make a diplomat, 'it might be argued that Pole fit the job nearly perfectly.' ('A Diet for Henry VIII: The Failure of Reginald Pole's 1537 Legation', *Journal of British Studies*, XXVI (1987) p. 310-1.)

²¹P. Van Dyke, 'The Mission of Cardinal Pole to Enforce the Bull of Deposition against Henry VIII', *EHR*, XXXVII (1922) p. 422-3. Mayer, *Starkey*, p. 102, states that Pole's 'memory was notoriously unreliable', but allows that Starkey learnt from other rhetoricians that 'what mattered was persuasion, not strict accuracy, verisimilitude, not point-to-point realism' (*ibid.*, p. 9). It will be agreed that this assertion also holds true for other politicians of the time, including Reginald Pole.

destined to fail, because the onesidedness of his approach would make his approach naive and transparent.

VI. 2. Pole's Relationship with Henry VIII and *De Unitate*

One of the constant features of Pole's dilemma between his service to the Roman church and his refusal to serve his sovereign is the cardinal's personal relationship to Henry VIII. Pole professed time and again that he held no-one in higher regard outside his family than Henry and that his love for the king was one of the reasons why he was striving towards the salvation of the king's endangered soul.²² This point has been accepted without argument by most historians who have worked on Pole.²³ Peter Donaldson calls Pole's relationship with Henry 'ambivalent'. He points out that on the one hand he saw in him the benefactor without whose generosity his education could not have been as brilliant as it was, on the other hand he would have seen Henry VIII as the person who occupied the throne which might have fallen to Pole's family.²⁴ Whether or not Pole was conscious of this feeling of ambivalence, if we accept Donaldson's point we may see Pole's engagement for the cause of the church also as an active move against Henry VIII. That is to say that his religious opposition to the monarch was an outlet for an aristocrat's resentment of a ruler whose family had deprived his family of an august position in the realm. Donaldson's view is substantiated by the fact that Pole did not only consistently remind his contemporaries of his love for Henry, but also of his own aristocratic background. In a letter to the imperial court he styled himself as the ideal spokesman of the English aristocratic opposition because he was a member of the family who had suffered extensively under the Tudors and for the cause of the Roman church.²⁵ In this context Starkey certainly represented

²²For example Pole to Granvelle, Carpentras, 11 Apr. 1539; p. 221 below.

²³Schenk, *Pole*, p. 73; or J.G. Dwyer in the foreword to his translation of Pole's *De Unitate* p. xvii.

²⁴P. S. Donaldson, 'Machiavelli, Antichrist, and the Reformation: Prophetic Typology in Reginald Pole's *De Unitate* and *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*' in R. L. DeMolen (ed.), *Leaders of the Reformation* (London, 1984) p. 212.

²⁵Pole to Granvelle, as in footnote no. 22 above, but p. 222. A good summary of other instances where Pole emphasized his aristocratic ambitions can be found in Mayer, *Starkey*, p. 155-6.

Pole's fascination with the Venetian form of government correctly.²⁶

When Pole disclosed his views on Henry's policies in his *De Unitate* the conscious or unconscious ambivalence of his feelings towards his royal cousin may well account for the strong and uncompromising language of the book. The ferocity of Pole's attack on Henry has been commented on a lot, both by Pole's contemporaries to whom it caused much chagrin and by modern historians.²⁷ It did not suffice for Pole to make his opinion about Henry's policies known in his *De Unitate*, he chose to write a fully fledged invective against the king. In the first book of *De Unitate* he pointed out that a temporal ruler as head of the church was unnatural, because the church 'is a gift of God, whereas the *regnum* is merely a creation of the citizens themselves, who "spontaneously submit" to an authority which they establish to match their own needs'.²⁸ Pole did not stop after this suggestion that the King of England was at variance with natural law; in the third part of his book he proceeded to assert that the king had in fact broken the law. As we can see from Starkey's *Dialogue*, Pole did not agree with the notion that the king should be above the law, thus he could logically conclude that a king who breaks the law is unworthy of the continuation of his kingship.

The third part of the *De Unitate* has been seen as the assertion of 'the constitutional right for insurrection', while falling short of being a theory for rebellion.²⁹ In this context it should not be forgotten that *De Unitate* was initially not written for publication, but Pole meant it to be for Henry's eyes only. Thus it is understandable that the final appeal to the English people to rebel against their monarch was omitted. The question is whether given the chance to make this appeal directly Pole would have done it. Baumer argued that in the first half of the sixteenth century the time for a 'theory of rebellion' was not yet ripe in England.³⁰

²⁶See p. 183 and footnote no. 10 above.

²⁷[Starkey] to Pole, *s.l., s.d.*; PRO: SP 1/105, f. 49-51; *L&P XI*, no. 74; for Contarini's effort to persuade Pole to cut some of the most offensive passages for Henry see Mayer, *Starkey*, p. 105; Dwyer comments on the violence of Pole's language as one of the most outstanding features of the book, foreword to *De Unitate*, p. xvii; Egretier, in the preface to her edition of *De Unitate*, p. 42-3, gives a comprehensive summary of the various, immediate reactions which Pole received after he presented *De Unitate* to Henry.

²⁸Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, II* (Cambridge, 1978) p. 91.

²⁹F. W. Baumer, *The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship* (New Haven, 1940) p. 117-8.

Later in the century John Ponet held the view in opposition to Mary Tudor that since tyrants were not ordained by God, the people need not show them obedience. Ponet indorsed tyrannicide and popular insurrection against tyrants.³¹ This example shows that it would certainly not have been unthinkable for Pole to arrive at the same conclusions. There is evidence in *De Unitate* that Pole was prepared to anticipate Ponet's radicalism. On nobody's but his own authority he freed the people of England from their oath on the royal supremacy, because this oath had been forcible exerted from the English.³² However, Pole did not appeal to the people to rise against Henry, but he left Henry in no doubt that popular insurrection would be a legal means of dealing with a law-breaker monarch.³³ We cannot be certain whether Pole would have sustained this theory in practice. While on the one hand he was trying to support and exploit the Pilgrimage of Grace during the 1537 legation, on the other hand his writings witness a conspicuous absence of any encouragement for the nobles to rise against Henry VIII. This, however, is the form of insurrection that we imagine would have found Pole's approval and support most readily in the light of his aristocratic tendencies. In *De Unitate* Pole laid far greater emphasis on discussing the reactions of Henry's catholic neighbours on the Continent. Here Pole highlighted the political consequences which England might face as a result of Henry's policies. In his discussion of the reactions of Francis I and Charles V, Pole was very outspoken, he even rhetorically called on these monarchs to intervene in England for the good of the catholic faith. In the context of Pole's 1537 legation it is interesting that in the *De Unitate*, that is well over a year before he became a cardinal and could even contemplate going to the

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 118-9. *De Unitate* cannot be called a 'theory of rebellion', because the final appeal to the people to oppose their monarch is missing in the book.

³¹W. S. Hudson, *John Ponet, 1516? - 1556, Advocate of Limited Monarchy* (Chicago, 1942) p. 157-61.

³²*De Unitate*, p. 200.

³³Pole used the form of a rhetorical appeal to the English nation to remind Henry he would regard insurrection as a legal means of dealing with Henry's breach of law; *ibid.* p. 248.

'Oh England! If you have not completely forgotten your pristine liberty, see to it that you now place before your eyes that time when kings themselves, who appeared to have administered your affairs badly, were brought up on charges, to render a public account according to the authority of the laws.'

European courts as papal emissary, he warned Henry that he himself would next approach the French king and beg him to oppose Henry in every possible way.³⁴ Pole even anticipated part of the commission for his legation in 1537 and warned the English king that the papacy may well seek the help of the Catholic monarchs.

The "Most Christian King" was, indeed, worthy of his name. He was outstanding in his obedience to the vicar of Christ. If the Roman pontiff, by virtue of his authority over the universal Church, received from Christ, should command the Christian King to undertake the task of repressing your efforts and subduing you by arms, he could not refuse this charge.³⁵

Pole was more open in his statements about the reaction he hoped for from the emperor. He directly called on Charles V to consider war against England in the light of Henry's religious policies.³⁶ In *De Unitate* he used a point for the first time which was to attain major importance in the *Apologia* of 1539. He compared Henry's England to the Turks as enemies of Christianity. Since the Turks were ancient enemies of the Christian world it was fitting for the emperor, as protector of Christianity, to prepare war against the sultan. However, Pole now called on the emperor in a rhetorical appeal to consider postponing this enterprise as the English menace to Christianity was comparatively worse.³⁷ In this context it should be remembered that Henry, even after the rebuttal of the pope's powers, still considered himself a catholic prince. Apart from this direct appeal to the emperor, Pole put a strong emphasis on Charles's role because of the fact that Catherine of Aragon was the emperor's aunt. Pole warned Henry that discord between England and Spain was undesirable as it could lead to a trade war or even a war in arms. In his appeal to the emperor Pole even went so far as to implore Charles to come to England himself and lead the English to a victory against their king.³⁸ The inevitability of a conflict with Charles was obvious for Pole unless the emperor

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 266.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 279.

³⁶Mayer, *Starkey*, p. 234 has recently shown that Pole cut this appeal from the copy which he presented to Henry VIII. Nevertheless, the notion of this appeal is important for Pole's political thought.

³⁷*De Unitate*, p. 272-3. This point will be discussed in greater detail in the context of Pole's *Apologia*, p. 197 below.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 275. 'Believe me, even now many whole legions of men whose knees have not bowed before Baal, are concealed in England. God Himself, who preserves you, will lead all of them over to your side if you should come.'

should desire to join ranks with the English monarch and 'despise completely the laws of nature and abandon the cause of religion.'³⁹ This assumption was, of course, merely hypothetical for Pole and it was used to add weight to his initial argument.

Pole had laid out his belligerent programme in his *De Unitate*. It is becoming apparent that the representation of Pole as an exclusively peace oriented politician cannot hold true for the cardinal's entire career. While the quest for peace may have been of prime importance to him in his later years, he did not shy away from advocating war or other violent measures in the 1530s.⁴⁰ Pole saw law as based on reason rather than will; therefore it becomes understandable why he strongly refused to concede a position above and beyond the law to the king.⁴¹ For him, Henry had broken the law with the renunciation of papal authority, thus it was natural for him to strive towards a punishment of the law breaker and a re-establishment of the law.

Moreau's doubt that Pole understood the full implications of his actions when he set out on his 1537 legation must be rejected.⁴² Not only did Pole understand the politics of his time, he took part in shaping them. Again the answer lies in the assertion that Pole's motivation lay in matters religious rather than temporal, his political thought was largely conservative as he strongly adhered to the 'customs of the realm and of the Church'.⁴³ Yet Pole's dilemma was that the rulers of his time were not prepared to use their power solely for the preservation of the traditional religious system in Europe. Pole understood the politics of his age; he saw that 'Christian natural law as the fixed and established basis for a general theory of

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 237 and 267.

⁴⁰See p. 181 and footnote no. 2 above.

⁴¹Macaluso, 'Concepts of Kingship', p. 43-5.

⁴²J. P. Moreau, *Rome ou l'Angleterre. Les réactions politiques des catholiques anglais au moment du schisme, 1529-1553* (Paris, 1984) p. 260.

