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A diplomat and a translator — Jean Hotman and the good use of translations for a soft diplomacy

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In 1603, a volume entitled *L'Ambassadeur* was published in Paris, while a translation of the book came out in London the very same year. The English version bore no author's name, but the French original clearly indicated that it was the work of Jean de Villiers Hotman. Hotman's name was a familiar one on both sides of the Channel, since he was the son of François Hotman, a well-known Protestant polemicist whose acid tongue had produced the most violent pamphlets against the League and the Guises during the French Civil War. Many of his texts had been translated into English and sold on the London bookstalls for several years. Such was the case of *De Furoribus Gallicis*, which had been written in Latin and published in Basel in 1573, and then translated into French and English the very same year—two editions, one in French¹ and one in English² had even been printed in London (under a false imprint). The text was the first and sole narrative of the Saint Bartholomew's massacres of 1572 to be published soon after the slaughter. It was widely read, and influenced many interpretations of French history by Elizabethans—Marlowe, for instance, drew heavily on Hotman's account of St. Bartholomew for his own *Massacre at Paris* (Kocher 352-63).

Jean Hotman, François's son, was a Protestant too, but he had quickly become more of a traveler than his father, whose steps had not gone further than Switzerland and the South of France. In his young years, Jean Hotman had been hired by Sir Amyas Paulet, the then ambassador of Queen Elizabeth in Paris, to teach his children (Posthumus Meyjes 10). This early introduction to the English diplomatic and political spheres put him in contact with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom he worked for from 1582 onwards and for several years in England, and then followed to the Netherlands during the Earl's mission there. Both the doctorate he had taken in Oxford in 1581 and his presence in Leicester's circle, paved the way for what Posthumus Meyjes has called his "English connection". In France, in England and in Scotland, Hotman did repeatedly try to make the most of his acquaintances in order to improve the position of the Protestant cause in Europe—first as an unpaid agent of Henri of Navarre in England in the late 1580s and later as a middleman between the Earl of Essex and James VI of Scotland.

Therefore, *L'Ambassadeur*, when it was printed in Paris in 1603, could be seen as the outcome of two decades of diplomatic services. Hotman was not unique in choosing the figure of the ambassador as a focal point. Tasso's *Il Messaggero*, in the early 1580s, had already detailed the role of this newcomer in State business. Indeed, the relative abundance of

¹ Varamund, Ernest [i.e. François Hotman], *Discours simple & veritable des rages exercées, par la France, des horribles et indignes meurtres commiz es personnes de Gaspar de Golligni Admiral de France, & de plusieurs grandz seigneurs gentils-hommes & aultres illustres & notables personnes, Et du lache et estrange carnage faict indifferement des Chrestiens qui se sont peu recouurer en la plus-part des villes de ce royaume sans respect aulcun, de sang, sexe, age, ou condition. Le tout traduit en Francois, du Latin d'Ernest Varamond de Frise. Auquel est adioyvstee en forme de paragon, l'histoire tragique de la cite de Holme saccagée contre la foy promise l'an 1517. par Christierne second, Roy de Dannemarch, et de la punition diuinement faicte, de ce tyran & de son Archeuesque Gostaue: extraicte de la cosmographie [sic] de Monster*, Basle [i.e. London]; Pieter Vallemmand [i.e. William Williamson], 1573, STC 13847.5.

² Varamund, Ernest [i.e. François Hotman], *A true and plaine report of the furious outrages of Fraunce, & the horrible and shameful slaughter of Chastillon the admirall, and diuers other noble and excellent men, and of the wicked and straunge murder of godlie persons, committed in many cities of Fraunce, without any respect of sorte, kinde, age, or degree. By Ernest Varamund of Freseland*, Striveling [i.e. London]; [Henry Bynneman], 1573, STC 13847.

