

**The Spanish Ambassadors in the Elizabethan Court: Collaboration, Conflict,
and Contempt before the Anglo-Spanish War**



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Short Abstract

This thesis examines the Spanish embassies sent to Elizabethan England by Philip II and Anglo-Spanish diplomacy between 1558-1584. It employs an actor-centred approach to study the lived experiences of the Spanish ambassadors in England before the Anglo-Spanish war, and utilises methodologies proposed by the New Diplomatic History. The thesis relies on the diplomatic correspondence between the ambassadors, Philip II, and other key Spanish political figures in the sixteenth century to reconstruct the intelligence gathering strategies employed by the ambassadors, and determine how they conducted their diplomatic duties.

Organised into two parts, this thesis first considers the foundations of early modern diplomacy. Part I establishes the epistolary practices found in these diplomatic dispatches to highlight the source base for this thesis. It will then locate diplomatic dispatches within the circulation of news in early modern Europe. The representative character of ambassadors and sociability of ambassadors will also be discussed before Part I concludes with an examination of sub-ambassadorial figures in court and how these figures engaged in diplomacy.

Part II reflects on the ambassadors' diplomatic activities in practice through a series of case studies that consider their relationships in court, and the relevance of the English embassy to early modern Spanish diplomacy. The ambassadors' interactions with Protestants and other Catholic ambassadors in the English court are examined in-depth and their diplomatic and social activities are considered in the context of confessional and cross-confessional diplomacy. Their support of English Catholics and Mary, Queen of Scots, and their reactions to the Dutch Revolt and the Portuguese Succession Crisis are then each studied to reveal the ambassadors' understandings of the ethos of Spanish diplomacy and their own diplomatic conduct. The thesis

concludes with a study of the limitations of ambassadorship and evaluates how Spanish diplomatic presence in Elizabethan England impacted political thought after 1584.

Long Abstract

This thesis examines the Spanish embassies sent to Elizabethan England by Philip II and Anglo-Spanish diplomacy between 1558-1584. Previously, the Spanish resident embassies in Elizabethan England have been assumed to solely contribute to the broader political and religious struggles that eventually led to the Anglo-Spanish war and the Spanish Armada of 1588. In this scholarship, the Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England had been considered as individuals of 'ill will' by historians such as Garrett Mattingly, a characterisation which erodes the nuances of and rationale behind their embassies. While more recent scholarship has attempted to untangle the enduring cultural and commercial exchanges between Spain and England in the sixteenth century, the diplomatic activities of the Spanish embassies have yet to be addressed. Ultimately, this thesis will avoid perpetuating teleological narratives of the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations to instead emphasise the ambassadors' diplomatic conduct and individual agency.

This thesis examines the diplomatic dispatches of the Spanish ambassadors in England with Philip II and other key Iberian political figures to expose the ambassadors' understandings of Spanish diplomacy, their impact on broader international relations, and how information circulated in sixteenth-century Europe. Owing to the interdisciplinary methodologies of the New Diplomatic History, this thesis analyses the cultural and social activities of the individual ambassadors to understand broader processes of early modern diplomacy, and highlights instances of both collaboration and conflict between the ambassadors and other courtiers or political figures. This thesis also engages with historiography of the Spanish empire and recent interest in cultural contact, connected history, and the institutions behind Spanish governance, subsequently bringing these historiographies into conversation with one another. It will

primarily employ an actor-centred approach to reconstruct the lived experiences of the ambassadors to situate the English embassy within Spanish communication networks, and Spanish foreign policy.

In two substantial parts, this thesis first establishes the foundations of Spanish diplomacy and communication practices, before addressing in Part II how the ambassadors conducted their diplomatic duties while responding to various religious and political developments throughout Europe. The impact of religion on their diplomatic conduct and their perceptions of political difference serve as key considerations throughout the cases studies of Part II and will thus be approached within frameworks of both confessional and cross-confessional diplomacy.

Part I sets the stage by highlighting the epistolary practices found in their diplomatic dispatches, the primary source base for the thesis. Chapter 1 sheds light on how information networks operated in early modern Europe and informed policy decisions by examining the role of diplomatic dispatches as key sources of news and the administrative practices of the Spanish government to catalogue and disseminate this information. A distinct epistolary culture in diplomatic correspondence thus emerges as the material and linguistic characteristics of these letters showcase the extended use and reading experience of diplomatic dispatches by the Spanish secretariat. Overarching Spanish diplomatic practices are also highlighted in an investigation of the appointment of the Spanish ambassadors to Elizabethan England, their initial instructions by Philip II, and how they prepared for their embassy in England.

Chapter 2 then analyses the sociability and representative character of the ambassadors in order to determine how the ambassadors interacted with, or gained information from, other court members. Social interactions were a cornerstone of the ambassadors' intelligence gathering strategies and the ambassadors employed or augmented their social activities to form

various information communities. Additionally, as the ambassadors were meant to physically embody their ruler, they sought to display their monarch in high esteem, and thus used their representative character and ambassadorial status to affirm diplomatic precedence whenever possible. The duality of considering how to gather information from other ambassadors through social encounters and asserting one's precedence in court is especially notable with the Spanish ambassadors' relationships with the French ambassadors. As the French embassy was the only other resident embassy present in England throughout the Elizabethan period, the relationship between the Spanish and French ambassadors in England is traced throughout the Spanish embassies, showcasing instances when the French ambassador was an asset, hindrance, or both to the Spanish ambassador's diplomatic goals. The court, therefore, is revealed to be a forum for larger geopolitical issues and a reflection of the international order as tensions were actualised or disputed at the level of individual ambassadors. Part I then concludes with a discussion of sub-ambassadorial figures in court and the degree to which they were able to conduct diplomatic duties and represent foreign rulers. In Chapter 3, the role of Spanish merchant Antonio de Guaras as unofficial *chargé d'affaires* in the absence of an official resident ambassador is considered in-depth and highlights how the New Diplomatic History has meaningfully expanded the consideration of diplomatic figures beyond traditional state sanctioned resident ambassadors. The ambiguities of diplomatic status and the assumptions behind who was considered an ambassador are further explored in a discussion of challenges to diplomatic legitimacy. A working definition for a Spanish ambassador is subsequently presented.

Part II is comprised of a series of case studies that outline how the Spanish ambassadors formed and utilised different intelligence gathering strategies to respond to various religious

and political concerns. Building upon the conclusions presented in Part I, Part II highlights the circulation of information and the sociability of the ambassadors in practice and through each embassy. The ambassadors' individual agency and how their understandings of their diplomatic aims differed from Philip II's foreign policy underpin this analysis. Chapter 4 begins with an examination of the ambassadors' relationships in court to establish how the ambassadors formed diplomatic relationships with Elizabeth, councillors, and courtiers. Special attention is given to their interactions with Protestant councillors and their efforts to construct cross-confessional diplomatic relations in England. These interactions ultimately prove that the ambassadors believed they could gather information from a larger and more flexible group of courtiers than scholars have previously considered. Shared political goals, personal dynamics, and religious conservatism will each be examined as a potential basis for the ambassadors' relationships with English courtiers and Protestants.

Chapter 5 turns towards an analysis of their support of English Catholics and Mary, Queen of Scots, to showcase the enduring importance of confessional bonds in diplomatic relationships and their conception of the role of religion in their diplomatic mission. The Northern Rebellion and the Ridolfi plot will each be discussed in the chapter's consideration of the ambassadors' confessionally driven modes of diplomacy. Critically, discrepancies between Philip II's foreign policy and his ambassadors' understandings of their diplomatic missions in England are revealed and underline the importance of the ambassadors' individualised perspectives in their diplomatic conduct. Aiding the English Catholics was ultimately a primary occupation for several of the ambassadors as they offered their co-religionists financial resources and support, showcasing the ambassadors' belief that English Catholics merited Spanish protection and possessed a place in Spanish diplomatic goals. Narratives of the

secularisation of diplomacy in the early modern world are thus aptly challenged as the difficulties of cross-confessional diplomacy are illuminated.

Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrate the ambassadors' response to two major political crises for the Spanish empire and discuss the importance of the English embassy within Spanish diplomatic networks and foreign policy. Importantly, these chapters engage with the ambassadors' anxieties and sense of crises as they contended with threats to Philip II's empire. The first crisis examined is the Dutch Revolt, and brings together a consideration of the information networks and communication practices, as established in Part I, with the ambassadors' religious concerns and the malleability of their information communities. As the Dutch Revolt unfolded over several decades, whether or not the ambassadors could inherit information networks between the Spanish embassies is discussed at length. Conversely, the second crisis examined, the Portuguese Succession Crisis of 1580, was limited to a single embassy. Encompassing issues of Iberian allegiances, an analysis of Bernardino de Mendoza's reaction to the crisis and broader concerns highlight the perceived vulnerabilities of Philip II's empire and newly established Portuguese rule. Largely neglected in historical scholarship on Iberian governance and early modern empire, within the context of the ongoing Dutch Revolt, the potential impact of the Portuguese Succession Crisis and its influence on diplomatic conduct is brought into sharp relief. Additionally, these chapters indicate that English involvement in these crises and its destabilising effect on Habsburg rule should not be diminished as it directly impacted ambassadorial conduct and Anglo-Spanish relations. Throughout the examination of these crises, the flexibility of the ambassadors' intelligence gathering strategies, and the importance of non-diplomatic information communities is repeatedly emphasised. The ambassadors are thus shown to rely upon informal information sources such as merchants

alongside their established court contacts in order to contribute to the spread of news and understand various developments. Ultimately, these chapters contribute to recent scholarly interest in the heterogeneous configuration of the Iberian empire, as the ambassadors contended with conflicting and overlapping national identities, religious beliefs, or political aims to construct information communities.

The final chapter of the thesis considers the limitations of ambassadorship and how diplomatic immunity functioned or was negotiated amidst the ambassadors' religious concerns, support of Catholics, and involvement in conspiracies against Elizabeth I. Chapter 8 outlines the foundations of diplomatic immunity to illuminate the importance of reciprocity when special privileges were awarded to resident ambassadors. Particular attention is paid to the volatile nature of religious privileges and the freedom to hear Mass in the aftermath of the Reformation, and its effect on Álvaro de la Quadra's embassy in England and John Man's embassy in Madrid. This analysis culminates in an examination of the expulsion of Bernardino de Mendoza due to his involvement in the Throckmorton plot in 1584, a conspiracy which ended Spanish diplomatic presence in England until the Jacobean period. Mendoza's expulsion serves as a case study of the various considerations of diplomatic immunity, the difficulty of determining who held legal jurisdiction over resident ambassadors, and the development of political thought on the limitations of one's diplomatic immunity. Crucially, Chapter 8 also engages with questions regarding how Mendoza's expulsion informed political thought on early modern ambassadorship and its limitations beyond Anglo-Spanish relations.