⁴³Dwyer, foreword to *De Unitate*, p. xxii. This conservatism did not exclude the possibility of change, nor did it deny the power of statute; however it was opposed to subduing the ancient privileges of the church under the legislation of parliament, Skinner, *Foundations, II*, p. 92-3. Skinner makes the point on conservatism about Pole, Fisher, and More, but, curiously, leaves Pole out when he comes to reconcile this conservatism with their friendly attitude towards evolutionary change.

authority received its greatest challenge from the historical minded humanists of the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ He decided to fight this development. His fight turned out to be doomed to failure, but that does not tell us that Pole did not know what he was doing when he decided to face the battle.

The programme which Pole had laid out in *De Unitate* was followed closely during his 1537 legation. The aim of the legation was to use the popular insurrection of the Pilgrimage of Grace in favour of the Roman church. Even if Pole had not advocated or suggested open rebellion, he was politician enough to try and seize the opportunity to profit from it. At the outset of the Pilgrimage Carpi had advised to create Pole a cardinal and to dispatch him to England in the hope that he would be able to lead the insurgents to triumph.⁴⁵ Pole combined this with the hope of persuading Henry's continental rivals to support him with either economic or political measures, so that enough pressure could be created to ensure a return of the Roman faith in England. As Pole's sole purpose was the re-establishment of Roman obedience in England the weakness of the approach in his legation lay in the fact that Charles and Francis were at war with each other, and were not prepared to alienate Henry. It had been hoped in Rome that Pole would be able to mediate a peace between Habsburg and Valois in order to enable them to support the cardinal's quest, but the continental rulers were not inclined to give up their *realpolitik* on behalf of the Roman church. Pole had been charged with an almost impossible task right from the outset of the legation, but the approach he took was the only one which bore the faintest hope of success. The fact that time was working against Pole was not so much the cardinal's fault as that of the pope and his advisors who curiously delayed his legation until it was too late. This does not alter the fact that Pole never faltered from his principles in the pursuit of his task. He showed political insight with his move to withdraw to neutral Cambrai when his presence in France became a political embarrassment for Francis I. He was beaten in the end by the greater influence which Henry wielded in comparison to that of Pole or even Paul III, but he tried every possible political trick to unite the Catholic forces against England. He made the greatest possible use of his companion, Giberti, in all aspects of the legation. Pole knew that he was a largely awkward

⁴⁴Macaluso, 'Concepts of Kingship', p. 46.

⁴⁵See p. 21 above.

political figure, so he charged Giberti with the negotiations at the French court and employed him to contact the English ambassadors in France. When he could not get access to the Netherlands he even used Giberti to negotiate at the court in Brussels, although Giberti was notoriously anti-Habsburg. From the start he had shown political insight by insisting that Giberti accompany him on this legation, because the Bishop of Verona was about the only papal politician who was in high esteem in both England and France and who was at least respected by the Habsburgs. Pole's neglect of Scotland and her potential involvement in the political scheme of an alliance against Henry is explicable in this context, too. It would have been useless to invest a lot of effort in binding Scotland to an alliance against England before the alliance actually existed. Pole could reasonably hope to secure Scottish assistance as soon as Charles and Francis agreed to support the Roman cause. Any other attitude might have proved suicidal from the point of view of the Scottish policy makers. If James V had felt strong enough to intervene in the English affairs without French assistance, whether for political or religious reasons, he would have given support to the northern insurgents. Pole saw this clearly and acted accordingly: he did nothing but pay his respect to Scottish king and assured him of the pope's favour before the continental alliance was secured. Pole's motivation was religious and he arranged his political actions accordingly, but the actions which he took were the only ones which might have promised success to his nearly hopeless task.

VI. 3. *The Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*

When Pole went on his next legation in 1539 the political situation in Europe had changed, but his task and motivation were still virtually the same. During the stay in Carpentras, where he retired after his fiasco at the imperial court, he wrote his *Apologia ad Carlum Quintum*.⁴⁶ The *Apologia* was originally planned as a dedicatory letter to Charles V for *De Unitate*, which Pole evidently resolved to

⁴⁶The *Apologia* itself does not bear a date, however there is enough evidence that it was written, at least for the most part, in Carpentras in 1539; P. Van Dyke, *Renascence Portraits* (New York, 1906) p. 387-8. There is no translation of the *Apologia*, the only modern aid to the contents of the treatise being a very rough summary in *L&P XIV,1*, no. 200.

publish after the failure of his legation became apparent.⁴⁷ Pole did not change the programme of his *De Unitate* much in the *Apologia*, he mainly stated the same points of view. The attack which he launched on Henry in the *Apologia* was stronger and less full of affection and care for the monarch than *De Unitate* had been. Pole had known that he had to abandon his family in England and give them up to the king's mercy when he wrote *De Unitate*, which accounts for the uncompromising attitude which he had taken in the book.⁴⁸ Now, three years later, Pole had gone through various personal disappointments and impoverishment, which resulted from his decision to maintain his loyalty for Rome, and he had also been condemned to witness the utter ruin of his family. The fact that Pole attacked so furiously in the *Apologia* must be attributed to his personal disinchantment and bitterness.⁴⁹ The other new feature of the *Apologia* is that the cardinal did not only attack Henry VIII but also his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, whom he portrayed as an evil influence on the monarch, solely governed by Machiavelli and his philosophy. Thus Pole became one of the earliest critics of Machiavelli and the theory of *raison d'état*.⁵⁰

In the following the contents of the *Apologia* and its meaning for Pole as a political thinker will be examined, after which some attention will be given to the discussion of Pole's treatment of Machiavelli and Cromwell. In contrast to *De Unitate*, the *Apologia* was clearly intended as a piece of propaganda, although it missed this goal because Pole chose not to publish it during his lifetime, and it saw its first publication only after the cardinal's death. *De Unitate* had been meant for Henry's eyes only, thus, however strong the invective was, it was strictly

⁴⁷Pole also designed to a dedication addressed to James V of Scotland, which is published in Quirini, I, 172-78, where it is entitled *Proemium alterum ejusdem libri a Reginaldo Polo transmissi ad regem Scotiae*. This title was given to the document by Quirini, because it follows directly after the *Apologia*. The manuscript in BAV: Vat. Lat. 5970,2, f. 239-268^v is untitled. See T. F. Dunn, 'Cardinal Reginald Pole and Codex Vaticanus Latinus 5970', *Manuscripta*, XXII (1978) p. 80-1, mainly for the variations in the text of the manuscript which are not represented in Quirini's edition. An English summary of the *Proemium* can be found in R. K. Hannay, D. Hay, *The Letters of James V (1513-1542)* (Edinburgh, 1954) p. 417.

⁴⁸Donaldson, 'Machiavelli', p. 214.

⁴⁹Baumer, *Foundations*, p. 170.

⁵⁰For Pole in the context of early Machiavelli criticism cf. H. Lutz, *Ragione di Stato und die christliche Staatsethik im 16. Jahrhundert* (Münster, second edition, 1976) p. 26-35.

private and had initially not been designed for publication. The *Apologia* was addressed to Charles V, who at the time of its design was one of Henry's most bitter enemies in Europe.

As Pole had done in *De Unitate* and during his visit to Toledo, he tried to convince the emperor that an attack on the Turks was much less desirable than positive action against the schismatic King of England. In Toledo he had reasoned mainly that an attack on the Porte would be untimely and unnecessarily risky, whereas the time for action against England had never been more promising.⁵¹ In the *Apologia* he re-enforced the argument of *De Unitate* that Henry was a more dangerous enemy to the church than the sultan, because the Turks would at least leave their Christian subjects freedom to exercise their religion, whereas Henry ranted and raved against those of his subjects who disagreed with him in ecclesiastical matters.⁵² In this context it should be pointed out that Pole's astonishing sympathy for the Turks was an attitude to which the cardinal subscribed purely for political needs. Despite what he argued here, Pole shared the opinion of most of his contemporaries that the Turks were a severe threat to Christendom. Once the English schism was no longer a problem, in the reign of Mary Tudor, Pole changed his tune considerably. In his *Discorso di Pace*, which he wrote in 1554, he claimed that the futile wars between Francis and Charles had given the Turks the opportunity to expand to a frightening extent. Interestingly, he barely mentioned the continental heresies in this context. Logically, Pole should have seen their success in the light of the ongoing struggle for European hegemony between Habsburg and Valois in the same way as he had seen the rise of the English schism in this context during the 1530s.⁵³ Once the English problem was out of the way, he thus reverted to his true intolerant, anti-Turkish belief, but as long as he had to struggle for the emperor's attention to England he was willing to sacrifice this belief in order to divert Charles's power from the Turks and to England.

Pole also pointed to Henry's cruel treatment of Fisher, More, and other

⁵¹Cf. p. 147 above it will be remembered that Paul III also made this point to the imperial ambassador, cf. p. 144 above.

⁵²*De Unitate*, p. 271-2 and *Apologia*, p. 78-81.

⁵³R. Pole, *Discorso di Pace*, in *NB*, XV, p. 389-91.

opponents of the religious changes in England. He alleged that the dissolution of the monasteries was an act of greed and avarice; and he strongly lamented the desecration of the tombs of Thomas Becket and Augustine. He also accused Henry of unnecessarily attacking the nobility, and deplored the recent execution of his brother, the Marquis of Exeter, and Sir Edward Nevill. All these events Pole branded as breaches of law, which must not go unpunished.⁵⁴ Towards the end of the *Apologia* Pole returned to the original aim of his treatise and asked the emperor to form an alliance with the pope and the King of France to punish Henry, whom he identified as the Antichrist.⁵⁵

Pole's imagery in the *Apologia* depends heavily on his conviction that Henry was the victim of his "satanic" adviser, Thomas Cromwell. Much has been written about Pole's treatment of Cromwell and Machiavelli, so that it seems expedient to summarize the relevant passages of the *Apologia* in some detail before discussing them. Pole informed the emperor that Henry had been approached by a 'messenger from Satan', who explained to the monarch that his problem lay in the restrictions which resulted from the yoke of Roman obedience. This messenger pointed out that it was unnatural to have two different rulers in one realm, one for temporal and one for religious affairs. He explained to the king that if the pope's sanction for the divorce could not be obtained it was the king's right and duty to renounce Roman obedience and make himself head of the church. The messenger proceeded to tempt Henry with the wealth of the church in England, which the king could incorporate in his own possessions if only he would take up his rightful title as head of the church.⁵⁶ Then Pole revealed the name of this messenger, who was no-one other

⁵⁴*Apologia*, chapters 16-25. The partition of the *Apologia* into chapters was introduced by Quirini and cannot be found in the manuscript. BAV: Vat. Lat. 5970,2, f. 1-235^v.

⁵⁵*Apologia*, chapters 42-44. See the excellent study on the dependence of Pole's imagery on Old Testament prophetic terminology and his place among the apocalyptic writers by Donaldson, 'Machiavelli', p. 211-47.