treatises about ambassadors in the late 16th and early 17th century came from the fact that the medieval practice of *ad-hoc* diplomatic mission had been gradually replaced by the permanent position of ambassadors in the major European courts. The presence of these men, the limits of their power and the challenges they posed to the kingdoms that welcomed them had soon begun to arouse the lawyers' and scholars' interest in what might be seen as a form of proto-international relations. What is interesting in the case of Hotman's *Ambassadeur* was that the author had been in direct contact with the diplomatic spheres—more than, say, his predecessors Tasso or Étienne Dolet (Hampton 148). Besides, what makes this work of particular interest is the fact that it was translated into English, perhaps by its very author but at least at the same time as when the original text was published in France. By its sheer existence, the translation also works as a diplomatic embassy, but as a soft one. Finally, in Hotman's life, the *Ambassador* may be seen as a prelude to a diplomacy of publishing, in which the diplomats are the printers and editors of books.

A practical guide for would-be diplomats and officers of the crown

Immediately after the epistle to William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke, the pattern of the book is described very simply: the Ambassador, “His behaviour / Charge / Privileges / Family”³ (A4v^o). The text is both descriptive and prescriptive. It begins with a list of the different types of ambassadors (ambassadors, extraordinary ambassadors, agents & consuls) which leads to the main topic of the book—the ordinary or resident ambassadors (B2v^o), that is precisely those whose entrance at court was a relatively new phenomenon. Hotman dwells on a number of good practices that would ease the task of the ambassador, in particular regarding his education and training. He does so by addressing a variety of topics in a series of didactic chapters. Prior to his appointment, the ambassador should have studied moral and politics, Roman civil law, history and eloquence (B8v^o-C3v^o). This last point is crucial, since the ambassador would have to deliver a number of speeches during his stay. The author insists on this quality, recalling an anecdote from Ancient Greece, which stated that the representatives of Sparta “had forgotten the beginning, understood not the middle, and disliked the conclusion” (C4) of a speech made to them by the Samnites. Moral values are also enhanced, like courage and resolution (E1v^o) or truthfulness and discretion (E4-E4v^o). All these are construed as basic requirements that will help the ambassador in his daily charge. Hotman wishes to be realistic in his requirements: “But for me, I require no more of him than he may attain unto by use of nature.” (B7) These prerequisites once given, Hotman turns to prescriptions as to what the ambassador should or should not do. Among other things, he should beware of written messages (Fv^o), be respectful of the social conventions of his host country (E2) and preserve the good relations with the rest of the diplomatic personnel at court (G1-G2). The diplomat's advice sometimes seems to come from moral concern—this is the case when he advises against drunkenness, because “wine and secrecy, are incompatible things, and this fault is ill befitting the dignity of him that represents such a majesty” (D7). However, on that topic as on others, he refuses to limit himself to a one-sided approach to the problem. In some cases, drinking might turn out to be a commendable activity: “I maintain, that in *Germany, Switzerland, Polonia, Denmark*, and other Countries of the North, he must, in some sort, accommodate himself to drink with them, it being very certain, that one is more acceptable unto them thereby” (D7). The ambassador should thus adapt to the customs and habits of his host country, but be cautious that drinking might also prove dangerous for his safety or his professional discretion. Hotman does not seem to be much interested in theory—in what we would call today international law, for instance—even if he is obviously aware of

³ For the sake of clarity, spelling has been modernized in all excerpts, both French and English.

the difficulties posed by the ambassador's unique status at a foreign court. He dwells at length on the issue of the diplomat's judicial responsibility, and advocates an extended immunity:"the person of an Ambassador hath in all ages been adjudged holy, sacred; and inviolable" (H2). The ambassador should always be tried according to the laws of his own country, except in cases of blood crimes.

