

Henry the VII: A Renaissance Ruler?

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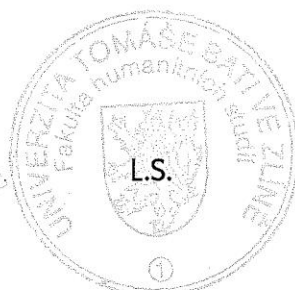
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce vysvětluje úspěšné panování Jindřicha VII a dokazuje, že Jindřich VII byl renesančním panovníkem. Pro přesné rozhodnutí o statutu Jindřicha VII jako renesančního panovníka je použito porovnání s dílem Vladař, ve kterém Niccolo Machiavelli popsal vlastnosti renesančního panovníka. V práci jsou vyhledány a porovnány společné znaky doby panování Jindřicha VII a myšlenky sepsané Machiavellim.

Klíčová slova: renesance, vládce, svěřenec, panování, žoldáci, pověst, rádce, pověst, základy

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis explains the successful rule of Henry VII and argues that Henry VII was a renaissance ruler. For the accurate determination of Henry VII's status as a renaissance ruler the qualities of a renaissance ruler as described by Niccolo Machiavelli in his book The Prince are used. Throughout Henry VII's reign the similarities with Machiavelli's ideas are found and evaluated.

Keywords: renaissance, ruler, ward, reign, subjects, mercenaries, reputation, counselor, foundations

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INTRODUCTION

Henry VII reigned as the king of England from the year 1485 till the year 1509. During that time, England was in the beginning of the renaissance period, which would mean that any speculation about Henry being or not being a renaissance ruler posed by the title of this thesis is unnecessary. However, to be considered a renaissance ruler, it is not enough to be alive and rule in the renaissance period of history. The aim of this thesis is to prove that Henry VII was a renaissance ruler. To prove or disprove the theory, a basis on which the qualities of Henry as a renaissance ruler could be judged, is needed. Such a basis is in this thesis provided by the book *The Prince* that was created by Italian renaissance writer Niccolò Machiavelli. *The Prince* describes the qualities, desirable to be possessed by renaissance ruler.

The thesis is divided into several chapters each of which describes one of the characteristics of a renaissance ruler and creates a close comparison between the quality described in *The Prince* and the actual decisions made by Henry during his rule.

The qualities most important for the renaissance ruler discussed and evaluated by this thesis are the conquering of a new state, where close look is taken on Henry's preparation and subsequent invasion of England. Foundation of power delves into the details of creating and securing a strong rule and dynasty. Use of armed forces scrutinizes Henry's use of different types of soldiery mainly at the beginning of his reign. Reputation among subjects explores the way in which Henry kept peace during his rule. Councillors and information is chapter that closely looks at, how Henry picked and promoted his closest councillors and the way he made decisions and financing of a dynasty deals with the way in which Henry acquired his wealth and the way in which he used its power.

The conclusion of the thesis re-evaluates all of the stated evidence, which points to the fact that Henry VII was truly a renaissance ruler, according to the possession of qualities that Machiavelli describes as elementary for the renaissance ruler to have.

1 RENAISSANCE

Renaissance is a historical period that bridges a gap between middle ages and modern society. The beginning of renaissance is believed to be at the brink of 14th century and the end of it is dated around the end of 17th century. Word renaissance comes from French language and it means rebirth. Symbolical awakening of man's minds after being bound by faith and church in middle ages. During this period, society slowly moves from being dictated by nobility and church, towards democracy.¹

The spread of renaissance is widely believed to have started in Italy, after the sack of Constantinople by the Turks. In the libraries of Constantinople, the old manuscripts written by Greek and Roman philosophers were stored. Classical Greek philosophy contained in the manuscripts laid the foundations of humanism and renaissance as it is known nowadays. Old manuscripts were brought, by people fleeing from the sacked Constantinople, to Italy through established trade routes with Middle East and they started being studied by Italians. This led to unearthing some long forgotten ideas that were the first building blocks of renaissance. The renaissance spread from Italy and by the beginning of the reign of Henry VII it fully reached England.²

This could further be supported by the fact that the tomb of Henry VII was made by Pietro Torrigiano an Italian sculptor that started his career beside a famous renaissance artist Michelangelo.³

During the renaissance there were many codes of etiquette produced, for example "the Book of the Courtier"⁴ that dictates the behaviour that any man should strive to have. Such code may be quite useful for the courtiers, merchants and ordinary people of the time, but ruler is in need of marginally different manual. This was provided by Niccolo Machiavelli, an Italian renaissance period writer, who in his book "The Prince", published in 1532⁵, provides practical rules that characterize a renaissance ruler and when followed correctly should grant the ruler an undisturbed and save reign in his kingdom. "The Prince" was published long after the death of Henry VII but during his rule it is possible to see many

¹ Margaret L. King, *The Renaissance in Europe* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2003), 31

² Margaret L. King, *The Renaissance in Europe* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2003), 74

³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 253–255

⁴ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 16

⁵ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 16–17

similarities with the advice provided by the book. Such as the use of armed forces, reputation among subjects or building of the foundations of power.⁶

⁶ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 16

2 YOUTH OF HENRY EARL OF RICHMOND

Henry Tudor earl of Richmond was born on 28th of January 1457 to his mother Margareth Beaufort and father Edmund Tudor. At that moment nobody could imagine that the boy will grow up to be a king Henry VII⁷ of England, even if he had a royal blood in his veins. Both the Beauforts and the Tudors were Lancastrian families which was unfortunate at the time since it was the peak of the Wars of Roses. During the Wars of Roses, Lancastrian families fought with Yorkist families to win the English throne. In the battle of Towton in 1461 Lancastrians lost the wars and Yorkist king Edward IV rose to power.⁸

Henry had a claim on English throne from both sides of his family. His grandfather Owen Tudor was married to the princess of France and queen of England Catherine of Valois. She Married Owen after her first husband Henry V died of dysentery. Catherine gave Owen four children, one of which was Henry's father Edmund. Before Henry VI was imprisoned after the battle of Towton, he gifted Edmund title of the earl of Richmond and his brother Jasper the title of earl of Pembroke, third brother became a monk and could own no land and their sister died early after birth.

On Lady Beaufort's side of the family, the connection to the royal blood was even more obscure. Henry's great-great-grandmother was a mistress of John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, whose eldest legitimate son became the first Lancastrian king Henry IV. Before Henry IV died, he legitimized the family of Beauforts, but at the same time any member of the family was prohibited by the act of parliament to become a king of England.⁹

After Edward IV came to power and recognized the importance of Henry, he took him from his mother and gave him as a ward to the Yorkist supporter sir William Herbert. Henry lived with Herberts until Edward IV was forced to escape England. In his place Henry VI was released from prison and reinstated as a king. Henry shortly met with his mother Margareth Beaufort in London and then was taken by his uncle Jasper Tudor back to Wales. Together they escaped to Brittany in order to keep Henry, who was the last member of the Lancastrian family to have a claim on English throne, out of reach of Yorkist king Edward IV after he reached London with his army and won his throne back.

⁷ For the purpose of this thesis and in the light of complex family tree, Henry VII is to be hereinafter referred to as Henry.

⁸ Marilee Hanson, "Hanson, Marilee."Henry VII Ancestry & Youth," Englishhistory.net, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/Henry-vii-ancestry-youth>.

⁹ Roger Lockyer and Andrew Thrush, *Henry VII: Seminar Studies in History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 1–6

Henry and Jasper were welcomed in Brittany by Duke Francis, who planned to use Henry as a bargaining chip to receive a military support from England against France. In 1476 Edward IV offered the support that Francis desired. Henry was to be sent to England, but at the port he fell ill, or faked his illness and came back to Francis, who surprisingly ceased the negotiations, concerning the exchange of Henry for military support, with Edward IV and kept Henry safe.