Ultimately, this thesis offers a new perspective on the Spanish empire through an examination of the individuals informing Spanish governance, and fits within recent scholarly works on the Iberian world and Spanish diplomatic networks. Regardless of the military conflict

of the Anglo-Spanish war, this thesis argues that the Spanish embassies in Elizabethan England should no longer be diminished to ambassadors of 'ill will' but should instead be used as a lens to view the foundations and practices of ambassadorship and news sharing, and considered as conduits for broader developments and political discussion. This thesis therefore offers valuable insights into Spanish empire, and contributes to the rich historiography of early modern Spanish governance, empire, and diplomatic contact.

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Abbreviations

AGS Estado	Archivo General de Simancas, Consejo de Estado
ANTT	Arquivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo, Lisbon
BL	British Library, London
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
CDMF	Bertrand de Salignac de La Mothe Fénélon, <i>Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de La Mothe Fénélon</i> , ed. Jean Baptiste Alexandre Théodore Teulet (Paris, 1838-1840)
CODOIN	<i>Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España</i> (112 vols, Madrid, 1842-1896)
CP	<i>Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire</i> , ed. R. Roberts, E. Salisbury, G. Montague, and G. Dyfnallt (24 vols, London, 1883-1976)
CSP Simancas	<i>Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas</i> , ed. Martin Hume (4 vols, London, 1892-1899)
CSP Vatican	<i>Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Vatican</i> , ed. J. M. Rigg (2 vols, London, 1916-1926)
DBE	Diccionario Biográfico Español
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Introduction

In March 1563, exhausted and ill, the Spanish ambassador in England, Álvaro de la Quadra, wrote to Philip II to lament that ‘My residence here [in England] matters so little...[but] I am still forced by the work and necessity to go through and reply many times’ to the letters he received and to continue his diplomatic duties.¹ Nearing the end of a tumultuous and difficult embassy, Quadra would succumb to his illness soon thereafter. In Anglo-Spanish historiography, scholars have implicitly agreed with Quadra’s assessment of his embassy—that it seemed to make little difference—in their omission of serious enquiry of the Spanish ambassadors in Elizabeth England. Crucially, however, they have also neglected the second issue raised by the quote, namely that despite potential difficulties, Quadra continued his diplomatic duties and that Spanish ambassadorial presence in England largely persisted throughout the Elizabethan period. By ignoring Quadra’s persistence and his belief in the necessity to continue to work regardless of political impact or even his failing health, historians have disregarded how the Spanish ambassadors influenced and contributed to broader diplomatic practices beyond Anglo-Spanish relations. In contrast, this thesis will examine the Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England to shed new light on early modern Anglo-Spanish diplomatic exchange, the foundations and models of early modern diplomacy, and the perseverance of diplomatic relations in the midst of cross-confessional, cross-cultural, and political tensions.

¹All translations are my own unless otherwise stated. Quotes are included in their original language in the footnotes and are transcribed according to how they appear in the cited source, therefore variations in spelling and grammar appear. Original capitalisations are maintained and included in translations, alongside standard English capitalisations. Abbreviations in the original cited source are expanded in the translation; ‘Mi residencia aquí importa tan poco...todavía yo soy forzado por el trabajo y necesidad que paso de replicar muchas veces’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 496.

Early Modern Anglo-Spanish Historiography

Sixteenth-century English and Spanish history have each enjoyed long and pervasive scholarly interest that has encapsulated and defined various historiographical trends and focuses for decades, including but not limited to state building, imperialism, and material culture. Substantial contributions have been made to the study of early modern Spanish history and Philip II by John Elliott, Geoffrey Parker, Henry Kamen, and Fernando Bouza to name only a few.² Their works have each attempted to examine and untangle Philip II's foreign policy aims, and particularly in the case of John Elliott, connect them to broader international considerations in how Philip II contended with such a vast empire.³ Elliott's work ultimately helped establish the canon of scholarship that seeks to examine Spain's wider connections and contacts across the globe, utilising more interdisciplinary historical approaches that prioritise contact and exchange as the basis of connected histories.⁴ Elizabeth I's political engagement with other monarchs and rulers, especially Philip II, has also enjoyed similar historiographical interest, with some of her diplomats, perhaps most notably ambassador to France, Francis Walsingham, eventually made Principal Secretary, becoming the centre of their own scholarly works.⁵ The resident embassies within Elizabethan England, however, have yet to receive the same level of

² See Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Phillip II* (New Haven, 1998); Geoffrey Parker, *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II* (New Haven, 2014); Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714: A Society in Conflict* (New York, 1983); Henry Kamen, *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power 1492-1763* (New York, 2003); Henry Kamen, *Phillip of Spain* (New Haven, 1998); Fernando Bouza, *Imagen y Propaganda: Capítulos de Historia Cultural del Reinado de Felipe II* (Madrid, 1998).

³ See John H. Elliott, *Spain, Europe and the Wider World 1500-1800* (New Haven, 2009); John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, 2007).

⁴ See Harald Braun and Lisa Vollendorf (eds), *Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic* (Leiden, 2013); Fernando Bouza, Pedro Cardim and Antonio Feros (eds), *The Iberian World: 1450- 1820* (London, 2019); Kimberly Lynn, and Erin Rowe (eds), *The Early Modern Hispanic World: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Approaches* (New York, 2017).

⁵ See Alan Haynes, *Walsingham: Elizabethan Spymaster & Statesman* (Sutton, 2004).

interest as English ambassadors abroad and have instead remained an underutilised lens to explore European foreign policy and international relations.

Throughout the twentieth century, premodern political history disproportionately devoted itself to uncovering the processes which had led to the solidification of states and the international order. The early modern period, subsequently, was viewed as a hallmark in this process due to varied and developing practices of diplomacy and resident embassies, though diplomacy cannot be credited as an early modern invention.⁶ Additionally, premodern European conflict and development remain centre pieces of scholarly work on international relations, including but not limited to the Reformation, the Treaty of Westphalia, and the Thirty Years War, amongst others. A teleological fixation on state building as the goal of early modern diplomatic relations, however, risks overlooking a plethora of complex and overlapping considerations of the ambassadors resident in foreign courts, and the processes of diplomacy. Furthermore, observing diplomacy only through a lens of political conflict obscures serious consideration of cultural connection and contact, even if the involved parties resorted to military confrontation. Sixteenth-century Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations have thus been assumed as futile in the grander narrative of feuding international empires as England and Spain eventually became embroiled in the Anglo-Spanish war in 1585. Questions regarding the Spanish ambassadors' diplomatic aims, activities, and perceptions of this supposed conflict have subsequently been neglected. The foundation of this thesis, therefore, will be to critically assess the agency and rationale of Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England, ultimately contributing to our understanding of early modern diplomacy beyond Anglo-Spanish relations.

⁶ The history of diplomacy in medieval Europe has been the subject of extensive study, see Joseph P. Huffman, *The Social Politics of Medieval Diplomacy: Anglo-German Relations (1066-1307)* (Ann Arbor, 2000).

In addressing both the political and religious challenges that swept the European continent, each Spanish ambassador responded differently and shaped Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations according to their own interest or actions, elucidating the importance of diplomatic agents and the value of studying these actors. This research will not disregard the importance or prevalence of larger political conflicts, but rather highlight the individual actions and diplomatic efforts of those ambassadors within this hostility to both clarify and combat previous scholarship on Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations.

Until the twenty-first century, the study of Anglo-Spanish relations in Elizabeth's reign had remained stagnant and assumed a state of perpetual conflict. Twentieth-century historiography of early modern Anglo-Spanish relations had often been dominated by considerations of the 1588 Spanish Armada, and the Black Legend, the characterisation of the Spanish as a cruel inhumane people perpetuated by largely English Protestant writers.⁷ Indeed, it is difficult to ignore how military, economic, and religious conflicts between Elizabethan England and Spain helped define European power struggles in the sixteenth century. While both of these topics can encompass complex and dynamic facets of military history, cultural perceptions, and expression, they work within a framework of confrontation and alienation. For example, Garrett Mattingly presented military conflict as the inevitable result of Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations in the sixteenth century without consideration of cooperation or communication between England and Spain.⁸ More recent scholarship, however, has begun to highlight Anglo-Spanish cultural exchanges, and the existence of a mutual fascination and

⁷ For overviews of the 1588 Spanish Armada see Alexander McKee, *From Merciless Invaders: The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (London, 1963); Peter Padfield, *Armada: A Celebration of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 1588-1988* (London, 1988); For more on the Black Legend see Charles Gibson, *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York, 1971); Antonio Sánchez-Jiménez, *La Leyenda Negra: La Batalla sobre la Imagen de España en Tiempo de Lope de Vega* (Madrid, 2016).

⁸ See Garret Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London, 1955).

political consideration.⁹ By examining the persistence of Anglo-Spanish relations and the complexity of cultural or political dialogues beyond court environments, these studies elucidate how England and Spain adapted to and interacted with one another regardless of (or in tandem with) larger political conflicts. These studies thus present a more nuanced interpretation of Anglo-Spanish perceptions that complicate previous understandings of a mutual villainy to showcase a cultural dialogue.¹⁰ Uncovering the lived experiences of the Spanish ambassadors, and contextualising their embassies within early modern networks and connections, thus makes substantial contributions to recent studies of Iberian empires concerned with Spanish interaction with foreign bodies and cross-cultural diplomatic relations.¹¹ Ultimately, this thesis will place Anglo-Spanish histories in conversation with the wider historiographical developments of the New Diplomatic History and highlight enduring diplomatic exchange through its examination of the Spanish ambassadors resident in Elizabethan England between 1558 and 1584.

The New Diplomatic History

This thesis will utilise and contribute to the historiographical developments of diplomatic history witnessed in the past two decades. The study of early modern diplomacy has undergone

⁹ See Alexander Samson, *Mary and Philip: The Marriage of Tudor England and Habsburg Spain* (Manchester, 2020); Óscar Alfredo Ruiz Fernández, *England and Spain in the Early Modern Era: Royal Love, Diplomacy, Trade and Naval Relations 1604-25* (London, 2020).

¹⁰ See Alexander Samson, 'A Fine Romance: Anglo-Spanish Relations in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 39/1 (2009), pp. 65–94; Eduardo Olid Guerrero and Esther Fernández (eds), *The Image of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Spain* (Lincoln, 2019).