What if the Ambassador himself hath offered violence to any particular person? I know not whether there be any thing determined or specified by the Laws therein: Yet of extremity be used, he cannot escape the rigor of the Laws of the Country where he committed the fault. (I)

Hotman's insistence on the question of an ambassador's liability is a good instance of his approach to his subject: he first asserts general principles and then lists a series of limitations or qualifications to his earlier statement. Above all, his treatise is meant for a practical use. His reluctance at tackling theoretical subjects is made clear early in the book, with opening remarks about the diminishing talents of the ambassadors of his time and the need to address practical "advice" to ill-equipped diplomats:

even so the learned Politicians of times past, believed not that Princes and Estates would be so indiscreet, as to honor with an Ambassage (which commonly importeth the whole estate) a person which were most capable thereof: or that he which were not worthy of it, should be so ill advised as to undertake it. To the former, punishments were afterwards ordained: and the other, have need of good instructions; till when I will give them in this Treatise, this word of advice. (B1v°)

In the treatise, he repeatedly refuses to enter considerations that are not immediately transferable to practice—for instance he explicitly avoids explaining the etymology of the word "ambassador", and only sticks to a brief definition of the different types of those (Bv°-B2). This quest for efficiency was relatively uncommon at the time, making the treatise a real guidebook for would-be diplomats.

His method, however, is less innovative, since he always proceeds in a fairly classical way: he first delivers a piece of advice, and then justifies his point by examples taken from ancient or more recent history:

I think not that without the permission of the Ambassador it is lawful for a Sergeant or other officer of justice, to lay hands on, seize upon, or to use any other course of justice upon any of those of his house, unless they be taken in the very act and out his house. For which cause the Ambassador of *Spain* had reason to complain of the officers of *Tunis*, which were come to carry away by force a servant of his being accused of Sodomitry...(K3v°)

Usually, several examples are used—Roman history ranks first among the most quoted sources, but there are also cases taken from contemporary times. Hotman often mentions episodes that he has witnessed himself in the course of his diplomatic missions, as in the case in the anecdote related to the Lord of Mortefontaine, Hotman's uncle, who had been to Switzerland in a mission for the French king (I5v°-I6). From the epistle dedicatory of the French edition, the reader has learnt that Hotman had travelled to Switzerland with him (Epistre A1v°)—it is very likely that the anecdote about Mortefontaine in Switzerland was witnessed by Hotman too, even though here Hotman does not speak in his own name. However, this is not always the case. Indeed, when dealing with what he sees as the necessary

immunity of ambassadors in their host countries, he mentions the case of Bernardino Mendoza, Philip II's ambassador at the English Court. He uses the precedent of Mendoza's expulsion from England as an illustration of his point—an ambassador, even when he has openly plotted against the monarch who welcomed him at court, should not be prosecuted in the host country: “the most requisite and ordinary means, and safest for the Estate, was to advertise his Master thereof, & to expect his allowance or disallowance” (H5v^o). Hotman had been personally consulted on the Mendoza case by the Privy Council in 1584, which he specifies in the book. His central role in diplomatic circles is underlined *en passant*, as in other excerpts dealing with French or English affairs.⁴

Hotman's intimate knowledge of France and England is a remarkable feature of *The Ambassador*—he had not just read about England, he had also lived there and taken a deep interest in what was going on there. For these reasons, the translation of the book from French into English might seem to be a mandatory step for such a work.

The translation issue

Because of his career and his numerous trips back and forth between France and England, Jean Hotman mastered the English language. However, the “epistle dedicatory” of the English version specifies that the book had been translated by a friend of the author, “for the private use of their friends” (“epistle” A2v^o), and not by the author himself. As the former “secretary for foreign languages” of the Earl of Leicester, Hotman would have been capable of translating his own text. In fact such may have been the case, and the epistle may be misleading on that aspect—the translator's name is mentioned nowhere, so Hotman may have written both the French and the English texts.