In 1483 the situation changed. Edward IV's brother Richard III took the power and locked the young sons of Edward IV in the Tower. Richard III sent his men to Brittany to make a similar offer to now old duke Francis as his brother Edward IV once did – military support in exchange for Henry. Fortunately Henry was warned of the plan to extradite him to England and escaped to France to the Court of Charles VII. From there Henry's invasion began in 1485.¹⁰

¹⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 4–9

3 CONQUERING A NEW STATE

After Henry learned that the French king plans to extradite him to Richard III, Henry had no other option, but to invade England. By this invasion Henry fulfilled one of Machiavelli's conditions of successfully retaining the conquered lands. Since according to Machiavelli the conqueror has to reside in the newly acquired lands to strengthen and secure his position. The conquering of the country must be preceded by meticulous preparations, as few things as possible should depend on luck. It is equally important to decide to strike at the right time. 1485 was right time for Henry's invasion for several reasons that are discussed in this chapter.¹¹

In 1483 through his mother's contacts Henry was informed that there is a revolt brewing in England. The duke of Buckingham was preparing a rebellion against Richard III and Lady Beaufort was urging Henry to try and join in. In the following months Henry tried to persuade French king Charles VII to give him ships that could carry him and his men to England. Philip agreed and the preparation began. In the meantime Richard III already suspected Duke Buckingham of his involvement in the rebellion.

When Henry set sail to England, the season of storms already hit the channel. He was planning to embark on the shores of Kent, the heart of the revolt. By the time Henry got to the English shores, his fleet was decimated by the storm. Henry decided not to land and turned back to France. By that time the revolt was already suppressed, Buckingham killed and Richards's army was waiting for Henry on the shores. If Henry had landed he would surely have been captured and probably killed.¹²

The failure of Buckingham's revolt had some good outcome for Henry. The refugees that fought on the side of Buckingham and fled the country came to France and joined with Henry, which increased the number of his English supporters to 400 men. By imprisoning the sons of Edward IV and killing Duke Buckingham, Richard III eradicated all the people with the claim on the English throne apart from himself and Henry.

Before the year 1485 the deal was made between Lady Beaufort and Lady Woodville¹³ that Henry will marry Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV. However, in 1485 Richard III offered lady Woodville that she and her family will be fairly and that they will

¹¹ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 35

¹² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 5–8

¹³ Wife of Edward IV and mother of Elizabeth of York.

not be sent to the Tower as Edward IV's sons were. This hurt Henry's cause greatly, since some of the Yorkist supporters he had, lost the reason to fight against Richard III. Also Richard intended to marry Elizabeth of York, which would ruin Henry's plans of joining the houses of York and Lancaster. If any time was ready to strike against Richard III, it was now. And so with new fleet from Philip, his 400 English supporters and 2000 French mercenaries, Henry started his invasion.¹⁴

On 7th August 1485 Henry's fleet reached Milford Bay in Wales. This was strategically chosen place, since Henry's uncle Jasper Tudor was well known there and Henry hoped that his uncle's fame will bring him more supporters. Wales was also hard to reach for Richard III, which gave Henry more time to march his army through England and gather allies. During Henry's time in France, he had an agreement with John Sewage and Rhys ap Thomas, the Welsh lords, that they would join their forces with Henry's once he lands in England. Henry started off towards their lands, but once he got there, he received terrible news that the lords would not join his cause. Few days later on the road to Shrewsbury, however, Rhys ap Thomas changed his mind, joined Henry and brought with him around 2000 men.¹⁵

Shrewsbury was a large city that stood in the way of Henry's progress and Henry needed to pass through it, since going around would give Richard III too much time to prepare. When Henry stated to the city officials that he intends to pass through the city, his passage was denied and Henry did not have any men to spare for storming the city by force. Luckily, Henry's ally lord Stanley sent a word to the officials of the city to let Henry and his army pass. When Henry was past Shrewsbury, he headed towards the lands of the Stanley family, where he expected full support of the Stanley army.¹⁶

Lord Stanley¹⁷ was initially reluctant to openly rebel against king Richard III, however his army followed, about half a day behind, after Henry all the way to the battlefield. To make things even more difficult even the night before the battle of Bosworth Field, lord Stanley did not promise Henry to join his cause completely and rather decided to stay out

¹⁴ Sean Cunningham, *Henry VII* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 22

¹⁵ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 1–10

¹⁶ Marilee Hanson, „The Road to Bosworth & Battle Of Bosworth Field,“ *Englishhistory.net*, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/the-road-to-bosworth-battle-of-bosworth-field>.

¹⁷ Husband to Henry VII's mother Lady Beaufort.

of the battle altogether. That was a crushing blow for Henry's plans, since even without lord Stanley's men, the army of Richard III was larger than the army of Henry.¹⁸

According to Machiavelli, the important quality of the prince in the war is to always stand with his men. If the soldiers notice that the prince is not ready to fight for his own cause, why should they. This works both ways. If the prince is seen among his men and does not fear to join the battle himself, it greatly boosts the morale of his army.¹⁹

This was true for Henry as he stood with his men and fought with his men, and so did Richard III. The whole battle of Bosworth Field was not won because of the tactical genius or greater numbers of one of the competitors, but instead by pure luck. Lord Stanley decided at the last possible moment to join the battle on Henry's side. Richard III tried to end the battle quickly by killing Henry, but in the cavalry charge that Richard III personally led, he was killed. This way Henry claimed a victory and also the crown of England. Moreover during the battle, apart from the king, a great number of Richard III's supporters died, which made the beginning and duration of Henry's reign easier, since he did not have to appease other noble factions than his own.²⁰

Machiavelli also argues that after achieving a victory, the prince should completely exterminate the family of his opponent to prevent any future rebellions. Since Richard III was killed in the battle, and any other members on the male side of his family were believed to be dead, Henry made an even better decision than exterminating the rest of the family. By marrying Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV, he connected both their families. This manoeuvre saved Henry from being thought of as cruel by his new subjects and also made the rest of Yorkist families swear loyalty to his new queen and through her to him. This bond was further strengthened by the birth of their children which effectively ended the Wars of Roses.²¹

It could be seen from the provided information that Henry carefully prepared the invasion of England. Which supports Machiavelli's statement that every Prince should do so prior to the battle. In addition Henry stood with his men on the battlefield and also fought for his own cause as Machiavelli dictates that every renaissance ruler should.

¹⁸Marilee Hanson, „The Road to Bosworth & Battle Of Bosworth Field,“ Englishhistory.net, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/the-road-to-bosworth-battle-of-bosworth-field>.

¹⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 60–61

²⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 5–33

²¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 18

4 FOUNDATION OF POWER

According to Machiavelli every king has to have strong and deeply rooted foundations of his power, if he is not to be overthrown by his subjects. Before conquering new lands, it is essential to either have these foundations to serve a strong claim to the throne or large amount of supporters already prepared. If these foundations do not exist at the time of invasion, it is possible to work on them later, however it takes a lot of time, energy and funds.²²

From the preceding chapters, it is apparent, that at the time of his invasion, Henry had neither clear and strong claim, nor the large support of English nobles or people. That may perhaps be a reason why since his ascension to the throne up until his death, Henry tirelessly tried to build strong foundation, not only for himself, but also for his newfound dynasty. To be more exact, Henry did so by the means of backdating the start of his reign, brokering advantageous marriage deals and using symbols of his dynasty in public places.²³

Henry's first and arguably best known act of foundation building was backdating the start of his reign. On the first Council meeting after his coronation, where all his vows of protecting the England and taking care of his subjects were taken, the date of his ascension to the throne was moved one day ahead of the battle of Bosworth Field²⁴. Thanks to this seemingly minor detail, all the nobles that stood on the side of Richard III on the day of the battle were marked as traitors to king Henry and the whole of England and could be pursued and hanged without a trial if Henry wanted to do so. This brought some of the nobles back to Henry pleading for mercy and gave him if not their appreciation, than at least their loyalty and gratitude. Those deemed by new king Henry not worthy of mercy or those still openly against his regime were hanged, beheaded or imprisoned and their confiscated lands and property given directly to Henry. He kept some of the lands and property for himself and granted the rest to his supporters who had been with him through the years in exile and to those who supported him in battle.²⁵

²² Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 36

²³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 1–9

²⁴ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 11–14

²⁵ Roger Lockyer and Andrew Thrush, *Henry VII: Seminar Studies in History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 7–10