¹¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam in particular has prompted further exploration into the connections of the Iberian empires. Many of the following works are indebted to both historiographical approaches of connections and disconnections, and Subrahmanyam's connected historical approaches that highlight broad spatial units of analysis. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500-1640', *The American Historical Review*, 112/5 (2007), pp. 1359-85; José Antonio Martínez Torres, "'There is but One World': Globalisation and Connections in the Overseas Territories of the Spanish Habsburgs, 1581–1640", *Culture and History Digital Journal*, 3/1 (2014), pp. 1–15; Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires and the Globalization of Europe 1415–1668* (Singapore, 2019); Zoltán Biedermann, *Disconnected Empires: Imperial Portugal, Sri Lankan Diplomacy, and the Making of a Habsburg Conquest in Asia* (Oxford, 2018).

substantial changes due to the methodological approaches of the New Diplomatic History. The New Diplomatic History has aimed to change and complicate perceptions of ambassadorship, and encourage the field to inherit interdisciplinary approaches and more flexible understandings of diplomacy than previous political histories. Earlier work on early modern diplomacy argued that the early modern period was unique for the professionalization and secularisation of diplomacy, and conceptualised the actions of individual ambassadors as the result of political tensions. Mattingly's seminal work, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, is indicative of this perspective as it focuses on the rise of resident embassies in the period and relates diplomacy only to the needs of states.¹² The rise of resident diplomacy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has thus often been linked to the codification of ideas about the state.¹³ While aptly highlighting the complexities of establishing resident embassies, this focus also creates an overarching narrative of political progress towards modern diplomacy and disregards the divisions of culture and religion in diplomatic practice and relationships. Tying the rise of resident diplomacy to processes of globalisation burdens diplomacy with conceptions of state-building and nationhood, thus de-emphasising the importance of ambassadors within these structural frameworks and how their individual diplomatic activities influenced and actualised political developments and considerations.¹⁴

These narratives have subsequently been challenged by the New Diplomatic History, which champions diplomacy as a multifaceted social discourse.¹⁵ The New Diplomatic History has responded to previous scholarship by examining communication networks and other

¹² Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*.

¹³ Richard Langhorne, 'Current Developments in Diplomacy: Who are the Diplomats Now?', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 8/2 (1997), pp. 1-15.

¹⁴ For an example of scholarly work on diplomatic history as it relates to state formation see Christopher Storrs, *War, Diplomacy, and the Rise of Savoy, 1690-1720* (Cambridge, 1999).

¹⁵ Tracey A. Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', *History Compass*, 14/9 (2016), pp. 441-56.

individuals who politically engaged with different polities beyond ‘the notion of the territorially bounded, sovereign state’.¹⁶ John Watkins suggests that scholars move from studies of diplomatic history ‘centered on nineteenth-century understandings of the nation’ towards the interdisciplinary and social methodologies that have enlivened historical discussions of race, gender, and intellectual history, to name but a few.¹⁷ This historiographical development therefore accounts for imperial cities, and smaller polities that otherwise do not fit modern criteria of statehood.¹⁸ Watkins is also joined by a chorus of European scholars who have suggested that diplomatic history embrace aspects of cultural history.¹⁹ The New Diplomatic History even includes alternative ‘foreign representatives and negotiators’ in its analysis, such as merchants, missionaries, or translators, amongst others.²⁰ It has thus opened the field to discussions of the role of women, such as mistresses or queen consorts, in diplomatic discourses.²¹

Questions, however, quickly emerge as to who, beyond a fully accredited ambassador, should be considered a diplomatic agent. Natalie Rothman, accounting for how individuals such as dragomans could possess membership to various political or cultural groups, refers to these individuals as ‘trans-imperial subjects’.²² Rothman has noted that legitimacy and accreditation could not be taken for granted, but instead was continually maintained and upheld by the

¹⁶ Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings, ‘Introduction: Practices of Diplomacy’, in Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410-1800* (Abingdon, 2017), p. 2.

¹⁷ John Watkins, ‘Towards a New Diplomatic History’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38/1 (2008), p. 1.

¹⁸ See J. L. Brooke, Julia C. Strauss, and Greg Anderson (eds), *State Formations: Global Histories and Cultures of Statehood* (Cambridge, 2018).

¹⁹ See Peter Krüger, ‘Internationale Beziehungen, Verfassung, Perzeption’, in Sven Externbrink and Jörg Ulbert (eds), *Formen Internationaler Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit: Frankreich und das Alte Reich im Europäischen Staatensystem* (Berlin, 2001), pp. 21-33.

²⁰ Sowerby and Hennings, ‘Introduction’, p. 7.

²¹ Sowerby, ‘Early Modern Diplomatic History’, p. 445.

²² Natalie E. Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, 2011), p. 5.

diplomats or intermediaries in question.²³ Though the majority of diplomatic agents examined in this thesis fall under the category of accredited formal ambassador, the Spanish resident ambassadors in England and Philip II still contended with questions surrounding who was a diplomat in the Elizabethan court, illustrating how legitimacy and authority could not be assumed. Therefore, the inclusion of sub-ambassadorial figures allows this thesis to scrutinise the activities of those personally but unofficially entrusted by Philip II to represent him abroad and engage with Iberian information networks, shedding light on the more informal diplomatic agents impacting early modern politics.

In its emphasis on cultural activities, the New Diplomatic History also inevitably posits what constitutes diplomacy and if diplomacy can be understood as a universal practice which demonstrates a shared ‘political rationality amongst human beings’.²⁴ At its core, the New Diplomatic History argues that diplomacy could be comprised of an evolving mix of material exchanges, rituals, social engagements, and informal conversations, all done in the pursuit of political or diplomatic goals. Jan Hennings has thus asserted that ‘diplomatic culture was itself a product of continuous cultural exchange’ as groups adapted to one another, eventually creating a ‘shared pool of ceremonial norms’ that diplomats and rulers alike could draw upon.²⁵ This emphasis on cultural activities has led to the examination of the rich textual and performative aspects of diplomacy and forms of diplomatic communication, beyond relaying news.²⁶ Therefore, the hidden significance of diplomatic encounters must be aptly addressed as

²³ Natalie E. Rothman, ‘Afterword: Intermediaries, Mediation, and Cross Confessional Diplomacy in the Early Modern Mediterranean’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2 (2015), p. 250.

²⁴ Joan-Pau Rubiés, ‘Political Rationality and Cultural Distance in the European Embassies to Shah Abbas’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 20/4 (2016), pp. 357-58.

²⁵ Jan Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe: Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648-1725* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 8, 247.

²⁶ See Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood (eds), *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World* (Oxford, 2019); Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Cornell, 2009).

diplomatic and communication practices could differ within various political or cultural contexts, and could cause genuine misunderstandings or miscommunications that led to breakdowns in diplomatic contact.²⁷ The focus on cultural activities and their symbolic meaning also highlights instances where diplomacy was conducted despite cultural difference. In the context of Reformation Europe, cross-cultural and cross-confessional diplomacy emerge as key historiographical considerations, altering our understanding of the basis of diplomatic relations and how diplomatic figures contended with cultural and religious difference.²⁸ Regarding later sixteenth-century Anglo-Spanish relations, there is an exciting opportunity to witness cross-cultural and cross-confessional diplomacy in practice especially given England's recent religious change and its effect on established political relations. Incorporating analysis of cultural history therefore meaningfully expands the field of diplomatic history, but also muddles its boundaries. Diplomacy was comprised of 'complex layers of political exchanges' that took on different forms, thus it would be erroneous to assume that modern understandings of diplomacy can be uniformly applied to the early modern period, especially as diplomacy did not itself emerge as a term until the eighteenth century.²⁹

The New Diplomatic History also comfortably supports the connective agendas of some global histories as the cross-border interactions of diplomatic agents can demonstrate the 'processes of intercultural interaction'.³⁰ Global histories can often focus on connections of

²⁷ Rubiés, 'Political Rationality', p. 358; This has also been considered within studies of cultural commensurability in diplomatic contact, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2012).

²⁸ See Toby Osborne and Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Introduction: Diplomacy and Cultural Translation in the Early Modern World', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 20/4 (2016), pp. 313-30; Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, 'Introduction: Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), pp. 93-105.

²⁹ Sowerby and Hennings, 'Introduction', p. 2.

³⁰ Christina Brauner, 'To Be the Key for Two Coeffers: A West African Embassy to France (1670/1)', *IFRA e-Papers*, 30 (2013), p. 2; For an overview of Iberian global histories see Subrahmanyam, 'Holding the World in Balance', pp. 1359–85; Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires*.

broad geographical scopes, and the interactions between European and non-European actors, however diplomatic interactions within Europe still highlight the communication networks underlying cross-cultural and cross-confessional connection, especially given the importance of the recent religious divide.³¹ Diplomats themselves, consequently, have begun to emerge as transcultural agents whose experiences highlight cultural and confessional difference, and assert the relevance of cultural exchange in early modern diplomacy.³² Ultimately, serious consideration of Anglo-Spanish diplomacy in the Elizabethan period cannot disregard the importance of and the ambassadors' concerns over the religious divide as they mediated exchange between Catholic and Protestant political agents.

Diplomacy undoubtedly underwent considerable changes throughout the early modern period, as demonstrated through attempts to codify ambassadorship, however, this thesis will refrain from conceptualising such changes as the professionalization of diplomacy, and will instead focus on diplomacy as both a social and political activity.³³ The New Diplomatic History ultimately has allowed for the study of early modern diplomacy to lose its traditionally rigid parameters of political engagements or legal agreements agreed to in public official settings, to argue that diplomacy was flexible and influenced by various individuals beyond ambassadors. The case of early modern Spanish diplomacy, therefore, offers unique insights into the cultural

³¹ Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, "'Localism'", *Global History and Transnational History: A Reflection from the Historian of Early Modern Europe*, *Historisk Tidskrift*, 127/4 (2007), p. 662; Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton, 2016); Maxine Berg, 'Global History: Approaches and New Directions', in Maxine Berg (ed), *Writing the History of the Global* (Oxford, 2013).

³² For examples of early modern studies that consider ambassadors as cultural agents, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York, 2006); John Paul Ghebrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford, 2013); Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (ed), *Embajadores Culturales: Transferencias y Lealtades de la Diplomacia Española de la Edad Moderna* (Madrid, 2016); Marika Koblussek and Baldeloch Noldus (eds), *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2011).

³³ For an outline on the emerging conceptions of ambassadors in the early modern period and prescriptive texts, see Heidrun R. I. Kugeler, "'Le Parfait Ambassadeur': The Theory and Practice of Diplomacy in the Century Following the Peace of Westphalia" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2009).

interactions of the New Diplomatic History, as ambassadors contended with questions of their own agency and Philip II's empire in this complicated and malleable political and social arena.³⁴ While there have been previous attempts within Spanish historiography to present an all-encompassing account of Spanish diplomacy, their focus lay in the dominating influence of the state and its rulers, without sufficient analysis of the agency of ambassadors and other diplomatic agents.³⁵ Conversely, this thesis will draw upon methods of network analysis to untangle the ambassadors' associations and communities from their correspondence, and cultural historical methods to understand the symbolic meaning of their writing and social interactions. By doing so, it will help scholars interested in cross-cultural diplomacy afresh by relating the Spanish ambassadors' cultural and social activities to their political aims and diplomatic mission.

Area and Scope of Study

Individual ambassadors, ultimately, played a central role in early modern diplomatic theory and practice, defining processes of interaction and perception.³⁶ Therefore, this thesis will employ an actor-centred approach in order to critically assess the individual perceptions and actions of ambassadors who have been long disregarded as merely caricatures of Anglo-Spanish rivalry.³⁷

This thesis is based on extensive research of the manuscripts in the Archivo General de

³⁴ Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, 'A New Diplomatic History and the Networks of Spanish Diplomacy in the Baroque Era', *The International History Review*, 36/4 (2014), pp. 603-18.