⁵⁶Pole used in this passage the image of Christ's temptation by Satan. 'Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith to him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' (Matthew 4, 8-9) 'Et cum hoc dicto quasi in pinnaculum Templi, vel in montem excelsum eum elevasset, unde omnia subjecta potestati Ecclesiasticae videri possent, sic omnia Regni monasteria, quae in magno numero et oppulenta fuerunt, omnes Episcopatus, universum denique Ecclesiae patrimonium illi ostendit, cum illud adjungeret: haec omnia tua sunt, tantum te

but Thomas Cromwell. He carried on describing Cromwell as being of the basest background, who used to work as a mercenary and a clerk in Italy where he acquired some education before he returned to England to start a career in politics. Pole admitted that he never actually heard Cromwell speak in public, but he assured the emperor that the reported speech was not far from the actual truth. The evidence for this he derived from a conversation which he claimed to have had with Cromwell shortly after 1527, which was just after he had returned from Italy to England.⁵⁷ Cromwell, who was then one of Wolsey's men, asked Pole what he thought the most important duties of a councillor to a prince should be. Pole answered that a councillor should always keep his prince's honour and advantage in mind, while he must never forget to keep his advice in accord with natural law and the writings of pious and learned men. Cromwell responded that Pole's view would be correct for public speech and academic use, but that in real politics they were of little value. These views uttered in secret council meetings by inexperienced men would incur the prince's hatred and disgust rather than anything else. Assuring Pole that he would come to the same conclusions once he had gained some experience in political work himself, Cromwell confided in Pole that he thought the real duty of the prudent councillor was to find out exactly what the will of the prince demanded.

Qua in re non mediocri prudentia opus esse dicebat, dum non semper, quam verbis ostendunt, eam intus voluntatem gerunt. Quos decet maxime in sermone, religionis, pietatis, et reliquarum virtutum praeclara nomina semper proponere, quin tamen cum his eorum voluntas semper conveniat. Hic ergo prudens Conciliarii oculus intentus esse debet, ut interiorem illam Principis voluntatem investiget, qua inventa ita ingenio elaboret, ita se gerat, ut et Princeps sua desideria consequatur, nec tamen defectio ulla, vel schisma in religione appareat. Qui universa ita aptare novit, ut cum religione consentiant, ut nec ullam virtutem Princeps negligere videatur (nam hoc Principibus maxime placet) hic quidem omnes numeros prudentis Conciliarii

Caput Ecclesiae, quod revera es, vocari te facias.' (*Apologia*, p. 121; 'And after he had said that he took him to the pinnacle of the temple, as it were, to the top of a very high mountain, from where all the wealth and power of the church could be seen, all the monasteries of the realm, which were numerous and rich, and all the bishoprics, that is he showed him all the possessions of the church, and he said to him: All this shall be yours, if you call yourself what you rightfully are, Head of the Church.')

⁵⁷*Apologia*, chapter 28.

implevit, et, ut quisque ingenio hic prope accedere potest, sic prudens ab omnibus habebitur. Haec via expeditissima ad tuendam gratiam, et auctoritatem apud Principes. Sic denique, qui hoc assequitur, sibi, et suis utilis esse potest.⁵⁸

The cardinal continued the account by reporting that as Cromwell realized that Pole was not pleased, he said no more, but offered to send him a book, in which a modern author had laid down the principles of statecraft for princes and their councillors. The two men parted with Pole promising to read the book, but Cromwell never sent it to him. Pole concluded from this that Cromwell had realized that Pole might be a political adversary and thus he did not want to disclose the source of his beliefs. Soon afterwards Cromwell rose to power and influence and Pole began to fear for his safety, because he had seen that Cromwell feared neither man nor God.

Tunc enim hic idem sermo, quem modo recitavi, quasi monitoris loco fuit, ut fugerem crudelis terras, quem Dei benignitas (sic enim postea sum interpretatus) voluit, ut audirem, ut daret mihi significationem, ut fugerem a facie acrus. Acrum enim prorsus intentum videbam ex illo sermone omnes, qui vel pietati, vel religioni essent dediti.⁵⁹

After his departure from England Pole claimed to have made great efforts to find out which book Cromwell had been talking about in their conversation. He assured the

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 134. 'In this matter, he said, a high degree of prudence was necessary, since their real will is not always what they indicate in words. It is fitting for princes, above all in their speech, constantly to utter the glorious names of religion, piety and the other virtues, without their own will always being in agreement. So here the councillor's prudent eye must be attentive, so that he may discover that inward will of the prince, and having found it out, he must so cleverly manage things and so conduct himself, that the prince may achieve his desires without any schismatic breaking in religion being apparent. The man who knows how to fit everything so that it agrees with religion and so that the prince appears to neglect no virtue (for this pleases princes above all), has in every detail fulfilled the duty of a wise councillor, and to that degree to which each man can by the exercise of intelligence approach this, he will be considered wise by all. This is the royal road to favour and influence with princes. Thus, finally, the man who achieves this can be of use to both himself and his family.'

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 136. 'Then this conversation, which I have just related, served as a warning to flee from cruel land, a warning which God's kindness (for thus I interpreted it subsequently) wished me to hear, so that He might give me an intimation, that I should flee out of bowshot. For I saw from that conversation that a bow was stretched out against all who were committed to piety or religion.' [The passage 'ut fugerem crudelis terras' is an interesting allusion to Vergil, *Aen.* 3. 44 'fuge crudeles terras'; I am greatly indebted to Mrs S. West of Hertford College, who made me aware of this.]

emperor that he had identified the source of Cromwell's despicable ideas about statecraft. He found the book which Cromwell had recommended, and instantly realized that although its title page bore the name of a man as its author, it had been written by Satan, much in the same way as the Bible could be called God's work. The book was Machiavelli's *Il Principe*.⁶⁰

So much for Pole's treatment of Cromwell in the *Apologia*. Much has been written about the possibility of Cromwell being familiar with Machiavelli's work around 1530, that is to say about the question of whether or not Pole's account can be trusted. The search for an answer to this became mixed up with a further question: Was Thomas Cromwell a Machiavellian?⁶¹ The answers to these questions are of purely academic interest. We cannot determine whether Cromwell knew the *Prince* before the late 1530s, or whether he had wanted to recommend another book to Pole rather than the *Prince*.⁶² Two other questions seem much more important in this context than the ones which have given nourishment to a lively debate among historians for the last eighty years: the first is that of the authenticity of Pole's account of the conversation with Cromwell. Secondly, how did Pole represent Machiavelli's teaching in the *Apologia*? In answer to the first question we can call only on circumstantial evidence, which is as much as we can do for the questions which have received attention in the past. However, it is curious that historians, who have generally doubted the accuracy of Pole's memory, have never pursued one question, which would render further deliberation unnecessary: did Pole invent the conversation with Cromwell simply in order to make his argument stick? We know that Pole became acquainted with Machiavelli's writings only after he returned to Italy in the 1530s; it seems even likely that he read Machiavelli between writing *De Unitate* and the *Apologia*, because otherwise he would have mentioned bad influences in the earlier work. As Cromwell's star reached its peak after Pole had written *De Unitate*, which is probably the same time as Pole discovered Machiavelli, it is conceivable that the cardinal invented the dependence of Cromwell's politics on Machiavelli's philosophy. As will be shown

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁶¹For a summary of the ongoing controversy about this question see the note at the end of this chapter, p. 207-8 below.

⁶²This was suggested by Van Dyke, *Renascence Portraits*, p. 401.

later, Pole was horrified by the content of Machiavelli's book, as he was by the development in England under the increasing influence of Cromwell, so it may be argued that Pole simply projected his image of Machiavelli onto Cromwellian politics. It is unlikely that Pole would have had a detailed conversation with a young, ambitious upstart about matters as sensitive as the ones described, when he was in England. It is equally unlikely that Cromwell, who was otherwise rather cautious, would have disclosed such ruthless opinions so freely to someone who was a perfect stranger to him. Also, it will be remembered that at one stage of their alleged conversation Cromwell was supposed to have advised Pole that he would find when he had gained more experience that Cromwell was right in saying that the academic approach to the duties of a councillor would be hateful to any prince in real politics.⁶³ At the time when the conversation was supposed to have taken place, Cromwell was just as inexperienced in this kind of work as Pole. This is a hint that the account of the conversation is as fictitious as the account of Cromwell's speech to Henry VIII, which Pole had given earlier in the *Apologia*. Then, however, he went to claim that his main evidence for the probability of this speech was the personal conversation which he had had with Henry's future first minister.⁶⁴ Pole needed some sort of evidence for his claim that English politics were governed not only by unlawful and selfish principles, but also by abominable and satanic influence. In this context it was not his main concern to victimize Cromwell, but Cromwell was a ready prop to use in order to convince the emperor that what was happening in England was a greater threat to Christianity than it was widely believed. Thus it is fitting to assume that Pole, who was convinced of the monstrosity of Machiavelli's teachings, invented the entire conversation in order to place Machiavelli in the English context and to be able to attack this development of political thought in general.⁶⁵ Besides, Pole may have been genuinely convinced that Cromwell was an evil influence on Henry. As will be pointed out below, Pole saw England merely as the first victim of Machiavelli's teaching and appealed to the

⁶³Cf. p. 197 above.

⁶⁴Cf. *ibid*.

⁶⁵G. R., Elton, 'The Political Creed of Thomas Cromwell', in Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government, II* (Cambridge, 1972) p. 219 footnote no. 3 contemplates but dismisses doubts about the historicity of this conversation.

emperor to stem the tide while there was still time. The points above do not imply that Pole may not have firmly believed Cromwell to be a Machiavellian, however this is negligible for the current argument. Also, the question as to whether Cromwell was a Machiavellian in the strict sense of the word cannot possibly be answered conclusively. His politics can certainly be called Machiavellian to a large extent, but whether Cromwell had shaped his own ideas, or whether he had been shaped by the ideas expressed in the *Prince*, or whether he had been under some other influence is of minor importance.⁶⁶ Machiavelli was little more than the first one to write down the basic principles according to which the princes of his time and their councillors conducted politics.

It must not be forgotten that the *Apologia* is a piece of propaganda literature, written with the intention of stirring up the emperor to take action against developments which Pole clearly saw as abominations. Pole's religious motivation allowed him to employ any conceivable means in order to try and stop what he saw as the major threat to the *Respublica Christiana*. This threat was the philosophical concept for the total secularisation of politics and for the subordination of religion under politics, which for Pole became obvious in the English enactment of ideas which he thought had been taken directly from Machiavelli. In this context it becomes unimportant whether Pole was convinced that Cromwell knew Machiavelli. Clearly, he saw it fit to attack them both in his *Apologia*, and the easiest way of doing this was by establishing a dependence between them. We might even suggest that Pole did not really care whether Henry's minister knew the writings of the Florentine, because his invective was directed at a concept and its manifestation rather than at Thomas Cromwell.

This leads us to the second question, which was raised earlier; namely, in what manner did Pole represent Machiavelli's views? Once Pole had identified Machiavelli as the source of evil in England, he proceeded to describe the *Prince* and the danger inherent in this book. First, he stated that the 'poison' of this book, which had been written through satanic inspiration, was present in all European courts, and he warned all princes that that they and their sons were at great danger

⁶⁶A. G., Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation* (London, 1959) p. 78, asserts that Cromwell did not need Machiavelli to form his political opinions.

through it. He also added a warning to the subjects of all princes that the influence of the book would ultimately lead to their undoing.⁶⁷ Without any more words, which is unusual for Pole's normally lengthy and verbose style, he started his description of Machiavelli's teaching. Pole's unusual brevity here betrays the urgency with which he regarded the subject.