Later in 1485 Henry continued his creation of strong foundations by marrying Elizabeth of York. Since his support from great English houses was still low, Henry needed to somehow boost it. As a descendant of a Lancastrian family, he had a support of Wales thanks to his uncle Jasper Tudor, and through his mother's marriage, Henry was supported by the Yorkist family of Stanleys. By marrying Elizabeth of York the daughter of Yorkist King Edward IV, Henry assured not only the support of Lancastrians, but also that of Yorkists.²⁶

To make his foundations even stronger, in the early years of Henry's rule, it was also important that kings from neighbouring countries acknowledged his claim and rule. King of France was glad that Henry won, since it meant that there was someone he knew and who owed him a favour, on English throne. Duke Francis of Brittany was also quick to support Henry's claim for the same reason. However, arguably the most important assurance for Henry came in the form of Papal Bull, from Pope Alexander VI, assuring him in his position as the king.²⁷

Another way that could be seen as solidifying or strengthening of power was Henry's use of symbols. Throughout his whole reign Henry used symbols to deepen his footing in the history of England. First he saw himself as a king Arthur from legends who came to rid English people of evil that was Richard III's reign. Immediately after his coronation Henry hired artists and sculptors to fill all royal and state properties with emblems of his dynasty. Thus there were soon the badges of house Beaufort the Portcullis and Henry's own red and white Tudor rose in Westminster and Richmond. All the book covers in the royal library were also repainted to show the Tudor rose.²⁸

Henry was always able to think ahead and use the power of symbols to further strengthen the foundation of power not only for himself, but also for his whole dynasty. After his son was born in 1486, Henry named him Arthur and reused the legend of King Arthur once again. Now, to symbolize his son as the king that will unite the whole of England. Arthur was a personification of the Tudor rose. From his father's side, the red rose of Lancaster and from his mother's side the white rose of York. This also deepened the loyalty of Yorkists to Henry. If Elizabeth died without children, Yorkist may have rebelled or at least conspired against Henry, but now, with Arthur, they would still have

²⁶ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 266

²⁷ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 11–14

²⁸ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 11

someone to be loyal to. More importantly, lineage assured a smooth succession in the event of Henry's death.²⁹

Henry kept Arthur close to him, teaching him, and preparing him so that Arthur could one day take his place. When Arthur was almost of age to marry, Henry started diplomatic negotiation with the king of Castile³⁰ Ferdinand concerning the marriage of their children. In order to ensure the marriage messengers were sent back and forth between England and Castile, since both kings kept arguing about the amount of the dowry for Catherine of Aragon, Ferdinand's daughter that Arthur was supposed to marry. The dowry was to be paid by her father once the marriage between Catherine and Arthur was consummated. After both kings agreed on 100000 pounds, the preparations of the ceremony could commence.³¹

The ceremony itself was another way for Henry to deepen his foundation of power and tie his dynasty even closer to the English history. As the whole ceremony took place in London. The city was cleaned and roads were covered with sand. On their way to the Westminster, the wedding procession encountered immaculately prepared entertainment. Five pageants, each grander than the last one, were prepared throughout the city, all of them celebrating either Tudor dynasty, legend of King Arthur, or the great Greek philosophers and gods. On one hand this event bettered the foundation of Henry's reign, because he was allied with Castile, one of the biggest countries of Europe, and on the other hand it entertained his subjects.³²

Henry also strengthened his reign through the marriages of his other children. After Henry's oldest daughter Margareth came of age, and after Henry suppressed the Scottish rebellion in 1497, Margareth was betrothed and later married to the Scottish king James IV. By this marriage Henry allied England and Scotland. This way Henry calmed the age old rivalries at the border with Scotland and also substantially lowered the chance of Scotland supporting any more rebellions against Henry. Interestingly the marriage did give the future Scottish kings the claim on English throne, but since it came from woman's side of the family, it did not carry as much weight as if it were from the man's side.

²⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 11–12

³⁰ Large kingdom in present time Spain.

³¹ Sean Cunningham, *Henry VII* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 41

³² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 54–66

Additionally, Henry had three more children at the time: oldest son Arthur, younger Prince Henry and the youngest daughter Mary, so the dynasty seemed secured.³³

However the illusion of strong and secured dynasty shattered, when an illness struck Henry's son Arthur in his castle in Ludlow in 1502³⁴ and subsequently he died. Arthur left behind his wife, now the widow Catherine of Aragon. Yet at that time Catherine was not with child which meant that after the dissolution of the first marriage, she could remarry. Henry immediately started negotiating with Catherine's father Ferdinand of Castile a new marriage proposal. Henry wanted to marry his son, Prince Henry to Catherine of Aragon to stay allied with Castile. This arrangement was also beneficial to Ferdinand and he agreed. The marriage with Arthur had to be first broken by Papal Decree which took some because Pope Alexander VI, who was more favourable for Henry, passed away and was succeeded by Pope Julius II, who had no connection with Henry at all.³⁵

After the decree was obtained, Prince Henry and Catherine of Aragon were betrothed. The wording of the decree left open one important question: the dowry payment. King Ferdinand of Castile³⁶ in the end agreed to pay the dowry in full, but continually postponed the payment date. Henry was quite content with waiting for the money, since the marriage could not happen before the amount was paid in full. Moreover, as long as Catherine was in England and betrothed to Prince Henry, the prize in the shape of alliance with Castile was firmly established. Henry even had his son Prince Henry break the betrothal in secrecy and started looking for a better match for him. Henry did this to further strengthen the foundations of Tudor dynasty, by allying England with someone stronger than Castile in case the marriage would not work out or Ferdinand would not pay the dowry. Since Catherine of Aragon was still in England, completely in Henry's power, he could afford to undergo this otherwise risky manoeuvre. Never announcing the broken betrothal publicly, it was easy to renew the betrothal whenever Henry wished to, or if Ferdinand did indeed pay the dowry.³⁷

Henry pursued strengthening of his power even after his wife Elizabeth of York died in 1503. He started looking for another marriage through which he would embed himself

³³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 147–148

³⁴ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 114–115

³⁵ Marilee Hanson, "The Death Of Prince Arthur 1502," *Englishhistory.net*, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/the-death-of-prince-arthur-1502>.

³⁶ Sean Cunningham, *Henry VII* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 63

³⁷ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 113–114

and his family even deeper in the centre of the European political power. He found what he was looking for in a young Hapsburg widow from Germany, but she ultimately refused him. Later, he tried to marry the widow of Phillip the king of France, but even this plan had failed. At this point, Henry started to look for another way to build up his power. After all his futile efforts, Henry finally negotiated the marriage which would put the Tudor dynasty at the very peak of the Europe's power politics. The marriage of his youngest daughter Mary to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles.³⁸

To secure the country against revolts and to keep the strong foundations, the castles throughout the country must be in trustworthy hands. During his reign, Henry strived to keep as many English castles as possible under control of nobles loyal to him. In the early days of his rule, there were not enough loyal nobles on his side to keep all of the English castles occupied³⁹. Also it would be unwise and oftentimes impossible to depose some of the current castle rulers of their property. For that reason Henry decided to use a different strategy. Owners of the castles whose loyalties were in question were forced to take bonds which had to be paid if they were convicted of disloyalty. By doing so, Henry ensured loyalty among a wide range of his subjects, thus strengthening his reign even further.⁴⁰

Machiavelli argues that if a ruler is starting without the foundations of his power already in place, the possibility of holding on to the power gained is slim. In this chapter we could see that Henry devoted much of his lifetime to creating foundations of power that granted him a long and somewhat peaceful reign. Henry's strategic actions moreover assured the continuation of his dynasty with equally powerful momentum. This way it could be argued that Henry did in fact fulfil this Machiavellian requirement of a renaissance ruler.

³⁸ Lockyer Roger, and Andrew Thrush, *Henry VII: Seminar Studies in History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 83–84

³⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 155–170

⁴⁰ H. M. Colvin, "Castles and Government in Tudor England." *The English Historical Review* 83, no. 327 (April 1968), 225–234.

