


*The Secretariat of the Fifteenth
Annual Virginia International
Crisis Simulation Presents:*



**The Privy Council of King
Henry VIII**

Chaired by Anna Mohan

VICS XV

Welcome Privy Counselors!

My name is Anna Mohan, and I am a second year student at the University. While I am currently undecided about my field of study, I am considering several majors, including Foreign Affairs, Political and Social Thought and Economics. At the end of this year, I hope to declare a double major and potentially pursue a Master's Degree in public policy. Academically, I enjoy studying politics, economics, languages, and history. In my free time, I love to read, cook, and hang out with my friends.

While I have not studied Henry VIII extensively and harbored a secret passion for his life and rule since birth, this committee has given me chance to really delve deeper in discovering the true nature of this most interesting monarch. It started with reading (and watching *The Other Boleyn Girl*) and quickly evolved into hours spent in front of the TV with the latest seasons of the Tudors. Beyond this rather fluffy introduction to Henry VIII, I have really found myself to be fascinated with his personal life as well as his rule. One man changed the shape of England forever, and this committee will allow us to take on this important role as well as that of his counselors and shape our own future.

The committee structure will be shaped largely around developing crises and the issues Henry faces during his reign—pay close attention to Henry's need for an heir, his foreign alliances, as well as the ever-present fear of the plague and the English Sweat. Delegates need not worry about the details about parliamentary procedure, for the committee will be run largely in a permanent moderated caucus and voting rules are not particularly relevant. Delegates will need to have an extensive knowledge of their position and be able to faithfully represent them while making distinct choices that may ultimately save their heads. The committee will begin at approximately 1525, as detailed in the background guide, and while delegates should have knowledge of what occurs historically following this date, the committee will not follow the exact dictations of history from this point forth.

Remember, the goal of this committee is to confront not only the issues that faced Henry VIII and his Privy Counsellors but also many more unanticipated crises. Be prepared...

I look forward to meeting you all at the conference and hope this committee will be a fulfilling experience for everyone. Please feel free to contact me at aom6z@virginia.edu if you have any questions prior to the conference.

Sincerely,
Anna Mohan
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VICS XV

A. Henry VIII: The Crown, Courtship and Continental Conflicts

Historical Context

It is important to examine the context and background of King Henry VIII's reign in order to understand fully the challenges faced by Henry during his rule.

With the beginning of the 16th century, Europe saw the onset of an age of exploration. Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492, funded by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabelle of Spain, expanded the world view of European powers and ushered in a new age of exploration. As a result, shortly after the turn of the century, Spain and Portugal began expanding their exploration and territorial claims throughout the world, acquiring Latin America and the Indian Ocean respectively. With this, came a new emphasis on naval power and imperialism in addition to traditional battling over the European continent. European alliances and conflicts rapidly gained higher stakes, as they grew to include not only the European continent but colonies and empires as well. Similarly, these new discoveries put pressure on all European monarchs to further their influence and secure their interests in the New World.¹

Around this time, Europe experienced religious upheaval in the form of the Protestant Reformation. In 1517, Martin Luther, a priest and professor of theology, published his

Ninety Five Theses, which challenged the very structure and many common practices of the Catholic Church. Primarily, he contested the Catholic hierarchy, arguing Christians could only attain salvation “by faith alone.” These teachings undermined the traditional doctrine, which placed priests and the Pope, in particular, as necessary intermediaries between the people and God. Similarly, his emphasis on lay piety put age-old religious concerns in the forefront of the peoples' minds, granting them license finally to challenge the teachings of the Church and its leaders. The invention of the printing press and increased literacy facilitated the rapid spread of Luther's ideas throughout Europe. The Protestant Reformation served as an important precedent in undermining what many people once viewed as an unquestionably infallible institution, the Roman Catholic Church.²



Figure 1: Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation

Further, in addition to budding imperialism and religious conflict, Europe and Tudor England, in particular, remained weary of the pandemics that continually ravaged the European

¹ General information on the early sixteenth century retrieved from <http://www.fsmitha.com/time/ce16.htm>
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² Reformation information retrieved from http://www.theopedia.com/Protestant_Reformation