Auscultate ergo hoc primum, quod de religione monet. Suadet Principi, ut ante omnia caveat, ne videatur negligere religionem, quam commodam rem esse vult, *et* sic Principi opportunam, si ea recte uti novit, ut nulla plus valeat ad omnia assequenda, quaecumque animus ejus desiderare possit. Hanc vero commoditatem ab eo ducit, quia populus, *et* vulgus hominum universum a nullo se facilius trahi patiuntur, quam ab eo, de cujus religioso animo aliquam spem conceperint. Quare sive cum suis populis Princeps agat, sive cum externis, in omnibus commerciis, contractibus, *et* foederibus hoc plurimum referre, quae de tua religione opinio praecessit, utrum fidei, *et* religionis observator, an contemptor habearis, maxime vero cavendum, ne contemnere videaris; quod tamen praeceptum ita intellegi vult, ut, nisi, cum res postulet, declinare scias, non tam opinio de religione tua proderit, quam oberit. Si ita serio, et pertinaciter religionem observes, quatenus libri de religione scripti perscribunt, hoc nihil damniosus, cum religio ipsa ex se nunquam fere se utilitatibus humanis accommodare possit, raro autem cum utilitate observari. ... Qui veritatem, ac fidem, *et* religionem semper sequi velit, nequit unquam tutus ab insidiis vivere. Nec tamen qui religionem aperte negligit, meliorem statum invenit. Quid ergo faciendum? Tenenda via media, quam suadet prudentia, ut, cum tua utilitatis moneat, religionem observes, cum non suadet, non ita sis scrupulosus, ut ab ea non discedas, nec tamen ita temerarius, ut aperte eam rejicias, hoc enim maxime nocet.⁶⁸

⁶⁷*Apologia*, p. 138-9; 'Huc enim spectabat illa doctrina, tanquam potio furorem inducens in Principes, ut in vos postea, qui subditi estis, tanquam lupi, vel tygrides in oves irruant, vel tanquam vulpes in pullos, ut vos lacerent, dissipent, *et* perdant.' (For this is the object of that doctrine, like a potion bringing frenzy upon princes, so that they may subsequently fall upon you, who are their subjects, as wolves or tigers might fall upon sheep, or foxes on chickens, so that they may tear you apart, dismember, and destroy you.)

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 138-9; 'So hear this first, his advice about religion. He advises the prince that he should above all things beware of seeming to neglect religion. Religion would be an advantageous thing and so expedient for a prince, if he knows how to use it rightly, that nothing could be more effective in achieving whatever his heart desires. He derives this advantageous quality from the fact that the people, and the crowd in general, allow themselves to be influenced by no-one more easily than by the man of whose religious disposition they have formed some hope. So, whether the prince deals with his own peoples or with foreigners, in all exchanges, contracts or treaties it makes an immense difference what view has been formed of your religion, whether you are regarded as conscientious and faithful in your religious observance, or as inclined to make light of it, and you must indeed take the utmost care not to seem to make light of it; but, nevertheless, he

Pole then continued his summary of Machiavelli that the councillors should use all their skill and intelligence to make sure that the prince who does deviate from religion will not appear impious to the world. Thus the councillor's duty according to Pole-Machiavelli is to convince the world that the prince's actions are just and in accordance with religion. Pole then pointed out that Machiavelli emphasized that the ruler must bear the semblance of possessing the virtues of piety, faithfulness, justice, and liberality, but in fact he should not have these qualities, he should merely make others believe that such qualities governed his decisions. The cardinal closed his summary by relating Machiavelli's view that a ruler should resemble both lion and fox. The vulpine nature of the ruler should enable him to be aware of traps which his adversaries lay for him, whereas the leonine side of the ruler's character would be useful to intimidate enemies.

So far Pole's treatment of Machiavelli's *Prince*. J. P. Moreau, who characteristically does not give Pole much credit for his intellectual abilities, judges that Pole did not understand Machiavelli.⁶⁹ Donaldson gets closer to the mark by asserting that Pole represented hardly more than one chapter of the *Prince* as the whole of Machiavellian thought.⁷⁰ However, Donaldson stops here and does not look at the way in which Pole presented Machiavelli. When Pole started his

[Machiavelli] intends this precept to be taken to mean that, unless when the case requires it, you know how to deviate, the opinion about your religion will do more harm than good. If you practice your religion as earnestly and perseveringly as the books written on religious subjects prescribe, nothing can be more harmful, since religion itself of its own nature can practically never adapt itself to human advantages, and can rarely be practiced with advantage. ... He who always wishes to follow truth, faith, and religion cannot long live safe from treachery. Nor does the man who openly rejects religion achieve a better state. So what is to be done? One should hold the middle course which prudence advises, so that you should observe religion when your own advantage so suggests, but when it does not you should not be so scrupulous that you do not deviate from it, nor, on the other hand, so rash that you openly reject it; for this does the utmost harm.'

⁶⁹Moreau, *Rome ou l'Angleterre*, p. 265, makes the case that Pole's lack of understanding lay in his missing of the point that Machiavelli was concerned with the stability of the state, whereas Pole's aim was, according to Moreau, to maintain divine order in people's conscience. Pole certainly did not miss Machiavelli's point about the stability of the state, but he could not accept the means that Machiavelli advocated princes should employ in order to achieve this end.

⁷⁰Donaldson, 'Machiavelli', p. 219. He points out that Pole dealt almost exclusively with the eighteenth chapter of the *Prince* in the *Apologia*.

summary of Machiavelli's thought he wrote, 'So hear this *first* [my italics], his advice about religion'.⁷¹ Interestingly Pole never presented a *second* to follow this *first*. His predominantly religious motivation did not allow him to see Machiavelli's teaching from any other angle than that of religion. His summary of Machiavelli's advice on religion uses many more words than Machiavelli himself ever did in the *Prince*. In the eighteenth chapter of the *Prince*, which is entitled 'How Rulers Should Keep Their Promises' and does not even primarily deal with religion, Machiavelli asserted that a ruler must from time to time disregard good virtues, religion being one of them, in order to sustain his power. Religion itself is a minor part of Machiavelli's argument in this context.⁷² We can see that Pole clearly misrepresented Machiavelli's writing in the *Apologia*. The *Prince* does not recommend a middle course between religious appearance and ruthless behaviour. While it suggests that it is important to seem devout, it does not convey the impression that this is meant to work as a recipe for achieving the prince's desires, but it solely concerns itself with the preservation of power. When the ruler's hold on the power in the state is at stake, Machiavelli advises letting go of the common standards of morally good behaviour. Pole generalized this point to a large extent in the *Apologia* and made it appear as if Machiavelli had written just to provide Henry with a concept for his politics. Even this needs further qualification; Pole represented the *Prince* as the philosophical superstructure of Henry's politics as he interpreted them. Pole's fixation on politics being motivated exclusively by matters

⁷¹Cf. footnote no. 68 above.

⁷²Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. Q. Skinner and P. Russel (Cambridge 1988) p. 62-3.

'A ruler, then need not actually possess all the above-mentioned qualities [generosity, mercifulness, loyalty, courage, affability, moderation, uprightness, even-temperedness, seriousness, devotion], but he must certainly seem to. Indeed, I shall be so bold as to say that having and always cultivating them is harmful, whereas seeming to have them is useful; for instance, to seem merciful, trustworthy, humane, upright and devout, and also to be so. But if it becomes necessary to refrain, you must be prepared to act in the opposite way, and be capable of doing it. And it must be understood that a ruler, and especially a new ruler, cannot always act in ways which are considered good because, in order to maintain his power, he is often forced to act treacherously, ruthlessly or inhumanely, and disregard the precepts of religion. Hence, he must be prepared to vary his conduct as the winds of fortune and circumstances constrain him and, as I said before, not deviate from right conduct if possible, but be capable of entering upon the path of wrongdoing when this becomes necessary. ... And it is most necessary of all to seem devout. In these matters, most men judge you more by their eyes than by their hands.'

of religion and faith becomes apparent in this context once again. Machiavelli made his recommendations in the much wider context of the usefulness of keeping up virtues, whereas Pole narrowed this down to religion only. While Machiavelli saw devotion merely as a part of the general virtues, Pole would have argued that no virtue could exist without uncompromising religious observance. It is impossible to determine whether Pole deliberately twisted Machiavelli's argument, or whether this was his natural understanding of the teaching of the Florentine. Another part of Pole's presentation of the *Prince*, however, was willfully falsified in order to fit Pole's argument against both Machiavelli and Cromwell. Pole was adding to Machiavelli's writing when he reported that Machiavelli, after dealing with the possibility of the necessity arising for a prince to act irreligiously, added a passage that it would then be the councillor's duty to make the prince's actions appear virtuous before the world. There is no such section in the *Prince*. The only point which Machiavelli makes about councillors or ministers is that one can judge the ruler's aptitude by his choice of ministers. If there are capable and loyal ministers in the state, the assumption that the ruler is intelligent and shrewd should be correct according to the *Prince*.⁷³ Pole's statement, however, was put into the *Apologia* in order to make an even stronger case for Cromwell's discipleship to Machiavelli. Pole had a vested interest in removing any doubt that Cromwell's politics were indeed dependent on Machiavelli, because we have seen before that in the course of the *Apologia* Henry would be identified with Antichrist, and Pole had already stated that the *Prince* had been written under Satan's inspiration. The link between Satan's teachings and Henry's politics must be established for Pole to make his case in front of the emperor. Pole continued his *Apologia* showing that Henry had followed Machiavelli's advice as he saw it. The English king had covered all his actions behind a shady façade of piety.

Qui etiam, quamquam cum Pontifice Romano inimicitias acerbissimas gereret, ejusque auctoritatem in omnibus rebus dejiceret, necque tamen Defensoris Fidei titulum ab eo datum relinquere voluit, sed in suis omnibus impiis edictis, per quae idem evertibat, semper ejusdem Defensoris nomen adhibuit. Quid vera tandem in illa tragicomoedia sine religionis specie agebatur? Cum vero a libidine in crudelitatem declinasset, et ex mista [sic.] comoedia veram tragoediam fecisset propter insignem saevitiam, qua omnes

⁷³Machiavelli, *Prince*, p. 80-1.

tyrannos, et impios superavit, non melius magistri praecepta exprimere potuit; hoc saltem (in quo reliqua omnia exprimuntur) ut sub praetextu religionis suis desideriis et cupiditatibus serviat, in quo uno tota doctrina Machiavelli, et Cromvelli continetur.⁷⁴

One is inclined to agree with Moreau that Pole did not understand Machiavelli.⁷⁵ In no passage of the *Prince* do we find any suggestion that the prince should be governed by his lusts and desires and cover up any abominable conduct with a show of religiosity. However, it would be too easy to assume that the man whose learning and understanding was praised all over Europe had been unable to make sense of this particular book. On the contrary, Pole understood the *Prince* very well and he did not like it. It is unlikely that he really saw Machiavelli as the teacher of a new generation of politicians and rulers in Europe, he must have rather seen Machiavelli's book as a symptom of what was going on around him. The development of politics, the secular approach to every problem, even to problems of religious policies, had found its articulation in Machiavelli and a manifestation in England. Pole had decided to fight them both and he used the weapon which was at the command of every humanist. He wrote a powerful invective. It is curious that he never published it. We know that Pole intended the *Apologia* to be the preface to a publication of *De Unitate*. However, while he was writing the *Apologia* in Carpentras the papal press in Rome prematurely published *De Unitate* without Pole's consent. Later publications of *De Unitate* were issued either without Pole's permission or after his death. It may be argued that Pole did not have the opportunity to publish the *Apologia* since a publication of it detached from *De Unitate* would have lost its sense and justification.