5 USE OF ARMY

Another aspect of a renaissance ruler that Machiavelli points out and that is worth exploring in this chapter is king's capability to use his army. Machiavelli argues that there are only three kinds of armed forces: auxiliaries, mercenaries and an army drafted from the subjects of the king that rules them. However only one of these is reliable enough to be used for a long period of time.⁴¹

First of these forces are auxiliaries which are units of soldiers, that serve the king of their nation. He pays them and they are borrowed to the new aspiring ruler to help him secure his claim. There are some flaws with auxiliaries that were clear not only to Machiavelli, but also to Henry. Since auxiliaries are paid by their king, in this case for example the king of France, and are made by him to fight for a stranger, Henry. They will never fight as hard as if they fought for their own country and their own king. More importantly, auxiliaries are loyal to the king who pays them⁴² and follow mainly his commands. For that reason, it can happen that after winning a battle for Henry, the king of France may have some conditions under which he will agree to leave the new territory in Henry's hands. Otherwise the owner of auxiliaries can decide to keep the conquered lands for himself altogether. Such turn of events would be possible due to the fact that the land would be under the direct control of King of France's troops. This would also mean that there would be nothing that Henry could do, but to agree with any terms given to him, whether he liked them or not.⁴³

Since Henry knew about the possibility of this event happening⁴⁴, he never asked his patrons, Duke Francis of Brittany and King Charles VII of France, to grant him an army of auxiliaries. Henry only asked for ships to deliver him and his men across the sea to the British Isles, for money with which he bought equipment needed, and which also enabled him to hire close to 2000 mercenaries. These mercenaries were all French soldiers who had nothing to do and no money to make in their own country, because France was not involved in any wars around the year 1485. French king was happy to provide Henry with the money to hire soldiers, for several reasons. One of them was that unoccupied soldiers in the peace time only cause problems inside the country. Another benefit for the French

⁴¹ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 59–69

⁴² *The king of France*

⁴³ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 69

⁴⁴ This event was used only for illustration of a point and never happened to Henry VII.

king was that for the duration of the invasion, he did not have to pay for their upkeep, and if the money that he gave Henry ran out and if Henry had no other way to pay the soldiers by that time, they would simply sail back to France leaving Henry⁴⁵ to his faith. Thus it is apparent that this undertaking posed no risk at all for the French king who happily supported Henry's cause.⁴⁶

Mercenaries are also not the ideal form of army to retain. Even if mercenaries are marginally better option than auxiliaries, they are paid by the person that hired them. This way, their loyalty to Henry was stronger than if they were auxiliaries, but there are still ways in which mercenaries can cause more trouble than they solve. This is due to the fact that mercenaries are mostly of different nationality than the noble who hired them. Luckily, in Henry's case the nationality did not play such a big role, since all his mercenaries were French and Henry spoke French perfectly, because he learned the language during his fourteen years of exile in Brittany and France. After such a long time, he knew the customs and mentality of French people and what is more important, he was well known by a powerful Frenchmen at court. These facts ensured that the mercenaries would obey Henry as though they were his own.⁴⁷

Another thing that undermines the usefulness of mercenaries is, that since they fight for money of their hirer, they lack the resolve of the armed forces loyal⁴⁸ to the king and not to the money. If the leader of the mercenaries is bad, it can assure the loss in battle because for mercenaries, their lives will always be more important than the ideas that they are supposed to fight for.⁴⁹

Other extreme can occur, if the leader of the mercenaries is a capable man. On one hand, it can assure the victory, but on the other, it can bring back the problems that occur with auxiliaries: the new king can find himself under the power of his own mercenaries and their leader who can decide to keep the lands for himself. This Henry VII also knew, but he had no other option but to hire mercenaries. To prevent this from happening, Henry devised a clever plan. Since there were also around 400 of Englishmen on his side, Henry

⁴⁵ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 4–9

⁴⁶ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 265–266;

⁴⁷ Niccolò Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 60–61

⁴⁸ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 3–11

⁴⁹ Niccolò Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 60

made some of them captains of the mercenary units in order to have the information and governance over all of his men including mercenaries, at all times.⁵⁰

After the battle of Bosworth Field on 22 August 1485, Henry knew that he could not rely on the mercenaries to keep the peace and protect the civilians. As soon as his subjects swore fealty to him, Henry released all of his French mercenaries⁵¹ and through his trusted councillor Richard Bray, hired 300 yeomen who became Henry's personal army. These soldiers were all personally kept and paid for by Henry, which made them the most reliable source of armed forces. Henry never kept more than these 300. If there was a need for a larger force either to attack another country or to defend England, Council would meet in Westminster and all the nobles would be expected to call their retainers and join their forces with the king. At that time and all the nobles kept their own soldiers according to their wealth and quota provided by the king. This enabled Henry to get rid of the mercenaries and keep the peace in kingdom through the Power of nobles and their units.⁵²

With respect to the use of armed forces, Machiavelli⁵³ advises against the use of auxiliaries since wise renaissance ruler should never trust the king that provides them. Thus it could be stated that by not using auxiliaries, Henry proves to be such a ruler. It is important to point out that Machiavelli also recommends that mercenaries not be used by a renaissance ruler. However it could be argued that Henry only used forces comprised of mercenaries at the beginning of his reign, when there was no other choice of acquiring other types of armed forces. This chapter also attempts to demonstrate that after Henry surrounds himself with allies and establishes his rule, he immediately creates an army that is directly under his rule, paid by him and consists of a loyal Englishmen. By doing so, Henry begins to use the only kind of armed force that Machiavelli approved of in "The Prince", which further supports the claim that Henry was in fact a renaissance ruler.

⁵⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 9–10

⁵¹ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 269–271

⁵² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 5–10

⁵³ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 61

6 REPUTATION AMONG SUBJECTS

Arguably the most widely known idea contained in the book *The Prince* is that, as a renaissance ruler, it is much better to be feared than it is to be loved. However this is a simplified conclusion of that part of the book. Machiavelli initially states that every ruler should strive to be good towards his subjects and to be loved by them.⁵⁴ But he also points out that no prince and not even a king can be unconditionally good. There are times in a reign of any ruler when he cannot be good and when his subjects may not be forgiven. At these times, Machiavelli implies, it is a paramount for the ruler to exact a punishment of such a magnitude that would not give the punished person even a smallest hope of revenge. The only thing that prince should be scared of is the open rebellion of his subjects against him and their hatred towards him. Since the hatred is often the first step towards rebellion, ruler must therefore keep the subjects content as much as possible by any means necessary. In the light of these facts, Henry's reputation among his subjects is to be explored in this part of the thesis.⁵⁵

Henry is often described as a stern and unforgiving ruler with the love for nothing else but power and money. Although Henry overthrew Richard III who was hated by many nobles for murdering the princes in the Tower and usurping the throne,⁵⁶ Henry is not remembered as a heroic conqueror that saved England from the tyrant. What is more he is hardly remembered at all. This may prove that Henry could not have been hated by his nobles or by his subjects because if people hate someone, they usually tend to go out of their way to let as many other people as possible know about their hatred. Henry is in fact the least written about king in English history from 1066 to the present day.⁵⁷ The lack of material thus does not seem to show that Henry was hated. More than anything else, it indicates that he was feared.⁵⁸

Henry's subjects had a good reason to fear him. Interestingly, it was not the lowborn ones, but the nobles of his reign that feared him the most. Even in the first days of his reign, Henry showed, his nobles that he would always find a way to subdue them. Henry's

⁵⁴ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 50

⁵⁵ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 80–82

⁵⁶ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 265–266

⁵⁷ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), xix–xx

⁵⁸ Marilee Hanson, "Henry VII Tudor as King Of England" *Englishhistory.net*, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/Henry-vii-tudor-as-king-of-england>.

subjects could do nothing but obey, since all of the methods of subjugation were, if not directly derived from, then at least in accordance with the English laws of that time.⁵⁹

To help with finding or creating such methods, Henry used intelligent councillors that were loyal to his regime. Such people were greatly rewarded by Henry for their aid. One of these people was Richard Bray who was with Henry throughout his exile in Brittany and France and through the battle of Bosworth Field. During his life Bray acquired so many responsibilities, that after his death, he had to be replaced by two people, Edmund Dudley and Richard Empson.⁶⁰

These and several other councillors helped Henry to rule England in a way where his subjects feared him, but did not hate him. But the true genius of Henry's rule is that even if all the subjects hated Henry, they were too scared of him to start a rebellion. Henry achieved this with the help of bonds.⁶¹

