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THE FIRST RESIDENT EMBASSIES: MEDIAEVAL ITALIAN ORIGINS OF MODERN DIPLOMACY

By GARRETT MATTINGLY

THE maintenance of resident ambassadors at foreign capitals has long been regarded as a principal symbol of the absolute sovereignty of the modern state. Perhaps the extension of the system of resident ambassadors is as good a test as any for 'modernity,' with the moment of its adoption by any Western power marking the emergence of that power from what we call the 'Middle Ages' into the modern state system. It is clear that by 1648 the system was virtually complete. After the peace of Westphalia, all independent European states maintained permanent diplomatic representatives with all other powers in the sphere of their interests, and the right to send and receive embassies began to be considered a test of sovereignty. Less than a hundred years ago, writers on international law commonly took 1648, really the end of a long development, as the starting point of their study. Thus Wheaton wrote: "The institution of resident permanent legations at all of the European courts took place subsequently to the Peace of Westphalia."¹ Now we know that the system was almost fully developed among the greater powers more than a hundred years earlier. The period of its adoption and perfection, first by the greater, then by the lesser powers, in spreading waves, northward and eastward from the western Mediterranean, corresponds closely to the transition from mediaeval to modern times which we sometimes label 'the Renaissance.' Like so many other Renaissance phenomena, the system appeared first in Italy. It began to develop there not later than the early decades of the fifteenth century.

Until the wealth of material for the later Middle Ages still lying in Italian archives begins to be published, or at least calendared, it will be impossible to write the history of the first period of modern diplomacy with any confidence. Something can be added, however, to the existing accounts, which are very

¹ Henry Wheaton, *Elements of International Law* (3rd rev. ed., Philadelphia, 1846), p. 260. Cf. the most recent edition of Wheaton's classic work in which this misleading statement is only imperfectly corrected, H. Wheaton, *Elements*, etc. (6th English edition, revised by A. Berriedale Keith, London, 1929), p. 438.

slight in English, and far from adequate in any language.¹ The following study cannot pretend to be more than a preliminary survey of the available printed sources. Yet even from these it is possible to add some lines to the sketch of the mediaeval Italian origins of modern permanent diplomacy.

Although the actual beginnings of resident embassies have been little studied, a great deal of discussion, mostly fruitless, has been devoted to the theoretical 'origins' of the institution. Mediaeval canonists derived the position of papal legates from that of the *legati* despatched from the Roman republic to its provinces and allied states, and the civilians, discussing the embassies of temporal powers, followed this lead, emphasizing the place of the papacy as a transmitter of Roman tradition.² Renaissance writers naturally embraced this view, and down past the middle of the eighteenth century most books on diplomacy were solemnly buttressed by anecdotes from Livy and Plutarch. The analogy is not without interest, but the connection is of the faintest. A papal legate *a latere* was no mere messenger from one sovereign to another; theoretically, at least, his concern was solely with the church, and in the province to which he was sent he was the visible incarnation of the authority of St Peter, in all respects the *alter ego* of the Pope. There was, of course, no continuity between the practice of republican Rome and that of the papacy. Probably the first popes to employ legates were conscious of no more precedent than was implied by the existence of a Latin word which could be bent to their meaning. At the very least it is clear that the *legatus natus* was in no sense an ambassador, and the *legatus a latere* was not supposed to be resident in the province of his legation.

A closer early analogy to the system of resident ambassadors was perceived by Alberico Gentili in the maintenance by many European sovereigns of *procuratores* to represent their interests at the papal court. Gentili says Sir Philip Sidney suggested this idea to him, adding that the practice of the provinces and allied states of sending permanent representatives to reside in Rome may have been continued by barbarian monarchs in favor of the popes, and that the institution of resident embassies was thus transmitted from ancient to modern times.³ Rejecting the connection with classical antiquity, the first part of this suggestion seems plausible. But, in fact, the proctors were not ambassadors but canon lawyers holding watching briefs for their principals at the highest church court. They were always clerics and usually Italians, and were customarily

¹ See the slight sketch in D. P. Heatley's *Diplomacy and the Study of International Relations* (Oxford, 1919), and the brief remarks of D. J. Hill in *A History of Diplomacy* (London, 1921), II, 154-159. Hill's pages, the best in English, are based almost entirely on a single article by Adolf Schaube, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der ständigen Gesandtschaften,' *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, x (1889), 501-552. Schaube's article is really an extended review of Otto Krauske's *Die Entwicklung der ständigen Diplomatie* (Leipzig, 1885), and does something to correct the grave weakness of its account of fifteenth-century Italy. But Schaube's article is too hasty and narrowly based to be reliable, and Krauske's book, in spite of its manifest deficiencies, remains the only systematic account since Alfred von Reumont's *Della diplomazia italiana dal secolo XIII al XVI* (Florence, 1857), a brilliant piece of pioneering but now quite out of date.

² Guilielmus Durandus, 'Speculum juris,' rubric 'de Legato,' in V. E. Hrabar, *De Legatis et Legationibus Tractatus Varii* (Dorpat, 1905), p. 31.

³ Alberici Gentilis, *De Legationibus Libri Tres* (Hanau, 1594), p. 58.

benefited both in the state they represented and at Rome. Pius II and all subsequent popes distinguished sharply between proctors and ambassadors and, in the later period, many powers maintained representatives of both sorts at Rome simultaneously. Moreover, there seem to have been few long-standing proctorships at the curia before the papacy of Nicholas V, and no custom of replacing proctors regularly. Pius II was the first pope to find them important enough to require a protocol. On the whole, therefore, the proctors are, at best, a special case of the rise of permanent diplomacy, rather than its first manifestation, though they did provide the powers beyond the Alps with their first experience with resident representatives abroad and their first contacts with the Italian system.¹

Little time need be wasted on the efforts of certain modern German canonists to find the origin of the resident embassy in the *responsales* maintained by the popes at Constantinople from the time of Gregory the Great to the schism under Leo the Isaurian.² These *responsales* ceased to be sent about 731; it is doubtful whether the emperors ever regarded them as ambassadors, and even more doubtful whether anyone in the fifteenth century had ever heard of them. Byzantine diplomacy of the great age needs further study for its own sake, but it is unlikely that it suggested anything to the practical tyrants of fifteenth-century Italy.

