

Jonathan Spangler  
*Senior Lecturer*  
*Manchester Metropolitan University*

## Mary of Guise as a Dynastic Entity: Re-asserting the Auld Alliance or Something Bigger?

The marriage of James V and Mary of Guise has often been seen as a re-assertion of the « Auld Alliance » between Scotland and France, and Mary as a replacement or surrogate Valois princess, replacing Madeleine of France after her early death following her marriage to the Scottish king in 1537. But Mary can be seen as something more. King James, influenced by the cosmopolitanism of the regent during his minority, his cousin the Duke of Albany, was determined to bring Scotland firmly into the European family of princes, no longer a mere satellite of England or France. John Stewart, Duke of Albany (1481/84-1536), regent from 1514 to 1524, had been born in France, the son and husband of French noblewomen, but was also connected to wider diplomatic and dynastic circles as brother-in-law of Lorenzo de' Medici, duke of Urbino, who was the nephew of Pope Leo X<sup>1</sup>. James certainly had connections to the court where his mother, Margaret Tudor, was raised, his grandmother's native court in Denmark-Norway, and indeed that of his great-grandmother, Mary of Guelders in the Low Countries<sup>2</sup>. James would have been attracted to all three of these courts due to family ties,

---

1 - Elizabeth BONNER, « Stewart, John, second duke of Albany (c.1482–1536) », *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

2 - Jonathan SPANGLER, « Aulic Spaces Transplanted : the design and layout of a Franco-Burgundian court in a Scottish palace », *The Court Historian*, 2009, vol. 14, n°1, p. 49-62.

geographical proximity, and economic links - the Low Countries and Scandinavia were Scotland's natural trading partners, particularly in wool and timber<sup>3</sup>.

But James, inspired by his country's historic « Auld Alliance » with France, looked to the Valois monarchy for guidance in his efforts to secure the independence of his kingdom in the face of English aggression. After several years of correspondence, James decided to go to France himself, to see if he could link himself more tightly to the French monarchy through the best means available, marriage. Dynasticism remained the defining rule of European statecraft and diplomacy, and if James could ally himself firmly to one of the oldest and strongest ruling houses in Europe, he would attain a powerful political tool indeed. Unlike the Valois or the Habsburgs, the Stewarts had only been a reigning family since the late fourteenth century. By allying himself with François I, James would aim to achieve what the Tudors (themselves a new dynasty) had attempted to do in allying through marriage with the Trastámaras of Spain in 1501. Always aware of his uncle's jealousy and desires on Scotland, James was determined to assert the independence of the Stewarts as a ruling house, and of Scotland as a sovereign state, equal among the kingdoms of Europe<sup>4</sup>.

The French trip of 1536 was a success : François was won over, and Princess Madeleine was married to King James at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris on New Year's Day, 1537<sup>5</sup>. James and Madeleine returned to France, laden with treasures, fabrics, and plans for rebuilding in such quantities so far never seen in Scotland. It was a triumph. But Madeleine did not survive long after the rough crossing and the wet cold climate of Scotland. She died in June 1537, and immediately James set about replacing her with another bride. François I probably did not wish to risk losing another daughter to the harsh Scottish climate, so he suggested the daughter of his boyhood friend, military hero, and virtual prince of the blood, Claude de Lorraine, first duke of Guise. François promised to treat Mary as a *filie de France*, the honorific title reserved for daughters of French kings which entailed certain privileges at court (though these were not yet clearly defined in the early sixteenth century). This was the same offer François had made to James in 1533, promising

---

3 - Grant SIMPSON (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries, 1124-1994*, East Linton, Tuckwell, 1996 ; and Th. RIIS, « Scottish-Danish Relations in the Sixteenth Century », T.C. SMOUT (ed.), *Scotland and Europe, 1200-1850*, Edinburgh, John Donald, 1986.

4 - Important studies of James V include : Jamie CAMERON, *James V. The Personal Rule, 1528-1542*, East Linton, Tuckwell, 1998 ; and Andrea THOMAS, *Princlie Majestie : The Court of James V of Scotland, 1528-1542*, Edinburgh, John Donald, 2005. For a useful examination of the Low Countries diplomacy of James's father, see J. P. WARD, « King James IV, Continental Diplomacy and the Guelders War », *The Scottish Historical Review*, 2004, vol. 83, n°215, part 1, p. 70-81.

5 - For descriptions of the reception of James V in France and his subsequent marriage to Princess Madeleine, see Andrea THOMAS, *op. cit.*, p. 185-188 ; and Jamie CAMERON, *op. cit.*, p. 131-133.

to treat any bride of his choosing : « tout ainsi que si elle estoit nostre proper fille, et telle [nous] la tiendrons et estimerons, lui faissant si bon et si grant advantage que vous aurez juste occasion de vous en contenter »<sup>6</sup>. James had already had the high honour of marrying the daughter of a king of France, but now he needed a healthy wife to provide Scotland with heirs - and Mary was indeed described as « lusty and fair », by English agents sent to scout out who the new Scottish queen was to be, in October 1537<sup>7</sup>. Mary had already been married to the duc de Longueville, and had produced two healthy sons before becoming a widow, a good sign for any woman on the marriage market. But Mary of Guise offered something more, which this article aims to explore.

We cannot be sure whether James and his advisors considered these things directly when considering the marriage, but it is likely. I will argue that Mary provided an even better, more balanced choice for James, with connections to both the Valois and Habsburg dynasties (and notably the Habsburg-affiliated courts of the Low Countries and Scandinavia). In this way she can be compared to a close contemporary, Christina of Denmark, who was considered on the dynastic marriage market of the 1530s more as a niece of the Emperor Charles V than as the daughter of the king of the Danes. She was married first to the duke of Milan, then to the duke of Lorraine, in both cases to seal ties to the Empire (and not to Denmark). Like Mary, Christina too was sought as a potential bride for Henry VIII. In their later lives, both Christina of Denmark and Mary of Guise had a good deal in common as dowager regents, both facing insurmountable opposition to their rule<sup>8</sup>. And like Christina and many other brides of princely rank who traversed Europe in service to dynasticism and diplomacy, Mary of Guise can be seen as a dynastic entity with clear links to France, the Holy Roman Empire, Aragon, and other states spread across Europe<sup>9</sup>. The links of such dynastic ‘chess pieces’ are useful in helping historians look beyond national narratives into the more cosmopolitan identities of European ruling dynasties in the early modern period. These links can be seen most clearly in the multiple components of their coat-of-arms. This chapter will thus explore Mary’s identity using the component elements displayed her arms, her ‘heraldic identity’, as a framework.

Before looking at Mary’s desirability as a dynastic entity, we can remind ourselves of her more human identity. She was in demand on the royal marriage

---

6 - Letter of François I to James V, January 1533, Alexandre TEULET, *Relations politiques de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Écosse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1862, vol. I, p. 78.

7 - *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, London, 1862-1929, vol. XII (2), p. 292.