Bonds were used even before Henry's rule by kings to assure the loyalty of the subjects and occasionally to financially destroy these subjects while at the same time to make money for the crown. Yet it is the sheer amount of bonds that were issued in Henry's time that makes this practice so successful. All the nobles that stood on the side of Richard III and subsequently being charged with treason after the battle of Bosworth, were forced to enter into the contract with Henry that specified the amount of the bond. This assured their loyalty, since the bond could be called to be paid at any time and for the simplest of reasons.⁶²

Another way in which Henry assured the loyalty and gratitude of his subjects were patronages and gifts. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli writes that if the ruler is given a control of the country by his friends or by subjects themselves, he is in a terrible position⁶³. The ruler is condemned to always favour the people that gave him the power, since the same people, if not happy with the new ruler, can easily rebel against him.⁶⁴

Henry turned this concept around and gave freely the property to his nobles, which gave him greater power over the nobles. After Bosworth there was a lot of land and properties left without owners or heirs who fell in the battle. Such unoccupied property

⁵⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 11–12

⁶⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 34, 55, 129

⁶¹ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 273

⁶² John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 273

⁶³ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 35

⁶⁴ Roger Lockyer and Andrew Thrush, *Henry VII: Seminar Studies in History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 18–21

rightfully fell into the ownership of Henry. After he gave away titles and land to the people that supported him in exile and during the invasion, Henry was still left with a substantial amount of English lands. Henry proceeded to give away lands and property to the people he deemed capable and loyal to his regime. People honoured, by this action came from all the levels of English society and, interestingly, in some times not even English.⁶⁵ Once Henry gave away an English title and lands to an Italian cardinal in exchange for a council with the Pope. All of the new land owners had to enter into the bond contract with Henry, ranging from 100 pounds to 10000 pounds. This ensured that not only could Henry take the given land back at any time he wanted, but he could also demand the bond to be paid if there was even a rumour of disloyalty. Henry would also advise all of his nobles to enter into new bond contracts with him, by which they would prove how loyal they were to Henry who may have otherwise questioned their loyalty at the time.⁶⁶

To make this agenda work properly and also to keep himself perfectly informed about the events that were happening within and without the borders of England, Henry also needed a spy network. This was provided by already mentioned Richard Bray. The network was so effective that when the Italian diplomats came to England to talk with Henry about his support of Venice, not only did he know that they were coming and for what reason, Henry also knew them and talked with them like with old friends. Henry also knew about the most recent events from Venice that is thousands of miles away⁶⁷. The spy network thus worked perfectly only Bray and Henry himself knew precisely who was a member of the spy network. Bray knew the members because he had hired them and Henry because he oversaw and signed every pound that was paid to them.⁶⁸

Moreover, such clever network of spies ensured that no noble had the courage to share their rebellious ideas, provided that they had any at all. This was possible mainly due to the fact that the nobles could not be sure if their court or the court of their friends was infiltrated, or if the friends themselves were spies of Henry's.⁶⁹

Henry came up with a clever way of finding and recruiting new spies for his cause. During 1502 Henry appointed Sir John Wilshire as a chief financial officer in Calais.

⁶⁵ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 273

⁶⁶ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 10–13

⁶⁷ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 77–78

⁶⁸ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 15–17

⁶⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 77–78

He was to control the finances of Calais since it retained around 500 men and was in a constant need of repairs which drew money from king's treasury. Wilshire was to create his own account book and together with the official accounts of Calais send it to the king. This way any theft could be discovered almost immediately. But Wilshire had another secret duty: he was to serve as an informer and information gatherer for Henry's spy network. Wilshire was appointed to hire more spies and pay them in the name of the king. This serves as an example of the spread of the spy network and that nobody could be saved from its ears.⁷⁰

Yet the spread and fear of the spy network had its drawbacks. In 1504 (also in Calais), there was a meeting held by five people: Richard Nanfan, his son, Sampson Norton, Sir Hugh Conway and John Flamank. Nanfan made his son and his son-in-law Flamank swear on the bible that they would tell nobody anything of what was to be spoken about during the meeting. Then they proceeded to share information on a supposed attempt on Nanfan's life and how they believe that it is all masterminded by lord Daubeny. Lord Daubeny was the head of Calais port at the time, but had been gone to England for some time. The Five men suspected that greater part of Calais forces was loyal not to the king, but directly to Daubeny and more importantly, in their mind, it looked like Daubeny is positioning himself to be in power after the king dies. However all five men quickly agreed that it is all just an improbable speculation, since lord Daubeny was one of the king's oldest and most trusted allies. But since none of the five men had any evidence against Daubeny, they decided against informing the king, because false accusation could make the king question their loyalty.⁷¹

That shows that on one hand people were scared of conspiring against king because they could be discovered, but on the other hand they were also scared to report the supposed conspiracies, because if the conspiracies proved false, they themselves would be under the close inspection of the spies and the king.

As it was previously mentioned, the king should strive to be loved. Henry did so by sharing his profits with people who helped him achieve these riches. Henry also gave away lands to keep the nobles happy and grateful. By installing these loyal nobles in the areas whose previous owner was either attained or otherwise dispossessed, Henry avoided discontent of subjects and local unrest. Also through these local lords the peace and king's

⁷⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 88–89

⁷¹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 139

law were kept. These actions further calmed Henry's subjects and consequently strengthened Henry's rule even more.⁷²

To further explore Machiavellian renaissance ruler, it is worth mentioning that the public image of the king should be based on the things and deeds that are completely under his control, because that way he can shape the image as he pleases. To instil fear or love is thus one of the decisions that ruler has to make. While being loved by his subjects may seem beneficial to the king, in many ways it is, in fact, not. This may be due to the fact that it is much easier to betray the man you love and beg him for forgiveness later, than it is to betray the ruler you fear and know that there will be severe consequences. As Machiavelli states: "Men love on their own accord and fear on accord of the Prince⁷³." Henry knew this perfectly well which is why he chose to build his reign on fear rather than on love from his subjects.⁷⁴

Henry ruled in true Machiavellian fashion, striking fear into the minds of his nobles and subjects alike. As this chapter tried to illustrate, Henry was not loved, even though, he rid England of Richard III and ended Wars of Roses. Henry was not hated either, even though he kept suspecting his subjects and nobles of treason that most of the time, was not happening. Henry through bonds, kept his subject so afraid that they never even thought to rebel against him. And if they did indeed think of it, they were not daring enough to discuss it with anybody, because of the spy network that Henry had created. In this sense, Henry's way of governing the land could be seen as purely Machiavellian and thus can Henry be described as a renaissance ruler.

⁷² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 139

⁷³ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 82

⁷⁴ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 71, 74, 77–78

7 COUNCILORS AND INFORMATION

Apart from loyalty of his subjects, a renaissance ruler's reign rests in his ability to form an effective council. Machiavelli states that: "The first opinion which one forms of a Prince, is by observing the men he has around him⁷⁵." On one hand, every ruler is judged by his subjects who come to contact with the councillors more often than with the king himself. On the other hand he will be judged by other kings and their envoys on the basis of that ruler's decisions. That is why Machiavelli suggests that an intelligent ruler should create a small court of wise men who are free to speak their mind and share their advice with the king without the fear of being harmed by him. There is nothing more devastating to the health of a kingdom than councillors withholding vital information from the king for fear of their own lives. Also no ruler should take any advice at its face value, as it is important to either question all the information, to combine the information of several people or to decide against the will and wisdom of the council altogether. A renaissance ruler must therefore make his own decisions and not just blindly trust his council. Moreover ruler must never be seen by his subjects as a puppet of other man otherwise his trustworthiness and that of his kingdom, would diminish significantly in the eyes of the subjects.⁷⁶

The acquisition of the post of king's councillor should depend on ones abilities and not on the friendship or birth right. This is also why when a king secures loyal men for his council, he has to treat them with respect and let them have part of the wealth and fame that they have helped to create. A good councillor is only the one who puts the affairs and wealth of his king at the first place, before his own ambitions.⁷⁷

Henry was clever enough to find several men of such qualities during his reign. He trusted them and listened to the advice that they had for him. At the end of every debate the final decision was made by Henry, and him alone. Henry was never even rumoured to be controlled by someone else, unlike his son Henry VIII who was under the complete influence of his council. No decision was passed without Henry. Not even when he lay ill on the brink of death in bed for several weeks at a time. And none of his close councillors ever tried to take the power from him.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 109