It is less certain that the fifteenth century could have learned nothing from the consuls maintained by the commercial cities, particularly in North Africa and the Levant, for almost three hundred years. Yet most modern writers either pass over in silence the possible influence of this interesting parallel or dismiss it as irrelevant. Krauske refuses to take it seriously because 'the consuls were really the officials, not of the state, but of a merchant community resident abroad,' and because they were concerned 'merely with commercial matters.'³ Maulde-la-Clavière declares with unnecessary emphasis and unusual inaccuracy, . . . 'le commerce, placé en dehors de la tutelle et de l'appui de l'Etat, possède lui-même, par ses consulats, basés sur le système de l'association libre et de la coopération mutuelle, son outillage international propre.'⁴ Venetian commerce was hardly 'placé au dehors de la tutelle et de l'appui de l'Etat,' and to differentiate between the 'diplomatic' and the 'commercial' interests of most Italian city states is to deal in totally unreal distinctions. In general, although the consuls seem to have started as elected representatives of a merchant community in a foreign city, they soon began to be dependent on the home government for their official standing, and by 1400 most of the *consuli electi* had been replaced by *consuli missi* sent out by the state, and at least as much its spokesmen as they

¹ Cf. R. de Maulde-la-Clavière, *La Diplomatie au Temps de Machiavel* (Paris, 1893), III, 288–289; T. A. Pieper, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der ständigen Nuntiaturen* (Freiburg, 1894), p. 28.

² Discussed by Otto Krauske, *Die Entwicklung der ständigen Diplomatie* (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 7 ff.; cf. Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 2. ³ Krauske, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴ *La Diplomatie au Temps de Machiavel*, III, 300. Both Krauske and Maulde-la-Clavière seem to have been misled by Heyd's somewhat schematic separation of diplomatic and consular functions; cf. A. M. Candiotti, *Historia de la Institución Consular* (Madrid, 1925), pp. 299 ff.

were representatives of the community whose interests they were expected to guard.¹

With the Venetians this development had taken place relatively early. They even organized their consular service under the supervision of consuls-general, like those at Damascus and Alexandria, who received and transmitted the views of their government to sultan and caliph, and occupied a position in most respects like that of an ambassador.² Naturally these consuls became important sources of political information for the home government, and the regular transmission of such information (an important part of the duties of the resident ambassador, be it noted) was ordinarily expected of them.³ The Venetian *bailo* at Constantinople regularly fulfilled both diplomatic and consular functions,⁴ and occasionally elsewhere the Venetian consul was provided with diplomatic credentials.⁵ It is noteworthy that when Surian was recalled from England in August, 1523, the Signory, upon hearing that his secretary was too ill to remain in charge of the embassy until the arrival of his successor, voted that the consul in London be charged with the transaction of whatever business was necessary, 'according to the custom of Venetian consuls in former times.'⁶

In certain states, experience with consular representation certainly affected and probably hastened the development of a permanent diplomatic service. But other states had resident ambassadors before they had consuls, and the device, elaborately complicated as it was to become, was, in its inception, so simple and so common-sense a solution of one of the problems of effective sovereignty in an interdependent, heterogeneous state system that it is unnecessary to look further than the need to perceive the probable origin. The earliest example of an exchange of resident ambassadors which the printed sources reveal is a clear illustration of this point. But first a matter of definition supervenes.

Henry Wotton's witty description, 'a man sent to lye abroad for his country's good' is hard to improve on. But how long (disregarding the pun) must the ambassador lie abroad before he is considered a resident? Formalists would make the matter depend on his credentials; a resident ambassador is one announced as coming to reside, or as replacing his predecessor.⁷ Unfortunately credentials are now often lacking. In seeking to avoid this difficulty, Adolf Schaube proposed to class all ambassadors who wrote more than one report in a transitional group between special envoys and residents, on the assumption that special ambassadors are sent to fulfil a particular mission and report only on their return.⁸ But many special ambassadors wrote several reports and some of them had more than one charge. Krauske sensibly suggests that the existence of a resident em-

¹ E. Engelhardt, 'Consuls et diplomats,' *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, iv (1890), 28-53.

² W. von Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant* (Leipzig, 1923), II, 464.

³ G. Salles, 'L'institution des consulats,' *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, xi (1897), 614. Sanuto frequently excerpts political information from consular reports, e.g., *Diarii di Marino Sanuto* (Venice, 58 vols., 1879-1902), I, 67, 69, 72; III, 15, 1262, 1551; IV, 10, 12, 438. Cf. Candiotti, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-387.

⁴ Heyd, *op. cit.*, I, 257-258.

⁵ Rawdon Brown (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian* (London, 1864), I, 298, 300.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 334, 336. ⁷ Maulde-la-Clavière, *op. cit.*, I, 311.

⁸ 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte . . .', p. 537.

bassy can be determined, other evidence failing, by the regular replacement of one representative by another over a considerable period.¹ This is satisfactory enough, provided it is not forced to narrow the field unduly; some embassies were meant to be permanent, but were discontinued because of changes in policy. Alberico Gentili's definition best fits the facts, though his terminology is awkward:

*Legatos temporis, sive temporarios eos dico qui ad non definitum certumque negotium, sed ad tempus sive certum sive incertum ita mittuntur, ut dum in legatione degunt omnia tractent faciantque quae e re mittentis toto illo tempore esse contingant. . . . Sunt enim quos Residentes vulgari sermone nominare solemus.*²

A resident, that is, is an ambassador the time for whose departure is not dependent on the conclusion of any particular negotiation. The general and miscellaneous character of the resident's dispatches and of the business he transacts may reveal his permanent status even though his credentials be lacking. A frequent name for such ambassadors in Italy in the fifteenth century was 'ordinarius'; they were understood to be charged, not with any specific mission, but with the general supervision of the relations of their home government with the government to which they were accredited.