8 - The best biography for Christina in English remains Julia CARTWRIGHT, *Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan and Lorraine, 1522-1590*, London, John Murray, 1913.

9 - For recent views on this topic, see Juan-Lluís PALOS and Magdalena S. SÁNCHEZ (eds), *Early Modern Dynastic Marriages and Cultural Transfer*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2016.

market immediately after she became a widow in June 1537. In December of that same year, two months after the death of his third wife (Jane Seymour), King Henry VIII of England came close to threatening the ambassador of the king of France over his desires to wed the newly widowed duchesse de Longueville. Henry apparently desired her over « any other French lady », as the French king, François I, had offered in the month previously<sup>10</sup>. Henry also reputedly admired her physical stature (she was tall and healthy), and said so to the French ambassador, Châtillon<sup>11</sup>, prompting the frequently quoted (but probably apocryphal) remark from Mary, that she was honoured by such an offer, but was afraid she had « too small a neck... »<sup>12</sup>. But by this point, Mary was already promised to Henry VIII's own nephew, James V. The correspondence of the French ambassador reveals further that the English king's spies kept him well informed, down to the details of the personal disposition of the Duchess, and even whether or not she herself had consented to a Scottish marriage. What was it about this woman - Mary of Guise - that made her so desirable, the centre of delicate international diplomatic manoeuvres, and more desirable than other French noblewomen, other daughters of the French royal house, even the King's own daughter ?

It is important to think of Mary of Guise not as the daughter of a French duke of recent creation (Claude of Lorraine was elevated to the French peerage in 1528), from a dynasty on the rise in the French noble hierarchy, but instead as a niece of the duke of Lorraine, a semi-sovereign prince ruling significant territory on the borders of France and the Holy Roman Empire<sup>13</sup>. Where does the duchy of Lorraine fit into the geopolitical landscape of the early sixteenth century ? Western Europe in 1538 can be divided roughly into two tiers : the first includes those states who receive regular coverage in European history textbooks (England, France, Spain, the Empire), while the second includes those who do not; those whose foreign policy was usually heavily dependent on their larger, stronger neighbours : Denmark, Portugal, Milan, Tuscany, Savoy, Naples, Lorraine, and arguably, Scotland. What almost all of these second-tier states had in common was their ability to occasionally offer the sons and daughters of their ruling dynasties as surrogate marital material for the first-tier royal houses. This is how Mary of Guise is usually considered, in standard histories of Scotland or France, or indeed in biographies of Mary herself—as a surrogate daughter of François I, intended

---

10 - *Letters and Papers ... Henry VIII*, vol. XII (2), p. 449.

11 - *Ibid.*

12 - Quoted for example in Antonia FRASER, *Mary Queen of Scots*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969, p. 7.

13 - For a recent overview, see William MONTER, *A Bewitched Duchy : Lorraine and its Dukes, 1477–1736*, Geneva, Droz, 2007.

to represent France in sealing the Auld Alliance between France and Scotland<sup>14</sup>. In the historiography of Mary of Guise, the most well-known recent biographical works take up the line that Mary was a surrogate French princess, notably those by Marshall and Ritchie<sup>15</sup>. Both of these use as sources for Mary's early life the large work devoted to the Guise from the nineteenth century, by the comte de Bouillé<sup>16</sup>. Marshall misses Bouillé's sense, however, that Mary is of princely rank from one of the oldest dynasties in Europe, and this has affected interpretations of her position by Anglo-Scottish historians ever since<sup>17</sup>. In fact she is given her appropriate princely rank by contemporaries<sup>18</sup>. As we have seen, François I himself offered to consider her as his own daughter when presenting her for marriage to James V.<sup>19</sup> This was certainly a boost, but her own rank should not be overlooked, as daughter of one of the oldest sovereign dynasties of Europe, rulers of a strategic crossroads between France and the Empire since 1047, certainly older than the relative parvenus ruling in Scotland - the Stewarts had only held the throne since 1371, a mere 150 years—and, as some considered, older than the royal Capetian House of France itself, through its links to the imperial House of Charlemagne<sup>20</sup>.

---

14 - Elizabeth BONNER, « Scotland's 'Auld Alliance' with France, 1295-1560 », *History*, 1999, vol. 84, n°273, p. 28.

15 - Rosalind K. MARSHALL, *Mary of Guise*, London, Collins, 1977 ; Pamela RITCHIE, *Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548-1560*, East Linton, Tuckwell, 2002.

16 - René de BOUILLÉ du Chariol, *Histoire des ducs de Guise*, 4 vol., Paris, Amyot, 1849-50.

17 - This includes MARSHALL's own more recent article, with Dana BENTLEY-CRANCH, « Iconography and Literature in the Service of Diplomacy : The Franco-Scottish Alliance, James V and Scotland's two French Queens, Madeleine of France and Marie de Guise », Janet HADLEY WILLIAMS (ed.), *Stewart Style, 1513-1542, Essays on the Court of James V*, East Linton, Tuckwell, 1996, p. 284. M. MERRIMAN goes a step further in asserting that the Guise were « parvenus » and « arrivistes », on par with David Beaton in Scotland, or the Dudleys in England, in « Mary, Queen of France », *Innes Review*, 1988, vol. XXXVIII, p. 31.

18 - In a pact the earl of Lennox made with Mary in 1543, offering his support in exchange for the marriage of her daughter to his son, she is referred to as « très haute, très excellente et très puissante dame et princesse Marie de France, veuve de... ». But was this a deliberate diplomatic reference to her powerful political patron (France), a typographical error in the citation of this treaty – Jules de LA BROUSSE, *Histoire d'un capitaine Bourbonnais au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle : Jacques de la Brosse, 1485(?) - 1562, ses missions en Écosse*, Paris, Champion, 1929, p. 56 - or a clerical error by the compiler of the original document (Bibliothèque Nationale, Fonds Français, no. 17890, fol. 12)?

19 - *Letters and Papers... Henry VIII*, vol. XII (2), p. 336.

20 - The House of Lorraine has various origin narratives, but most placed the family in the region of Metz from the early tenth century, and, crucially, highlight the marriage of the second duke of Upper Lorraine, Gerhard, to Hedwig of Namur, grand-daughter and heiress of the last of the Carolingians, Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine (d. 991). Much of the genealogical data, however, is contorted and suspicious. For recent scholarly approach to sorting it out, see the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy : [http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/LOTHARINGIA.htm#\\_Toc260754320](http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/LOTHARINGIA.htm#_Toc260754320). [accessed 21/06/16].

One way of approaching the varied dynastic identities (or at least potential) for Mary of Guise (or Mary of Lorraine as she was more often known to her contemporaries), is to examine her complex coat of arms. In the sixteenth century, a coat of arms was the easiest way for a family, royal, noble or patrician, to display its pretensions of prominence and power, and the Guise arms are particularly rich in such pretensions. These symbols would have been seen by numerous people James V needed to impress, from his own courtiers to diplomatic and foreign observers<sup>21</sup>. The houses of Stewart and Lorraine shared a similar past and aspiration ; both were eager to demonstrate their independence from larger neighbours, politically and visually : Scotland from England, and Lorraine from France. Theirs was an alliance that made sense.