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landscape throughout the early 16th century. The plague surged throughout England around 1509, killing thousands, and in 1517, the country experienced an epidemic of the Sweating Sickness. This disease struck rapidly and without warning, signaled at first by perspiration and tremors and followed by high fever and rash. In many, it proved fatal within the first two or three hours, yet beyond twenty-four hours, its virulence vastly declined. Ultimately, the English Sweat, as it was also known, represented a unique point of concern, for it struck most frequently among the upper classes.³

Henry VIII: Early Life and Rule

Henry VIII, the second son and third child of Henry VII and Elizabeth York, was born June 28, 1491 in Greenwich Palace. As the younger brother in a paternalistic society, he did not anticipate gaining the Crown, thus allowing him to indulge in childish behavior unfit for the future leader of England. He received an excellent education, gaining fluency in Latin, French and Spanish while serving under the tutelage of the poet, Skelton. He also excelled in his theological studies, prompting many to conclude he planned to devote his life to the Church. Beyond his theological and linguist achievements, however, Henry also became an accomplished athlete and

musician, truly embodying the modern conception of a Renaissance man.⁴



Figure 2: Henry VIII as a child

Unfortunately, Henry's two brothers, Prince Arthur and Edmund, Duke of Somerset, as well as two of his sisters predeceased their father, leaving only Henry, his older sister, Margaret, and his younger sister, Mary, to carry on the Tudor dynasty. With the death of his older brother, Prince Arthur, in 1502 shortly after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, a Spanish princess, Henry necessarily entered the spotlight as next in line for the British Crown with an ailing father. With the hopes of maintaining Catherine's dowry and cementing the alliance with Spain, Henry VII sought a papal dispensation, which would allow young Henry to marry his brother's widow upon his coronation. Pope Julius II issued the dispensation, exempting Henry from Canon Law, which would have prohibited him from marrying his brother's wife after the consummation of

³ Information on the Sweating Sickness retrieved from

<http://www.storyoflondon.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=244&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

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⁴ Childhood information on Henry VIII retrieved from

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/tudorbio.htm>

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their marriage. Catherine of Aragon, however, maintained her short marriage to Arthur was never consummated, a practice common among young couples, denying the need for a dispensation at all. Thus while the dispensation was granted, it is not clear whether Henry meant to use it or whether Catherine thought it was necessary.⁵ Despite the dispensation, Henry and Catherine's betrothal remained tentative, as Ferdinand and Isabelle of Spain failed to pay the agreed upon dowry and Henry VII dallied in paying his portion of the deal as well, leaving Catherine virtually penniless and uncertain of her future.⁶

In April of 1509, Henry VII died, and 18, VIII, at age Henry a



Fig. 1. Catherine of Aragon, wife of Henry VIII.

handsome, vivacious and athletic youth, rose to accept his role as King of England in the first peaceful transition to power since the War of the Roses. Henry's father left his son a full exchequer, making him one of the richest monarchs in Europe, in addition to a kingdom free of major foreign entanglements yet with the respect and acknowledgement of the major European powers on the continent. Following his coronation in June, Henry VIII chose to marry his brother's widow Catherine of

Aragon, then 24, thus cementing an informal alliance with Spain.

While their marriage came as a surprise to many, their love and gaiety quickly uplifted both court and country. Henry's youth brought the court back to life, as he hosted frequent jousts, hunting expeditions, card games, feasts, and musical performances while leaving the administration of his kingdom to his top advisors, including his wife, Catherine. While Henry had little practical experience, Catherine had spent her time following the death of her first husband, honing her diplomatic skills in addition to her political wisdom. As such, Henry relied extensively on his new bride, counting her as one of his top advisors.⁷

From the onset of his rule, however, Henry VIII never failed to distinguish himself as a distinct ruler from his father. Some of his first acts included the imprisonment and execution of two of his father's top advisors, Sir Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, on charges of treason. The beheading of these unpopular advisors served to bolster Henry's popularity among his people and revealed to Henry the full extent of his nearly limitless power to both advance and destroy whomever he wanted at his whim. Henry also developed an interest in the England's sea power from an early age, establishing a regular navy with dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford.⁸ In addition, he demonstrated his theological education and faithfulness to Christianity in opposing the "Lutheran heresy," as it gained influence in Europe. With the support of one of his chief

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Information on betrothal retrieved from <http://www.tudorhistory.org/henry8/>

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⁷ Information on Henry's marriage and early rule retrieved from *The Monarchs of England*

⁸ Ibid.