The first instance which I have observed of such general representation dates from 1375, nearly seventy-five years before Schaubé's 'first resident ambassador.' Some time before August of that year one Messer Bartolino de Codelupi arrived in Milan as the representative of Lodovico Gonzaga of Mantua, and was concerned in drawing up the marriage contract between Agnese Visconti and the lord of Mantua's son, Francesco.³ He remained at the court of Bernabò Visconti as Gonzaga's representative, occasionally receiving further instructions, and writing to Lodovico what information Bernabò gave him or what he could gather for himself. His function apparently was to further the coöperation of Visconti and Gonzaga against the Scaligers in Verona and against Francesco Scala's ally, Louis of Hungary; and, in general, to maintain the alliance between Mantua and Milan. A letter to Codelupi from Lodovico mentions one master Andreas, who seems to have been a similar representative of Bernabò's in Mantua.⁴ Codelupi was still at his post in Milan in June, 1379.⁵ When he was withdrawn is uncertain. Whatever his official title (and residents were not usually called ambassadors before about 1500), Codelupi seems certainly to have been what we would think of as a resident ambassador. A question might be raised, of course, as to the public character of his embassy. Lodovico Gonzaga was legally merely 'Capitano del Popolo' at Mantua, and Bernabò's position as lord of Milan was hardly more formal. But these Italian tyrants were sovereigns in fact if not in name.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 10. ² Gentili, *De Legationibus*, p. 13.

³ L. Osio (ed.), *Documenti Diplomatici tratti dagli Archivi Milanesi* (Milan, 1864), I, 177, 186, 191, 192.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 186 (June 22, 1376). Since Bernabò's archives were destroyed in the sack of his palace in 1385, only the Mantuan end of the correspondence survives.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 202. Agnese Visconti married Francesco Gonzaga in the summer of 1380, but Codelupi's letters show no expectation that he would be withdrawn when the marriage took place. There is a gap of several years in the archives after 1379.

I find no convincing evidence of resident ambassadors in Northern Italy in the days of Gian Galeazzo. Apparently the great duke acquiesced in his relative diplomatic isolation in the peninsula, employed spies and confidential agents more often than accredited diplomats, and preferred subjects to allies. Though his negotiators were active north of the Alps, their missions seem to have been strictly limited. Until further documents are brought to light, Codelupi's must continue to seem an isolated instance.

Permanent diplomacy made important advances in the reign of Filippo Maria. The last of the Visconti trusted in guile rather than force, and found diplomacy a congenial arm. He knew the advantages of organization, of regular channels of information, of established methods of procedure. Perhaps, too, his indecisive temperament found in long and tortuous negotiation a refuge and a substitute for action. His secretary, Francesco Barbavara, built up the Milanese chancery along lines which were to make it, under Cecco Simonetta, perhaps the most efficient in Europe.¹ His secret political agents reported from all quarters of Italy. He welcomed ambassadors from the Italian states, and did his best to establish diplomatic liaisons among the remaining Ghibelline powers. But, until the last year or so of his life, it is his diplomacy outside the peninsula which is most significant. He sent embassies to the kings of Aragon and Burgundy, and twice to the Turks, probably with the idea of stirring up the enemies of Christendom against the Venetians. And, for more than seven years, he was continuously represented at the court of the King of the Romans, during most of which time Sigismund was also represented at Milan.

This is the clearest case of an exchange of resident ambassadors before 1448. It has not, hitherto, been described. Filippo Maria consistently sought to draw close to Sigismund, both because the Emperor-elect could legalize the Visconti position in Lombardy, and because the King of Hungary was Milan's natural ally against Venice. In 1418, the duke had an ambassador, Jacobino da Iseo, at Sigismund's court.² When he withdrew is uncertain. Some time before May, 1425, Conrado de Carretto was the duke's ambassador to the king in Hungary; on his departure he was invited to return. This he did within the year, setting out for Hungary on June 8, 1426, in company with Guarnerio Castiglione, bearing full powers to negotiate with Venice, and instructed to report fully and frequently to Milan.³ Some time before, Brunoro della Scala had reached Milan as the king's special envoy, and he was soon followed by Bartolomeo Mosca, who remained at the Visconti court as Sigismund's representative.⁴ Carretto's mission was evidently regarded as likely to be soon terminated, but while he was still on the way, Novello da Caimi was also despatched by Filippo Maria to Hungary, bearing general credentials which set forth that he was sent because the king had sent Mosca to Milan, and to acquaint the court with conditions in Italy.⁵ Actually, Caimi never headed the legation, and we hear no more about him; he may

¹ The documents printed by Osio in Volumes II and III afford a very complete picture of the organization of the chancery under Barbavara, and of Filippo Maria's diplomatic activities.

² Osio, II, 64.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 134, 169, 173, 200, 214.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 175, 216.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 180-181, 222.

have remained as secretary to the embassy. In August, Lodovico Sabini was sent to the royal court to replace Carretto and Castiglione. His credentials state that he was to remain 'usque ad perfectionem omnium agendorum apud . . . regem'; his instructions, incidentally the first document of this character to be written in Italian instead of Latin, emphasize the desirability of frequent reports.¹ Sabini remained with Sigismund, following his court in its peregrinations, reporting political news from Germany, and taking full charge of Milanese affairs, until the end of the year 1428.²

In March, 1428, Jacobino da Iseo, the former ambassador, was sent to supplement the activity of Sabini, who was, however, to remain. Sabini seems to have returned to Milan before December, 1428, leaving Iseo to head the embassy which Federico de Pezzi, formerly ambassador to the Sultan Murad II, had already been sent to strengthen. Pezzi remained at Sigismund's court in early October, 1430, when Iseo returned to Milan on a flying visit. Pezzi was also expecting recall, and Iseo was urged to hurry back to Germany, while Sigismund was reassured that Milan would not withdraw her ambassadors without replacing them.³ This is the kind of assurance normally given in the later period on the withdrawal of residents. Iseo did, in fact, return at once, and continued to represent the duke and to keep him informed of movements in Germany until Sigismund's descent into Italy. In January, 1432, he was joined by Niccolo Guerrieri, who had previously been ambassador to Savoy, and, on Iseo's withdrawal in June, Cristoforo da Velate came to reinforce Guerrieri, the idea being, apparently, to maintain a pair of residents.⁴ The coldness between Filippo Maria and Sigismund over the coronation in Milan did not interrupt diplomatic relations between them, and Guerrieri and Velate seem to have followed the Emperor back over the Alps. The date of their withdrawal is uncertain, but since Sigismund's interest in Italy was waning, it is unlikely that they were replaced. There was apparently no Milanese resident at the Imperial court in 1438.⁵