As a starting point, we can look closely at each of the component parts of the Lorraine coat of arms, which today can be seen across the modern French province of Lorraine, as well as in various royal residences in Scotland, thanks to Mary of Guise's position as queen of Scots. The arms of Mary of Guise would have encompassed the full (or « great ») arms of the House of Lorraine, differenced with a three-pointed label, to show that her father was a younger son. The full coat-of-arms consisted of the arms of the Duchy of Lorraine itself over six separate compartments, each representing a different dynastic pretention of the family :

- the kingdom of Hungary
- the kingdom of Sicily, or the First House of Anjou
- the kingdom of Jerusalem
- the kingdom of Aragón (or the county of Provence, see below)
- the duchy of Anjou, or the Second House of Anjou
- the duchy of Barrois

These six shields will be explained in greater detail below. Two others were added by the main ducal line after 1540 (and also added by the Guise, including Mary), representing dynastic claims the duchies of Guelders and Jülich. The full arms of the House of Lorraine became known as the « four kingdoms over four duchies », and would come to form a central piece of visual propaganda for the

---

21 - One nearly contemporary source, dedicated in fact to Mary of Guise herself, demonstrates how heraldry was perceived, at least by courtiers and scholars : Jehan LE FERON, *Le simbol armorial des armoiries de France, & d'Escoce, & de Lorraine*, Paris, 1555. I thank Dr Steven Thiry for this reference.

royal aspirations of the House of Lorraine for the next two centuries<sup>22</sup>. Its multiple components also served as a strong visual reminder of Mary of Guise's status as a European, not merely French, noblewoman.

### *1. Lorraine and Christian warrior ancestry.*

The Duchy of Lorraine as a sovereign state has been largely forgotten in general accounts of European history. It is easier for us to conceptualise this for other second-tier houses like Denmark or Portugal, whose kingdoms survived into the modern world as fully sovereign states, while Lorraine did not<sup>23</sup>. Contemporaries, however, were not ignorant of its status. Marriage policies of the great powers in the sixteenth century illustrate this point. Lorraine's central geographical position and familial links with most of Europe's reigning houses made marriages with that family desirable to the great powers, and its dukes contracted successive marriages with princesses of Spain, France, Denmark, and Navarre<sup>24</sup>. It should be stressed again that Mary of Guise was only one generation removed from the main ducal line, and would not have lost her identity as a member of its ruling family when she was on the marriage market. Permission was required, for example, from the Duke of Lorraine, as head of the house, for Mary's marriage to James V.<sup>25</sup>

Mary's place in the hierarchy of the sixteenth-century « society of princes » was based on the prestige of her dynasty. The prestige of any dynasty, sovereign or not, was based on common memory of ancestral heroism, clemency, or munificence, and was heavily dependant on ancientness of lineage. This is often

---

22 - Jonathan SPANGLER, « Seeing is Believing : The Ducal House of Lorraine and Visual Display in the Projection of Royal Status », *Journal of Illustration Studies* (in press); and the introduction to Jessica MUNNS, Penny RICHARDS and Jonathan SPANGLER (eds.), *Aspiration, Representation and Memory : The Guise in Europe, 1506-1688*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015.

23 - A recent study of the Duchy of Lorraine emphasised the need to examine smaller states as more typical for the early modern European experience : Charles LIPP, *Noble Strategies in an Early Modern Small State: The Mahuet of Lorraine*, Rochester, NY, University of Rochester Press, 2011.

24 - For an overview of the dynastic history, see Georges POULL, *La maison ducale de Lorraine*, Nancy, Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1991.

25 - British Library, Add. Ms. 19401, fols. 39-40, Beaton to James V, 22 October 1537. In the same manner, her daughter Mary, Queen of Scots, was often considered to be an extension of the Guisard clan while she was Dauphine, then Queen of France. When she died, she asked to be buried in Reims, close to Joinville and Lorraine, in the sepulchre long-associated with the Guise cardinals. Mark GREENGRASS, « Mary, Dowager Queen of France », *Innes Review*, 1988, vol. XXXVIII, p. 171 ; Alexander WILKINSON, *Mary, Queen of Scots and French Public Opinion, 1542-1600*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 41-42.



reflected in its heraldic symbols. For the House of Lorraine, sixteenth-century genealogists stressed descent from Godfrey de Bouillon, one of the heroes of Crusader mythology<sup>26</sup>.

The simple arms of the dukes of Lorraine consisted of a diagonal red band across a gold field, on which band appeared three *alérions*. Alerions were derived initially from eagles, one of the two heraldic beasts representing royalty, but in this case, they were depicted without beaks or talons. The reasons for this are lost : but the usual suggestion is simply that they lost the smaller details due to a lack of space as official seals diminished in size in the fourteenth century<sup>27</sup>. Alerions represented the perfection of the Christian knight, Godfrey of Bouillon, and were adopted by the Lorraines as his « imagined » descendants<sup>28</sup>. It was of little concern that Godfrey of Bouillon was actually Duke of Lower Lorraine (roughly today's Belgium), not Upper Lorraine, and in fact had no children (thus rendering descent from him impossible). He was nevertheless the ideal dynastic role model, as leader of the First Crusade, and God's chosen warrior, who demonstrated his piety by taking the humbler title « Defender of the Holy Sepulchre » in 1099, rather than king of Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> Godfrey became the semi-legendary hero (like Roland and Arthur) of Medieval *chansons de geste* and chivalric poetry, and was named one of the Nine Worthies, as early as the mid-1300s.<sup>30</sup> As the legend grew, he was said

---

26 - See for example, Symphorien CHAMPIER, *Le Recueil ou cronique des hystoires des royaulmes d'Austrasie ou France orientale dite à present Lorryne*, s.l., 1510. On this topic, see Robert STURGES, « The Guise and the Two Jerusalem : Joinville's *Vie de saint Louis* and an Early Modern Family's Medievalism », Jessica MUNNS, Penny RICHARDS and Jonathan SPANGLER (eds.), *op. cit.* Later this stress on Godefroy shifted, and genealogies were published illustrating descent from Charlemagne, and later again to highlight common roots with the House of Austria.

27 - Jean-Christophe BLANCHARD, *D'Alérions en alérions. Dix siècles d'images héraldiques Lorraines*, Haroué, Gérard Louis, 2012, p. 18. It is also suggested that the name « alérion » came from the Frankish « adalaro » (eagle), a cognate with the German term « adler », or noble. Jiri LOUDA and Michael MACLAGAN, *Lines of Succession. Heraldry of the Royal Families of Europe*, London, Macdonald, 1981, p. 218.