³⁵ See Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la Diplomacia Española* (6 vols, Madrid, 1990).

³⁶ On the actor-centred approach in diplomatic history see Christian Windler and Hillard Thiessen (eds), *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im Historischen Wandel* (Cologne, 2010).

³⁷ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider special ambassadors sent to England from Spain during the Elizabethan period; it will instead focus on the diplomatic activities and perspectives of resident ambassadors to England and the sub-ambassadorial figure Antonio de Guaras.

Simancas and the *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*.³⁸ The primary concern is with how the Spanish ambassadors performed their diplomatic duties in England and how they adapted to broader political and religious concerns, and thus the analysis departs from established narratives of the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations into military conflict. Instead it presents the adaptability of Spanish diplomacy and ask questions about the rationale behind early modern diplomatic relations and resident embassies.

The structure of this thesis is inspired by early modern treatises on diplomacy which endeavoured to define the important functions of an ambassador and the nature of ambassadorship, and drew from examples of both stable and broken diplomatic relations to support their argument. Largely divided into two parts, Part I outlines the foundational aspects of diplomacy and the tasks deemed crucial to an embassy's success, while Part II moves towards case studies of how the Spanish ambassadors' embassies reacted to specific crises, concerns, or developments and influenced Anglo-Spanish relations. More particularly, Part I elucidates the foundations of early modern Spanish diplomacy and Philip II's embassies to Elizabethan England. It outlines his appointments of and instructions to his ambassadors, demonstrates the communication and epistolary practices of the Spanish ambassadors, and showcases Iberian administrative practices to reveal how information was circulated and utilised. Ambassadors will be approached as social actors to highlight how they operated within social circles for political goals and information gathering. Special attention will be paid to conceptions of precedence and ceremonial in an examination of how early modern Spanish ambassadors represented their rulers in diplomatic hierarchies, particularly against the French ambassadors.

³⁸ Philip II's correspondence with his ambassadors in England is also published as a subset of the *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España* (CODOIN) in 5 separate volumes, *La Correspondencia de Felipe II con sus Embajadores en la Corte de Inglaterra 1558 a 1584*, but will be cited here in their original sequence within CODOIN as volumes 87, 89, 90, 91, and 92.

Crucially, however, how ambassadors accessed court spaces, diplomatic networks, and formed relationships in England depended on their status and accreditation. Part I will thus conclude with an examination of sub-ambassadorial figures to present a working definition of a Spanish ambassador.

In Part II, the ways in which the Spanish embassies interacted with court members and through various political developments will be examined within specific case studies. Efforts to gather information from English courtiers and form communication networks in England will set the stage for how the ambassadors responded to the demands of their embassies. Their interactions with councillors William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, and Francis Walsingham in particular will be examined in a cross-confessional context. The Spanish embassies in England will thus be contextualised within concerns over Protestantism at the Elizabethan court, Elizabeth's marriage negotiations, the state of Catholicism in England, and the threat to Elizabeth from Mary, Queen of Scots. Additionally, the Dutch Revolt, and the challenge of Dom António to Philip II's Portuguese rule will be used to showcase the ambassadors' and Philip II's diplomatic strategy during crises of the Spanish empire. Finally, the thesis will reveal the limitations of ambassadorship by critically assessing which of their actions were deemed acceptable for their position and the rhetoric surrounding expulsion and diplomatic privilege.

Ultimately, this research changes our understanding of Anglo-Spanish diplomacy by illustrating the importance of the Spanish ambassadors in broader European political developments and how they impacted information networks and practices. The relevance of the English embassy within Spanish communication networks will emerge as a key theme throughout the thesis as the ambassadors' correspondence reveals how the diplomatic strategy of Philip II's political actors differed from his own and showcase if, and how, cross-confessional

diplomatic relations persisted in an Anglo-Spanish context. As the New Diplomatic History hopes to untangle the role of unofficial diplomatic actors, illuminate the cultural activities underpinning diplomacy, and decentralize the role of the state in the early modern world, this thesis will serve as a vital addition to this recent scholarship by arguing that Spanish embassies in Elizabethan England defined processes of early modern diplomacy far beyond Anglo-Spanish relations.

PART I

Chapter 1: The Spanish Embassy in Elizabethan England and Foundations of Diplomatic Communication

The Spanish Embassy in England and Models of Spanish Diplomacy

The Spanish embassy in England has received modest historical inquiry, however, this has largely focused on periods of amicable or temperate Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations and disregarded the embassy during periods of tension. Namely, the Imperial embassy of Eustace Chapuys to Henry VIII's court, though Charles V was often personally outraged by Henry VIII, and Spanish ambassador Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, the Count of Gondomar's relationship with James I have each been examined in wider cultural studies on court dynamics or the early modern book trade.¹ Thus, the Spanish embassy in Elizabethan England, and its place within the context of early modern diplomatic practice has yet to be fully explored. While the ambassadors Philip II sent to Elizabethan England ultimately inherited practices from earlier Spanish models, their embassies also illustrate how Spanish diplomatic practices encapsulated a larger cultural transformation in communication and information sharing in the sixteenth century. Their correspondence within the Consejo de Estado in the Archivo General de Simancas demonstrate the use of established and growing communication networks, epistolary practices, and the administrative organisation of diplomatic dispatches. Therefore, they show

¹ See Lauren Mackay, *Inside the Tudor Court: Henry VIII and His Six Wives through the Eyes of the Spanish Ambassador Eustace Chapuys* (Stroud, 2015); José A. Pérez Díez, 'Gondomar and the Stage: Diego Sarmiento de Acuña and the Lost Theatrical Connection', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s. 1-25 (2021), pp. 1-25; Ernesto Oyarbide, 'Embodying the Portrait of the Perfect Ambassador: The First Count of Gondomar and the Role of Print Culture and Cultural Literacy in Anglo-Spanish Relations during the Jacobean Period', in Carrió-Invernizzi (ed), *Embajadores Culturales*, pp. 157-86.

how Philip II's diplomats adapted to the challenges of the Elizabethan period and subsequently became key informants in the early modern circulation of news.

Spain established a network of resident diplomats earlier than most other European polities.² Philip II utilised diplomatic practices popularised by Ferdinand and Isabella, such as resident diplomacy and gift-giving, as Ferdinand and Isabella 'provided a template for future Spanish rulers' as the union of Castile and Aragon helped combine medieval conventions with new diplomatic practices and appointments.³ These networks were prominent throughout Europe, as the circulation of diplomatic dispatches, and even cultural texts, from an ambassadorial posting back to Madrid can be witnessed in Spanish embassies throughout early modern Europe, especially Italy.⁴ Certain practices, however, should not only be accredited to their union but relied on wider established diplomatic practices. The Holy Roman Empire's diplomatic contact in the fifteenth century, as explored by Duncan Hardy, also saw official ambassadors rely on local diplomatic actors, suggesting some continuations into later modes of imperial diplomacy witnessed in Philip II's reign.⁵

This chapter examines the communication and epistolary practices of the Spanish embassy in England and situates the embassy within broader early modern European models of diplomacy to reveal a distinctly diplomatic epistolary culture of news sharing and flow of information. Faced with new political challenges, Spanish models of diplomacy proved to be adaptable and they utilised and contributed to broader developments and transformations in

² See J. N. Hillgrath, *The Spanish Kingdoms 1250-1516* (2 vols, Oxford, 1976-8) for an overview of Spanish foreign policy and diplomatic activities prior to the Elizabethan period.

³ Germán Gamero Igea, 'Gift Exchanges, Self-Representation, and the Political Use of Objects during Ferdinand the Catholic's Reign', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, p. 214.

⁴ Michael Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth Century Italy* (Ithaca, 2005), pp. 10, 183-99.

⁵ Duncan Hardy, 'Burgundian Clients in the South-western Holy Roman Empire, 1410-1477: Between International Diplomacy and Regional Political Culture', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, p. 29.

early modern communication and news. Cultivating diplomatic knowledge and responding to the unique challenges in Philip II's empire, the appointment and instruction of his ambassadors to England developed to incorporate the increasing importance of the Low Countries in Anglo-Spanish relations. Moving beyond how ambassadors were prepared for their posting, their shared epistolary practices demonstrate a common epistolary culture within ambassadorial networks, affirming diplomatic dispatches as their own sub-genre of letters and impacting wider information sharing practices. The importance of materiality or physical demarcations of respect have been well documented, particularly in studies concerning letters between monarchs.⁶ However, diplomats also subscribed to the social logic of specific literary and material epistolary practices, and their correspondence can elucidate how letters could serve both practical and performative functions and how ambassadors' news was coupled with strategies of self-fashioning.

An examination of the ambassadors' diplomatic dispatches as material texts and the subsequent use of their reports also illuminates the administrative and record keeping practices of the Spanish government, and the wider transformation of the republic of letters. Ultimately, Spanish diplomatic correspondence influenced and was influenced by a larger transformation in sixteenth-century communication that helped disseminate news and solidified diplomatic letters as a genre of communication. Therefore, the correspondence of the Spanish ambassadors in England provides a rich case study of the emerging social and administrative logic of diplomatic documents and their place in the development of news. Their letters also illuminate questions about communication networks and whether networks were solely inherited or if

⁶ See Rayne Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York, 2012).

ambassadors demonstrated autonomy in reshaping and participating in these information communities.

The Appointment of Philip II's Ambassadors to England

Five men served as Philip II's official resident ambassador to Elizabethan England between 1558 and 1584.⁷ Upon Elizabeth's accession in November 1558, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa y Córdoba (d. 1571), the Count of Feria, assumed the post as Spanish ambassador to England until May 1559 when he was recalled at his own request. Álvaro de la Quadra (d. 1563), the Bishop of Aquila, occupied the embassy from 1559 until his death in 1563 and was replaced by Don Diego Guzmán de Silva (d. 1578), who served as ambassador from 1564 to 1568 when he was also recalled. Guerau de Spes (d. 1572) then took up the post until December 1571 when he was formally expelled for his involvement in the Ridolfi plot. This ultimately left the Spanish embassy unoccupied, with Spanish merchant, Antonio de Guaras (d. 1584), serving as an unofficial *chargé d'affaires* until the embassy was re-established by Bernardino de Mendoza (1540-1604) in 1578. Mendoza would serve until 1584 when, like Spes, Mendoza was expelled after being implicated for conspiring against Elizabeth.

Philip II's choice of these men continued his predecessors' practice of appointing mostly well-educated and elite men as his ambassador. During the sixteenth century, Spain experienced an increased interest in secondary education and university-trained specialists.⁸ Though this came to benefit a larger part of the Spanish population, specialised education and a religious education was still largely reserved for those from elite social classes. Therefore, Philip's

⁷ Foreign names will appear in their original language, with the exception of those conventionally known by an alternative or Anglicized spelling.

⁸ Sara T. Nalle, 'Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile', *Past & Present*, 125/1 (1989), p. 65.

appointments came from similar educational backgrounds, providing them with a common body of knowledge or courtly experience to utilise during their embassies.