All this shuttling back and forth of the Milanese ambassadors, and the way in which they hunted in pairs, finds no explanation in the documents, but its reason is not far to seek. One of the chief obstacles to the extension of the system of resident embassies was, for many years, the fear that an ambassador who stayed too long at his post would be corrupted by foreign gold, or, at least, forget the interests of his country. Filippo Maria must have been especially haunted by this fear to have taken such elaborate precautions, setting his envoys to watch each other, and replacing them at frequent intervals. Sigismund, on the other hand, more confident of his servants, or less willing to pay for their comings and goings, seems to have left Bartolomeo Mosca to represent him at Milan for more than seven years. Sigismund does not seem to have been any the worse served for his nonchalance — as far as we can judge without Mosca's reports, which have never been published. Later, governments were to learn the advantage of being represented by someone who knew the ground and had a long experience of the post.

¹ *Ibid.*, II, 253, 255.

² *Ibid.*, II, 261–286.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 477.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 395; III, 13–70.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 162.

This diplomatic episode has been stressed for several reasons. Although none of the Milanese ambassadors was described as a resident, the change from the specific powers of Carretto to the more general credentials of Sabini and his successors, the immediate replacement of one ambassador by another, and the apparent feeling that a failure to do so would require explanation, all illustrate the transition from the special to the resident embassy. The causes of this closer relationship, the same as those in the earlier *rapprochement* between Milan and Mantua, the presence of a common enemy and the desire not only to exchange views and information, but to confirm friendship and concert action, indicate the motives for the establishment of resident embassies, and the manner in which they grew up. The methods and personnel of these negotiations point to the formation of codes of procedure, and even of the nucleus of a corps of professional diplomats, in Milan under Filippo Maria Visconti, facts which help to explain the better-known diplomatic activities of Francesco Sforza. Finally, if such an observation be of any value, this is the first indication of a resident embassy outside of Italy. At least it is earlier by more than thirty years than the Milanese embassy in France which has so far been considered the first. Its abandonment when it seemed to be of no further practical use is very characteristic of the period of transition.

The kaleidoscopic political alignments in Italy after Sigismund's departure discouraged the formation of any permanent diplomatic connections, and although Filippo Maria's diplomacy continued to be active, no Milanese resident embassy is recorded in the next thirteen years. The nearest thing to a stable relationship in that period was the *rapprochement* between Florence and Venice, which was the pivot of Cosimo de' Medici's foreign policy after his return to power in 1434. From the material so far published, the evidence for the exchange of residents between these states is slight. Certainly there was none in the earlier period of sporadic coöperation against the Visconti.¹ Cosimo himself was ambassador to Venice in 1438 and Neri Capponi in 1439, in 1440, in 1445, and in 1446, always with the object of effecting closer coöperation against Milan, but all these were special embassies, and there is no indication of the existence of a resident.² It is probable that up to this time Florence had followed her ancient republican custom of despatching a series of negotiators, each for a brief period and with limited instructions, a series which in times of emergency might become almost continuous in fact. But a few months after Capponi's mission of 1446, Scipione Ammirato says that Puccio Pucci, the Florentine ambassador, in company with an ambassador from Venice, carried a message of defiance from the allied republics to Filippo Maria Visconti, and then returned to Venice, 'sua residenza ordinaria.'³ Certainly in the next year, 1447, Dietisalvi Neroni

¹ See the instructions to Rinaldo degli Albizzi, printed in A. von Reumont, *Della Diplomazia Italiana dal Secolo XIII al XVI* (Florence, 1857), p. 351.

² G. Cavalcanti, *Istorie Fiorentine* (Florence, 1838), II, 264 ff.; N. Machiavelli, *Istorie Fiorentine*, lib. 5 (*Opere complete*, Florence, 1843, pp. 110 ff.).

³ Scipione Ammirato, *Istorie Fiorentine* (Florence, 1647), II, 51. Cavalcanti, *op. cit.*, II, 247, does not use the phrase *residenza ordinaria* in speaking of Pucci's embassy, but he indicates that Pucci was already in Venice and does not mention his return to Florence.

was Florentine resident in Venice,¹ and a year later Niccolo de Chanali, Venetian resident in Florence.²

At about this time the waning fortunes of Filippo Maria and the growing dread of Venetian preponderance in Lombardy and the Romagna marked the beginning of a new alignment in the peninsula. Eugenius IV, in spite of his Venetian origin, abandoned his support of the Signory, and struck up an alliance with Visconti, and in July 1445, Marcolino Barbavara presented his credentials at Rome as Milanese resident.³ A little more than a year later, after the disastrous defeat of the Milanese at Casal Maggiore, Nicodemo da Pontremoli, Francesco Sforza's secretary, appeared in Florence as the Count's agent, charged with maintaining the liaison with Cosimo de Medici by which Sforza was to achieve his dukedom, and by which Cosimo intended to set limits to the Venetian advance.⁴

Adolf Schaube has signalized *dolce Nicodemo* as the 'first resident ambassador outside of Rome'⁵ and David Jayne Hill has accepted his case as that of 'the first permanent diplomatic relations of which we have any record.'⁶ Hill, who seems uncertain whether Nicodemo represented Sforza or Visconti, objects that if he was the representative of the former (as, of course, he was) he cannot be regarded as a regular ambassador before 1450. This is hardly sound. In 1446 Sforza still styled himself 'Count and Viscount, Lord of the Marches' though Sigismondo Malatesta had already driven him from most of the March of Ancona, and was to drive him from Romagna as well. Even after the surrender of Jesi, however (August 4, 1447), Sforza remained territorial lord of Cotignola and of Bianca Sforza's dower towns, Cremona and Pontremoli, and had as good a right to send ambassadors in his own name as the Marquis of Mantua or the Duke of Urbino. Actually he maintained not only Nicodemo in Florence, but a pair of residents in Venice,⁷ and there seems to have been no question of the regular diplomatic status of his agents at either place.