28 - For the uses of « imagined descent », see Pascal PAYEN « Généalogie du Christ et imaginaire de la parenté à la fin du Moyen Âge », Olivier ROUCHON (dir.), *L'opération généalogique : cultures et pratiques européennes, XV<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014; for Lorraine in particular, see Jean-Christophe BLANCHARD, « Entre généalogie et mythologie : la mise en image de la mémoire dynastique dans les heures d'Antoine, duc de Lorraine », *Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes*, 2012, n°52.

29 - Interestingly, there was also a claimed link to medieval Scotland at this time, with the marriage of Godfrey's brother Eustache to the daughter of Malcolm Canmore, King of the Scots.

30 - The Nine Worthies (the « neuf preux ») included Hector, Alexander, Caesar, David, Joshua, Judas Macchabeus, Charlemagne, Arthur and Godfrey.



to have shot three eagles in flight with the shaft of one arrow during the siege of Jerusalem<sup>31</sup>.

The sign of three eagles pierced by a single arrow by Godfrey was adopted by the House of Lorraine by the late twelfth century. The *alérions* came to represent the « Vertu, noblesse, & antiquité de la maison de Lorreine », as seen in an emblem published by Claude Paradin in 1557, accompanied by the motto *Dederitne viam casusve Deusve* [« Shall chance or God provide the path? »], referring to the guidance of the arrow in Godfrey's miraculous shot. Paradin's text explicitly states that this design was employed by the ducal house of Lorraine as the descendants of Godfrey de Bouillon<sup>32</sup>. Perhaps most relevant for the identity of the House of Lorraine as a border dynasty, Godfrey himself was keen to be depicted as a bridge between the cultures of France and Germany, « born at the frontier of the two nations and himself speaking both languages », and using his authority to appease quarrels provoked by national self-esteem<sup>33</sup>. This affiliation is therefore quite fitting for the dukes of Lorraine and for Mary of Guise, straddling the cultural and political frontiers between France and Germany in the sixteenth century.

## 2. *Duchy of Bar, forging a regional identity.*

The second half of the composite state of Lorraine-Bar in the early sixteenth century was the Duchy of Bar, also known as the Barrois. The Barrois was a small, hilly territory just west of Lorraine, that had been divided in the early fourteenth century into Barrois *mouvant*, and Barrois *non-mouvant*, creating one of the most curious feudal relationships in all of Europe. The portion that was « mouvant » lay within the jurisdiction of the king of France, while the part that was « non-mouvant » did not, and remained a part of the Empire. In this way, the duke of Lorraine became simultaneously an independent sovereign, a vassal of the emperor, and a vassal of the king of France<sup>34</sup>.

The arms for Barrois are composed of two vertical golden « barbels » on a blue field, with scattered golden crosses. The « barbels » on the coat of arms for Barrois were a pun on the name of the Duchy and a type of local fish (in heraldic

31 - John C. ANDRESSOHN, *The Ancestry and Life of Godfrey of Bouillon*, Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1972.

32 - Claude PARADIN, *Devises Heroïques*, Lyon, 1557, p. 38.

33 - Otto von FREISING, « Chronicon », Liber VII, R. WILMANS (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae historica : Scriptorum*, 1868, vol. XX, p. 250 : « *Hic etiam inter Francos Romanos, et Teutonicos, qui quibusdam amaris et invidiosis iocis frequenter rixari solent, tamquam in termino utriusque gentis nutritus, utriusque linguae sciens, medium se interposuit* ».

34 - Guy CABOURDIN, *Encyclopédie illustrée de la Lorraine : Les temps modernes, I. De la Renaissance à la guerre de Trente ans*, Nancy, Éditions Serpenoise, 1991, p. 10-11.

language this is called « canting »). By adding the Duchy of Bar to their domains in the 1430s through marriage, the dukes of Lorraine acquired a large territory adjacent to their own, nearly doubling the size of their estates. Perhaps more significantly, their domains were now directly bordering the kingdom of France, and the duke was now subject to the French crown for a large part of his territory.

Mary of Guise was born in the capital of the Duchy of Bar, in the château of Bar-le-Duc, a medieval fortress perched above a narrow river valley in the border area between France and Lorraine (in fact it was in the Barrois-*mouvant*, and therefore Mary was technically born on French soil). The unified duchies of Lorraine and Bar had solidified the dynasty's place as a regional power, but it was the temporary union of the House of Lorraine with that of Anjou which propelled the dynasty onto a much wider diplomatic stage and boosted its prestige and aspirations to rule as a sovereign royal family.

### 3. *Royal Status and the Two Houses of Anjou.*

The union of Lorraine and Bar had come about in 1430 through the marriage of Isabelle de Lorraine and René I, duc d'Anjou, from a cadet branch of the royal house of France. As heir to the house of Anjou, René brought with him royal titles and status, though he spent most of his life fighting in vain to actually make good his claims<sup>35</sup>. When he died (1480) he passed control of Lorraine and Bar to his daughter's son, René II of Lorraine, while the royal titles were passed to his nephew, Charles d'Anjou. After his great victory over the Duke of Burgundy in 1477 which liberated Lorraine, René II was not satisfied with returning to the *status quo ante* of being a semi-sovereign regional duke. He immediately set out to claim the full inheritance of his mother, Yolande d'Anjou. In doing so he began to style himself « king » like his grandfather and demonstrated this visually with a royal crown, and by displaying the arms of his Angevin predecessors<sup>36</sup>. Mary of Guise's arms thus can be read as those of a grand-daughter of a duke of Lorraine (René II) as well as a great-grand-daughter of a French prince of the blood (René I), and heir to his royal status and pretensions. By linking her to the House of Anjou, we also see that Mary was not the first to ascend the heights of the dynastic marriage

---

35 - An incisive recent biography is Margaret L. KEKEWICH, *The Good King : René of Anjou and Fifteenth-Century Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2008.

36 - Christian de MÉRINDOL : « La Politique du duc de Lorraine René II, 1473–1508, à l'égard de la seconde Maison d'Anjou, de la France et de la Bourgogne, d'après le témoignage de l'emblématique et de la thématique », *Les Pays de l'entre-deux au Moyen Âge : questions d'histoire des territoires d'Empire entre Meuse, Rhône et Rhin*, Paris, Éditions du C.T.H.S., 1990, p. 61-114.

market, but was following the footsteps of her father's great-aunt, Marguerite d'Anjou, queen-consort of England from 1445 as wife of Henry VI.

The first of the two Anjou quarters - the golden lilies of France on a blue field, with a red three-point label to indicate « cadency » (that is, junior status) - represents the First House and the kingdom of Sicily. Founded by Charles of France, younger brother of Louis IX, the First House of Anjou set out in the mid-thirteenth century to conquer a kingdom for itself to rule. Their history is long and bloody, but by the end of the century they were rulers of Naples and Sicily, while another branch were ruling in Hungary and Poland. The Angevins were one of the most successful pan-European dynasties of their era, bringing together art and music from their various domains to synthesise a truly European court<sup>37</sup>. This too was part of Mary's heritage.