Of the ambassadors sent to England, the Count of Feria, Guerau de Spes, and Bernardino de Mendoza all came from the Spanish nobility, and thus received an extensive education. Inheriting the title of fifth count of Feria, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa y Córdoba came from a great noble and land owning family and was able to build a strong personal relationship with Philip II.⁹ Feria's son even entered the service of Philip III as an ambassador, showcasing the family's prominence in Spanish diplomatic circles and the aristocracy.¹⁰ From the mid-1560s, Spes served as a knight of Calatrava, the first of the Spanish military orders, and was affiliated with the Cistercian religious order.¹¹ Despite carrying ideals of the Crusade far into the sixteenth century, the order's primary loyalty was to the king. Beginning in the thirteenth century, their ties to the royal court had limited recruitments to only the high nobility.¹² Spes was also from an ancient noble family that had a history of service to the crown of Aragon.¹³ While crown intervention in the military orders did eventually introduce men who had served as royal servants into these military orders, Spes's time as a knight demonstrates his relative social esteem and extensive education.¹⁴ José Miguel Cabañas Agrela has even asserted that Spes's Latin was particularly excellent.¹⁵ Prior to his appointment, Spes would have been well acquainted with the military objectives and the court dynamics of early modern Spain.

⁹ David Loades, 'Suárez de Figueroa, Gómez, first duke of Feria in the Spanish nobility (1520?-1571), diplomat', ODNB (6 Sept. 2020) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/70578>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Francisco Fernández Izquierdo, *La Orden Militar de Calatrava en el Siglo XVI: Infraestructura Institucional, Sociología y Prosopografía de sus Caballeros* (Madrid, 1992), p. 417; Peter Linehan, *Spain, 1157-1300: A Partible Inheritance* (Oxford, 2011), p. 11.

¹² Richard Barber, *The Reign of Chivalry* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 130.

¹³ José Miguel Cabañas Agrela, 'Guerau de Spes', DBE (24 Sept. 2019)

¹⁴ Izquierdo, *La Orden Militar de Calatrava*, p. 121.

¹⁵ Agrela, 'Guerau de Spes', DBE.

Mendoza also shared Spes's specialised military education and experience, and came from an extensive and powerful noble family—his father Don Alonso Suárez de Mendoza, the Count of Coruña, had received various royal favours and solidified the Mendoza family's place in Castilian history.¹⁶ After receiving his primary education at home, Mendoza was brought up in a relative's household, whose political position was meant to introduce him to state business and diplomacy.¹⁷ Here, Mendoza was educated in rhetoric and oratory, with the aspiration to eventually serve his monarch. Mendoza's *Comentarios* and later writings on his time in the Low Countries and in war also reflect his extensive education by showcasing his historical knowledge and rhetorical skills.¹⁸

Though lacking the same high aristocratic standing, ambassadors Alváro de la Quadra and Guzmán de Silva would have also been well educated through their church positions. In early modern Spain, those in the service of the Catholic church had often been educated to meet the qualifications of their specialised profession and were thus well versed in theology and rhetoric.¹⁹ Quadra had served as the Bishop of Aquila, in Italy, and had prepared for a life in the church from an early age, prior to assuming the role of ambassador. Silva held a canonry in the Cathedral of Toledo before his time as ambassador to England and in this capacity, had negotiated with the Queen of France regarding the return of religious relics to Toledo.²⁰ Therefore, all those appointed as official ambassadors to England by Philip II had a strong social standing and comprehensive education that provided key rhetorical skills that later helped them

¹⁶ José Miguel Cabañas Agrela, *Don Bernardino de Mendoza un Escritor-Soldado al Servicio de la Monarquía Católica (1540-1604)* (Madrid, 2001), p. 45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Bernardino De Mendoza, *Comentarios de Don Bernardino de Mendoza de lo Sucedido en las Guerras de los Payses Baxos, desde el Año de 1567 hasta el de 1577* (Madrid, 1592).

¹⁹ Luise Schorn-Schütte, 'Priest, Preacher, Pastor: Research on Clerical Office in Early Modern Europe', *Central European History*, 33/1 (2000), p. 36.

²⁰ Collado A. Fernández, *La Catedral de Toledo en el Siglo XVI. Vida, Arte y Personas* (Toledo, 1999), p. 78.

communicate with diplomatic networks. However, Philip eventually needed to adapt his appointments to consider relevant political experience and the recommendations of key political figures to appoint individuals well suited to this posting.

Initially, Philip did not have to contend seriously with questions of appointing an especially suited ambassador to his embassy in England. Feria, as a favourite and confidant of Philip, had first gone to England for Philip's marriage to Mary I.²¹ He then later returned to England in 1557 as Philip's representative, and thus lacked the formal instruction and preparation of a traditional resident ambassador. Described unflatteringly as 'without ambition' by David Loades, Feria fulfilled his basic function of reporting news of England back to Philip. He enjoyed special access to the English monarch due to her marriage to Philip and neither required nor requested further guidance in his posting. Once Elizabeth succeeded the throne, however, Philip recalled Feria.

With the Elizabethan regime beginning to re-establish Protestantism as the religion in England, sending a Catholic bishop as one's resident ambassador could be interpreted as an act of aggression, however there were political considerations in sending a new embassy. Feria had married Mary I's former maid of honour, Jane Dormer, and enjoyed extensive ties to the Marian regime. While the appointment of Quadra may have helped to disassociate the Spanish embassy politically from the Marian regime, it firmly placed religious difference as a key issue. Eventually, Elizabeth wanted to have Quadra recalled due to extensive religious conflicts and his support of English Catholics, but Quadra passed away in England before being able to return to Spain.²²

²¹ Loades, 'Suárez de Figueroa', ODNB <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/70578>.

²² Quadra's engagement with English Catholic communities are examined at length in Chapter 5.

Responding to the tensions caused during Quadra's ambassadorship, Philip's next appointment still had strong religious beliefs and a background in the Church, but crucially possessed a greater deal of diplomatic experience and was hoped to be a more temperate choice. Philip explicitly noted Silva's experience in his initial instructions, writing that Silva had the necessary characteristics and qualifications, namely his 'lineage, prudence, and experience in [state] affairs' coupled with his 'love and desire to serve' Philip II.²³ Silva's previous diplomatic service had also earned him contacts and established correspondence with Iberian political figures throughout Europe, providing him with a solid foundation for his embassy. This diplomatic experience was especially valuable during Silva's embassy since the 1560s witnessed growing unrest in the Low Countries. As figures such as the Duke of Alba increasingly engaged with the Spanish embassy in England, they also influenced Philip II's appointments of local ambassadors who could adequately address the concerns of the Low Countries as well.

When Philip appointed Spes as his ambassador to England in 1568, Alba corresponded with Spes to provide him with news from the Low Countries, and more importantly to ensure 'that [Silva's] successor is Catholic'.²⁴ Alba's personal interest in the matter and his hopes to preserve a Catholic appointment in England allude to the English embassy's relevance to Iberian political figures and networks. After his own embassy in England, Feria went on to serve in the Netherlands and also strongly influenced the appointment of Spes as ambassador during this period.²⁵ This development demonstrates the importance of those in the Low Countries, the interconnectedness of Philip II's ambassadorial networks in Northern Europe, and Philip II's

²³ 'linaje, prudencia, experiencia de negocios'; 'amor y deseo de servirme': CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 3-4.

²⁴ 'que el sucesor sea católico': CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 319.

²⁵ Loades, 'Suárez de Figueroa', ODNB <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/70578>.

use of diplomatic knowledge from England. Spes, however, would later be expelled from England. Though Philip did not send another resident ambassador to England until 1578, in January 1572, Alba asked Philip to consider carefully who would be the next official ambassador to England.²⁶ He wrote to Philip that he ‘would prefer that if he were someone from here [the Low Countries, rather] than from another place, because things he will deal with in that Kingdom [England], for the most part concern these [Low] Countries’.²⁷ Recognising the volatile political situation in the Netherlands, and England’s involvement in the matter, Alba believed that Philip’s next appointment should carry specialist knowledge in order to best address the conflict during his embassy.

Philip’s appointment of Mendoza as ambassador in 1578 followed the same logic as his appointment of Silva, as he referenced the diplomat’s past service and experience in justifying his suitability for the role. While Spain’s waning control of the Low Countries continually threatened Habsburg authority, Mendoza’s experience in the Low Countries and established connections became key reasons for appointing the former general. Philip’s choice of men to fill his embassy in England was demonstrably adapted in the light of growing issues in the Spanish empire, particularly crises such as the Dutch Revolt. Additionally, following a tumultuous embassy, Philip twice responded by appointing a new ambassador with extensive diplomatic experience and precultivated communication ties to key political figures in his European network. Thus, while subscribing to the general practice of appointing learned men from noble families that was common in early modern diplomacy, the appointment of specific ambassadors remained reactive and incorporated the suggestions of major political figures.

²⁶ During this period, Antonio de Guaras served as a de facto *chargé d’affaires* in lieu of an official embassy. His time at court will be examined extensively in Chapter 3.

²⁷ ‘estimaria mas que fuesse alguno de por aca que de otra nacion, porque las cosas que ha de tratar en aquel Reyno tocan por la mayor parte a estos Payses’: AGS Estado 551, fo. 37v.

Ultimately, the prosopography of Philip's appointments to the Spanish embassy in England demonstrates the enduring importance of the nobility but also the development of a new diplomatic strategy that prioritised relevant diplomatic experience and familiarity with certain political issues.

Instruction and Diplomatic Preparation

As the resident ambassador was meant to represent the wishes of their monarch, clear instructions were crucial to accurately reflect the monarch's views. The initial instructions sent to ambassadors beginning a new posting therefore demonstrate the foreign policy aims of their posting and illustrate the diplomatic practices utilised by a monarch. Philip II's instructions to his ambassadors showcase the importance of his communication networks and circulating information between his various embassies and Iberian political actors across Europe. His instructions also indicate his desire to create a comprehensive and self-sufficient diplomatic communication network as he required his ambassadors 'to set up regular exchanges of correspondence between each other'.²⁸ Understanding the importance of ambassadors' working relationships, Philip relied upon these networks to inform and prepare his incoming ambassadors. Meeting with one's predecessor, or with individuals such as Alba, was an integral part of their diplomatic preparation. Additionally, his instructions also evolved to consider the difficulties of the embassy in England, and began to caution against actions that had compromised previous embassies, highlighting how Philip had to respond to and utilise new diplomatic knowledge to adjust his strategy.

²⁸ Cristina Borreguero Beltrán, 'Philip of Spain: The Spider's Web of News and Information', in Brendan Dooley (ed), *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Burlington 2010), p. 30.