One may wonder what would have been the point of translating the text into English. There are many allusions to English events in the text, because Hotman could draw on his past experience and rely on his English diplomatic contacts to collect anecdotes. England provided many valuable examples. In that respect, English readers might have related easily to this description of the ambassador's role, because it supposedly fit what happened in their own country. On the author's side, this translation had other advantages. On the one hand, it opened a new market for his book, and even if he got no money from the sales themselves, his own fame there would spread further. Because he saw himself as a diplomatic nexus between England and France, he needed to be not only known, but also recognized as a key player in diplomacy. Yet there may be more to the translation. Because he had written in French for a French readership, the author dared tackle English issues that perhaps might have been considered as touchy for an English book. Such is the case for instance of the anecdote about the Duke of Anjou's visit to London:

Being at dinner with an English Lord, he began to speak of the succession (a matter then amongst them odious and capital) and affirmed, that a certain Princess was the presumptive inheritrix thereunto: notwithstanding a certain law which seemed to exclude those that were born out of the land: and yet, said he, I know not where this law is for all the diligence which I have used to find it out. It was suddenly replied unto him by this Lord: You shall find it on the back side of the Salic law, a judicious and biting rebound, which instantly stopped the curiosity of this man, which indeed was in all respects out of season (G2-G2v^o).

⁴ Such is the case for instance when he mentions the Duke of Anjou's visit in London and the topics suitable for conversation (G2-G2v^o).

This anecdote is one of the most pleasing ones in the volume, and it is telling of Hotman's way of telling stories. It is complete with witty remarks, as well as a lesson to be drawn from it—that one guest should always be respectful of one's host's sensitivity (here, both the English worry as to the succession issue and their concern about the threat posed by Mary Stuart's captivity in the North of England). Still, by recounting this episode, Hotman himself infringes on touchy matters—the treatise was entered in the Stationers' Company's register on June 10, so after Elizabeth's demise and James's succession, when the succession issue had already been settled. Yet for the text to be ready for print in June, the translation must have been initiated prior to Elizabeth's death, at a time when the topic itself must have been very thorny in England. All this would have been less of a problem for a French author writing a text published in France. Hotman's "Frenchness" may have worked as a smokescreen allowing him to tackle issues that remained touchy for the English.

On the whole, the translation is faithful to the original text. Yet there is one major difference between the two which is interesting to examine—the books' dedications. *L'Ambassadeur* was dedicated to Nicolas de Neufville, Sieur de Villeroy. The man had been a State Secretary under Charles IX, then a counsellor of Henri III, and had finally joined Henri IV after the latter's conversion to Catholicism in 1593 (Dickerman 5-6). He had then been appointed Secretary of State for War and Foreign Secretary by the King until his assassination in 1610. So the French book was dedicated to a man who had a professional knowledge of diplomacy, and whose career symbolized the compromises necessary to diplomatic negotiation—first following one's heart and beliefs by backing staunch Catholic monarchs, then coming to terms with the need to join up with the legitimate sovereign in spite of initial divergences. For a Protestant like Jean Hotman, Villeroy at this stage of his career⁵ appeared as one of those men who had finally accepted to follow the King because he was the legitimate heir to the throne. Their rallying had proved that there was a reason of state which stood above the religious divide. Hotman's dedication proved two things about the way he saw his book—it was a treatise aimed at professionals and it openly dealt with matters of state which were not to be disclosed to everyone. On the other side of the Channel, *The Ambassador* was dedicated to William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke. The man is well-known as a major literary patron—he was the son of the Second Earl of Pembroke and of Mary Sidney, he had been Chancellor of the University of Oxford, where he was to found Pembroke College under James I. He has remained in history because he was, among other things, the dedicatee of Shakespeare's first *folio* in 1623 and consequently became a potential candidate for the famous 'W.H.' character to whom Shakespeare dedicated his sonnets.