The Second House of Anjou, another cadet branch of the House of France, used a similar coat of arms : the arms of France, this time using a red border to signify cadet status. Founded by Louis of France (younger brother of King Charles V) in the late fourteenth century, this Second House took over the claims to Naples and Sicily from the First House, and also ruled Lorraine through René I. Regardless of his claims being pushed aside as successor to the House of Anjou, René II of Lorraine and his heirs displayed their arms (Anjou I and Anjou II), along with the titles they used : king of Sicily and duke of Calabria - despite the fact that the Angevins themselves had not ruled Sicily or Naples since they were run out in the mid-fifteenth century by the House of Aragón<sup>38</sup>. This claim provided a tremendous boost to claims to be genuinely royal, as opposed to merely noble, and was recognised as such (when convenient) by the other great powers. Venice recognised René II as heir to Naples as early as 1480<sup>39</sup>. And François I, though not recognising the Duke as king of Sicily, honoured his widow (and his cousin) by addressing her in at least one instance as « royne de Cicile »<sup>40</sup>. The pretensions of the dukes of Lorraine to the Angevin inheritance were apparently not seen as threatening by King François I, and he allowed the use of their multi-faceted heraldry. But in the next generation, the quick ascent of the Guise clan to power

---

37 - Noël-Yves TONNERRE, Élisabeth VERRY (dir.), *Les Princes Angevins du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Un destin européen*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2003.

38 - These titles would re-appear from time to time in print or on coins, and various members of the family did continue to harbour hopes of re-conquest, notably in the efforts of Henri II, Duc de Guise, who tried to conquer Naples almost single-handedly in 1647, and again in 1654.

39 - Christian de MÉRINDOL, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

40 - Permission granted to the Dowager Duchess of Lorraine, Philippe de Gueldres, to allow her underage sons to delay their oaths of homage for their French feudal properties. Émile HUMBLLOT, Roger LUZU, *Les seigneurs de Joinville*, Saint-Dizier, A. Brulliard, 1964, p. 130.

(aided in large measure by the marriage of Mary to James V), King Henri II felt the need to demonstrate his sovereignty over the duchy of Anjou by naming his third son Duke of Anjou (the future Henri III)<sup>41</sup>.

The arms of Anjou did not only represent links with southern Italy, but, more obviously, strong visual links with the royal House of France itself, through the display of its arms, the gold lilies on blue. The lilies represented the Virgin Mary, another visual element adopted by the Lorraines. The Marian cult was notable in the churches and convents they built and indeed in the names they gave their daughters, and specifically Marian Catholicism would remain important in the Guise dynasty identity both in France and Scotland<sup>42</sup>.

#### *4. Further Angevin claims to royal status : Hungary, Jerusalem, and the creation of a princely capital.*

Aside from Sicily, two important components of the Lorraine coat-of-arms had lasting significance in the construction of a royal dynastic identity. These derived from the Angevin claim to the kingdoms of Hungary and Jerusalem. The First House of Anjou ruled Hungary from 1308 to 1386, and their claims passed to the Second House of Anjou along with Naples and Sicily. Its coat of arms is the simple eight bars of alternating red and silver, but another symbol of Hungarian monarchy may have been passed along to the House of Lorraine as well. The Eastern double cross, sometimes called the Cross of Saint Stephen, possibly came to Hungary from the Byzantine church, and was adopted by its Angevin rulers. The Angevins then brought this potent symbol of Christian rule to Lorraine in the early fifteenth century ; it became known as the Cross of Lorraine, and can be seen on buildings across the region<sup>43</sup>. By the twentieth century, this cross had become the symbol not of the dynasty, but of the province of Lorraine itself, and

---

41 - Or at least this is claimed by Hugues Noël WILLIAMS, *The Brood of False Lorraine. The History of the Ducs de Guise*, 2 vol., London, Hutchinson, 1919, p. 4. It seems like sound reasoning.

42 - On Guise dynastic identity and Marian identity, see Jonathan SPANGLER, « Points of Transferral : Mademoiselle de Guise's Will and the Transferability of Dynastic Identity », Lisbeth GEEVERS, Mirella MARINI (eds.), *Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Europe : Rulers, Aristocrats and the Formation of Identities*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015 ; and *id.*, « Material Culture at the Guise 'Court': Tapestries, a Bed and a Devotional Dollhouse as Expressions of Dynastic Pride and Piety in Seventeenth-Century Paris », *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 2012, vol. 34, n°2, p. 158-175.

43 - Christian de MÉRINDOL, *op. cit.*, p. 81 ; William MONTER, *op. cit.*, p. 21-23. Examples to be seen still today in Nancy include the Porte de la Craffe (part of the old defensive wall) ; and in Paris in a former residence of Lorraine princes, the Hôtel de Mayenne, now a school on the rue Saint-Antoine near the Place de la Bastille.

was adopted by the resistance of an occupied Lorraine in the First World War, and then of an occupied France as a whole and by Charles de Gaulle personally in the Second.

Another type of heraldic cross also became emblematic of the royal aspirations of the House of Lorraine. The Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem had fallen in 1291, but its last kings left descendants who passed the claim to its crown from dynasty to dynasty. The Angevins in Sicily adopted this claim and its symbol, the Jerusalem cross. This was a square Greek cross of gold, on a silver field, along with four smaller gold square crosses. This is a colour pattern which broke one of the fundamental rules of heraldry by placing a metal on a metal (gold on silver), but was acknowledged as a means of showing how special, and above the normal rules, Jerusalem was to the Medieval world<sup>44</sup>.

These two heraldic elements (Hungary and Jerusalem) represented to contemporaries that the House of Lorraine saw themselves as more than just regional dukes, or heirs of a cadet branch of the House of France (Anjou), but also as descendants and potential rulers of two major Christian realms, one more spiritual than physical. Both kingdoms were also creations of significant holy men and founding dynastic heroes (Saint Stephen in Hungary, Godfrey de Bouillon in Jerusalem). The House of Lorraine was thus to be considered as part of the universal ruling clique, ready to be sovereigns wherever God would call them to be. Mary of Lorraine was born ready to be queen of the Scots.

A royal dynasty needed a suitably princely residence, a place to display regal power and authority. René II began the rebuilding of his capital, Nancy, with this in mind after the war with Burgundy that ended with the dramatic siege of Nancy in 1477. Mary of Guise spent a good deal of her childhood here. The ducal residence in Nancy was less a fortress like Bar-le-Duc, and more a palace, renovated along the lines of a Burgundian flamboyant gothic style. René's son, Duke Antoine continued his father's work but modified it to demonstrate the mixed cultural influences of his court, partly French, but not entirely. Antoine had been raised at the court of Louis XII, primarily at Blois, where he was introduced to humanism and Italianate design ideas<sup>45</sup>. Returning to Nancy as its new duke in 1508, he halted the work of his father's architects, and introduced a plan based on the newer Renaissance style. Further invigorated with new ideas on his return from campaigns in Italy in 1511, Antoine built a *galerie des cerfs* in emulation of

---

44 - Jiri LOUDA, Michael MACLAGAN, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

45 - For an overview, see Nicolas LE ROUX, « La cour de Lorraine », and Pierre SESMAT, « Les années 1510, l'invention de l'architecture de la Renaissance en Lorraine », both in Olivier CHRISTIN, *Un Nouveau Monde : Naissance de la Lorraine moderne*, Paris, Somogy Éditions d'Art, 2013.

the *palazzi* he'd seen there, a setting for great receptions, and for sessions of the Estates General of Lorraine and Bar<sup>46</sup>.