Due to the unique nature of Feria's time as ambassador—he was not the resident ambassador of a foreign power but of Mary I's spouse—Feria had not been sent extensive diplomatic instructions nor was he prepared to represent the Spanish monarchy upon Elizabeth's succession. Feria's confusion, and his repeated requests for Philip to correspond with Mary, may have been the result of his understanding of previous models of Spanish diplomacy between spouses. Models of diplomacy developed during Ferdinand and Isabella's reign were the result of mixing different traditions to account for both domestic and foreign relationships.²⁹ Ferdinand needed to cooperate with his wife Isabella to pursue international policies and balance the interests of Castile. Spanish diplomatic tradition therefore adopted both Castilian and Aragonese practices as a result of Ferdinand and Isabella's union.³⁰ This cooperation between spouses may have influenced how Feria understood his English posting, and in particular Feria's attempts to encourage Philip to correspond and cooperate with Mary I. Feria's lack of instruction, and perhaps his own ineptitude, subsequently caused his embassy a great deal of distress when he became *de facto* foreign ambassador upon Elizabeth's accession. Feria expressed immediate concern with Elizabeth's rule, writing in November 1558, only a week after Mary's death, that 'I am greatly afraid' of the state of religion as Henry VIII's annulment had caused 'a defect in the line of succession'.³¹ Thus he encouraged Philip to write to Rome to better understand the situation.³² Feria also lamented that he had been removed from the heart of the English court and policy discussions.³³ In December 1558, he expressed that 'I wish to always promptly understand what happens here' but that the English 'wanted to see me lying in

²⁹ Igea, 'Gift Exchanges', p. 205.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

³¹ 'Yo estoy con gran miedo'; 'defecto en la sucesión': CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 88-9.

³² CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 89.

³³ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 81.

the river'.³⁴ Feria began to request further instruction and clarification to fulfil an official diplomatic role, however he elicited few replies.

In Feria's own circles, it was clear that he believed he would be recalled upon Mary's death. In November 1558, he wrote to González Pérez, secretary at the Consejo de Estado, about how Henry Cobham's diplomatic missions and the whereabouts of some other English agents had been adapted or were 'terminated upon the death of the Queen [Mary]'.³⁵ Feria's comments reflected a wider understanding that diplomatic postings were contingent upon monarchs, and having represented a specific relationship between Philip II and the English monarch, he would either require new credentials or should leave this posting once the relationship changed. Feria, however, still held a unique purpose in England as he became part of Quadra's diplomatic preparation and oversaw the transition between the embassies.

Quadra ultimately received greater diplomatic preparation and instruction than Feria, as Spain needed to re-establish a fully-fledged ambassador in England. Quadra had also been sent to England before Feria's departure to serve Feria in a supporting role, providing a transition between embassies that allowed the men to cultivate a relationship. Therefore, Quadra was never confused about his role at court and did not have to adapt to a new position. In December 1558, Feria thanked Philip for sending Quadra, noting that the latter 'understood the business of the Emperor and his children very well...he is a very rational and virtuous man, and with good service will help me greatly'.³⁶ These meetings also provided Philip with the opportunity to pass on his instructions to Quadra. Later, Philip instructed Feria to present Quadra to

³⁴ 'deseo que siempre entiendo puntualmente lo que aquí pasa'; 'me querían ver echado en el río': CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 105-6.

³⁵ 'espirado con la muerte de la Reina': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 89.

³⁶ 'muy bien entendidos los negocios de Emperador y sus hijos...es hombre muy cuerdo y virtuoso, y para cualquier buen servicio y ayudaráme mucho': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 90.

Elizabeth as the new resident Spanish ambassador in England. In May 1559, he instructed Feria that

When you leave to say goodbye to the Queen, you will take the Bishop of Aquila with you and will present him to her and say (as I am also writing him) that I have appointed him to reside as my Ambassador to her... and you will tell the Bishop of what you see fit, and order him to continue and carry out the businesses that you have started there, and to notify us of what will be done.³⁷

A standard practice, the formal introduction was meant to establish the new embassy officially in England and ensure that other members of the court were aware of the new appointment.

In addition to sharing diplomatic documents, Feria and Quadra also jointly met with Elizabethan councillors in order to cultivate new working relationships between Quadra and the English. Feria noted in March 1559 that with Quadra, ‘I had a long conversation with the Treasurer of the household regarding those religious matters that were dealt with here...and although he [the Treasurer] is not as Catholic as would be necessary, he is the best among those close with the Queen’.³⁸ Quadra had also noted in a memo that he ‘want[ed] to remain neutral’ in business with Elizabeth as events surrounding the death of Mary, and tensions with the French king, pointed to the destruction of the Catholic religion.³⁹ Therefore, Quadra at least presented himself as hoping to cultivate diplomatic ties regardless of religious strife and Feria helped Quadra identify possible working relationships that would be beneficial for his embassy. Quadra’s embassy, nevertheless, was almost exclusively dedicated to persevering the Catholic

³⁷ ‘Cuando os fuéredes á despedir de la Reina, llevareis con vos al Obispo de Aquila, y se la presentareis y diréis (como yo también se lo escribo), cómo le he nombrado para quede y resida por mi Embajador cerca della...y al Obispo dejareis advertido de lo que viéredes que conviene, y órden que continúe y lleve adelante los negocios que vos habéis comenzado, y que nos avise de lo que en ellos se hiciere’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 182-3.

³⁸ Here Quadra is likely referring to William Paulet, see David Loades, *The Life and Career of William Paulet (c. 1475-1572): Lord Treasurer and First Marquis of Winchester* (Aldershot, 2008); ‘es haber yo tenido una larga plática con el Tesorero de la casa acerca destos negocios que aquí se han tratado de la religión...y aunque él no está tan católico como sería menester, es el más puesto en razón de los que tiene lugar con la Reina’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 136.

³⁹ ‘querer estar neutral’; CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 133.

faith at Feria's encouragement. Quadra's first memo (received from Feria) detailed that Elizabeth was set to 'totally destroy the [Catholic] Religion'.⁴⁰ Quadra was thus encouraged to monitor figures such as William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief advisor, who would only harm Catholicism if tensions were not remedied.⁴¹ Owing to his own interest in the religious state of England as a bishop, Quadra's predecessor only further helped define his religious focus. The ensuing conflicts of Quadra's embassy thus provoked the appointment of a more politically minded ambassador as his successor.

By the mid-1560s, Habsburg authority in Europe had experienced specific tensions, such as the grievances in the Low Countries. The growing importance of the Dutch context redefined Philip's diplomatic strategy to ensure that his ambassadors could adequately address these concerns. Thus, in his original diplomatic instructions to Guzmán de Silva in January 1564, Philip outlined how Silva needed to understand the business between England and the Low Countries.⁴² In 1564, even before his posting to England, Philip had tasked Silva with a mission in the Low Countries, providing him with connections to the royal officials and local nobility, contacts he would utilise during his time in England and beyond in his future ambassadorial postings.⁴³ Silva's ambassadorship also provided Philip with the opportunity to solidify Habsburg cooperation: Philip's instructions explained that his uncle, the Holy Roman Emperor, lacked an ordinary ambassador in England so he was accustomed to having Quadra represent Imperial matters, 'and so I will be pleased to do the same with you'.⁴⁴ This was not an entirely

⁴⁰ 'destruir la Religión totalmente'; CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 132-3.

⁴¹ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 136.

⁴² CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 7.

⁴³ Maria J. Rodríguez-Salgado, "'Do not reveal that I wrote this': Diplomatic Correspondence, News and Narratives in the Early Years of the Civil War in the Low Countries", in Raymond Fagel, Leonor Álvarez Francés, and Beatriz Santiago Belmonte (eds), *Early Modern War Narratives and the Revolt in the Low Countries* (Manchester, 2020), pp. 18-35.

⁴⁴ 'y así holgaré de que si usare con vos lo mismo'; CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 10.

unique phenomenon as Habsburg-Spanish diplomatic cooperation also similarly occurred in the early modern Ottoman court.⁴⁵ Silva ultimately benefited from his integration into these information networks, with Luis Requensens, Governor of Milan, commenting to Philip that he did not need to be instructed on maintaining a correspondence with Silva due to his ‘great obligation and desire’ to speak to Silva in any case.⁴⁶

Philip’s instructions to Silva also began to outline the individuals with whom Silva was meant to uphold constant communication, highlighting Philip’s refinement of his networks while also allowing Silva to solidify his own communication practices. Philip had even tasked Margaret of Parma, then Governor of the Low Countries, with providing Silva with ‘the general cipher’ he was to use in his correspondence.⁴⁷ Additionally, the king also highlighted that Cardinal Granvelle, a prominent statesmen for the Spanish Habsburgs, and Francés de Álava, the Spanish ambassador to France, should be key correspondents, though Silva was to identify any other relevant ministers on his own.⁴⁸ Ensuring that other political figures worked with Silva, Philip also wrote to Álava about the appointment, ordering him to keep Silva informed of French matters so that the latter could ‘have the good intelligence and correspondence that he requires’ to conduct his duties.⁴⁹ Therefore, Philip intended that there would be a triangulation of information between England, France, and the Low Countries.

⁴⁵ See Aneliya Stoyanova, ‘The Benefits and Limits of Permanent Diplomacy: Austrian Habsburg Ambassadors and Ottoman-Spanish Diplomacy in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century’, in Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz (eds), *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c.1500–1630* (New York, 2021), pp. 153–73.

⁴⁶ Rodríguez-Salgado, ‘Diplomatic Correspondence’, p. 23.

⁴⁷ ‘la cifra general’; CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 5.

⁴⁸ CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 5.

⁴⁹ ‘tengáis con él la buena inteligencia y correspondencia que se requiere’: Don Francés de Álava y Beamonte, *Don Francés de Álava y Beamonte: Correspondencia inédita de Felipe II con su embajador en París (1564–1570)*, eds. Pedro Rodríguez and Justina Rodríguez (San Sebastián, 1991), p. 145.

Silva's instructions also alluded to the necessity of having an ambassador physically present in England in order to achieve diplomatic goals and ameliorate political damage. Philip explained to Silva that despite 'the letters of Luis Román, who was Bishop Quadra's secretary, that were shown to you [Silva] here, who has dealt with and continues to deal with English matters after the death of his master [Quadra]', the damage caused by growing tensions in the Low Countries and the seizure of Spanish ships by the English had mounted in the absence of an official ambassador.⁵⁰ Receiving the diplomatic documents of one's predecessor also demonstrates the administrative practices of Spanish diplomacy as it was common for a secretary to copy dispatches and eventually have them stored by the Spanish secretariat in Madrid.

Philip also circulated his instructions to Silva to other members of his network, such as Margaret of Parma and Alba, to ensure cooperation and clarify the aims of his embassy in England. To Margaret of Parma, Philip explained that 'I will show you the instructions that I am sending him [Silva], as is right, so you can see what they contain', and requested that she notify Silva of any developments that might aid his embassy.⁵¹ Philip also delegated to Alba the task of providing further instructions and news to his later ambassadors. For example, in May 1568, he informed Silva that 'away from here I have ordered that only the Duke of Alba be informed of my deliberation, and you will give him [notice of] what was done, so he understands it and can tell you of what he sees fit'.⁵² Therefore, Philip relied on others to provide instruction

⁵⁰ 'las cartas que aquí se os han mostrado de Luis Roman, secretario que fué del Obispo Quadra, se ha tratado y trata los negocios en Inglaterra despues que su amo murió': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 5.