Nicodemo was the chief go-between in that tortuous policy whereby Sforza advanced towards his ambition in Milan, aided at every step by Cosimo's money and counsel, and when the Florentine embassy arrived to congratulate Francesco on his accession to the dukedom, and Dietisalvi Neroni remained as Florentine resident at Milan, Nicodemo was confirmed as Milanese resident at Florence, the first diplomat to hold this post.⁸ He was active in 1451 in negotiating the league of Milan, Florence, and France which countered the alliance of Venice, Naples, Montferrat, and Savoy, and he continued at his post for seventeen years thereafter, more closely in the confidence of Cosimo de Medici than almost anyone

¹ G. Canestrini and A. Desjardins, *Négociations Diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane* (Paris, 1859), I, 59.

² B. Buser, *Die Beziehungen der Mediceer zu Frankreich* (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 39, 364.

³ L. Osio, *op. cit.*, III, 369. ⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 319, 357; Buser, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-24, 352.

⁵ 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte . . .', p. 509. ⁶ *Hist. of European Dip.*, II, 154.

⁷ Osio, III, 420, 458.

⁸ Simonetta, 'Historia Francisci Sfortisi' in Muratori, XXI, 608, 610, 632, 668; Buser, pp. 36-44, 362, 367; Osio, III, 300.

else in Florence, and devoted to the policy of a peaceful balance of power in Italy and the exclusion of foreign influences from the peninsula.¹

The peace of Lodi (1454), which ended the war between the two leagues of 1451, marked the triumph of the Medici-Sforza policy, and inaugurated a new era in the history of Italian diplomacy. From it may be dated the regular extension of resident embassies throughout the peninsula. Milan and Venice, by the peace of Lodi, adjusted their territorial disputes, mutually guaranteed each other's boundaries, and formed an alliance for the preservation of peace. The right of all other Italian states, belligerents or neutrals, to join the league, and receive similar guarantees, was expressly declared. Florence entered at once, Ferrara, Bologna, and Mantua within the year, the papacy somewhat later, and finally the kingdom of Naples before the end of 1455. After Lodi there were to be no significant territorial changes, no large alterations in the relative positions of the Italian states for forty years. The five great powers, Milan, Venice, Florence, the Papacy, and Naples remained in an unstable equilibrium, which the elaborate ballet of condottiere warfare proved itself unable to upset. Smaller powers, like Lucca, Mantua, and Ferrara, were protected against serious aggression by the mutual jealousies of their powerful neighbors, and large states and small were coming to a high degree of centralized organization and bureaucratic efficiency. Italy was a model of what Europe was to become. In this little system of independent powers of various magnitudes, this heterogeneous order dependent upon a delicate balance of political forces, diplomatic alertness was of the first importance. Resident ambassadors now proved their usefulness for the first time. Their watchful presence served as a check and as a means of spreading the alarm when any power threatened to upset the balance; their prompt intervention averted more than one crisis; and their widespread establishment made possible the rapid realignments needful to preserve equilibrium in the changing pattern of alliances and understandings which crisscrossed the peninsula. When Europe became as conscious of the political interdependence of its parts as Italy had become, the system of resident ambassadors had already proved its worth.

But although the need of keeping in constant touch with the political situation all over Italy was to be the decisive factor in demonstrating the usefulness and insuring the continuance of the resident ambassadors, it was not the cause for their first exchange. In the previous half-century, the exchange of residents had come to be regarded as normal, or at least desirable, between powers in close alliance with one another, a means of facilitating common action, and a symbol of mutual friendship and understanding. Now, by the peace of Lodi, each Italian state, as it adhered to the league, became the ally of all the other states. What more natural, then, than to exchange residents with the other allies, thus marking the new friendship, and providing a set of liaison officers to coördinate the joint efforts of the powers to enforce the peace?

Even from the printed documents we can demonstrate that this is about what happened. The relations between Milan and Florence have already been discussed.

¹ Buser, pp. 414-434; B. de Mandrot (ed.), *Dépêches des Ambassadeurs Milanais en France sous Louis XI et François Sforza* (Paris, 1916), I, 380-387.

It seems likely that shortly after the peace Milan and Venice also exchanged residents.¹ On the adherence of Naples to the peace, Milan promptly despatched a resident there, and Naples probably returned the compliment, though the first certain record of a Neapolitan resident in Milan dates from 1466.² When Malipiero's diary begins in 1457, Nicolo Sagondino, Venetian resident at Naples, was already at his post, and a Neapolitan resident was established in Venice.³ In the same years Florence resumed her regular diplomatic intercourse with Venice, and shortly thereafter established similar connections with Naples.

The workings of the Italian system of residents can be studied most easily in the *Dépêches des ambassadeurs milanais sur les campagnes de Charles le Hardi* (1474-76) by Baron F. de Gingins-la-Sarra. Here is collected all the material in the Milanese archives relating to the action of the Duke of Burgundy and all its political ramifications and consequences. The Milanese residents all write in, recording the diplomatic repercussions of the Burgundian campaigns in their quarters of Italy. There are records of discussions and arrangements for coöperation with the Florentine residents in Rome, Naples, and Venice, a summary of memoranda exchanged between the Venetian residents in Milan and Florence relative to Milanese policy, and constant evidence of the regular circulation of information, and of coöperation in keeping their ambassadors at the court of Charles the Bold advised of policies and events.

How far the smaller powers participated in these exchanges is difficult to say. Milan had a resident in Genoa by 1455, probably by 1453, and the Genoese were represented in Milan after the embassy which congratulated Sforza on his accession in 1451.⁴ Siena had an ambassador resident in Venice as early as 1453 (Siena had been a member of the league against Milan and Florence in 1451, though an inactive one), and the following year Francesco Contarini took up residence in Siena as the representative of Venice.⁵ Malatesta, lord of Rimini, established a resident in Venice in 1457,⁶ and it is probable that a number of the other smaller states were represented there, and elsewhere, though the greater powers did not always reciprocate, unless they saw an advantage in doing so.⁷

So far little has been said of Rome. In this period the Roman pontiff received resident ambassadors, but sent none in return. Whether the popes felt that such reciprocal exchanges were beneath the unique dignity of their office, whether

¹ At least such relations were established before Malipiero's diary begins in 1457. D. Malipiero, *Annali Veneti, 1457-1500* (Florence, 1843), pp. 200, 201, 203, 207.