This cosmopolitan environment in which Mary was partly raised is also evident in music and court ceremony in Lorraine. The court of Lorraine was influenced by geographical proximity to the most prominent musical centre of the period, Flanders, and by inherited ties to the former Angevin territories in Provence (a major centre of music and poetry) and Italy<sup>47</sup>. The Guise themselves were patrons of the composer Clément Janequin (c. 1485-1558), originally from Anjou, who became the most well-known composer of the French *chanson* of the early sixteenth century, including a famous commemoration of the Battle of Marignano, where both Duke Antoine and his brother Claude (Mary's father) had served<sup>48</sup>. Much like the French court at this time, the court of Lorraine was drawn to influences from Italy; and the gateway to Italy for them was the County of Provence.

### *5. Mediterranean draw : Aragon or Provence and the Cadet Branch of Guise.*

The last royal element claimed boldly in the arms of the House of Lorraine as reconstructed by Duke René II is normally considered to be the Kingdom of Aragon, incorporating his mother's claims to this Iberian kingdom (claims which were in turn based on those of her grandmother, Yolanda of Aragon). In practical terms, this meant very little since the Habsburgs were now fully in control there after the death of King Ferdinand in 1516 and the succession of his grandson, the Emperor Charles V, though there had been a briefly successful attempt at gaining this inheritance by Yolanda's grandson Jean, Duke of Calabria (René II's uncle), in 1466<sup>49</sup>.

All sources refer to the fourth panel in the arms of the House of Lorraine as the Kingdom of Aragon : six vertical bars of red and gold. But the coat-of-

---

46 - Named for the stags painted on its walls. Guy CABOURDIN, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 14-15.

47 - Albert JACQUOT, *La Musique en Lorraine*, Paris, A. Quantin, 1882. For the court of René I in Provence, see Jean-Michel MATZ and Elisabeth VERRY (eds.), *Le Roi René dans tous ses États*, Paris, Patrimoine, Centre des monuments nationaux, 2009. Music remained a strong feature of Lorraine court life through the succeeding centuries, and can even be cited as a source for the flourishing of the Viennese musical world of Mozart and Haydn, after the dukes of Lorraine transferred themselves to the Imperial court in 1740.

48 - Stuart CARROLL, *Martyrs and Murderers : The Guise Family and the Making of Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 38-39.

49 - For Yolande, see the recent study by Zita Eva ROHR, *Yolande of Aragon (1381-1442) : Family and Power. The Reverse of the Tapestry*, Basingstoke, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016.

arms of Aragon and Provence at this time were the same, both referring to the House of Barcelona, which had jointly ruled both territories since the twelfth century (Provence from 1112, and Aragon in 1164). I would argue that the link with Provence was of greater significance ; indeed the title « comte de Provence » lingered much longer in the listings of formal titles of the dukes of Lorraine, and strong connections between Provence and the cadet branch of Guise in particular would continue for several more centuries<sup>50</sup>.

This allows us to return to examining more closely Mary's immediate family, the House of Guise. Their position as cadets of the House of Lorraine was signalled in their coat-of-arms by the addition of a label. The label, a three-pronged bar like that used by the Prince of Wales in the United Kingdom today, is a traditional heraldic symbol in western Europe of someone either as heir to the throne (normally silver), or as a younger son (a different colour) : in this case, the Guise family bore a red label, though in Scotland, for Mary, this is usually represented as silver<sup>51</sup>.

By the late fifteenth century, the dukes of Lorraine and Bar also possessed large French fiefs in Normandy, Champagne and Provence. Mary's father Claude was therefore sent to the French court to represent his family's interests there, supported by a formal partition of the family properties in 1506, while the main ducal branch continued its diplomatic balancing act between France and the Empire<sup>52</sup>. Mary's role in this dynastic strategy was therefore to represent both the interests of France and Lorraine. This would be the defining role of the so-called *princes étrangers* at the French court for the next three centuries<sup>53</sup>.

---

50 - Although Duke René II claimed to succeed his grandfather René as count of Provence, it was in fact incorporated into France, though René and his heirs did acquire the private properties of 'le bon roi René', notably the important barony of Lambesc. The Guise maintained a strong clientele network there, and were influential as governors and admirals of the Mediterranean fleet. After 1630, however, the centralising cardinal-ministers recognised this powerful threat and removed the Guise from power there. Nevertheless, ties continued, and the penultimate governor of the province under the *ancien régime* was a Guisard, Camille, prince de Marsan. See the chapter on the Guisard connections to Provence in my monograph : Jonathan SPANGLER, *The Society of Princes : The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009.

51 - I have not been able to establish a clear reason for this, and suspect that either the colour red was not definitively established for the Guise by the time Mary left for Scotland, or else later restorers in Scotland mistakenly turned to the more common British white (or silver) label for Mary's arms.

52 - See my forthcoming article, « Sons and Daughters Sent Abroad : Foreign Princes at the French Court » (under review).

53 - This is one of the main themes of my book, *The Society of Princes*.



One element of Mary's dynastic past that is not included visually in her coat-of-arms is that of Joinville, the ancient noble house that had dominated south-eastern Champagne for many centuries. The arms of Joinville were used by the cadet branch of the House of Lorraine in the fifteenth century, Lorraine-Vaudémont, but were not incorporated into the arms of Claude de Guise, or his descendants, probably indicating their commitment to remaining united with their dynasty of origin rather than forging a new heraldic identity. But of course, the château de Joinville played a large role in the upbringing of Mary of Guise. Soon after her birth, Mary's family moved to the château, which had become the Guise's permanent seat. Joinville was also an old medieval fortress, overlooking the upper valley of the Marne, in eastern Champagne, and, like Bar-le-Duc, guarded the eastern entrances to the kingdom of France. As we have seen with the development of a princely capital for the dukes of Lorraine in Nancy, so too did Mary of Guise's family transform their residence at Joinville, keeping the older château on the top of the hill with its flamboyant gothic style, but also building a newer pleasure palace and gardens in the valley below, started in the 1520s, along the lines of the latest styles from Italy, where Mary's father Claude, had recently returned from the wars<sup>54</sup>. It was to be a place for pleasure only, situated on a slow-moving channel of the Marne, and attached to a sumptuous garden (hence its secondary name, the Château du Grand Jardin). Work started in 1533, the year before Mary's marriage to the Duc de Longueville, so she would undoubtedly have been conscious of its construction and design.