⁵¹ 'la instruccion que vereis que mandádole he que os la muestre, como es razon, así para que sepa lo que contiene': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 12.

⁵² 'fuera de aquí á solo de Duque de Alba he mandado dar aviso desta mi deliberacion, y vos se lo dareis de lo que se hiciese, para que lo entienda y os pueda advertir de lo que viere que conviene': CODOIN, xc, p. 64.

and represent his wishes, demonstrating the comprehensiveness and self-sufficiency of his networks as he did not have to engage with the issue.

The concept of relying on the use of communication networks and tasking one's predecessor with aiding the transition between embassies occurred again upon the appointment of Spes. In June 1568, Philip II confirmed to Silva that he was going to be ambassador to Venice, and oversee Spes's transition to ambassador to England. He explained 'before you leave [England], you are to inform Don Guerau [de Spes] of the state of public and private matters very well, and make sure he knows who can be trusted and other things in that Court and Kingdom'.⁵³ Spes's first task was to meet with Silva, 'to whom you will show and communicate these original instructions' so that Silva could arrange an audience to present Spes as the next Spanish resident ambassador.⁵⁴

Yet, due to the continued significance of political issues such as the tensions in the Low Countries, Philip realised that one's diplomatic predecessor alone could not fully prepare someone to address the new needs of the embassy in England. Alba thus became a greater part of Spes's diplomatic preparation than with his predecessors. In November 1568, Philip wrote to Alba that Spes had been ordered 'to reside near your person, [as] it seems to me that with your good sense and manner, and with your knowledge of England, [you] will be useful in assisting him in these States'.⁵⁵ Philip also sent Alba a copy of his initial instructions to Spes in 1568 and asked Alba to assist Spes in whatever matters might aid him.⁵⁶ Again, Philip also instructed his ambassador Álava to aid Spes from France to keep him informed just as Álava

⁵³ 'antes que salgais de ahí habeis de informar muy bien á D. Guerau del estado de los negocios públicos y particulares, y darle á conocer las personas de quien se puede fiar y las otras cosas desa Corte y Reino': CODOIN, xc, p. 89.

⁵⁴ 'á quien mostrareis y comunicareis esta instruccion original': CODOIN, xc, p.126.

⁵⁵ 'le enviar á residir cerca de vuestra persona, paresciéndome que con su cordura y buena manera y con la inteligencia que tiene de lo de Inglaterra, podrá ser útil su asistencia en esos Estados': CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 495.

⁵⁶ CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 495.

had done with Silva.⁵⁷ Thus, Habsburg communication networks were prominently featured in ambassadorial instructions in order to encourage correspondence and allow the circulation of news to operate independently. Ultimately, within these growing networks, diplomats became key informants in the circulation of information across early modern Europe.

It was clear in Philip II's instructions to Spes that Spes would inherit Anglo-Spanish tensions beyond his control. Indeed, Philip outlined his displeasure at the tumultuous embassy of English ambassador John Man in Madrid.⁵⁸ While a hindrance to maintaining amicable relations, the strife also provoked Philip to provide Spes with copies of diplomatic dispatches amongst other documents to properly educate him on the issue. In outlining the struggles presented by John Man, Philip's instructions noted that Silva 'has shown you [Spes] the letters I wrote then' on the matter, in addition to other documents from both Silva and Elizabeth regarding the issue.⁵⁹ Philip therefore responded to previous diplomatic tensions and prepared his incoming ambassador by circulating information and manuscript materials.

Philip's instructions to Mendoza, the last official resident ambassador Philip sent to Elizabethan England, provided the ambassador with the opportunity to redefine Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations that had been stalled for much of the 1570s. While Philip failed to strictly limit Mendoza's individual agency, his instructions were considerably lengthier than those sent to Mendoza's predecessors and continued his trend of outlining contacts and Habsburg communication networks that would aid the embassy. Philip's instructions thus adapted to

⁵⁷ Rodriguez and Rodriguez, *Don Francés de Álava y Beamonte*, p. 244.

⁵⁸ The embassy of John Man in Spain and its effect on diplomatic privileges is explored more thoroughly in Chapter 8.

⁵⁹ 'os ha mostrado de las cartas que entonces escribí': CODOIN, xc, p. 124.

caution certain activities and prioritise maintaining strong contact with his communication networks and positive Anglo-Spanish relations at court as a reaction to Spes's embassy.⁶⁰

After both Quadra and Spes compromised their embassies through their involvement with English Catholics, Philip instructed Mendoza that 'If any English Catholics come to you, you will receive them gently, comforting them and encouraging them with general words to persevere, without entering into any talk or plot against the Queen'.⁶¹ Philip also warned against showing hostility to the English kingdom because Antonio de Guaras, a Spanish merchant who had served as a *chargé d'affaires* in the absence of a formal resident embassy, had been arrested due to English suspicions and Mendoza was to request his immediate release.⁶² The characterisation of Mendoza as an ambassador of ill will popularised by Garrett Mattingly is thus suspect as José Miguel Cabañas Agrela has portrayed Mendoza as a writer-soldier devoutly dedicated to the service of a Catholic kingdom.⁶³ Rather, as shall be seen, Philip's instructions to Mendoza were more restrictive than to Mendoza's predecessors, thus Mendoza's actions considered Philip's instructions and his own religious convictions in tandem.⁶⁴ Indeed, Mendoza inherited contacts but exhibited his own agency in how he utilised and shaped his diplomatic networks.

Philip also instructed Mendoza to seek out various information sources in England, in contrast to his instructions to earlier ambassadors where he only explicitly encouraged contact with fellow Iberians and some English councillors deemed more moderate. Philip had thus come

⁶⁰ CODOIN, xci, pp. 182-93.

⁶¹ 'Si acudieron á vos algunos católicos ingleses, admitirlos heis suavemente, consolándolos y animándolos con palabras generales á que perseveren, sin entrar con ellos en ningun género de plática ni negociacion contra la Reina': CODOIN, xci, p. 189.

⁶² CODOIN, xci, p. 189.

⁶³ Agrela, *Don Bernardino de Mendoza*, p. 80.

⁶⁴ Philip II's instructions to Mendoza are also far more comprehensive than to Mendoza's predecessors, for example, Philip did not provide Feria with official diplomatic instructions upon the regime change; CODOIN, xci, pp. 180-93.

to recognise the importance of allies within the English court itself, writing to Mendoza that ‘With the French Ambassador and Portuguese representative residing there, you have the required friendship and good correspondence’, as he explained these agents represented Philip’s uncles and that Mendoza knew their rulers well.⁶⁵ Philip evidently believed there were potential allies in England, especially when Philip believed they held shared political or religious beliefs. Mendoza was thus sent more detailed instructions at the beginning of his embassy to this effect. The instructions, presented as a list, specified what information Mendoza should gather about England, such as identifying who in England was Catholic, Protestant, or seemingly neutral so that Mendoza could form religious alliances quickly.⁶⁶ The instructions also went on to ask Mendoza to discover England’s financial resources, their ports, government actions, and why the French ambassadors were in England.⁶⁷ Philip’s diplomatic instructions to Mendoza demonstrate his realisation that more explicit instructions and a stronger communication network were paramount to his embassy’s success.

Mendoza was also well versed in diplomatic practice and integrated into communication networks due to his experience in the Low Countries. Prior to that service, he had received similar instructions from the Duke of Alba in February 1573. Alba detailed that as Spanish forces suffered, it was crucial for Mendoza to send dispatches to Philip and the court as diligently as possible so that Philip could act on news.⁶⁸ Alba’s instructions, however, did not clearly outline a plan of action beyond this, as he went on to detail the importance of Mendoza’s service and the religious implications of the state of the Low Countries rather than explicitly

⁶⁵ ‘Con el Emabajador del Rey de Francia y agente del de Portugal que allí residen, terneis la amistad y buena correspondencia que se requiere’: CODOIN, xci, p. 189.

⁶⁶ AGS Estado 831 fo. 253r-v.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ AGS Estado 556 fo. 81r-v.

outline other contacts or courses of action for Mendoza to pursue.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Alba was thoroughly satisfied with Mendoza's performance in the Low Countries and he recommended Mendoza to the post of Spanish ambassador to England, solidifying Mendoza's place within Habsburg information communities and signifying Alba's influence in diplomatic circles.⁷⁰

Mendoza's time in the Low Countries was also prominently advertised to Elizabeth. In his first audience with the queen, Mendoza was instructed to introduce himself and extend offers of friendship, and to clarify that 'there had been a delay in order to see how things unfolded in the Netherlands', so that Mendoza could communicate matters to Elizabeth 'with more foundation'.⁷¹ Thus, it was clear that Mendoza was an established contact within Habsburg networks and while the Dutch Revolt continued, Philip wanted an ambassador familiar with the political strife manning his embassy in England.

Ultimately, Philip's instructions and diplomatic preparation evolved between ambassadors. While the prominence of utilising one's predecessor's diplomatic documents remained throughout this period, Philip began to refine the use of Habsburg networks and adapted his instructions to incorporate new diplomatic knowledge, namely identifying informants and cautioning previously volatile behaviour. The ambassadors' diplomatic preparation therefore highlights the key role of ambassadors in the circulation of news and information across Europe, and the necessity of adapting instructions and preparation to respond to the more pertinent diplomatic concerns, such as the Low Countries.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ CODOIN, xci, p. 182.

⁷¹ 'por esperar á ver qué camino tomarian las cosas de los dichos mis Países-Bajos'; 'con más fundamento': CODOIN, xci, p. 184.

Epistolary and Communication Practices

In early modern Europe, letters emerged as a distinct genre and mode of communication that were connected through shared epistolary practices that had developed from medieval and Renaissance practices. Diplomatic correspondence was thus a sub-genre of a wider sixteenth-century transformation in communication and news sharing. Spanish diplomatic correspondence of the sixteenth century encapsulates this emerging change and helped establish epistolary networks as a primary mode of circulating news, later synonymous with the republic of letters. Early modern diplomatic correspondence deployed specific epistolary practices, both in textual and material forms, that were designed to demonstrate respect and iterate the relative social status of the correspondents.⁷² Sixteenth-century self-fashioning used humanist traditions to approach notions of identity and self-consciousness, yet interpretations of this self-fashioning have often been limited to studies of early modern literature.⁷³ Diplomatic correspondence, however, also employed specific literary measures to demonstrate the ambassador's aptitude and affirm hierarchies of power, thus demonstrating the writer's sense of self.⁷⁴ Epistolary practices in diplomatic correspondence signify the social logic of diplomatic interactions, and the methods used to self-fashion themselves to correspondents. Thus, while there was the practicality, and necessity, of sharing information, how the news was presented and the appearance of these letters created an epistolary culture with its own social and cultural norms.

⁷² Diplomatic correspondence as it relates to English epistolary practices has enjoyed recent interest, see Elizabeth R. Williamson, *Elizabethan Diplomacy and Epistolary Culture* (New York, 2021); For an overview of early modern Spanish letter writing practices and their cultural meaning see Fernando Bouza, *Corre Manuscrito: Una Historia Cultural del siglo de Oro* (Madrid, 2001).