⁷⁴*Apologia*, p. 144-5. 'Even, although he [Henry VIII] was engaged in most bitter feuds against the Roman pontiff and rejected his authority in everything, he was nevertheless unwilling to give up the title of Defender of the Faith bestowed by him [the pope], but in all his impious edicts in which he was overturning it [the faith], he always used the name Defender. But what, I ask, in that tragi-comedy was being done without the appearance of religion? But when he had descended from lust to cruelty, and had turned what was half comedy into true tragedy, because of the extraordinary savagery in which he surpassed all tyrants and impious men, he could not more effectively put into practice his master's precepts - this, at least (in which all the rest is expressed) that beneath a veil of religion he should serve his own desires and lusts - and in this one thing is contained the whole doctrine of Machiavelli and of Cromwell.'

⁷⁵Cf. p. 203 above.

The *Apologia* as a piece of propaganda did not have to be fully accurate in the representation of the enemies which it attacked. It is an example of political literature where the argument defeated the issue. Pole knowingly twisted the facts in order to create a more powerful cause. Rather than accepting Moreau's point of view, we refute Macaluso's suggestion that 'there is no idea of "pure politics" for Pole, that is statecraft divorced from morality.'⁷⁶ Pole saw it differently. In his fight for morality, religion, and the precepts of natural law, he was prepared to compromise with the truth. Thus Pole proved himself as an apt and shrewd politician. His tragedy was that he was trying to halt the development of his time, and that the men and women to whom he appealed for help had already followed the developments which he tried to stop.

VI. 4. Note on the controversy about Machiavelli's influence on Thomas Cromwell

P. Van Dyke, *Renascence Portraits*, started the discussion in 1906 by refuting Pole's allegation that Cromwell had wanted to send him the *Prince*. He suggested that Cromwell had had Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* in mind (p. 395-405). This argument was fully supported and repeated by L. A. Weisberger, 'Machiavelli and Tudor England', *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927) p. 599-602.

G. Constant, however, took no notice of Van Dyke's and Weisberger's reservations and used the *Apologia* as a historical source for Pole's relationship with Cromwell in his *The Reformation in England, I* (London, 1934, repr. 1939) p. 260-84. In 1940 the first doubts were raised about Van Dyke's point of view by F. W. Baumer, *Theory of Kingship*, p. 168, who thought it possible that Cromwell had known Machiavelli at this early stage and believed that he had had the *Prince* in mind during the conversation with Pole. Baumer found support from W. G. Zeeveld, *Foundations*, p. 14, in 1948, who suggested that Cromwell may have come to know Machiavelli's writings through Richard Morison. T. M. Parker presented an article entitled 'Was Thomas Cromwell a Machiavellian?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, I (1950) in which he argued that Cromwell may well have known Agostino Nifo's *De Regnandi Peritia ad Carolum V*, which is a Latin,

⁷⁶Macaluso, 'Concepts of Kingship', p. 44.

plagiarized version of the *Prince*. He also rejected the idea that Cromwell may have been talking about the *Courtier*, because the this book did not contain anything to warrant Pole's violent reaction to it (p. 67-8). G. R. Elton next wrote in reply to Parker. In his 'Political Creed' he argued that whether or not Cromwell knew Machiavelli, he would not have agreed with his views (p. 220-2). Further, he suggested that Cromwell had wanted to send Marsiglio di Padua's *Defensor Pacis* to Pole (p. 84). A. G. Dickens, *Thomas Cromwell*, showed that the *Courtier* contains passages which fit Pole's alleged conversation with Cromwell. However, he doubted that Van Dyke's theory was correct, although he also did not believe that Cromwell knew the *Prince* around 1530. He offered no alternative solution to the problem (p. 77-8). C. Morris in his 'Machiavelli's reputation in Tudor England', *Il Pensiero Politico*, II (1969) p. 417-8, decided not to enter in the discussion, but he listed some of the literature about the problem. The latest addition to this ongoing controversy was Donaldson's refutation of the suggestion that Cromwell may have been thinking about the *Courtier* because there would have been no reason to keep it secret. Donaldson then asks why he should not have thought about the *Prince*, if we accept that he had made the offer to send a book to Pole, as he might well have read and acquired it in Florence himself ('Machiavelli' (1984) p. 236-7).

VII. Conclusion

This study shows Reginald Pole in the decisive period of his life. Whereas Pole has always, and rightfully, been seen primarily as a humanist and theologian, the formative impulse of his life was his political decision to oppose his royal cousin. Pole entered Roman service as a politician, or to be more precise, as a pawn in the political struggle between Henry VIII and Paul III. The Roman policy makers had understood the advantage of having a relative of Henry VIII's in curial service and thus they invested a lot of energy in persuading Reginald Pole to follow the papal summons to Rome in 1536. It was certainly not Pole's intention to spend his life as a cardinal in the direct political service of the Roman church, but the immediate circumstances of his defection to the curia necessitated that he started his career there in this manner. It is true that the pope had originally summoned Pole to Rome so that he would participate in the commission for the changes within the Roman church, but this summons hardly gave all the reasons why the papacy was so eager to see Reginald Pole in Rome.¹ Pole's input into the report of this commission was certainly valuable, although it is impossible to ascertain which members of the commission provided the main thoughts for its final report. The report, the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, has been viewed by Hubert Jedin as a team work production by all members of the commission.² However, in his assessment of the *Consilium*, Jedin focuses on the theological eminence and role of Contarini, Carafa, Aleander, and Badia, whereas Pole is not mentioned save in the list of the members of the commission. It should also be noted that in 1536 Pole did not have an outstanding reputation as a theologian. It is true that he was renowned for his learning and that in due course he could have acquired a reputation comparable to that of Erasmus, but in 1536 the most striking credential which would have resulted in his inclusion in the commission was his friendship with some other eminent members of the commission. It is therefore suggested that Pole's summons and his inclusion in the commission happened for largely political

¹Cf. p. 19 above.

²H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, (London, 1957) I, p. 425-6. Jedin calls the effort to ascertain each member's input 'useless'.

reasons. Pole was a kinsman of Henry VIII who was loyal to the Roman church and who was capable of opposing the religious policies of the English monarch publicly. It may be going too far to assume that Pole was lured to Rome under false pretenses, but his value for the curia in 1536 lay more in the political sphere than in the theological.

Thus it is wrong to see Pole exclusively as a churchman, and his political activities during his early Roman years are of the utmost importance for an understanding of the rest of Pole's career. When Pole has been viewed as a politician by historians so far, it has generally been his last legation in the 1550s which attracted their attention. Thus, the common verdict on the cardinal's political views and abilities was that he was an eirenically minded politician, whose failure was brought about by his idealism for the cause of the Roman church. Since Pole's aim in his last legation was the institution of a lasting peace treaty between Habsburg and Valois, he failed in his efforts, because Charles V and Henry II were not yet fully prepared to compromise. Thus Pole has earned the reputation of being politically inept, because he could find no means to keep the warring nations at the negotiating table, and of being solely inspired by a quest for European peace and tolerance. This assessment has always been seen in combination with Pole's stance for religious compromise between the Roman church and the reformers at the Council of Trent, which prompts historians to see him as the prototype of religious and political mediation and temperate compromising in an age of intolerance and radicalism.

This study shows that these views, which are largely derived from Pole's actions in his later years, cannot hold true for his entire career. We have shown Pole's aggressiveness in his attempts to persuade Charles V and Francis I to intervene in England. He did not shy away from advocating hostile methods such as trade war or even war in arms. We have also shown that, at least in the 1530s, his religious tolerance towards the new learning was little more than theoretical. When it came to his own family and their religious allegiance he stated categorically that he would show no tolerance if his relatives conformed with Henry's changes in the spiritual life of the English nation.³ Thus Pole's predominantly eirenic

³In 1537 Pole conveyed a message to his mother, exhorting her to stay loyal to the Roman

disposition in matters political and spiritual was either a development of the later years of his life, or he brought his views in line with what he saw as realistically feasible. His stand for mutual understanding at the Council of Trent must be seen as a political move, because the cardinal realized that without some readiness for compromise the entire north of Europe would be irretrievably lost for the Roman church. Pole's quest for the European peace in the 1550s can also be explained by political expediency because after the solution of the English schism and the marriage alliance between Tudor and Habsburg there was nothing but the ongoing conflict between the French king and the emperor which hindered the catholic forces of Europe from striking against the protestants and the Turks. In this context Pole cannot be seen as the peace-loving, idealistic cardinal he has been made out to be, but we must take him for what he was: a calculating politician, who tailored his efforts to the needs of the faith and the Roman church.

It has been pointed out in the course of this study that Pole's political actions were exclusively motivated by religious considerations. Thus, the concept of pure politics did not exist for him, but he always adjusted his approach to meet his ends: these were the preservation of the Roman church as the sole representative of western Christianity and the inner reform of this church. Indeed, his approach can be called as Machiavellian as that of Thomas Cromwell, whom he reproached for his alleged discipleship to the Florentine philosopher.

The reason that Pole repeatedly failed in his efforts to influence the course of European politics does not lie in his ineptitude, but in the fact that his approach was untimely. He was trying to coax the emperor and the French king into political action and aggression for purely religious motives. It was Pole's ill fortune that the temporal rulers in the early days of the reformation were not inclined to take up arms on behalf of the faith. Charles and Francis were busy fighting each other for European hegemony and the thought of concluding alliances with schismatic Christians or even infidels was not abhorrent to them. What Pole was advocating was religiously motivated war. However, the time for this was not yet ripe, because the Roman church had neglected reforming itself and thus re-establishing her credibility. Yet the sole purpose of Pole's legations of 1537 and 1539 was to

church and threatening to disown her if she conformed to the Henrician changes. Cf. p. 52 above.

find a way to re-institute Roman obedience in England. This was not possible without the support of the great catholic rulers, who were unwilling to compromise their political aims for the good of the papacy. The crucial mistake underlying both his legations was that the curial policy makers sent him on these legations to begin with. Pole was not a free agent in his diplomatic missions, but he depended on the instructions issued for him by the pope and the papal State Secretariat. Although Pole was the pope's chief advisor on matters concerning England, the policies followed in Pole's legations were curial policies. As it became apparent in the 1530s that the problems in northern Europe were more complex than had been assumed earlier on, the papal policy makers tried to gain a more active role for their policies than they had had before. The measures taken against the religious changes in the Empire during the 1520s had been largely ecclesiastical, such as disputations and excommunications, and the papal diplomats there had been confined to advising the princes of the Empire and exhorting them to stay loyal to the pope. This policy changed in the 1530s and Reginald Pole's legations counteracting the English schism were among the first instances when curial politics became belligerent towards a prince who had broken with Rome. It is suggested that through the approach of Pole's legations the Roman policy makers wanted to test the feasibility of hostile actions on England, in order to employ the same strategy on the German protestants, if England could be successfully reduced to Roman obedience.⁴ In the course of Pole's legations the Roman policy makers were gradually learning that both Charles V and Francis I were paying but lip service to religious unity. In both 1537 and 1539 Pole set out from Rome on a boat which was already leaking and although he was steering it as well as anyone could have done in his position he could not prevent it from sinking.