#### *6. Addendum : Guelders & Jülich : Mary as « Burgundian ».*

Although the two panels representing the duchies of Guelders (or Gueldres) and Jülich—a gold lion on blue, and a black lion on gold, both rampant - were not added to the full Lorraine coat of arms until 1540, after Mary of Guise had already moved to Scotland, she incorporated them into her arms after that date as well, as a means of retaining her family solidarity<sup>55</sup>. These two important duchies in the lower Rhineland were claimed by Mary's uncle, Duke Antoine of Lorraine, in the name of his mother (Mary's grandmother), Philippa of Guelders. Duke Antoine was unsuccessful in establishing his claims, but was allowed to retain the two shields on his coat-of-arms as a mark of honour by the Emperor Charles V (who

---

54 - Jean-Michel MUSSO (ed.), *Le Château du Grand Jardin, Joinville*, Langres, 1993 ; François ROCHE, *Claude de Lorraine, Premier duc de Guise*, Chaumont, Le Pythagore, 2005, p. 159-175.

55 - As seen in the wedding portrait of James and Mary at Blair Castle, which probably dates from 1540. My thanks to Annette Bächstädt for this reference.

granted Jülich to the House of Cleves, and annexed Guelders himself)<sup>56</sup>. Even as symbols, these two provinces linked the House of Lorraine closer to the Low Countries and Middle Rhine, and to the still prominent memory of Europe's model court, that of Burgundy<sup>57</sup>. Guelders and Jülich also represented something Mary and James had in common. In the previous century, James's great-grandmother, Mary of Guelders, had represented a link between Scotland and Burgundy in their treaty of friendship of 1449, and in particular, a link with Scotland's most important trading ports in Holland and Flanders, then part of Burgundy<sup>58</sup>. Mary's grandmother, Philippa of Guelders, was a similar link to the Low Countries and its dynamic culture and economy. Indeed, Mary had been raised in part by her grandmother, which has been highlighted as a major influence on her later spiritual life<sup>59</sup>.

This points once more to the importance of Burgundy in Scottish foreign policy and in particular to the choice of Mary of Guise as a bride for James V. Flemish cities relied on Scottish wool for their cloth industries, a factor which had formed one of the key motivations behind the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France<sup>60</sup>. But the County of Flanders was no longer legally part of France after it was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire in 1529 by the Treaty of Cambrai. With Flanders no longer under French jurisdiction, and Scottish wool increasingly being replaced by Spanish wool, it is no surprise that the Auld Alliance barely survived the early years of the sixteenth century. As vassals of the Emperor, Mary's family was thus on friendly (if fragile) terms with the new master of Flanders, the Habsburg emperor/king of Spain. This connection, moreover, could also explain why Henry VIII would have been interested in Mary - England too relied on good relations with Flanders, and was always keen to humble French power in the region. Henry made further enquiries in 1537 and 1538 about marriage to Mary's sister, Louise, married shortly thereafter to the Prince of Chimay, another prominent Low Countries princely house<sup>61</sup>. For similar connections, he turned in 1539 to Guelders' neighbour and rival in the Lower Rhineland, Cleves, whose eligible princess, Anne, had already been betrothed (briefly) to the son and heir of Duke Antoine of Lorraine, Prince François.

---

56 - Guy CABOURDIN, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

57 - Gerard NIJSTEN, *In the Shadow of Burgundy : the Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

58 - David DITCHEBURN, « The Place of Guelders in Scottish Foreign Policy, c.1449-c.1542 », Grant SIMPSON (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries...*, *op. cit.*, p. 59-61.

59 - See in this collection the text from Ghislain Tranié.

60 - Alexander STEVENSON, « The Flemish Dimension of the Auld Alliance », Grant SIMPSON (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries*, *op. cit.*

61 - Gabriel de PIMODAN, *La mère des Guises : Antoinette de Bourbon, 1494-1583*, Paris, Champion, 1889, p. 65-68.

François was instead married to Christina of Denmark, further symbolising the re-establishment of links between the House of Lorraine and the Imperial dynasty (recall that Charles V was her uncle). Viewed as a Scotland-Lorraine-Denmark alliance, in this wider dynastic context, it is thus easy to see why in the next generation, James VI would marry Anne of Denmark to solidify the dynastic and accompanying economic connections.

### 7. *Conclusions: The Hybrid Identity of Mary of Guise.*

The identity of Mary of Guise was thus complex : a Francophone noblewoman reared by a grandmother raised at the court of Burgundy, who spent her youth partly at the court of the semi-sovereign duchy of Lorraine, and partly at the French court as a *princesse étrangère*. This mixed identity is enduring in the House of Guise : as late as 1573 - nearly seven decades after the their relocation to France - the family's chief political leader, Cardinal Charles de Lorraine, « regarded himself as an agent of the papacy and universal Catholicism rather than as a nobleman of France and a servant of the crown »<sup>62</sup>. The Guise princes generally considered themselves to be Catholics first, and held any geographical identity second. This certainly was true for Mary of Guise, and extended as well for her daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots. Both adapted their identities to their physical surroundings, but remained focused on their Roman faith. But religion has often been used to oversimplify the goals and policies of the Guise in the sixteenth century. Catholic zeal was indeed a part of the Guise mentality, but dynasticism, not religion, was paramount, and overall family strategy could always override if religious demands constrained the needs of the dynasty<sup>63</sup>.

Such was the reputation of the lineage of Mary of Guise, something that would certainly have been under consideration by James V and his advisors in 1538. If James did indeed have a project for enhancing the « European » reputation of the House of Stewart, a Lorraine connection would have been of great use. One might assume that his father's marriage into the English royal family would have helped to solidify this dynastic status, but in the 1530s, the Tudors were still considered by some on the Continent to be parvenus and usurpers, particularly those adherents of the Duke of Suffolk and Cardinal Pole. Similar attempts in earlier generations had equally shaky foundations : the House of Oldenburg, the

---

62 - Nicola Mary SUTHERLAND, *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew and the European Conflict, 1559-1572*, London, Macmillan, 1973, p. 62, 70.

63 - Stuart CARROLL, *Noble Power During the French Wars of Religion. The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 252-253. Carroll points out that several Guise allies and clients were in fact Protestant.

family of the wife of James III, was established on the Danish throne only in 1448, while the House of Guelders, the family of the wife of James II was continually under threat of dispossession either by the dukes of Burgundy, the emperor, or the rival house of Egmont. Prior to these external marital alliances, the Stewarts had married only locally, taking brides from the Scottish magnate families, from the midst of which they themselves had only recently emerged<sup>64</sup>.

