



The signatories: Lennox

Ludovic Stuart (1574-1624), 2nd Duke of Lennox, was born into the “Auld Alliance” between Scotland and France and came to maturity in the “new alliance” between Scotland and England.

Ludovic was the son of Esmé Stuart, 6th Seigneur d’Aubigny. Esmé was first cousin to Henry Stuart Lord Darnley, the unfortunate husband of Mary Queen of Scots and father of King James VI of Scotland and I of England. (For those who like to trace lines of descent: Ludovic’s grandfather was John Stuart, 5th Seigneur d’Aubigny, brother to Matthew Stuart, 4th Earl of Lennox, father of Darnley and therefore James VI & I’s grandfather.)

It was not unusual for prominent Scottish families to have ties to both Scotland and France. This was a direct result of the “Auld Alliance.”

The “Auld Alliance” was based on a need, shared by Scotland and France, to contain English expansion. A long-standing connection, it was formally established by treaty in 1295, renewed by Robert the Bruce in 1326, and cemented by Scottish King James I (1394-1437) who sent Scottish forces to fight for the French King Charles VII (and Joan of Arc) against the English. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the countries assisted each other against the English on several occasions. The “Auld Alliance” was primarily a military and diplomatic alliance but there were cultural associations as well, with French influence being felt in Scottish architecture and law. One significant aspect of the "Auld Alliance" was the existence of French titles and lands held by Scots nobles.

The first Scottish “Seigneur d’Aubigny” was Sir John Stewart, knight of Scotland, who entered the service of France in 1419 and rose to the position of Constable of the Scottish forces in France. Later “Seigneurs d’Aubigny” of Scottish origin had included a Chamberlain of the King of France, a Captain of the Scottish Archers who later became Grand Constable of Sicily and Jerusalem, and a Marshal of France.

Esmé Stuart, 6th Seigneur d’Aubigny, father of Ludovic, was born and raised in France, where he married and had children. In 1579, he was sent to Scotland as an emissary of the powerful Guise family (King James’ grandmother was Mary of Guise, wife to James V). Esmé arrived just after the 13th birthday of young King James.

James was emerging from an extremely unpleasant childhood. As a pawn of powerful families and an extremist Protestant Kirk, he had been threatened and browbeaten and regularly kidnapped as soon as he had begun to bond with his guardians, and raised to believe his mother (Mary Queen of Scots, imprisoned in England) was an adulteress who had murdered his father. When James, isolated and lonely, met his tall, handsome, sophisticated, worldly, 30-something French cousin, he came down with a case of hero worship from which he never recovered. James showered his cousin with lands and power, naming him Duke of Lennox in 1581. Esmé, however, abused James’ trust by engaging in some highly impolitic and rather ineffective plotting, rousing the anger of the nobility and the Kirk. The wildly unhappy King was forced to send Esmé back to France. A year

later, Esmé died. In 1583, James (by now 18 years old and in charge of his own destiny) had his hero's 10-year-old son, Ludovic, brought from France to Scotland to be raised at his court.

James immediately began to lavish a succession of wealthy estates and influential lordships on his young cousin; he named Ludovic Duke of Lennox (by which name he will be hereafter known), a Gentleman of the Bedchamber and Great Chamberlain for life, among other honors and offices, and asked him to carry the crown to the opening session of the Scots Parliament in 1584. Lennox repaid his king and cousin with lifelong loyalty.

In 1589, at the age of 15, Lennox was named to the Scottish Privy Council and began to take an active role in national affairs. When James VI left the country in 1589/90 to claim his Danish bride Anne, Lennox acted as governor of the kingdom and president of the Scottish Privy Council, roles which he carried out with meticulous responsibility and notable success. As Chamberlain, Lennox headed the ceremonial celebrations surrounding the arrival of Queen Anne and her subsequent coronation. He continued to serve as a patron of the arts, sponsoring his own troupe of actors (known as the Duke of Lennox's Men) and performing in court masques.

In 1601, Lennox was sent as an ambassador to France, unofficially renewing the "Auld Alliance," which had been in abeyance since 1560 when Scotland, having officially become a Protestant nation, signed the Treaty of Edinburgh with equally Protestant England. On Lennox's return journey from France to Scotland, he made his first visit to London, spending several weeks being entertained at the court of Elizabeth I before heading north.

In 1603, Lennox returned to London in the company of James VI of Scotland, who had succeeded Elizabeth as James I of England. James immediately appointed Lennox a member of the English Privy Council, First Gentleman of the English Bedchamber and Lord Steward of the household. (On Lennox's death, the position of Lord Steward, a highly influential position with considerable political importance, was given to another signer of the Peirce Patent, James Hamilton, 2d Marquis of Hamilton.) Lennox continued to accumulate honors and lordships in England; his titles eventually included Duke of Richmond and Earl of Newcastle upon Tyne. For the remainder of his life, Lennox was based in London although he continued to serve at intermittent intervals as James' ambassador to France and periodically returned to Scotland where he continued to maintain extensive holdings and lordships.

Lennox's Scottish territorial holdings were largely in the west and it is not surprising that his first colonial venture was across the North Channel of the Irish Sea. James, having crushed an Irish rebellion in 1607, decided to "plant" loyal Scots in Ireland, a venture known as the "Colonization of Ulster." Under his direction, Ulster was divided into lots and offered to "Purchasers." Fifty-nine Scots received shares of 81,000 acres of land. Lennox was given a significant grant of lands in Donegal, known as the Portlough Patent. The actual settlers were then carefully chosen and located on the lands. It is estimated that, by 1640, there were 40,000 Scots settled in the north of Ireland. The repercussions of this first English colonial experiment echo even today.

As one of the most powerful members of James' Privy Council, Lennox was involved with the business regarding plantations that came before the Council. He played a dominant role in supporting the New England Company but his interest was, on the whole, remote. He certainly was no friend to religious dissenters of a Puritan persuasion and had, in fact, been excommunicated at one time by the Kirk on suspicions of an excessive leaning towards Catholicism. His motivation seems to have been the support of any effort that would stabilize the finances of the crown and extend England's political influence and power. Lennox's loyalty was to his king and his habit was to avoid confrontation.

Lennox married three times. His first marriage was the romantic elopement of a 17-year old carried out to the displeasure of his guardian, King James. Lennox's bride, Sophie Ruthven, daughter of the Earl of Gowrie, died after a year of marriage. At the age of 24, Lennox married Lady Jean Campbell. They had two children, who both died young; the couple quarreled violently and separated by 1607. Jean died in 1612. Lennox took a third wife, Frances Howard Seymour, in 1621. Frances was the granddaughter of Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, and the widow of Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, who was 1st cousin to Queen Elizabeth I.

Lennox died in 1624; he had no surviving children. He and Frances (who died in 1639) are both buried in Westminster Abbey in the Henry VII chapel. Their hefty tombs can be seen today, in a small dark chapel to the south of the tomb of Henry VII.