⁴This hypothesis needs substantiation through further studies in the strategy of the curial approach to the religious change in northern Europe in the 1520s and 1530s. B. M. Hallman, 'Practical Aspects of Roman Diplomacy in Germany, 1517-1541', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, X (1980) p. 193-206, argues that the papal diplomats in this period were mainly concerned with the keeping of peace and the avoiding of bloodshed. While this may be largely true for the papal diplomats in the Empire, the present study shows that this cannot be seen as a constant factor of papal diplomatic policies. Both Pole's and Rodolfo Pio's efforts against England show that papal diplomacy in the period in question had its strongly belligerent features.

In the past the two legations discussed in this study have received but little attention. The main reason for this is undoubtedly the daunting task of reporting about failures. Consequently, the legations have traditionally been viewed in too close connection with each other as nothing but fruitless attempts by the papal diplomacy to entice the emperor and the King of France to intervene in England. Superficially, this is true. However, there is far more information we can gain from a close examination of these two legations. Firstly, it must be pointed out that the legations started under very different auspices: while the emperor was at war with France in 1537 there was a state of unity between the two rulers in 1539. In 1537 the papacy had to discover that a papal legate was not honoured any more just because of the ecclesiastical significance of his office. A papal diplomat was expelled from France and forbidden entry to the Netherlands in order to please a schismatic king. The papacy had undoubtedly lost its position of honour among the European powers. It was not the first time that a papal diplomat was treated disrespectfully by a temporal ruler, but in this case the reason behind the treatment which Pole suffered was new. While earlier papal diplomats may have suffered offences through rulers who were at variance with the pope, in this case a legate was pushed around like a stage extra, because the two most powerful catholic rulers could not afford to alienate an enemy of the pope. The religious dimension of the papal legate had lost its significance. In 1539 the development went one step further. Although the French king and the emperor were not at war any longer, they had no intention of intervening in England. The curia had received messages from both these rulers that they were outraged by the conduct of Henry VIII and they had both indicated their readiness to act on behalf of the church. However, when it came to Pole's legation the presence of the cardinal proved to be an embarrassment for both of them. Again, even in times of peace, they would not jeopardize their political relations with England and the financial interests of their merchants for the benefit of the papacy. Pole was left in a position of check mate in Carpentras.

Of course, the fact that Pole was an exile from England and a renegade subject of the English king may also have prompted the continental rulers to treat him as

disrespectfully as they did. Had the pope sent one of the Italian cardinals on these legations, banishment and closed borders may not have been a problem. In Pole's case however, Henry could always insist that the legate was a traitor. Even if Charles and Francis never stated this explicitly, it is suggested that they may have felt apprehensive about negotiating with Pole, because that could have meant sanctioning their own traitors' deeds if only these traitors managed to reach some foreign potentate who would use them in the diplomatic game.⁵

The English reaction on Pole's legations proves that the potential threat they posed was indeed taken seriously. The English fear of an attack in both 1537 and 1539 should not be underestimated. Henry's and Cromwell's efforts to organize either the abduction or assassination of Pole were certainly partially motivated by the desire of bringing a traitor to justice, but another reason for these efforts is also their fear that Pole might possibly be successful in his efforts. It appears that these two legations were taken far more seriously by Paul III and Henry VIII than by the men who they were meant to impress, Charles V and Francis I.

The destruction of the Pole family is another indication of how much Pole's political potential was feared in England. It has been shown in this study that the traditional concept of the "Exeter Conspiracy" cannot withstand close examination. While the Courtenays may have suffered for political reasons, due to their proximity to the throne, their friends and allies the Poles were victimized for quite different motives. We have shown that there was no immediate danger of conspiratorial activities of the Poles and Courtenays in 1538, and that their downfall was brought about by judicial murder. The Poles suffered because Henry used them as political hostages, trying to secure a reasonable conduct from Reginald Pole. First threats against the Poles were made when Reginald went to Rome, and after he had sufficiently enraged Henry through his first legation, the English king struck back as soon as the political situation in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace allowed it. Geoffrey Pole was arrested when the cardinal accompanied the pope to the peace negotiations in Nice. When Reginald Pole set out to the emperor,

⁵It will be remembered that Charles V told Wyatt in 1539 that he would give Pole an audience even if he was one of his own traitors, because he came as papal legate (cf. p. 156 above). Despite this assertion it is unlikely that Henry's continuous insistence that Pole as a traitor was unworthy of diplomatic status remained without effect with the other European monarchs.

Lord Montagu was beheaded, and when the political threat of the 1539 legation reached its peak, the attainder of the Countess of Salisbury and, indeed, the cardinal himself followed suit. The different treatment of the members of the Pole and Courtenay families while they were detained in the Tower also indicates that these two families did not suffer for the same reasons, but that there was a personal vendetta against the Poles. The destruction of this family must be seen in close connection with the political activities of Reginald Pole. Viewing the fate of the Courtenays and the Poles as comparable or even identical means falling into the trap which Henry built for his contemporaries. He wanted everyone to believe that these executions were necessary for the good of the state, which had been threatened by conspiracy. The examination of the trials and indictments against the Poles has shown that they were not executed and killed as ordinary traitors, but that their trials had been staged only to gain a pawn against Reginald Pole.

In the 1530s Cardinal Pole was definitely the most formidable of Henry VIII's opponents. What is more, he was an enemy who was taken seriously by the king. Pole was a principal character on the European diplomatic stage, and his adversaries at least feared him as such. However, he was fighting a losing battle from the start. In his time it was impossible to achieve political change through religious motivation. The time for this was to come only when the various Christian denominations were all fully established during and after the catholic reformation. Religiously motivated alliances and wars would find no support until the Roman church had effectively gathered her followers under her banner. Pole's failure was that he was fighting for the re-establishment of the Roman church in England for purely religious reasons, and that he was unable to show the catholic rulers any political advantage or material gain by this change. This study, however, shows that Pole was defeated not because of a lack of ability as a diplomat, but because of his exteranlly dictated, exclusively religious approach.

Appendix

Archives Générales du Royaume, Brussels

Papiers d'Etat et Audience 128, f. 241-5

Pole to Granvelle, Carpentras, 11 April 1539.

/241/ Ill[ustrissi]mo S[igno]re,
scrissi da Perpignano a V[ostra]
S[ignoria] della deliberatione ch'io
haveva fatto circa la mia andata in
franza, cioè che la natura attesa della
commission datami da Sua S[anti]ta et
parendomi le cose star' in altri termini
di quello Sua S[anti]ta pensava, m'era
parso necessario fermarmi,
aspettando novo ordine da Sua
S[anti]ta. Et l'avisar' come havea
mandato un mio gentilhomme al Re
Chr[istianissi]mo con una mia lettera
della qule ne mandai la copia al
Signor Nuncio accio la mostrasse a
V[ostra] S[ignoria]. Hora havendo io
havuto risposta per il detto mio
gentilhomme, il quale è ritornato dalla
corte di franza, et mi ha portato letter'
del Re il quale ha preso in bonissima
parte il mio fermato per camino
anchora che m'aspettassi in desiderio,
et havesse gia mandato, per quanto
m'ha referito questo gentilhomme in

/241/ Most noble Lord, I wrote to your
lordship from Perpignan about the
decision I have taken concerning my
journey into France. Regarding the nature
of the commission given to me by his
holiness it appeared to me that things are
different now from what his holiness
thought, thus I considered it necessary to
halt my journey and wait for new orders
from his holiness. I also told you that I
sent one of my gentlemen to the Most
Christian King with a letter, of which I
sent a copy to the nuncio, so that he
would show it to your lordship
[Granvelle]. I have now had an answer
through my above mentioned gentleman,
who has returned from the French court,
and he brought me a letter from the king,
who took the interruption of my journey
very well although he is expecting me
impatiently. He had already sent [an
escort] in order to honour me and ensure
me of his fondness, as I was informed by
this gentleman in Bayonne. I thought it

Baiona, per farmi honor et carezze mi
 è parso cosa conveniente alla
 observantia ch'io porto alla Cerarea
 Maesta avisar V[ostra] S[ignoria] di
 quanto ho inteso della volunta del Re
 in questa causa, nella quale Sua
 Maesta Chr[istianissi]ma si mostra
 molto inclinata et pronta, per quanto
 mi ha scritto, et V[ostra] S[ignoria]
 potrà veder' per la copia delle lettere
 di Sua Maestala quale hora ho
 mandato al Signor Nuncio insieme
 con quella del Signor Conestabile.
 Sua Maesta Chr[istianissi]ma ha
 anchora detto al passato mio
 gentilhomme, che fara intender a Sua
 S[anti]ta l'opinione sua circa
 l'impedimenti propositi dalla Cerarea
 Maesta alla executione di questa
 impresa d'Inghilterra, della qual cosa
 io ne pregai Sua Maesta
 Chr[istianissi]ma per la lettera ch'io li
 scrissi, onde io ho mandato con
 diligentia l'istesso mio gentilhomme a
 Roma a Sua S[anti]ta, per intender'
 l'animo et parer' di quella, et saper'
 quanto li piacerà ch'io faccia, ne mi è
 parso inconveniente fra tanto avisar'
 V[ostra] S[ignoria] di quello sino a
 qui è occorso, maxime pertinendo
 questa causa per ogni rispetto
 pricipalmente alla C[esare]a Maesta.

was fitting for the deep respect which I
 bear the emperor to advise your lordship
 on how much I have heard about the
 readiness of the king [Francis I] in this
 matter. The Most Christian King shows
 himself very interested and ready [to act]
 according to what he has written to me,
 and you may see the letter, a copy of
 which I have now sent to the nuncio
 together with a copy of one from the
 constable [Montmorency]. The Most
 Christian King told my gentleman earlier
 that he would also make known to his
 holiness his opinion about the
 impediments which the emperor saw to
 the execution of this enterprise. In the
 letter which I sent to the Most Christian
 King I had asked him to do this.
 Therefore I have with all diligence sent the
 same gentleman to Rome to his holiness,
 in order to learn his opinion and thoughts,
 and to find out whether he is content with
 my actions. It seemed inconvenient to me
 to inform your lordship of all this only
 after all this will have happened, because
 this matter depends in every respect
 mainly on the emperor. That is why I
 now want to lay open in front of your
 lordship my soul and opinions, and to
 disclose every last thought as if to a
 loving and faithful friend, with whom I
 can talk about everything

Nella qual causa voglio hora con
V[ost]ra S[ignor]ia gionar' tutto il
senso dell'animo mio, et aprirgli ogni
mio minimo pensiero si come ad uno
amorevole et fidele amico, col quale
io possa ragionar' senza /241^v/ niun
rispetto tutto quello che io sento,
havendo per il passato, et hora che
son stato in Spagna conosciuta
V[ost]ra S[ignor]ia molto favorevole
a questa causa et amorevole alla mia
particular persona.

Io vedendo alla presente la
Maesta Chr[istianissi]ma non sol
pronta a non esser' impedimento a
questa Impresa, il che li anni passati
si potra con ragion temer, ma a
prestar ogni aiuto et favor a Sua
Cesarea Maesta spero n'habbia a
riuscir' ogni bene, parendomi che la
causa sia riduta al suo natural ordine
cio è ad esser principiata da Sua
Maesta Cesarea la qual si come da poi
dio è stata prima et in piu gravamente
offesa ragion è debba esser la prima a
deffender la causa de Dio et sua
insieme, et questa è et è stata sempr'
la expectation di quella afflitta Isola da
poi che per occasion della grande
ingiuria fatta alla Nobilissima casa di
Sua Maesta è caduta in si extreme

/241^v/ without

being careful, for both in the past and
now that I have been to Spain I have
known your lordship to be favourably
inclined towards this matter and me.