So the French original and its translation were preceded by different dedications. Hotman dedicated his original book, but it was editor James Shaw who dedicated the English translation. Shaw seems to have seen the book in a very different light from Hotman's—through its dedicatee, *The Ambassador* takes on a literary tinge that lacked in the original version. Indeed, the Earl of Pembroke was a literary, slightly eccentric figure in late Elizabethan England. Even if he originated from a prestigious family, and in spite of his father's efforts to marry him with Burghley's grand-daughter—a marriage that would have brought him closer to the government sphere—William Herbert failed to become a serious political character. However, by the end of Elizabeth's and the early years of James's reigns, he had become a major patron of arts and a famous courtier who was sought after by all would-be writers (Brennan 122-3). Therefore, as a dedicatee, the Earl of Pembroke brought a literary endorsement to the text, more than a political one. The English book seems to have been construed less as a professional and more as a literary case study, and this may have

⁵ He will later become the main secretary of Mary da' Medicis during the regency, and the main actor in Sully's disgrace in 1611.

defused the potentially polemical nature of the text. Just as Annabel Patterson speculated about “reading between the lines”, the process here would have been to *write* between the lines. The character of the book’s dedicatee would have partly shaped the very nature of the text. Consequently, by classifying the book in a less suspicious field of knowledge—here, literature—the editor could be more daring in the content that was conveyed in it.

The treatises as preludes to a diplomacy of translation

In the case of *The Ambassador*, therefore, the translation may be seen as yet another tool to tackle touchy matters, or matters usually kept away from the layman. The shift from manuscript to print, and the increasingly rapid pace of book-printing multiplied the copies and thus enlarged the potential readership and impact of any one book. By trusting his book to a printer, Hotman brought matters of state, and matters that were usually kept secret, to the fore. The trespassing of these invisible limits was always foreseen as a potentially problematic moment for authors, and explains why so many epistles—and that is the case of Hotman’s *Ambassador* in its original and English versions—dwell at length on the reluctance of the authors to publicize their work through printing. Translations added a further dimension to this, by sending the text beyond the linguistic limits that would have preserved an acceptable readership for the book. In England, the well-off and well-read people that would have been the obvious audience for a volume about such sensitive matters—those who had been educated enough to learn French—were no longer the privileged readership for *L’Ambassadeur*. People who were from more humble backgrounds could also dive into topics which had always been prohibited to them. None of this was new, but none of this was ever overlooked by authors and editors, to further their own ends.

Jean Hotman seems to have seen himself as an agent of Henri IV, someone who could further the French cause in England. The translation of his book must have been part of a more general strategy to advertize French diplomacy on the other side of the Channel. In that intention, printers and publishers played a key role, since they were those who chose the texts and bore the responsibility of printing them. The translated text could be a better agent of communication than a professional diplomat—the text spoke to a greater public, and its content could be spread easily. A French text, translated and published in England, would broadcast an image of France that could be shaped to fit the interests of this or that party. Many texts by François Hotman, Jean’s father, had thus been translated during the French religious wars and sent over to England as part of the propaganda of the Huguenots in order to gain Elizabeth’s financial and military support. However this might work in different ways, as Hotman himself seems to have been aware.

In 1603, while *The Ambassador* was under print, Hotman read James Stuart’s *Basilikon Doron*. There is no point in dwelling too long on the printing history of the text, which is well-known, thanks to the studies by Jenny Wormald and by James Doelman among others. The text had originally been printed for a private circle of people, close to the King, among whom of course Prince Henry, to whom the book was dedicated (Wormald 50-1). In 1599, a year after the book’s composition, the King had the text translated into English (it had been written in Scots) and printed by Robert Waldegrave, his own printer. Yet it was not until 1603, when Queen Elizabeth’s waning health made James’s succession a likely event, that one of Waldegrave’s copies was leaked to London. On March 28, only four days after the Queen’s demise, Thomas Norton entered the text in the Stationers’ Register. Once published, the book became an instant best-seller, the kind of printed must-haves that led to multiple editions (Rypins 393-4). Translations had been initiated in the Netherlands and in Switzerland already, but the king had showed little support for the venture (Lyll 204-17). Hotman had had missions in Scotland in the 1590s on behalf of King Henri IV, and so in a way he