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advisors Sir Thomas More, also a devout Christian and intellectual, he drafted a pamphlet entitled *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* in 1519, contesting Luther's assertions about the Church and Christianity. While More urged Henry to dilute the polemic tone of his writing, Henry insisted on maintaining it, supporting unconditionally the supremacy of papal authority. For his efforts, the Pope granted Henry the title "Fidei Defensor," or Defender of the Faith.⁹

"The Queen Has Missed Her Courses": Creating an Heir to the English Throne

One of Henry's chief objectives from the earliest days of his reign concerned the production of an heir to the throne. With his parents' devastating record of early child deaths, he recognized the utmost importance of providing a male heir to the throne who would continue the Tudor Dynasty and preserve peace in England. He knew that in order to avoid the competing claims to the throne that arose during the War of the Roses, he would need to produce a male heir who could continue to lead the country in the Tudor tradition. In January of 1511, Catherine of Aragon gave birth to their first son, who died within two months, leaving Henry and Catherine in despair. While the newly weds continued tirelessly to create a male child, Catherine did not bear her first child to survive past infancy until 1516 when she gave birth to a young princess named Mary. Whether in a desperate attempt to conceive a male heir or simply for pleasure, Henry began taking mistresses

around this time as well. Most notably, he had affairs with Bessie Blount and Mary Boleyn, two of Catherine's many ladies-in-waiting. Blount gave birth to an illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, and it is possible that Mary Boleyn also bore two children by Henry. Regardless, the conception of these children, however illegitimate, reminded Henry of his potency and as such, placed increasing pressure on Catherine to produce a legitimate male heir to accede to the throne upon Henry's demise.



As Catherine aged, she continued to

Figure 4: Anne Boleyn

suffer miscarriages in lieu of providing Henry with a child, causing him to grow increasingly frustrated with her as a wife. Her poor luck in childbearing suggested to Henry that he should question the very legitimacy of his marriage. Alongside his acknowledgement of his own mortality and the pressure to have a male heir, Henry experienced sexual frustration as well, with a wife six years his senior. In 1525, he met and quickly developed an interest in Anne Boleyn, the sister of his former lover, daughter of one of his

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⁹ Information on Henry's pamphlet retrieved from http://www.emmetlabs.com/pair/King-Henry-VIII_109/Sir-Thomas-More_410
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advisors, and maid in his wife's entourage. She easily captivated the entire court with her wit, charm, and devilish glances.¹⁰

Thus, during this committee, Henry is faced with pressure to produce a male heir and secure the future of the English throne as well as his increasing passion for Anne Boleyn. As his advisors, you will need to balance his political responsibilities while indulging his private needs and advise him as to the best course of action for Henry and England.

Foreign Affairs: Continental Clashes

In addition to producing an heir, Henry remained consistently concerned with the status of England among other European nations. While his father left him with amicable relationships with both France and Spain devoid of any entangling alliances, in his early rule, Henry vacillated in his allegiances to each country due, in large part, to the varying pressures and influences of his opposing advisors as well as his counterparts in Europe.

In 1511, Pope Julius II formed a Holy League, composed of Spain, Venice, the Swiss Cantons and the Holy Roman Empire, in order to free Italy from French influence. Henry, hoping to capitalize on the alliance against France and expand England's territorial holdings, joined the alliance. This prompted his first military venture, a campaign into France in 1513, in which



Figure 5: Francis I, King of France

he achieved moderate success, as in the Battle of Spurs.¹¹

While Henry remained occupied on the continent, however, James IV of Scotland, his brother-in-law, attacked England. Thomas Howard, one of Henry's chief advisors, ultimately defeated James IV and pushed back the Scottish army at the Battle of Flodden Field.¹² Despite Henry's success against the French and Scottish, Pope Julius II died in 1513, dissolving the Holy League and leaving England, once again, without any solid alliances.