⁷⁶ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 111

⁷⁷ Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 109–110

⁷⁸ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 34–35, 314–315

Because of the decisive victory at Bosworth Field, Henry did not have to favour any factions within his kingdom to keep opposing factions at bay. From the beginning of his reign this turn of events allowed Henry, to appoint his close councillors into the roles of ministers, not because someone in the council told him to do so, but because he wanted to do so.⁷⁹ During the reign of Henry, all the ministers were personally appointed to their posts by king himself. These people were given the power purely because of their great ability and intellect in their fields of expertise. Furthermore, it did not matter what birth right the person had or which people he was involved with in his life. During Henry's reign, acquiring the post of a minister depended solely on one's ability and willingness to put the king's business before one's own.⁸⁰

Probably the best known ministers and councillors that the king appointed were Richard Fox, Raymond Bray, Edmund Dudley and Richard Empson some of which were briefly mentioned in the previous chapters. All of these people were vital for helping Henry to rule England, however most of them held only minor titles in their name. Raymond Bray, probably the most powerful man after the king himself, only held a title of chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. After his death in 1503, this title was given to Richard Empson. Another minor title of "minister of the Council" was held by Edmund Dudley. Interestingly, this title meant that Dudley was a minister, but without a ministry under his control.⁸¹

Hidden behind these virtually meaningless titles to hide their actual influence all of the men except for Richard Fox⁸² were members of the council-learned-in-law. The force that ruled the nobles of England and that was keeping a rigid eye on abiding the laws of England in Henry's name. Irrespective of their stature those who broke the law, were tried and usually fined in the name of the king.⁸³

Even though the king was the head of the council learned in law, he rarely attended any of its meetings or trials. Such seemingly irresponsible behaviour was possible due to the fact that Henry felt confident enough that he had picked the right people, who were

⁷⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 34–35, 314–315

⁸⁰ Marilee Hanson, "The Road to Bosworth & Battle Of Bosworth Field," Englishhistory.net, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016 <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/the-road-to-bosworth-battle-of-bosworth-field>

⁸¹ Roger Lockyer and Andrew Thrush, *Henry VII: Seminar Studies in History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 24–33

⁸² John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 268–269

⁸³ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 269

utterly loyal to him. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, these five men proved to be essential elements of Henry's rule, therefore the following section attempts to shed more light on their influence and decisions they made during Henry's reign.⁸⁴

7.1 Raymond Bray

Raymond Bray was one of the most important people in England during the reign of Henry. Bray and Henry knew each other since Henry was 11. Bray's father was a steward in the service to Henry's mother and he introduced his son Raymond to Henry in Raglan castle where Henry was under the watchful eye of Herbert. During Henry's exile, Bray worked for Lady Beaufort in England. Right after the successful invasion, Bray started working directly for Henry. As Henry soon learned, Bray was a financial genius. That is why Henry took Bray into his personal service and let him take care of the county of Lancaster that belonged directly to Henry.

Bray never exceeded his original post, at least not officially. Until his death he kept his post as the chancellor of the County of Lancaster however his effective work soon catapulted Bray to the very peaks of political power in England.⁸⁵ And what is more, Bray is speculated to be the only person that could openly argue with the king. Raymond Bray stood at the birth of the financial system of the Tudor dynasty. Most of this system was taken directly from Henry's predecessors. Bray only streamlined it to near perfection. Making money for Henry also made Bray, a rich person and an extremely influential one. As one claimant for king's favours put it, right after the king himself and the prince, Bray was on the ladder of important people that deserved loyalty. This gave Bray huge amount of power over the people of England. He rented parts of estates, arranged lucrative marriages among the nobles, arranged the wardships of young lords and bought the lands and estates of bankrupted nobles at low price.⁸⁶

Right after the tragic death of Prince Arthur in 1502, Bray created a list of important deeds that he needed to do. Some of those activities were to keep a closer look on the accounts of King's estates that had been somewhat neglected over the past years and to create a new last will of the king in the case of his untimely death. From just these two

⁸⁴ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 150–152

⁸⁵ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 148–150

⁸⁶ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 34–35; Arthur Percival Newton, "The King's Chamber under the Early Tudors." *The English Historical Review* 32, no 127, (July 1917), 348 – 372; Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 148–150

points of the list, it is clearly visible how much of Henry's trust and unofficial power in the realm Bray actually had. It was trust that was well placed, since Bray never tried to betray the king. Such quality is observable in all of Henry's closest advisors, which only underscores the loyalty and devotion that the council felt towards heir king.⁸⁷

7.2 Edmund Dudley

Dudley was a part of a noble family but he was too far down the ancestry line to benefit from his family name. He was a lawyer based in the city of London. Through the use of his knowledge of law and his friends and various other connections, Dudley was able to secure for himself a post of London's undersheriff. It was a prestigious post that would later help Dudley to get into the king's service. The secret weapon of Dudley's was that Raymond Bray was a friend of Dudley's family, and as soon as Bray and consequently Henry noticed Dudley, they decided that thanks to his knowledge of London customs, he could become a valuable asset.⁸⁸

Dudley left his post in the city and entered into the service of Bray. Who was grooming Dudley to become his successor. Dudley's interest in Italian bankers also quickly proved to be beneficial not only to Dudley, but mainly to Henry. Dudley along with Della Fava, who will play an important role in chapter 8, helped to orchestrate majority of the illegal alum trades. The greatest help was Dudley's knowledge of London import taxes on goods. After the death of Bray, together with Empson, Dudley took his place in managing the bonds. But unlike Bray who was fair and he delivered a service for every bribe provided, Dudley and Empson were ruthless⁸⁹. Their character could be illustrated on the case of Thomas Sunyff⁹⁰.

Thomas Sunyff was a London draper that was well known among the London citizens. In 1507 Empson and Dudley created a rumour that Sunyff killed a baby. This rumour, although not true, was enough evidence for council-learned-in-law to claim that the contract of the bond that Sunyff accepted was broken and he has to pay the full amount of 500 pounds. However, Sunyff knew that the rumour was false and refused to pay even after Empson and Dudley had him throw into a jail. After 6 months, Sunyff confessed and

⁸⁷ Marilee Hanson, "The Death Of Prince Arthur 1502," Englishhistory.net, March 3, 2016, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/the-death-of-prince-arthur-1502>

⁸⁸ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 159

⁸⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 159

⁹⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 275

paid 600 pounds to be released from the prison. All of the money was collected by Dudley and given to the royal treasury.⁹¹

7.3 Richard Empson.

Empson was attorney general of the duchy of Lancaster under the king Edward IV which meant that after Richard III's rise to power he lost his post. After Bosworth, however, anybody not liked by Richard III was welcomed by Henry and his administration and Empson was thus immediately reinstated into his former post⁹². Empson worked directly for Bray so he was able to utilize his position. Bray quickly noticed Empson's drive and made him his right hand man. Empson was later described to act more like a duke than the lowborn he in fact was.⁹³

During his work under Bray, Empson looked for any opportunity to enrich himself. That is best illustrated by the case of Sir Robert Plumpton. Empson wanted to disown Plumpton's lands and give them to Plumpton's daughter that he intended to marry later. Plumpton lost the first case and fell into a huge debt. With the help of Richard Fox at the second hearing, Plumpton was able to win the case and retain his estates. Even though Empson ultimately lost the case, it speaks volumes about his drive for power and wealth. But as with every close councillor to the king, even Empson and Dudley always worked in the first place for the king and in the second place for themselves.⁹⁴

7.4 Richard Fox.

Henry met Fox during his exile in France. The two men met while Fox was visiting the Paris University. Henry and Fox became close friends from that moment and Fox became one of the most loyal and trusted councillors of Henry. After Henry started his rule, he made Fox his diplomat and gave him the title of bishop of Exeter, later the Bishop of Durham and later still bishop of Winchester. The diplomatic genius of Fox was unparalleled. He was instrumental in the talks between Henry and Ferdinand preceding the wedding of Arthur and Catherine. He also drew the plans for the wedding itself. Fox also secured "the treaty of perpetual peace" in 1507, which promised, among other things, the