probably felt entitled to the task. Furthermore; James VI's position on the question of royal power met a number of his own beliefs, and the two men shared the same faith. Guillaume H. M. Posthumus Meyjes and Roderick Lyall concur on the involvement of Sir Thomas Parry, the then ambassador of England in Paris, in the process that led to the translation. However, the two men disagree over where the initiative lay—the former asserts that Thomas Parry was the one who contacted Hotman, whereas the latter states that Hotman decided to translate the text on his own (Posthumus Meyjes 42, Lyall 208). In Lyall's version, based on documents published by Craigie in his edition of *Basilikon Doron*, Hotman contacted Parry for him to obtain James I's authorization. According to him, the translation was a commissioned work, for which Hotman expected to be paid. A third version is to be found in the Calendar of State Papers: the Venetian ambassadors in Paris wrote a letter to the Doge and the Senate disclosing to them that:

Another book called—Basilikon Doron, the work of the King himself, is to be seen. It is addressed to his eldest son, and is written in English. It has been translated into French by some who wished to publish it here. The English Ambassador vetoed this until he had his master's pleasure on the subject.⁶

According to the Italian diplomats, James I had consented to the publication, “but without any additions”. Whatever version is right, what remains is the fact that in all cases, at least one professional diplomat committed to the project—Parry or Hotman. Furthermore, even if Hotman was prompted to work by a promised reward, the two men showed an interest in the project which is all the more remarkable as James I seemed hardly enthusiastic about the idea. The King of Scotland had remained relatively isolated from the European stage so far, being kept in the shadow of Queen Elizabeth. Becoming her successor, he needed to be better known and respected by his European counterparts, and both Parry and Hotman seemed to believe that the book could do just that. In his epistle to the reader, Hotman thus stated:

Que si le sçauoir est de telle importance en un Roy, trouuera-on mauuais qu'il le face valoir aussi bien par liures que par effets ? & qu'il communique ses liures aux siens, qu'il en face part à la posterité, sur tout à ses enfans, pour les laisser après luy viues images de sa vertu. (2v^o)

The need to convey the King's own vision of government is made clear by Hotman — in that perspective, to *publicize* and to *publish* are closely linked. Because he considered that it was in James's interest to broadcast his book, Hotman lamented the lack of support from the king, but went on with his task anyway. Even if it was a commissioned work, the Frenchman was obviously intent on fulfilling it, since he wrote to Parry, asking him to send the King a sample of his work and even writing to the King himself, apparently to no avail. Yet, in spite of this, the book was published in Paris in 1604 under the French title: *Présent royal de Jacques premier, roy d'Angleterre, Escoce et Irlande, au prince Henry, son fils, contenant une instruction de bien régner*. Several editions were published, including two pirate ones in Lyons and Rouen (Lyall 209). This fact, as well as the number of editions in Paris, show that the book must have sold well in a country that was curious about that new, little-known king, whose mother had briefly been queen of France fifty years before.

Hotman's obstinacy in translating the text, as well as King James's persistent lack of interest, are telling of the discrepancy between the way the two worlds they belonged to saw

⁶ CSP, Venice, 1603-1607, 15 July (1603), no. 93, Marin Cacalli and Anzolo Badoer, Venetian Ambassadors in France, to the Doge and Senate, 65.

books and translations. Hotman believed that translating *Basilikon Doron* would do more for James than many diplomatic missions would. Of course Hotman did not think that diplomacy was pointless—and both his career and his own *Ambassador* were evidence of his attachment to the art of diplomacy. And yet official representation and missions were insufficient, the times had already come for a soft diplomacy, made of informal contacts and ideas spread for which books and their translations were efficient media. On the contrary, James's lack of interest in the fate of his book abroad proves that he failed to see that this book initially meant for private use only said more about him and about what he wanted to do than all the messages he could pass on to the French court through the ambassadors. What he probably feared was that by becoming an author, he would run the risk of becoming commented upon, or even criticized as a mere scribbler. What is remarkable is the fact that Rosny, King Henri IV's closest adviser, seems to have shared the same concern. When asked to grant royal privilege to *Present royal de Jacques premier*, he hesitated, as a Frenchman testified to his English correspondent: "Nous avons eu peine à avoir permission de faire Imprimer le livre du Roy en françois Et le plus grand adversaire a este Rosny finalement il y a permission Capiettement Mais non privilège." (quoted by Craigie 34).⁷ The reasons for Rosny's hesitation are not given—perhaps the advisor was worried that the French King's privilege would work as an endorsement for the writings of a king who was said to be a radical Protestant. In that case, he seems to have overlooked the weight of a name like Hotman's.