Following his brief ventures against the French, Henry switched his allegiances at the behest of his Lord Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, an ardent French supporter. In 1520, Henry approached the King of France, Francis

¹⁰ Information on Henry's marriage and children retrieved from *The Monarchs of England* The Privy Council of King Henry VIII

¹¹ Information retrieved from <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/tudorbio.htm>

¹² Information retrieved from <http://www.tudorhistory.org/henry8/>

I, in hopes of agreeing to the terms for a permanent peace between the two nations. They met in Calais, and in an attempt to outdo the other; each monarch brought lavish shelter, made of cloth woven with gold, and large entourages. More than reaching any substantive conclusion, the meeting, which earned the title “Field of Cloth of Gold,” served to demonstrate the power and influence of each king to his counterpart. The kings failed to sign a peace accord, and after returning from the encounter, Henry signed a treaty with Charles V, the king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor. Shortly thereafter, the Emperor declared war on France and King Francis, and, Henry, a dutiful ally, followed suit.¹³

During committee, each of you will be responsible for advising Henry as to how he should proceed with respect to



Figure 6: Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain

forming alliances on the continent. With your own dispositions towards particularly allies, you must work to convince Henry the prudent course of

¹³ Information retrieved from <http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/clothofgold.htm>

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action would be the support of your party given current events and new developments.

B. Privy Council

Background on the Privy Council

A Privy Council is a group, which serves to advise privately heads of state, particularly monarchs, in the affairs of the state. In the modern British version of this body, Her Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, most of the representatives are politicians and members of the House of Lords or House of Commons, and other committees check its power. Originally, however, the Committee of the Privy Council, created by Henry VII, wielded a great deal of executive, judicial, and legislative authority and consisted primarily of the kings’ closest friends and allies. During the fifteenth century, for example, the Council had the authority to impose any sentence on any subject, except for death, without the review. Similarly, during Henry VIII’s rule, the Privy Council retained the ability to make any law by proclamation, subverting the legislative authority of Parliament altogether.¹⁴

Committee Structure

This committee at VICS XV will represent King Henry VIII’s closest advisors, beginning in the mid 1520s (around 1525). At this stage, Henry has been King for more than 10 years and has toed the line between foreign alliances and gained the favor of the English populace but still has yet to

¹⁴ Information on the Privy Council retrieved from http://wapedia.mobi/en/Her_Majesty%27s_Most_Honourable_Privy_Council#1.

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produce an heir to the throne. In this committee, Henry's intimate political and ecclesiastical advisors as well as close friends will aid him to determine policy in all areas of the Crown, from the public face of the Kingdom and its presence in Europe to Henry's more private "affairs." You will have to deal with the cropping up of a whole range of crises from bouts of the Sweat to the breaking of treaties by foreign powers. As a body with essentially limitless power and influence, you will create laws to be enacted in Parliament, form alliances, and try treasonous subjects. The committee will be conducted in the style of a permanent moderated caucus with opportunities for delegates to break off into private discussion, contact their districts or dioceses as well as send private communication to their allies in foreign lands.

While Henry ultimately has the final say on the actions of the Crown, he relies a great deal on the advice of his Privy Council. Tread lightly, however, for as a young king, Henry is quickly realizing the true extent of his power. Delegates will have to work to promote their interests and those of England in each matter while always maintaining favor with the King in the hopes of earning titles and gifts and avoiding the executioner's block. Remember you have the opportunity to change history depending on your persuasiveness, altering the ill fate of some of Henry's advisors. The following is a list of positions to be represented in Henry's Privy Council, ranging from Henry's closest boyhood friends to ecclesiastical leaders and wealthy landholders. As you will note, many of them lack the titles they would historically come to earn (knight, duke, earl etc.). During this committee, Henry will choose to bestow The Privy Council of King Henry VIII

and remove these titles as he sees fit, depending on your performance. Let this be a cautious reminder once again, however, that more is at stake than mere land ownership...



Figure 7: King Henry VIII

Positions

Cardinal Thomas Wolsey- Easily the most powerful of Henry's advisors at the time of this committee, Cardinal Wolsey is currently serving as Lord Chancellor. He has a distinctly pro-French viewpoint and many assert has set his sights on the papacy.

Thomas More- Thomas More, a humanist and political realist, has served Henry since his early reign. Beyond helping Henry to write his pamphlet, confuting Luther's heresy, he advises Henry in legal and political matters. Greatly respected for his intellectual prowess, More is the author of *Utopia*, a

work which demonstrates the true nature of his political philosophy.

Thomas Cromwell- Thomas Cromwell is Henry's newly appointed secretary. A diligent worker and ambitious politician, he has rapidly gained Henry's favor although he has demonstrated some interest in Luther's movement.

Thomas Cranmer- A holy man who works at Cambridge is new to the king's inner council. Having been appointed to a small post at the English embassy in Spain, he has distinguished himself, quickly becoming one of Wolsey and in turn, Henry's important advisors. His religious background and particular sympathies for the growing Reformation should prove interesting in the context of Henry's marital struggles.