At present I see the Most Christian
King ready not only not to impede this
enterprise, fear of which may have been
reasonable in the past, but also ready to
give help and support to the emperor. I
hope that only good things will be gained
from this, as it seems to me that the matter
has been brought back to its natural order,
that is the emperor is its leading force. In
the face of God he [Charles V] has been
more gravely offended, thus it is
reasonable that he should be the foremost
defender of God's cause and his own.
This has always been the expectation of
this afflicted island since it fell into such
extreme misery on the occasion of the
grave injury done to the most noble house
of his majesty [house of Habsburg]; it
[England] has always hoped to be saved
and comforted by his majesty more than
by anyone else; in view of the old

miserie, dalle qual ha sempre sperato
 de esser sollenata et consolata da Sua
 Maesta piu che da ogni altro, attesa
 maxime l'antiqua amicitia di quel
 Regno con la Nobilissima casa di
 Borgogna dalla qual ragionevolmente
 si potra promettere', ben che non vi
 fusse altra causa di privata offension,
 essendo oppressa da cosi mostrosa
 Tyrannide come è hora di dover esser
 agiutata con molto maggior prontezza,
 che dal Regno di franza, o da alcun
 altro potentato. Ma che per aventura
 io potrei parer piu vehemente in
 questa causa per la privata iniuria fatta
 alli mei parenti di quello sia
 conveniente voglio chiamando il
 Signor Dio in testimonio del animo in
 cio dir et affirmar a V[ostre]
 S[ignoria] che si mio padre fusse
 stato quello chi havesse operato
quello ha operato quel Re contra
 l'honor de Dio et della Chiesa credo
 certissimo non sarei andato con tanti
 rispetti con quanti son andato verso
 lui, et similmente se io vedesse che
 aiutando io hora la causa del Re, li
 mei parenti fossero per esser' Signori
 di quel Regno non serei mancho
 adversario allora di qual sono hora al
 Re, et chi vole /242/ senza passioni
 interpretare po havere questo evidente

friendship between this realm [England]
 and the most noble house of Burgundy.
 Even if there had not been another reason
 through the private offence [the divorce
 from Catherine of Aragon], it would
 reasonably have been hoped [in England]
 that help against the oppression through
 such monstrous tyranny as the present
 one would have been sent with far greater
 readiness [by the emperor] than by the
 realm of France or by any other ruler.
 But if, peradventure, I might seem to be
 more vehement in this matter than is
 proper, because of the private injustice
 done to my relatives, I wish to tell and
 protest to your lordship - and I call on
 God to testify for my soul - that if my
 father had been the one who did all these
 things against the honour of God and the
 church, as indeed this king [Henry VIII]
 did, I am absolutely certain that I would
 not have proceeded with so much care as,
 indeed, I did in his regard. Similarly, if I
 saw that by helping the cause of the king
 [Henry VIII] my relatives would become
 the rulers of this realm, I would not be
 less of an adversary to them than I am
 now to the king. Those who want to

/242/ discuss things without passion may
 take this obvious line of reasoning of my

argomento del mio animo che sapendo et vedendo io di metter non solamente la mia propria vita in gran pericolo resistendo alla sensualita del Re, ma oltra cio tutta la famiglia mia in manifesta ruina non di meno per questi rispetti non ho mai lassato di dir' et far tutto quello che mi è parso debito secondo la conscientia mia senza alcun rispetto de parenti, anchora che mi fussero sopra modo chiarissimi, il che essendo ben noto al Re, tanto per questa via di rimuovermi dalla mia sententia facendo che loro mi scrivissero con ogni efficacia exhortandomi a compiacere al Re il che non facendo mi renuciavano omnia vira nature et amoris, alli quali risposi che io haver un altro Re al qual havra maggior obligo di compiacer et che se io perdessi l'amor et la coniuntion di sangue con loro, io la incontro acquistarei quella di color haveano sparso il sangue in defension della causa contra la sententia del Re, li qual sono della parentela del figliolo de Dio, et non mancheria di continuamente pregar per il Re et per loro, et questa mia risposa riporto un corrier' mandato mi a posta dal Re con le lettere dalli mei a questo fine.

mind into account: although I knew and saw that I was not only greatly endangering my own life by speaking out against the king's sensuality but also exposing my entire family to utter ruin, nevertheless I never ceased to say and do whatever was necessary according to my conscience without any regard for my relatives, although I loved them most dearly. This was known to the king, who tried to force me into abandoning my stance by ordering them to write to me and to exhort me with all effectiveness to conform with him, and if I would not do so they would sever all ties of nature and love to me. To this I responded that I have another king to whom I have greater obligation to conform, and that if I lost their love and blood-ties, I would in return gain ties with those who had given their blood in defence of the cause [of the church] against the judgement of the king, who are of the family of the Son of God, and that I would not fail continually to pray for the king and for them; and this answer of mine was taken back by a courier who had been sent to me in haste by the king with the letters of my family. From this one can see quite clearly that regard for my relatives has never been my principal driving force in this cause, and

Da questo si puo chiaramente veder il rispetto delli mei parenti non esser quello che in questa causa principalmente mi habbia mosso ne mi mova e ben vero che essendo io forse piu remesso alla defension della causa di quello richiedeva il mio debito verso Dio et la Chiesa inteso che hebbi la iniuriosa morta de mio fratello parvemi esser da Dio chiamato et stimolato per questa via di natura a piu prontamente sollicitar la causa sua. Non voglio pero negar questo che quel Re, se Re si deve chiamare, facendo morir' questo mio fratello, mi ha tolta quella piu amata creatura che io havessi al mondo, excetto pero colei che et lui et me genero, et colui che lo ha fatto morire, et questo dico in presentia de Dio /242^v/ non rescusando di esser da lui reietto in æternum se io conosco in animo mio di haver quel non sol reverito et venerato come mio Re et Principe mio, ma portatoli maggior affettione et amore che io habbia mai portato ad alcuna creatura al mundo, il qual amor mio verso lui e anchor tanto che se esso fusse in stato che io potesse servirli a beneficio all honor et salute sua et io ritrovassi nella supremo dignita del mondo et monarchia del

indeed that I am perhaps more devoted to the defence of the cause than my debt to God and to the church requires. When I suffered the grave blow of the death of my brother, it seemed to me that I was called and enticed by this path of nature to uphold His cause more readily.

However, I do not want to deny that this king, if one can call him 'king', by putting my brother to death robbed me of the person that I loved most in this world, with the exception of those who brought him and me into this world and of him who put him to death. I say this in the presence of God,

/242^v/ knowing that

He will reject me eternally if I know in my soul that I have not only revered and venerated him [Henry VIII] as my prince, but that I have also borne him more love and affection than any other person on earth; this love to him is still so strong that if he was still in a state where I could serve him to his good, and his honour and salvation, even if I was in the highest dignity of the world and reigned the universe, I would willingly abandon all honours and willingly put myself at his feet in order to do him good and free him

universo, lassarei volentieri ogni
 dignita et mi metterei alli piedi soi, per
 farli beneficio, de liberarli da questa
 extrema miseria et cecita, nella qual si
 ritrova al p^unte, che maggior esser
 non potria; tal che io lo riputo la piu
 misera creatura del mondo in questa
 vita, et se in tal stato passera a l'altra
 chi crede a dio ben sa quel mal che in
 perpetuo li aspetta, ne sarei men
 pronto al ben suo quando bene
 extinuesce in tutto il nome della
 famiglia mia, ma non mi par si possa
 sperar' ben alcuno ne di lui ne di
quella povera Isola, mentre che esso
 tien quel Regno, et dio volesse che
 cosi come la longa impunita li è stato
 occasione di precipitar in ogni
 extremo_male, cosi la iusta vendetta lo
 reducesse a debita penitentia in salute
 se l'anima sua, il che piaccia al Signor
 Dio sia per sua infinita misericordia.
 Ho voluto dir questo a V[ostre]
 S[ignoria] per chiarirli quale sia stato
 et è l'animo mio verso quel Re, et li
 mei parenti, et certo se io dicesse al
 mio confessor di haver desiderio di
 vindicarmi per la iniuria fatta alli mei
 parenti, farei senza dubbio grande
 iniuria a dio, dal quale ho ricevuto
 gratia per sua Infinita misericordia di
 non sentir stimulo alcuno di tal

from his extreme misery and blindness, in
 which he is now and which could not be
 greater; so much as I think that he is the
 most wretched person on earth in this life,
 and if he passes on to the next life in such
 a state, everybody who believes in God
 knows what eternal misery is awaiting
 him; and I would not be less ready to
 work for his good, even if he
 extinguished the name of my entire
 family, but it does not seem to me that one
 may hope for anything good neither from
 him nor from this poor island, while he is
 holding this realm. May God arrange that
 in the same way as the long absence of
 punishment made him to fall into every
 extreme evil, the just revenge will lead
 him back to due penance for the salvation
 of his soul, which God may give through
 his infinite mercifulness. I wanted to tell
 this to your lordship in order to make it
 clear what has always been in my mind
 concerning this king and my relatives.
 Certainly, if I said to my confessor that I
 would like to take revenge for the injustice
 done to my relatives, I would doubtlessly
 be sinning against God, through whose
 infinite mercifulness I have received the
 grace of not feeling any inclination
 towards such a passion. If I show zeal in
 this cause against the king, without
 having ever in my life had any enmities

passione, et se io mostro ardor in questa causa contra quel Re non havendo in vita mia havuta inimicitia con alcuno et amato lui sopra tutti, chi volesse investigar la causa di questo non contentandosi d'intender il zelo della Religione et amor mio verso dio io non saperia dirne alcuna altra se questa /243/ per aventura non fusse una, che havendo quel misero Re questo appresso li altri vicij di esser piu ingrato verso di soi amici che alcuno che si possi nominare, la iusta providentia de Dio vole che la vendetta di questa ingratitudine sia procurata da uno che sopra li altri e conosciuto amarlo; se questa non e altra causa non saperei dire, ma per tornar al proposito della causa et della persona mia, se le iniurie et maltrattamenti fatti alli perenti mei da una banda puon haver dato suspicion che io debba esser' piu appassionato del dover in questa causa, et se questo fa la persona mia men atta a persuader quello che seria il bisogno della causa, nel che ho hora dechiarato a V[ostre] S[ignoria] l'animo mio quale dio conoscono me, lo vede; da l'altra banda so ben l'opinion di tutti l'homini da bene d'inghilterra che li

with anyone and loved him [Henry VIII] above all others, who would want to investigate the reason for this [zeal] and not be content to find the zeal for religion and my love for God [as a reason]. I would not know anything else to say, but /243/ perhaps, that this miserable king [Henry VIII], apart from all the other vices, is more ungrateful to his friends than anyone who could be named, and that God's just providence requires that the revenge for this ingratitude shall be procured by someone known to love him more than anyone else; if this is not another reason [for my zeal] I do not know what to say; but let me return to the topic of the cause and of my person: if, on the one hand, the injustice and the bad treatment done to my relatives have aroused the suspicion that I may be too passionate in this cause, and if this makes me less apt to persuade him who is most needed for the cause [Charles V], I have now explained to your lordship my mind as God sees it; on the other hand, I know well that the good people of England have such an opinion of my relatives and my house that, if they had to choose someone to send on a similar errand to find the emperor gracious, and thus more apt to take pity and remember the calamity of