² Buser, pp. 392-400; Simonetta, in Muratori, xxi, 676, 677, 741, 782.

³ Malipiero, pp. 199, 205, 207.

⁴ L. Cibrario, *Della Economia Politica del Medio Evo* (Turin, 1861), I, 214, mentions Giovanni della Guardia, *orator residens* from Milan to Genoa in 1455. Schaube remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 507) that Cibrario gives no reference. But Cibrario worked from documents in the Genoese archives, and had already quoted (I, 193) one of della Guardia's dispatches.

⁵ Machiavelli, *Opere*, p. 146; L. Pastor, *Histoire des Papes depuis la Fin du Moyen Age* (Furcy Raynaud tr., 4th ed., Paris, 1911), II, 274, 280. ⁶ Malipiero, I, 197.

⁷ Sanuto, *Diarii*, I, 115, 116, 377; Gingins-la-Sarra, II, 199; M. Sanuto, *La Spedizione di Carlo VIII in Italia* (Venice, 1873), p. 178; Krauske, *op. cit.*, p. 32; F. Calvi, *Bianca Maria Sforza* (Milan, 1888), p. 22.

they were satisfied that the long-established system of legates was enough, and that wherever the organization of the church extended it was not likely to want agents to advance its interests or channels through which to receive information and to communicate advice, or whether the view was simply that, since God's vicar was in theory always at peace with everybody, there was no need to emphasize this relationship further, the fact remains that the papacy, alone among Italian powers, remained half outside the system throughout the fifteenth century.

Indeed, the priority of Rome in the development of permanent diplomacy has often been carelessly exaggerated. At the end of the schism the city was a ruin disputed by bandits, and the prestige of the popes was at low ebb. Martin v reëntered Rome in 1420, and such was his diplomatic activity that numerous embassies of obedience charged with important affairs visited him there in the next few years. But the popes were by no means undisputed masters either of the church or of so much territory as their palace stood on. The long struggle of Eugenius iv with the Council of Basle and his flight from Rome before the rebellious barons need not here be recalled. Until the popes were relatively secure either as Italian sovereigns or as heads of the church, their capital was unlikely to be of first-rate diplomatic importance. They were neither until the very last years of Eugenius iv. Until 1445 there was certainly no Milanese resident in Rome, nor does there appear to have been any Venetian or Florentine resident either, and there may have been no resident diplomats at all, except possibly a few proctors. Marcolino Barbavara, who came from Milan in 1445, may have been the first diplomatic resident accredited to the curia.

Barbavara is a diplomat of whom one would like to know more. Appointed by Filippo Maria Visconti, he found no difficulty, after the battle of Casal Maggiore, in telling the rising from the setting star, and addressed most of his correspondence to Francesco Sforza.¹ He seems to have remained in Rome from 1447 to 1450, possibly as the representative of the Ambrogian Republic, and was continued at his post by Francesco Sforza. He was succeeded at Rome by the bishop of Novara in 1455,² who was followed in 1458 by Otto di Carreto.³ The Milanese embassy at Rome, then, was continuous from Barbavara's appointment in 1445. It was probably the first of the continuous resident embassies in Rome, although it antedates by only about a year the exchange of residents between Florence and Venice, and Sforza's establishment of residents in both those cities.

But if the priority in time of the embassies at Rome has often been exaggerated, nevertheless the importance of Rome in the establishment of permanent diplomacy both in Italy and throughout Europe was enormous. Talleyrand's dictum: 'Rome sera toujours un centre d'affaires très important' begins to be true about the time of the elevation of Nicholas v. At that moment there were present in Rome the ambassadors of the emperor (one of them the future Pius II), of the kings of Aragon and Cyprus, of the Teutonic Order, of Siena, of Milan, and

¹ Osio, III, 369, 416, 496, 498, 508, 518, 573.

² A. B. Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Milan* (London, 1912), p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20; Mandrot, I, 56; Muratori, XXI, 686.

of Naples.¹ Probably at no other court in Europe were so many distinguished diplomats collected. Embassies of obedience poured in from most of the realms of Christendom. Most of these were not permanent, it is true, but in the next ten years, practically all of the Italian states at least, small as well as large, had established resident orators with the curia. Printed material permits only an incomplete list which may however prove suggestive: Milan in 1445, Siena in 1446, Naples shortly after, Florence in 1454, and Genoa at about the same time, Venice, for the first time, in 1458, and Mantua also in 1458.² There were, in fact, so many resident ambassadors newly established in Rome, in the early years of the papacy of Pius II, that the Pope, in this respect a diplomat of the older school, attempting to rid himself of them, declared to the assembled ambassadors that all of them who remained more than six months in Rome should be degraded in the protocol to the rank of proctor. Perhaps Pius II was forgetful, or perhaps he was merely mindful, of the arts whereby Aeneas Sylvius had risen, but in any event his proclamation had little effect toward reducing the number of resident diplomats in Rome; they became constantly more numerous, and after Sixtus IV there was no further attempt to discourage them.³

This assemblage of diplomats had important influences on the development of resident embassies. Rome then began to be, what it remained for centuries, the chief training school of diplomacy.⁴ Here for the first time, after the disgraceful uproar among the legation servants which marred the entry of Frederick III in 1452, serious attention began to be given to questions of precedence, and the formal organization of the *corps diplomatique*.⁵ Here was the diplomatic nerve-center of Italy, where shocks were felt from the remotest corners, and where a whispered word in the corridors might be of more importance than the clash of arms in Calabria or Piedmont. And here the *corps diplomatique* first began to develop a professional spirit, to codify their mutual relations, and to act together in a crisis. The habit of the popes of calling together the whole body of the ambassadors to make important announcements and of assigning them a special place at all ceremonies is too well known to need illustration. The first instance of the common action of the diplomatic corps at a particular capital seems to have been the attempt of the ambassadors at Rome to intervene in the war of the Pazzi conspiracy in 1479.⁶

Perhaps the chief significance of this diplomatic training school was that its influence extended readily to the rest of Europe. From the ends of Christendom threads of policy ran to the rehabilitated Roman curia. The popes intervened more and more in politics all over Europe; the legates *a latere* in Germany for instance, Roman-trained negotiators all of them, constitute an almost continuous series from 1468 to 1521.⁷ Rome itself was visited by a practically continuous procession of embassies from beyond the Alps. The popes began to expect more

¹ Pastor, II, 3, 16, 26. ² *Ibid.*, II, 10, 26, 290, 301; Malipiero, p. 206. ³ Pieper, pp. 28-29.