⁹¹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 276

⁹² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 276

⁹³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 153–155

⁹⁴ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 153–155

future marriage of Charles of Castile (the future Holy Roman Emperor) to Henry's youngest daughter Mary.⁹⁵

Fox continued to be devoted to Henry even after Henry died in 1509. Together with several other witnesses, he decided to keep Henry's death a secret for two days, in order to position the loyal troops in place to arrest Empson and Dudley who were seen as a threat to the succession. Due to the fact that they were believed to plan to make Prince Henry imprison other councillors and then rule through him. Fox and his loyalist prevented this from happening, and succeeded the throne peacefully to Henry VIII.⁹⁶

This manoeuvre was also significant because there was a certain level of discontent among the subjects at the end of Henry's rule. Which was a consequence of Henry's prolonged ruling through the means of fear. Fox understood that in order to succeed in peaceful succession, the regime needed to change along with the king. Since Henry VIII was seen as a benevolent ruler and Empson and Dudley were the most prominent names during the end of Henry's rule, they could not be seen with the new king Henry VIII. Fox used them as scape goats to throw all of the problems of Henry's administration on them, which worked precisely as planned. Clearly, Fox was the most loyal of Henry's administrations and continued to work for his son until his own death.⁹⁷

From the description of these more prominent of Henry's councillors it is self-evident that Henry was a great judge of character and was able to pick the most talented and most loyal people for the right task. None of the closest councillors ever tried to betray him or joined rebellion against him. They put Henry's affairs in the first place and their own desires in the second. For their service they were richly rewarded in the Machiavellian fashion that means receiving part of any wealth that they helped to earn for the king. Moreover as could be earlier seen in Machiavelli's statement, the final decision of a renaissance ruler ought to always be a combination of wise advice of councillors and ruler's own ideas⁹⁸, which was definitely true for Henry and his council of the five men. This behaviour shows other renaissance qualities in Henry's reign.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 21, 34

⁹⁶ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 48–50, 341–345

⁹⁷ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 273–275

⁹⁸ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 109–110

⁹⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 34–35, 314–315

8 FINANCING OF A DYNASTY

To keep peace and face enemy, states Machiavelli, is possible either by commanding great force of men utterly devoted to the leader and his cause, or by commanding extreme wealth¹⁰⁰. In the beginning of his reign Henry did not have plenty of wealth and due to this fact he neither commanded great force of devoted men. Almost everything he owned came from his patrons, first duke Francis of Brittany and later from French king Charles VII. But Henry had a talent to amass money. As John Guy puts in his book: “Henry was the best businessman to sit on the English throne¹⁰¹.” Henry did not earn such reputation by stealing from the people per say, but by rigidly following all the laws already in place. This chapter explores some of the ways that helped Henry acquire his wealth as well as the means by which he did so.¹⁰²

Henry received the initial finances of his reign mainly after backdating his coronation and depositing of lands and property of those who committed treason.¹⁰³ Another way for a king to make money is usually to implement war taxes, however, except for one instance in 1492, Henry never used war taxes to fund his rule. In that scenario in 1492, Henry was invading France to claim the right of English kings on French throne. Council was called to meet, nobles were to amass their soldiers and Council issued a war tax to pay for the undertaking. Several battles into the war in France and the French king came up with a proposition of paying Henry 50 000 pounds for stopping the war and leaving France¹⁰⁴. Henry accepted but continued to receive war tax for several months.¹⁰⁵

Some of the biggest incomes to the royal treasury under Henry’s rule were from fines and attainders. Fined could be anybody who was found guilty by law of any crime. For example in 1507 lord Begraveny was found guilty of retaining too many armed men. He was fined by King’s Bench to pay fine of 5 pounds for every man for every month that he was convicted of illegally retaining them. In total the amount came to be 70 650 pounds for 471 men retained. Lord Begraveny decided to plead guilty since if he did not, the amount

¹⁰⁰ B. P. Wolffe, “Henry VII’s Land Revenues and Chamber Finance.” *The English Historical Review* 79, no. 311 (April 1964): 225 – 254.

¹⁰¹ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 268–269

¹⁰² Niccolo Machivelli, *The Prince* (Ballingslöv: Wisehouse Classics Edition, 2015), 53

¹⁰³ Roger Lockyer and Andrew Thrush, *Henry VII: Seminar Studies in History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 7–10

¹⁰⁴ John M. Currin, “To Play at Peace: Henry VII, War against France, and the Chierigato-Flores Mediation of 1490.” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 31, no. 2 (Summer 199): 207 – 237.

¹⁰⁵ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 266–267

could be even higher, because the time of the prolonged case would be counted into the time of the retaining of the soldiers and would have to be paid as well.¹⁰⁶

The attainder was a parliamentary statute, where accused was immediately found guilty of all his crimes and his whole family bloodline deemed tainted. Such a person did not have the right to appeal to court and all his lands and property were confiscated by crown. (Sometimes not all the lands were confiscated). However to use attainders properly, they must be reversed in the name of the heir of the lands and titles. If they are not reversed it could sow discontent in the minds of the heirs, or worse still, the dispossessed lands could be left without any owner to upkeep the law in the region and help spread rebellion. During the reign of Henry 138 attainders were issued and only 46 reversed in his lifetime. After Henry's death, further 6 attainders were reversed by his son Henry VIII.¹⁰⁷

Another significant way of making money for Henry was by the means of alum trade.¹⁰⁸ In the year 1462 a large deposit of alum was discovered in Tolfa, Italy. This mine was the only alum mine in Europe at that time and it was owned by the Pope. However, there were other means of acquiring the alum mineral, so vital for the textile industry in Europe. In the Middle Eastern countries there were many alum mines which drove the price of alum down drastically. However Pope issued an edict banning any resident of Christendom to trade alum originating in any other mine than Tolfa,¹⁰⁹ in order to keep the price of alum high and fund the crusade, from the financial sources acquired this way. To assure the obedience, anyone discovered trading alum from Middle East could be excommunicated or condemned. At the same time the Pope cut the supply of alum down which caused its price to skyrocket and some textile businesses to go bankrupt. Since a lot of English income depended on the export of textile to Europe for further manufacturing, this was a bad turn of events for the English economy.¹¹⁰

Smuggling of the alum from Middle East was a lucrative business and Henry, seeking to secure enough wealth for himself,¹¹¹ could not resist being involved in the smuggling, once he learned about its existence. First record of Henry's involvement in alum trade

¹⁰⁶ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 271–272

¹⁰⁷ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 272

¹⁰⁸ Alum is a mineral that was in the Middle Ages used in the textile industry. It was used to fix colour into the fabric. Without it the colour of the fabric would gradually fade by constant washing

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 201–204

¹¹⁰ Peter Ramsey, "Overseas Trade in the Reign of Henry VII: The Evidence of Customs Accounts." *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 2 (1953), 173–183.

¹¹¹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 201–204

comes from February 1486. Giovanni Ambrogio da Negroni, an Italian merchant residing in England at that time, received the information about an illegal shipment of alum being transported on a Spanish ship into France. He quickly acted upon this information, recruited a ship with a crew of English sailors and took the Spanish ship by force. After the ship was brought to the English port, Negroni claimed the cargo belongs to the church and the Pope. On Henry's behalf a merchant from Florence protested that in England there are no laws against the otherwise illegal alum trade, and that Negroni himself, by acting without king's permission had done an illegal deed, since England was at the time allied with Spanish kingdom of Castile. Both merchants were taken to court and the case had an international interest. Pope himself had an interest in the case, because if Negroni had won the Pope would get the shipment of alum, and send an appeal to Henry. Henry wrote back to the Pope, that he would love to do something to alter the verdict of the court that the shipment was not illegal and does not belong to the Pope, but he cannot act against the laws of England, which do not prohibit free trade of alum. Henry could not do so for several reasons, but mainly because of his extremely short reign at the time, meaning that, he did not yet possess enough influence over the matters of court. Florentine merchant ultimately won the case against Negroni and the alum was sold to the European textile businesses, with part of the profit belonging to Henry.¹¹²