parenti mei et la casa mia esser tale, che se alla elettion loro fusse comesso di mandar' persona che per verisimile conietture si potesse sperar dovesse esser grata a Sua Maesta Cesarea, et per tal causa piu atta a persuaderli di haver compassione et sovenir alla calamita di quella Isola se non elegessero me, certo pensariano che qualche un altro della Famiglia mia per ogni rispetto si dovesse eleger, non essendo famiglia alcuna in tutto quel Regno, che habbia tanto patito per conto della Nobilissima casa di Sua Maesta et per le matrimonie et per le altre circumstantie dependenti da quello ha patito la famiglia mia, et non essendo alcuna in Inghilterra dalla quale in ogni sorte di bisogno li parenti di Sua Maesta habbiano ricevuto piu servitio et consolatione che della Casa nostra, et questo è troppo noto in Anglia in tanto che la santa memoria della amita di Sua Maesta quando intese che mia madre fu /243^v/ rimossa dal governo della principessa sua figliola disse che alhora et non prima, da poi tante tribulationi incommenciava a sentir penetrar il dolor nel suo core, et quando prima mia madre prese il governo della Principessa tanto

this island, and if they did not choose me, they would certainly think that someone else of my family should certainly be chosen, because there is no other family in the entire realm, which has suffered as much for the most noble house of his majesty [the house of Habsburg]. My family has suffered both for the marriage [between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon] and for the other events connected with it, and there is no other family in England from which in all moments of their need the relatives of his majesty [Charles V] have received more service and consolation than from our family. This is better known in England, for when the late aunt of his majesty [Catherine of Aragon] heard that my mother had been

/243^v/ removed as
governess of the princess, her daughter, she said that then for the first time after all the disturbances she began to feel grief penetrating her heart. When my mother first took up the post as governess of the princess, her majesty, the Queen, showed

desiderio di cio mostro la Maesta della Regina che non li basto per indurla a pigliar questo carico far chel Re gli scrivesse et commandasse ma volse Sua Maesta insieme con il Re venir a casa de mia madre lassando da parte le commandamenti a pregarla che volentieri pigliasse questo carico si come fece con tanta satisfation della Regina come ben dimostrarono le sopradette parole che disse quando poi la ne fu rimossa, et di tutto questo è persona in corte di Sua Maesta che ne po dar bon testimonio che è il medico che alhora stava con la Regina, ne voglio raccontar hora quanto danno recevesse casa nostra al principio fu fatto il matrimonio del Re con la nobilissima amita di Sua Maesta che fu tanto che se alcuna famiglia in tutto quel Regno dovesse esser stata quella che si dovesse ingegnar di oppugnar quel matrimonio et haver allegrezza di vederlo dessoito humanamente la nostra doveria esser stata la principale et non dimeno la providentia de Dio ha voluto sia tutto il contrario onde la Regina soleva spesso dire che quando ben non havesse mai ricevuto alcun servitio et consolation della famiglia

such great desire for this that she did not content herself with ordering her to take the burden as the king had written to her and commanded her, but her majesty wanted to leave all the commands aside and go to my mother's house together with the king and implore her to take up the burden willingly. This she [Margaret Pole] did to the utmost satisfaction of the queen, as can be seen by the above mentioned words, which the queen spoke upon my mother's dismissal. To testify for all this there is no better person at the court of his majesty [Charles V] than the doctor who was then with the queen; I do not want to tell now how much ill was done to our house at first, because of the wedding between the king and the most noble aunt of his majesty [Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon]. This ill was so great that if there is any one family in the whole realm which might have contrived to oppose the marriage or rejoiced to see it annulled by men our family would have been the first to do so. Nevertheless, divine providence wanted the contrary and the queen often used to say that even if she had never received any service or consolation from our family, she would have felt greatly obliged to look for a way to make up for the injustice we suffered

nostra sol per rifar il danno che
havevamo patito per conto del suo
matrimonio di sentiva haver grande
obbligo con noi di cercar' per ogni via
di gratificarne, et questo tutto ho detto
hora a V[ostre] S[ignoria] sol per
dechiararli quanto iusta causa possa
haver quella afflitta Isola di esser
sovenuta da Sua Maesta vedendo
haver intercessor appresso quella uno
di quella famiglia che /244/
ragionevolmente potriano existimar'
piu atta di alcun altro a tal officio, et
da l'altro conto in questa extrema
desperation si vederiano, quando non
vedessero seguir cosa alcuna
conforme alla sua expectatione, et per
questo io tanto desideravo di haver
qualche pegno del bon animo di Sua
Maesta in favor della causa non tanto
per me quanto per consolatione de
tanti altri, ben che quando in
particular dimandasse qualche poco di
consolatione conoscendo haver dato
tanto pegno dalla parte mia della
observantia a Sua Maesta quanto non
so se piu dar' potria, questa non
potria ragionevolmente parer ad
alcuna speranza, temeraria. Et ben
che pare a molti che Sua Maesta mi
habbia dato gran pegno del suo
animo, si come anchio ho giudicato

because of her wedding. I have told all
this now to your lordship in order to
explain how rightfully this afflicted island
may expect to be helped by his majesty
[Charles V], because it has a intercessor
with him, who comes from the family
which /244/ can justly esteem itself to be
more apt for this office than any other.
Besides, they [the English] will see
themselves in extreme desperation, if they
do not see anything happen as it ought.
That is why I so much desired to have a
token of his majesty's [Charles V's] good
mind in favour of the cause, not so much
for myself but for the consolation of so
many others, although I asked for some
small consolation knowing that I have
given such great a token of my allegiance
to his majesty that I would not know what
else to give. And although it seems to
many that his majesty has given me a
great sign of his affection, as I have also
judged when our lord [Paul III] placed me
in the rank of a cardinal at the prompting
of the ambassador of his majesty
[Charles V]. If I had deemed this
promotion to further our cause I would
have welcomed it more, but I knew that
fleeing [my allegiance to England] would
result in thousands of disturbances and
dangers not only for me, but for my
whole family. I saw this quite clearly,

havendomi N[ostro] Signor, da
l'orator di quella sollicitato, posto in
questo grado del Cardinalato, il che
quando se io havessi desiderato over
pensato dovesse esser al proposito
delle cose nostre piu grato mi seria
stato; ma essendo tale che io fugiva
come quello che m'havesse a portar
seco mille disturbi et pericoli non solo
a me, ma a tutta la mia famiglia, il che
vedendo alhora chiaramente et
dicendo a Sua S[anti]ta non vedendo
ove espressamente per questo grado
io potessi far' servitio a Dio et alla
Chiesa pregai Sua S[anti]ta volesse o
non darmi o differir almeno di darmi
alhora questo honore, havendo
maxime in quel tempo aviso
d'Inghilterra che non accettando
questo grado, l'entrate che mi erano
suspese mi seriano restitute et
ampliate con molte altre promesse
grande, et da l'altra banda terrori
grandi se io accettassi, il che vedendo
et referendo a Sua S[anti]ta
pregandola ad haver compassion del
caso mio, non vedendosi pronta
occasion da questa mia promotion al
servitio de Dio, Sua S[anti]ta fu per-
/244v/ suasa a differir', ma dapoi
sollicitata grandamente da l'orator di
Sua Maesta volse in ogni modo

and I said to his holiness that I could not
see where I could effectively serve God
and the church in this rank and I begged
his holiness either not to give this honour
to me or at least to defer it, because at that
time I had strong advice from England
that, if I refused this rank, my revenues,
which had been suspended, would be
restored to me and I also received other
great promises. On the other hand great
threats were made against me if I
accepted. All this I saw and told it to his
holiness and begged him to take pity in
my cause, and he saw that it was an unfit
moment for my promotion and thus his
holiness was persuaded

/244v/ to defer it;

but later, because of the strong insistence
of the ambassador of his majesty

promovermi et io al voler suo mi acquetai nonostante tutte le pericolose circumstantie, sperando per questa via di haver occasion di far' qualche cosa a honor et servitio di Dio et utile a Sua Maesta et parmi certo in questo haver dato quel maggior pegno della observantia del animo mio verso Sua Maesta che possi dar alcuno ad un Principe. Et in vero quanto a me per questo grado altro frutto et comodo non ho havuto, che oltra li gran percoli ne li quali mi son posto, di perder anche tutto quello che io havea, che era tanto che io potea benissimo viver et mantener il grado mio con securta, et hora havendo questo cosi honorevol grado mi ritrovo spogliato et nudo di tutti li presidij humani per potermi mantener et defender da tanti et si grandi pericoli nei quali son per questa mia entrata con tanto danno et ruina di Casa nostra. Et di tutto questo io non ho mai fatto moto alcuno a Sua Maesta ne a voi Signori del Consiglio suo, ne mai ne haria fatto parola se altro fine non havesse del mio particolar bene, ma parendomi hora che ogni dimostrationi che Sua Maesta si degni far verso la persona

[Charles V], he wanted to promote me by all means and I acquiesced in his will notwithstanding all the dangerous circumstances. I was hoping that in this way I would have an opportunity to work for the honour and in the service of God and his majesty [Charles V], and it seems certain to me that I thus gave a greater token of allegiance to his majesty than I could give to any other prince. And, indeed, I did not gain any other benefit or convenience from this rank, apart from the great perils in which I have put myself, but furthermore I lost everything I had, which was enough to live very well and to maintain my position in security. Now that I am in this very honourable rank I find myself stripped and bare of all human protection to maintain and defend myself from such great perils, in which I am, and from the condemnation and ruin of our house because of my entrance [into the cardinalate]. And I have never said a word about this to his majesty [Charles V] or to you, the lords of his council, and I have also never complained that I have no means to pay for my living. But since it now seems to me that every demonstration [of gratitude] which his majesty deigns to make towards me results in a favour for England, I have

mia resultar in favor et beneficio delle cose publiche di Anglia, ho voluto con quella securta che io ho nella cortesia et amorevolezza di V[ostra] S[ignoria] verso me explicarmi particolarmente l'osservantia mia verso Sua Maesta dalla qual non desidero maggior pegno che di vederle in questa causa exequir a honor de Dio et beneficio della Chiesa quello a che son certissimo per la pieta et generosita sua sia inelimatissima cosi il Signor Dio si degni favorir questo suo bon desiderio, removendo quelli impedimenti che fin hora l'hanno ragionevolmente ritardata /245/ augmentando sempre in Sua Maesta le gratie sue a beneficio della Christianita. Et a V[ostra] S[ignoria] et al Signor Gran Commendator insieme con tutto il core mi raccomando.

Da Carpentras, li xj d'avrile
mdxxxix

Reginaldo Polo Card[inale]
Legato

now wanted to explain myself - in the certainty of the courtesy and the affection which your lordship bears towards me - particularly to explain my allegiance to his majesty, from whom I desire no greater token than to see him act in this cause for the honour of God and the benefit of the church. I am sure his action will be unlimited, because of his piety and generosity, so that God will deign to favour his desire and remove the impediments which have up to now hindered this.

/245/ And that He will forever augment His grace towards Christianity, with the aid of his majesty. I commend myself to your lordship and to the lord grand commander with all my heart.

From Carpentras, 11 April 1539.
Reginald Pole, Cardinal Legate.

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