⁴ B. L. von Mackay, *Die moderne Diplomatie* (Frankfort, 1915), pp. 13-16.

⁵ Pastor, II, 143; E. von Wertheimer, 'Zur Geschichte der Diplomatie,' *Oesterreichische Rundschau*, LI (May, 1917), pp. 123-132; E. Nys, *Etudes de droit international*, I, 211-218.

⁶ Canestrini-Desjardins, I, 184. ⁷ Pieper, pp. 33-34.

insistently than ever before that embassies of obedience be addressed to them on the elevation of each new pope or at the accession of each new sovereign, and, besides these embassies of ceremony, there was usually some business afoot which required the presence at Rome of the negotiators of one or more of the transalpine powers. Relatively few of the northern ambassadors were technically residents. France had no resident ambassador until nearly the end of the century, and, apparently, not always even a resident proctor, but the French crown was represented by frequent special envoys, many of whom remained for considerable periods.¹ The Emperor, too, usually had some sort of special ambassador at Rome; so, often, had the crowns of Castile and Aragon, and the king of England.² Denmark, Portugal, Poland, and Scotland were occasionally represented. Savoy seems to have been the first northern nation to appoint a resident ambassador to Rome, though this embassy seems later to have been discontinued.³ In general the volume of business to be done at the papal curia and the advantages of Rome as a listening post made the desirability of permanent representation there more and more obvious to the northern powers. All these northern diplomats, resident or not, had in Rome a prime opportunity to observe the Italian system of resident ambassadors in full operation and to carry home with them some notion of its customs and advantages, thus preparing its reception beyond the Alps.

At the same time, their governments began to receive frequent embassies from Italy, several of which became permanent. Of these, the most important was the Milanese legation in France. For several reasons, Milan led the way in the establishment of permanent non-commercial diplomacy. Historically, Milan had been the most important and aggressive of the Italian powers. Her geographical position made her concern with events beyond the Alps more acute than that of Florence or Venice. Her Duke, Francesco Sforza, inherited from the Visconti a well-organized chancery, experienced in a diplomacy which included at least one resident embassy of considerable duration, that to Sigismund beginning in 1425. Moreover, the republics tended to be wary of allowing their citizens to remain too long abroad, and to prefer frequent embassies of short duration as more consistent with their usual system of rotation in office, while the dukes of Milan entrusted affairs to a small group of experienced permanent officials as is usual in monarchy.

From the first, Francesco Sforza had regarded relations with France as of the highest importance. The French had been his allies against Venice in 1452, and it may have been his observation of the ferocity and instability of the French

¹ Canestrini-Desjardins, I, 52, 178, 185; *Cal. Milan*, p. 234.

² *Cal. Milan*, pp. 22, 35, 238; *Cal. Ven.*, I, 138, 147, 215; Mandrot, I, 72.

³ Krauske, p. 10; Maulde-la-Clavière, *La diplomatie* etc., I, 28. Schaube (*op. cit.*, p. 508) has clearly shown that the Savoyard embassy was not continuous from 1460 to modern times, but his objection that it cannot therefore be counted as a resident embassy will hardly stand in the face of Louis I's credentials designating the archdeacon of Savoy in 1460 'orator et ambasciator continuus et perpetuus . . . plenam protestatem et baliam.' N. Bianchi, *Le Materie Politiche relative all' Estero degli Archivi di Stato Piemontesi* (Bologna, 1876), p. 176.

troops at the sack of Pontevico which determined the old condottiere to keep them out of Italy. In 1458, he set about to undermine French authority in Genoa; and when it looked as though Charles VII was going to back the Angevins, Francesco joined hands with the Dauphin Louis to thwart and embarrass the king. In furtherance of this intrigue, he dispatched Prospero de Camoglio to reside with the dauphin in 1460.¹ Camoglio was hardly a regularly accredited ambassador, but he remained after the coronation of Louis XI until a special embassy of ceremony, headed by Piero de Pusterla, superseded him in December, 1461. Pusterla departed in April, and there is an apparent gap of thirteen months. But relations between Sforza and Louis XI remained cordial, and in May, 1463, another Milanese ambassador, Emmanuel de Jacopo, reached the French court. When Jacopo withdrew in August, Sforza assured Louis that he would be immediately replaced and credentials were issued to his successor, Alberico Malleta, on August 26. Malleta remained for more than three years, and from his time to the withdrawal of Cristoforo Bollato in 1475 the continuity of the embassy remained unbroken.²

The withdrawal of Bollato illustrates strikingly a characteristic of the transitional period. In Italy, the Milanese maintained permanent relations, interrupted only by war, with all the major powers. But outside the peninsula, they still followed the principles which had guided Filippo Maria Visconti in establishing and terminating his embassy with the Emperor Sigismund: that of maintaining a resident only with a power whose alliance they sought. Events within as well as without Italy, the coldness of Louis, and possibly the restlessness of young Galeazzo Maria, determined an abandonment of France for Burgundy. The Milanese chancery seems to have envisioned a strong Burgundian state on France's eastern frontier, buttressed by alliances with Milan and Savoy, as a safer guarantee against French intervention than the uncertain friendship of the king of France. Bollato was summarily recalled and permanent resident ambassadors were appointed to the courts of Burgundy³ and Savoy.⁴

It is to be noted that this shift of diplomatic relations did not involve any declaration of war against France. Indeed, Panigarola's shrewd dispatches from Charles' camp must soon have convinced Milan of the probability of disaster for Charles in Switzerland, and in April, 1476, the Milanese were again seeking to draw closer to France. But Giovanni Blanco, the new ambassador, was coldly received.⁵ Louis XI had no intention of avenging the defection of the Milanese, but he did not encourage the revival of the resident embassy, and the assassination of Galeazzo Maria, and the death of Charles the Bold before Nancy, left the diplomatic relations of Milan in chaos. There were no further permanent relations between France and Milan until Lodovico il Moro's disastrous intrigue fifteen years later.