Indeed, *Basilikon Doron* was perceived by Catholic powers as the profession of faith of a Calvinist. Written by a king whose political and religious *doxa* was little known, the text was considered as a manifesto for the strictest Presbyterian ideas. Therefore, its translation and publication abroad were construed as political and religious moves from the adversaries of Catholicism in Europe. The two Venetian ambassadors quoted above were confident that James's *Present royal* was "sure to appear, because the heretics would have it" (*CSP Venice* 65). That the new English King should stand closer to Henri IV may not have reassured the Venetians much, and yet it would have eased Rosny's concern. However, the real content of the text mattered less than the reputation it was shrouded in, and in that respect the fact that Hotman chose or was chosen to translate it only enhanced the issue.

As we have seen, through the memory of his father, Jean Hotman's name was still closely linked to the Huguenot propaganda against the League and the Guise during the worst years of the French religious wars. Like Duplessis-Mornay, another of Navarre's advisers, François Hotman had remained adamant in matters of faith, and had often written pamphlets in which the violence uttered against the Catholics went far beyond what the then King of Navarre's *politique* ideas supported. Hotman's name appeared neither on the title-page nor after the preface which opened the volume. However, among those who were likely to buy the book, many must have known that the diplomat had translated it. In fact, it was more than that—his translation worked as an endorsement of the book's content. By translating, he *authorized* the text, giving it the reformed tinge that made it orthodox for the Huguenots. Hotman thus conveyed a message to the French that came from beyond the Channel, and his role as a link between the two kingdoms was but another facet of his role as a diplomat.

So even if the Renaissance saw the birth of a more formal diplomacy embodied in the official permanent position of the ambassador at a foreign monarch's court, the softer, more discreet tools that had been necessary for lack of a permanent ambassador in the previous era lived on. They took on a new dimension with the birth of the printed book, which became an easily transported and circulated means to convey political messages to a broader public. Therefore, the sheer conception, existence and translation of Hotman's *L'Ambassadeur* can be

⁷ From a letter by one "Saint Sauueur" to Sir John Carleton in Paris, 9 October 1603 (PRO, Londres, State Papers, French, 1603, September to December ; S.P. 78/50, fol. 37v).

read as a tribute paid to both forms of diplomacy, the “hard” one, to which the ambassador was central, and the soft one, which lived through books, their authors, translators, printers and sellers. It would take some time for the monarchs to come to terms with that new reality.

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Abstract

À une époque où le personnel diplomatique se professionnalise, Jean Hotman cherche à rédiger un guide pratique à l’usage de tous ceux qui souhaiteraient partir servir leur roi dans un pays étranger. Livre politique, qui mêle anecdotes et grands principes, *L'Ambassadeur* est traduit en anglais l’année même de sa publication en France. Si le nom du traducteur reste inconnu, il n’est pas impossible que Jean Hotman lui-même ait procédé à ce travail, dont il pouvait espérer qu’il le servirait, ainsi que le roi de France, Outre-Manche. Simultanément,

Jean Hotman entreprend de traduire le *Basilkion Doron* du roi Jacques I^{er}. Dans ces deux cas, le livre imprimé devient l'instrument d'une diplomatie discrète qui s'ajoute à la diplomatie officielle telle qu'elle est pratiquée dans les cours européennes.