From that day forward, Henry was active in the alum trade from Middle East, by Pope's Decree otherwise illegalised. Even though Henry bought a large quantity of Pope's alum from the legal mine in Tolfa,¹¹³ he did so only to mask his illegal activities. By 1503 the old Pope Alexander VI died and was succeeded by Julius II, whom Henry did not know. In the face of his new ascension, Henry VII assured Julius II of his good intentions considering the alum trade, and also provided Pope with some donations. In the background, however, Henry's alum activities continued undisturbed.¹¹⁴

After being voted into his post Pope Julius II immediately lowered the supply of alum from Tolfa even more, which consequently led to the raise of alum prices. This in turn caused discontent in the large textile manufacturing centres in Europe. This made Philip king of France and Maximilian the Holy Roman Emperor fear that this discontent could become something worse, maybe even open rebellion and, obviously, they wanted to

¹¹² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 202

¹¹³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 203

¹¹⁴ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 201, 204

somehow solve the whole situation. But since Holy roman emperor could not be seen breaking the Pape's Decree and Phillip was not ready to do it either, they needed someone else to smuggle the alum to Europe and its textile centres in France and Germany.¹¹⁵

Philip and Maximilian therefore chose Frescobaldi bank to handle trading since it had a post in England where the origin of alum could be conveniently changed because of Henry's aforementioned legal purchases. In 1504 Lodovico della Fava, head of the English branch of Frescobaldi bank and a personal broker to Henry VII, Came to Henry with a proposition. Henry was to provide Frescobaldi bank with money to buy alum from mines in the Middle East and also with ships to deliver the alum to England. Henry seeing the possibility of profit gave Frescobaldi several ships among which were even two of his own, carracks Sovereign, and Regent that subsequently helped with the trade.¹¹⁶

All future profits that Henry made on alum were extracted in the form of customs and taxes. Henry received little over 13 sovereigns¹¹⁷ per every quintal¹¹⁸ of alum imported which at that time was a substantial sum of money. Depending on the amount of storage space in the ships, one shipment could bring from 8000 pounds to 15000 pounds to the kings personal treasury. Imported alum was then sold through Della Fava to the rest of the European countries, and even with imposed duties the price of alum was still lower than that from Tolfa mines.¹¹⁹

In the year 1506 Pope Julius II issued one of the most aggressive campaigns again the illegal alum trade in order to fund another crusade, funds for which came, in most part, from legal alum trade. He printed the letters that warned all the merchants against the illegal form of alum trade, under the pain of excommunication and anathema. In the letters were announced several names of traders believed to be involved in the illegal trade and advised not to be traded with. One of the names was Nicolas Waring, a member of a crew on Henry's ship Sovereign and another name was Lodovico della Fava, Henry's broker. Now informed about Henry's illegal alum activities, the Pope even sent his advisor Pietro

¹¹⁵ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 201, 204

¹¹⁶ C. S. Goldingham, "The Navy under Henry VII." *The English Historical Review* 33, no. 132 (October 1918), 472 – 488.

¹¹⁷ British gold coins introduced by Henry VII.

¹¹⁸ A hundred pounds of cargo.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 201–204, 251–252

Griffo to try and make Henry stop his illegal trading. However all of Pope's attempts proved to be futile.¹²⁰

On the 11th November 1506 Della Fava and Henry brokered a new deal, purpose of which was the import of 7000 quintals of alum from the Middle East. When the Pope found out about the deal, he sent a letter to Pietro Griffo and ordered him return to Rome from England and on his way to fix one of Popes letters that Griffo had in every public place in England that Griffo will pass through. What Julius II did not know was that in the meantime, Henry managed to get Griffo on his side, which is apparent from the account book where Griffo is recorded to give Henry's treasurer 434 pounds for illegal alum trade brokered by Della Fava himself. It is impossible to count how much Henry earned thanks to the alum trade, but apparently it must have been plenty of money because he was for example able to pay 108000 pounds out of his personal treasury to the king of France for extraditing a rebel leader to England.

It is apparent that illegal alum trade not only helped Henry fund his reign, but it also gave him much greater control of alum trade and subsequently the whole textile industry in England. Since English manufacturers had no other option but to buy Henry's cheaper alum since they could not afford the expensive alum from Tolfa.¹²¹

By rigidly studying the laws of England there was yet another way for Henry to make a profit. In order for this to work, council-learned-in-law was first created and Raymond Bray was put into work as one of its first members. The main reason for council to exist was to examine all the court cases and try and gain any amount of money for the king from the convicted subjects. This way Henry earned a small amount of money from each of the convicted subjects, further filling his royal treasury with money he needed. The council-learned-in-law¹²² was never officially legalized and operated outside of the usual English Court of law. (The summons to appear in front of council-learned could be delivered by any means and in the summons it was not stated, what is the convicted person accused of. Also the council-learned had no permanent seat of power and so it could commence as soon as there were several member in the same area)¹²³. For these very reasons it was the

¹²⁰ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 203

¹²¹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 204

¹²² Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 204

¹²³ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 150–152

most terrifying institution of Henry's administration, but at the same time it was effective institution for finding any potential profit for the king.¹²⁴

Machiavelli advocates that a renaissance ruler should be so wealthy that he can end any conflict with the use of only his wealth. Henry was certainly capable of doing that. From having almost no money at the beginning of his reign, Henry was able to become one of the wealthiest kings in Europe. However to achieve such a post Henry had to pray on his subjects. Even though he, in essence, did not oppress his subjects personally, Henry created an institution, council-learned-in-law, that oppressed his subjects for him. It is not true that establishing council-learned contradicts the possibility of Henry being a renaissance ruler. Since the council-learned was used to punish those who broke the law and keep other subjects from doing so by the fear of the consequences, this rather proves Henry as a renaissance ruler based on the evidence from the chapter reputation among subjects. Concerning arguments provided in this chapter, Henry acquired his wealth by following the laws of England and used the funds, as Machiavelli advises to renaissance rulers, to face the enemies and eliminate the threats to his rule.

¹²⁴ John Guy, *Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 270

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to prove that Henry VII was a renaissance ruler. To prove that Machiavelli's work *The Prince* was used. Throughout the thesis, the qualities that should be observed on a renaissance ruler were evaluated and compared to the time and rule of Henry VII.

In the thesis, it was found that Henry prepared well for his invasion of England. By dividing his English allies between the mercenaries as their leaders, Henry proved that he understood, as a true renaissance ruler should, the difficulties that could be caused by different types of armed forces and limited the possibility of the loss in battle as much as possible. Henry's determination to cease the English throne also provided an option for another quality of a renaissance ruler to be observed, when Henry stood and fought together with his troop during the battle of Bosworth Field.

Once in power, Henry was tirelessly creating new foundations of power that were so important for the renaissance ruler. Be it by the use of the symbols, to intertwine the images of his dynasty with the English history or by arranging the advantageous marriages for himself and his children, to ensure their calm succession to the English throne, without any questions about the legitimacy of their claim.

Henry's stature and personality did not allow him to inspire love in his subjects and his obsession with power would never let him depend on such an uncertain assurance of loyalty as love. To overcome his shortcomings Henry in a true Machiavellian fashion decided that fear keeps subject more loyal than love and that, unlike love, he could directly control the fear of his subjects. Henry was able to keep his subject afraid, on one hand, but on the other hand they did not hate Henry and did not rebel against him. By achieving this point of balance, Henry further proved his qualities as a renaissance ruler.

To help Henry with ruling his subjects, he kept a small number of close councillors that always offered him their advice to use them as he saw fit. Machiavelli argued that renaissance ruler should personally pick his councillors based on their loyalty, ability and their willingness to work in the first place for the ruler. Such devotion must renaissance ruler reward by sharing with them the wealth that they brought him. This criterion Henry also fulfilled.

When financial power is concerned, Henry was the most powerful among the European kings at the time of his rule. The way in which Henry combined the acquisition of new funds with keeping his nobles loyal through the bonds and attainders also exposes

his Machiavellian qualities. The amount of the money that Henry wielded and could use instead of army to peacefully resolve virtually any crisis and even to stand up to the Pope, when alum trade was concerned, further establishes Henry as a Machiavellian renaissance ruler.

After carefully considering all of the provided arguments and comparing them with Machiavelli's ideal qualities of a renaissance ruler, this thesis proves that Henry VII was a renaissance ruler throughout his reign. This clearly answers the question posed by this thesis' title as well as its main aims.

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