¹ See Mandrot, *op. cit.*, vols. I to IV for the documents for this embassy.

² Mandrot, IV, 46; Gingins-la-Sarra, I, 85.

³ G. P. Panigarola, Feb. 1475 to Oct. 1476, — Gingins-la-Sarra, I, 106, II, 381.

⁴ Antonio d'Appiano, Nov. 1474 to later than Jan. 1, 1477, — *ibid.*, I, 11, II, 391.

⁵ Philippe de Comines, *Mémoires* (ed. B. de Mandrot, Paris, 1901), I, 252-253.

We can be reasonably certain of only one permanent embassy outside Italy between 1477 and 1490. On the termination of the Venetian embassy to Burgundy in 1479, Benuto Gabriel was named resident at the court of Louis XI.¹ This is the date usually given for the establishment of the permanent Venetian embassy in France. It is difficult to see, however, from the published documents, how Gabriel's embassy differs from that of Domenico Gradenigo in 1477² or that of Hieronimo Zorzi in 1485–88.³ All three look like special ambassadors. Five years intervened between the departure of Gabriel and the arrival of Zorzi, and ten between Zorzi's embassy and that of Loredan in 1498. But at some time in the first of these intervals Giovanni Pietro Stella was established in France as Venetian resident 'secretary.' He was there when Zorzi arrived and remained when Zorzi departed, and he was apparently still at his post in France when Loredan arrived in 1498.⁴ Certainly the Venetian intention to establish a permanent embassy in France antedates the Italian wars.

The thread to be followed in tracing the development of Italian resident embassies outside Italy is the alliances or understandings between Italian states and powers beyond the Alps. The object for which resident ambassadors were usually sent was to secure coöperation against a common enemy. Consequently, when the storm of French invasion, so long threatened, finally broke in 1494, the system received its most rapid extension. Lodovico Sforza had established a resident ambassador at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1490,⁵ and one in England at about the same time.⁶ After 1493, when Maximilian married Bianca Sforza, there was a Milanese resident, Erasmo Brascha, at the Hapsburg court.⁷ Meanwhile, in the course of the negotiations which brought on the French invasion, Carlo da Balbiano, Count of Belgioioso, was accredited as resident ambassador to Charles VIII.⁸ So, when the storm broke, Lodovico had representatives at all the chief courts of Europe.

As soon as they perceived the French danger, the Venetian signory dispatched ambassadors to Maximilian⁹ and to Ferdinand in 1495,¹⁰ and to Henry VII in 1496.¹¹ Ferrante of Naples, who had the greatest reason to fear the French, and who was in no hurry to leap into the arms of his powerful Aragonese relatives, sought to draw closer to France's old enemy, England, and had sent a resident ambassador to Henry VII as early as 1490.¹² In 1494 he also established residents with Ferdinand¹³ and Maximilian.¹⁴ Even the papacy was shaken from its superior attitude by the French invasion, and after 1494 Alexander VI had practically continuous representation in Germany and France. Only Florence, loyal to the lilies, and absorbed by domestic strife, established no residents outside of Italy before 1498, although her representation at the French court was practically

¹ *Cal. Ven.*, I, 140.² *Ibid.*, I, 138.³ *Ibid.*, I, 155, 169.⁴ Malipiero, p. 504.⁵ *Cal. Ven.*, I, 221; Sanuto, *Diarii*, I, 116.⁶ *Cal. Ven.*, I, 189. Henry VII generally refused to treat Spinola, Lodovico's envoy, as a regularly accredited ambassador.⁷ Calvi, *Bianca Sforza*, pp. 36–47.⁸ H. F. Delaborde, *L'expédition de Charles VIII en Italie* (Paris, 1888), pp. 220 ff.⁹ Krauske, pp. 35–36.¹⁰ Malipiero, p. 336.¹¹ *Cal. Ven.*, I, 223.¹² *Cal. Ven.*, I, 199, 262.¹³ Sanuto, *Diarii*, I, 865.¹⁴ *Cal. Ven.*, I, 227.

continuous from 1493.¹ By 1500, however, the anxious faces of Italian negotiators were a common sight at every major European court.

But before 1500, permanent diplomacy had extended to the great powers. Spain began. Ferdinand of Aragon inherited a lively interest in the affairs of the Italian peninsula, and perhaps the groundwork of a permanent political embassy in Rome. In 1481, he supplemented his father's impressive and politically active proctor, Bartolome de Veri, with an entirely political ambassador, the bishop of Gerona, who was accredited from the crown of Aragon to all the Italian states, and remained in Italy until 1494. Thereafter there was always a Spanish ambassador in Rome, and one in Venice. About the same time, in pursuit of his scheme of encircling France and of hampering any further French intervention in Italy, Ferdinand adopted the system whose worth had been proved in Italy, and sent resident ambassadors to London, to Brussels, and to the itinerant Austrian court. As other powers followed his example, resident embassies sprang up in all the great western capitals. The middle ages in diplomacy were over.

¹ From the embassies of della Casa (1493-94), and Soderini (1495), Canestrini-Desjardins, I, 222, 640. Desjardins (I, 496 note) names Ridolfi (1497) as the first resident, and, though he cites no credentials, this may be correct. Gualterotti and Lenzi seem to have replaced him in 1499, and to have remained until replaced by Tosinchi after whom the series is admittedly continuous (*ibid.*, I, 532, II, 24, 42).

Schaube argues that the Florentine embassy in France was practically continuous from 1475 (*op. cit.*, p. 532), but the documents cited do not bear this out. Cosimo Sassetti, who supplied Lorenzo the Magnificent with political news from France throughout the 1480's was not an ambassador, but the manager of the Medici bank at Lyon. — Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Lettres et Négociations de Philippe de Commines* (Brussels, 1867), II, 39, 40, 60, 78.