William Warham- Warham currently serves as archbishop of Canterbury. Once Lord Chancellor, he resigned his position early in Henry's reign and has receded from the forefront of court politics. While he recognizes the importance of supporting Henry's opinions, in his old age, he has begun to express more of his independent thought.

Thomas Boleyn- The father of Anne Boleyn, Thomas is currently a rising star of the king's advisors. He has served several positions, including ambassador to France, completing many important foreign missions for the King. Despite his Francophile attitudes, he remains staunchly opposed to Cardinal Wolsey.

Thomas Howard- Thomas Howard, Thomas Boleyn's brother-in-law, is currently Duke of Norfolk. His success against the Scottish in the Battle of Flodden Field revealed him to be an apt military leader and gained him favor with Henry. Ultimately, he seeks the The Privy Council of King Henry VIII

advancement of his family and their interests.

Francis Bryan- Francis Bryan is related to both the Boleyns and the Seymours, and serves as Chief Gentleman of the Privy chamber and Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. While he was removed from the Privy Chamber at the request of Thomas Wolsey in 1519, he was returned to favor in 1528 (for the sake of this committee 1525).

Thomas Wyatt- Thomas Wyatt is a gifted poet whose father served as one of Henry VII's advisors. He serves as an ambassador for Henry VIII but is purported to have more than a courtly love for Henry's latest attraction, Anne Boleyn

John Seymour- John is a member of the powerful Seymour family, which stands in stark opposition to the Boleyns. With a recent scandal marring the family name, Seymour must work hard to earn the king's trust and return his family once again to the spotlight.

Charles Brandon- Brandon is one of Henry's closest childhood friends, who early on experienced the power of Henry's favor, becoming Duke of Suffolk upon Henry's coronation. While he was sent away from court after romancing and marrying Henry's younger sister, Mary Tudor, in 1514 without Henry's approval, he quickly regained the king's approval and has returned to the council.

William Compton- One of Henry's close friends, Compton serves a special function in Henry's court. While his exact duties are unknown, it is rumored that he seeks out mistresses for his king and plays a strong hand in arranging the king's romantic affairs.

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Committee Expectations

In preparing for this committee, delegates will be expected to have a full and complete knowledge of their position's life, personality, political activity, religious beliefs, and any other relevant characteristics. These factors will be extremely important when delegates attempt to accurately represent the interests of their characters. This is not to say, however, that delegates must remain faithful to the specific actions and fate of their positions. The events and crises and the committee will not align exactly with those of real life and thus delegates are welcomed and encouraged to alter their actions accordingly. You must strike a balance between adequately representing your character and reacting reasonably given what your knowledge of the time period and new twists and turns of events. Beyond specific knowledge of their position, delegates should research more about the background and context of Henry's rule. Delegates should be familiar with the important issues of the time, such as Henry's need to produce an heir, the religious controversy surrounding the reformation and England's stance among its European allies. Knowledge of the events that preceded the specific time period that will begin our committee (approximately 1525) is important to gaining a general understanding of events, yet delegates will have the opportunity to change this history and alter the very fabric of time.

Delegates are responsible for submitting a background guide to me, giving a detailed background of their position as well as their stance on the important issues, their allegiances, and the counsels they would most likely give Henry. This will increase the efficiency of the committee and allow delegates to take full advantage of and respond effectively to the crises and events that develop throughout the weekend.

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of the committee and allow delegates to take full advantage of and respond effectively to the crises and events that develop throughout the weekend.

C. Useful Sources for Delegates

1. **Tudor History-**
<http://www.tudorhistory.org/>
 This website gives a good overview of Tudor history, specifically Henry VIII's reign. It also provides a list of important figures at the time, including monarchs of other nations and the holders of ecclesiastical and political office.
2. **Emmet Labs-**
<http://www.emmetlabs.com/>
 An interesting website that allows you to discover the relationships between important historical figures. May prove useful in finding information about delegates' specific positions and their relation to Henry.
3. **Luminarium: Encyclopedia Project-**
<http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/>
 Provides information about important figures, events, and issues during and surrounding Henry VIII's rule.
4. **Wikipedia-**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
 While not a suggested resource for in-depth study, Wikipedia is a good jumping off point for research on your individual

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positions. Most of the information within the background guide is compiled from this source.

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