Thus dynastically, James V was getting in Mary a bride with solid ancient connections to the Carolingians and the Medieval emperors of Germany, plus the more recent pan-European dynasty of the Angevins, and their connections to the thrones of Aragon, Naples, Hungary and far-off Jerusalem<sup>65</sup>. But James would not have rejected Mary's value as a symbol of the renewal of the « Auld Alliance » either. Besides her mixed Lorraine and Angevin ancestry, she was also the daughter of a Bourbon princess, Antoinette, the elder sister of the duke of Vendôme, who became first prince of the blood after the extinction of the senior line of Bourbon in 1527. Mary's grandmother, Philippa of Guelders, was first cousin to Louise of Savoy, mother of François I (they both had Bourbon mothers), meaning that her father and the King were second cousins. A common practice in the late medieval and early modern periods when reviewing a bride's background was to draw up a pedigree chart, or her « sixteen quarters ». Doing so reveals that Mary of Guise had twelve (out of the sixteen) ancestors that were either of royal or « semi-royal » status<sup>66</sup>. Of the remaining four, two held the rank of count (the highest non-royal title available to nobles in this period since dukes were still almost exclusively junior royals), while the final two (Beauvau and Chambley) were below that rank, but still prominent noble houses<sup>67</sup>. In contrast, a similar chart for James V reveals

---

64 - Indeed the duke of Milan refused the offer to send his daughter to become queen of the Scots, considering that kingdom to be « *in finibus orbis* ». Norman MACDOUGALL, *An Antidote to the English : The Auld Alliance, 1295-1560*, East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 2001, p. 90.

65 - James' own aspirations to be seen as a European prince can be seen in his addition of four chivalric orders (the Golden Fleece, the Garter, the Order of St-Michel, plus his own Order of the Thistle) on the main gates at the palace of Linlithgow.

66 - By « semi-royal » I mean semi-sovereign houses such as the families of Lorraine, Guelders, or Savoy, who had not yet established themselves as fully royal, but generally rules as territorial princes, measurable by the exercise of regalian rights, minting of coinage, and a degree of independence in legal jurisdiction.

67 - The house of Beauvau followed René I from Anjou to Lorraine during the fifteenth century, married into local Lorraine noble families, and continued to serve the House of Lorraine for the next three centuries. See my chapter, Jonathan SPANGLER, « Transferring Affections : Princes, Favourites and the Peripatetic Houses of Lorraine and Beauvau as Trans-Regional Families », Barbara HAIDER-WILSON, Wolfgang MUELLER and William D. GODSEY (eds.), *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis : Traditionen und Perspektiven*, Vienna, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2016. The Chambley were an ancient noble house of Lorraine, whose co-heiress brought lands by marriage to the Beauvau.

that he had only eleven ancestors of royal or semi-royal blood, against five non-royal; in fact, his five non-royals were of lower rank than hers - including the daughter of a royal bastard (Somerset), the father of a royal mistress (Earl Rivers), and an obscure Welsh squire who got lucky in the bedchamber, Owen Tudor<sup>68</sup>.

Mary of Guise would also have been analysed by the counsellors and genealogists of James V for her potential as a dynastic heiress in her own right, of her own family, or of another. In 1538, she would have appeared in position number eleven in the succession to the duchies of Lorraine and Bar, whose laws allowed for female successions (as was seen twice in the preceding century, in 1430 and in 1453). She was thus a potential heiress to the claims of the kingdoms of Naples-Sicily and Jerusalem. This question was not mere speculation, but a seriously considered potential reality. Major European diplomatic revolutions had occurred in recent memory due to genetic failure of one house, and convenient marital links of another (most spectacularly for the Habsburgs in Burgundy and Spain). In fact, one of the chief diplomatic concerns in Anglo-Scottish relations of the 1530s, was that James V himself would inherit the throne of England if his uncle Henry VIII's heirs died<sup>69</sup>. Several of James V's other potential brides were also heiresses or claimants to significant thrones, including Christina of Denmark, the Catholic claimant to Denmark, and the Infanta Isabella of Navarre or her niece, Jeanne d'Albret, who was not only the heir apparent of Navarre, but also of France if the Salic Law could be successfully challenged<sup>70</sup>. Mary of Guise was also a potential heiress of her mother, Antoinette, and of the Bourbon-Vendôme family, whose vast landholdings spread across much of Picardy and Artois, and who could also lay a tentative claim to another semi-sovereign duchy, Luxembourg, were it not already held so firmly by the king of Spain<sup>71</sup>.

As a strategy for diplomatic balancing, James V would marry a princess with strong connections to the French royal house, but *not* actually a member of the royal family. This could have been seen as advantageous in a period of frequently shifting alliances. Mary's family in Lorraine maintained a careful balance between its connections to France and those with the Empire, as seen in the marriage of Duke François in 1540 (just two years after Mary's marriage to James) to Christina of Denmark, niece of Emperor Charles V. This marriage may itself have already

---

68 - The study of pedigree and genealogy has seen a recent academic acceptance, as seen in publications such as Olivier ROUCHON (dir.), *op. cit.* ; Germain BUTAUD, Valérie PIÉTRI, *Les enjeux de la généalogie, XII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Pouvoir et identité*, Paris, Éditions Autremont, 2006.

69 - M. MERRIMAN, *op. cit.*, p. 32-34.

70 - See a list of eighteen potential brides for James V, in Jamie CAMERON, *op. cit.*, p. 132, 153, fn 15.

71 - David POTTER, « The Luxembourg Inheritance : The House of Bourbon and its lands in northern France during the sixteenth century », *French History*, 1992, n°6, p. 24-62.

been in negotiation in 1538, prompting James to think of advantages he himself could derive from Mary's Imperial connections, and those with Scotland's old trading ally, Denmark-Norway. In the event, neither James V nor Duke François survived long after their marriage, and had any plans existed, they were scrapped. Although Mary of Guise continued the relationship between Scotland and France through the marriage of her daughter to the Dauphin, Christina as regent for her son Duke Charles III did not maintain a similar relationship between Lorraine and France, and her stubborn adherence to the Imperial cause resulted in her deposition as regent, and the first (brief) French occupation of Lorraine in 1552.

\*

In conclusion, relations between Scotland and Lorraine need to be considered when re-visiting the life of Mary of Guise, not just those between Scotland and France. One concrete example of this Scottish-Lorraine relationship - symbolised in one way by their shared use of the thistle as a dynastic symbol, a gesture of defiance towards larger threatening neighbours - can be seen in Mary's steps as queen-consort to ask her uncle the duke of Lorraine to send experienced miners from Lorraine to Scotland to help her husband James V in his efforts to extract gold from the Lowther Hills in the Southern Highlands<sup>72</sup>. At the same time, however, she also maintained her close connections to the French court, as a regular correspondent with King Henri II, and in particular her brother the Cardinal de Lorraine, on policy issues affecting Scotland and France. In the long term, it is not too much of an exaggeration to claim that the dynastic pretensions of the House of Lorraine helped propel the Stuarts to the premier ranks of European royal houses.

---

72 - Rosalind K. MARSHALL, *Mary of Guise*, p. 76.







# Mélanges