⁷³ See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 2005).

⁷⁴ See Susan M. Fitzmaurice, 'Diplomatic Business: Information, Power, and Persuasion in Late Modern English Diplomatic Correspondence', in Marina Dossena and Susan M. Fitzmaurice (eds), *Business and Official Correspondence: Historical Investigations* (Bern, 2006), p. 77-106.

Ambassadors positioned themselves within these communities by relaying news and information. ‘News was currency’, thus diplomats cultivated reciprocal working relationships with other ambassadors and political figures to create an information community.⁷⁵ How the ambassadors corresponded with and transmitted information to others in Philip’s ambassadorial network elucidate the working relationships behind Philip’s embassies. However, letters and diplomatic correspondence also reflected courtly life by demonstrating customs of reciprocity, and a culture of deference.⁷⁶ Fernando Bouza has thus asserted that this correspondence was ‘a specific genre governed by the conventions of the age’ and represented a distinct category of cultural exchange.⁷⁷ As the literary and material conventions of court correspondence became widespread, it created a new model of early modern communication.⁷⁸

Diplomatic correspondence inherited earlier traditions and practices of letter writing of the medieval *ars dictaminis* and later Renaissance humanist writings.⁷⁹ *Ars dictaminis* has received extensive historiographical attention and points to the importance of epistolary networks for cultural and political exchange.⁸⁰ Letter writing as its own genre had also been established through the publication of epistolary manuals throughout early modern Europe. These manuals would identify different types of letters, provide outlines or examples, and offer instructions regarding prose, though they often varied in their recommendations for a letter’s

⁷⁵ Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham, ‘News Networks in Early Modern Europe’, in Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 8-9.

⁷⁶ Fernando Bouza, ‘Letters and Portraits: Economy of Time and Chivalrous Service in Courtly Culture’, in Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond (eds), *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 146.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁷⁹ These traditions were also part of a wider emphasis on the importance of good speech in diplomatic contexts and appeared in diplomatic treatises, see Juan Antonio de Vera Zúñiga y Figueroa, *Le Parfait Ambassadeur: Divisée en Trois Parties*, tr. Sieur Lancelot (Paris, 1642); Jean Hotman, *The Ambassador* (London, 1603).

⁸⁰ See Armando Petrucci, *Scrivere Lettere. Una Storia Plurimillennaria* (Rome, 2008).

content or style.⁸¹ For example, Juan Luis Vives, a sixteenth-century Spanish humanist emphasised the importance of determining one's relationship to one's correspondent through greetings, superscriptions, and the conversational nature of the text because these were all meant to reflect the context of the writers' relationship.⁸² Mendoza even mentioned sending a correspondent a letter in Latin written in his own hand, understanding the appropriate connotations of respect and intimacy that holographs carried in court circles.⁸³ Epistolary manuals were some of the most popular works on rhetoric throughout Europe, with many being reprinted and translated, and letter-writing becoming a central part of early education.⁸⁴ Within Spain, some letter collections by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanists even responded to real world situations and accounted for letters being read after they were sent to their intended correspondent by a wider audience.⁸⁵ For example, the letters of Luciu Marineu Siculo, an Italian humanist who spent most of his life in Castile, were popular and critically, included guidance for addressing social unequals, something the ambassadors would often have to consider in their writings to Philip II or other royals.⁸⁶ Members of noble families would have therefore become familiar with these texts at an early age, especially Mendoza who was being prepared to enter the king's service from childhood. Therefore, it is doubtless that the Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England would have been made familiar with these texts during their education, as these manuals informed how the ambassadors showcased deference and understood how correspondence, including diplomatic dispatches, were not necessarily conceived as confidential or private documents.

⁸¹ Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620* (Oxford, 2011), p. 256.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁸³ CODOIN, xcii, p. 281.

⁸⁴ Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 228.

⁸⁵ Katherine Elliot van Liere, "'Epistolae familiares'", in *Sixteenth-Century Spain: An Analysis of Three Recent Letter Collections*, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 12/4 (2006), pp. 575, 585.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

A shared epistolary culture between the ambassadors becomes evident in the standard layout of their diplomatic dispatches. Letters sent from ambassadors stationed in England to Philip, amongst others, generally followed the same relative sequence. After their initial greeting, the ambassador would detail any letters received by their correspondent, and if relevant, mention other letters they had written or received from others in Habsburg communication networks, usually other ambassadors stationed in Europe. Their letters then relayed political news and England's dealings with other nations, before mentioning news from the court, such as who they had spoken to, audiences they may have had with Elizabeth, and other cultural or court events. This might also include news from other domestic information sources, usually on the state of religion, or occasionally on their dealings with figures such as Mary, Queen of Scots. Only then would the ambassador usually go onto make a request for money, further instruction, or action. An ambassador might also offer an apology here for lack of news or their confusion, though this was more common towards the end of tumultuous embassies and was often accompanied by requests to be recalled. Therefore, the ambassadors believed there was an obvious pattern to how to relay events and news and that this structure was a pragmatic way to process the information, solidifying diplomatic dispatches as their own sub-genre of communication.⁸⁷

This construction also followed similar logic to the Venetian *dispacci*, weekly diplomatic reports sent to the Doge and Senate that helped contribute to Venice's vast diplomatic records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸⁸ Eventually, at the end of a

⁸⁷ The assertions in this paragraph are based on an analysis of over 1500 diplomatic dispatches in the Consejo de Estado of the Archivo General de Simancas and *Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*.

⁸⁸ See Frederick Hammond, 'Bernini and Others in Venetian Ambassadorial Dispatches, 1623-1644', *Notes in the History of Art*, 4/1 (1984), pp. 30-5; For examples of Venetian diplomatic documents such as *dispacci*, see *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy*, ed. Rawdon Brown, Horatio F. Brown, and Allen B. Hinds (38 vols, London, 1864-1947).

Venetian ambassador's tenure abroad, they also produced a *relazioni*, a long detailed diplomatic document specifically written for record keeping purposes and to disseminate information to those who may next occupy that embassy. Despite the formulaic and codified construction of Venetian *dispacci* and *relazioni*, Filippo de Vivo has demonstrated the multiple personal and institutional functions of these diplomatic documents to highlight unique textual strategies of sharing and outlining news.⁸⁹ Based on their information, both regular and more substantial diplomatic reports served different functions to different readers, and individuals' engagements with these texts demonstrate how diplomatic sources contributed to a variety of cultural discussions and intellectual history.⁹⁰ Sixteenth-century diplomatic dispatches were thus developing for multiple uses, and the reliance on networks, reconstruction of political news, and reflections of court life all demonstrate the various purposes and intentionality of these reports, and thus like *dispacci*, they developed a clear structure. Crucially, *dispacci* and *relazioni* were formal presentation documents with both a practical and performative life. Conversely, Spanish diplomatic dispatches, while also meant to inform the Spanish governance and be referred to by a wider audience, were working documents that informed their correspondent in the immediacy and then were later transformed or edited into presentation documents for wider dissemination. Spanish diplomatic culture was therefore at the forefront of a wider cultural development as the circulation, reception, and use of news in Spanish diplomatic correspondence influenced news sharing practices in early modern Europe.

The formulaic structure of dispatches, including noting when last correspondence was received also had practical purposes in ensuring that one could confirm they had accounted for all information sent as postal services were not entirely secure, often leaving information either

⁸⁹ Filippo de Vivo, 'How to Read Venetian Relazioni', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 34/1–2 (2011), pp. 56–7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

vulnerable or difficult to circulate at all. Ambassadors required news to perform their basic duties, and a lack of news might indicate that one's sovereign lacked political connections or was isolated and uninformed themselves.⁹¹ Being on the periphery of Europe, England's physical isolation caused it significant problems in the postal system as it developed in London.⁹² This could pose a great inconvenience to the Spanish ambassadors in England, especially as the official Spanish mail system would not be established until 1580.⁹³ Ad hoc couriers, sometimes paid large amounts to travel at a moment's notice, were thus used in addition to sending letters via merchants.⁹⁴ Whenever Spanish ambassadors lacked sufficient resources, they entrusted their dispatches to an ordinary messenger rather than their own courier, boosting security concerns.⁹⁵

News disruptions could also be contingent upon other political disruptions. There were delays, disruptions, security concerns and missing letters that stalled the circulation of news.⁹⁶ For instance, between 1568 and 1569, due to piracy disrupting communications across the English Channel from the Netherlands, Philip II's ambassador to France, Álava, suddenly found himself the best information source Philip II had regarding the Dutch Revolt.⁹⁷ In response, diplomats and their respective governments adopted administrative practices to combat the inefficiency or insecurity of the post to disseminate and catalogue information. Their efforts in establishing postal networks were eventually somewhat successful as public posts in Britain and Europe expanded upon networks that had been initially developed and utilised for diplomatic

⁹¹ Tracey A. Sowerby, 'Elizabethan Diplomatic Networks and the Spread of News', in Raymond and Moxham (eds), *News Networks*, p. 306.

⁹² Nikolaus Schobesberger, Paul Arblaster, Mario Infelise, André Belo, Noah Moxham, Carmen Espejo, and Joad Raymond, 'European Postal Networks', in Raymond and Moxham (eds), *News Networks*, p. 48.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁹⁵ Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, p. 49.

⁹⁶ Beltrán, 'Philip of Spain', p. 36.

⁹⁷ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'Diplomatic Correspondence', p. 20.

communication.⁹⁸ Diplomatic correspondence therefore influenced the use of letters as news, and simultaneously developed with a more comprehensive European postal network.

For ambassadors attempting to collect, and subsequently disseminate, news or privileged information, a familiarity and reciprocal working relationship with key communication nodes in the Spanish empire was indispensable. Procuring news and information on a matter could then present an ambassador with the opportunity to remark on their relevance and contribute to wider Iberian information networks, and allow them to engage in the foreign policy discussions that occurred in Madrid. Observing the number of connections between certain parties in networks reveals ‘who the most active people are in that community, who are the most well connected, the most influential or esteemed’.⁹⁹ Conveying the relative status of the correspondents and displaying signs of deference were thus key epistolary practices in the early modern period. Demonstrating status through practices such as the forms of address used has been coined ‘epistolary ceremonial’ by Giora Sternberg.¹⁰⁰

The complex social hierarchy of early modern Spanish society was demonstrated through various addresses, and was codified in the *Pragmática*, presented to Philip II by Juan Gallo de Andrada, a notary in the Council of Castile, in 1586. The *Pragmática* gave ‘order and form’ to ‘the courtesies of word and writing’ by outlining the appropriate titles used for people of specific social rankings, both in oral and written greetings.¹⁰¹ It posited that it was ‘necessary and convenient’ to outline the proper use of titles and legitimize the honour surrounding them.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Schobesberger et al., ‘European Postal Networks’, p. 61.

⁹⁹ Ruth Ahnert, ‘Maps versus Networks’, in Raymond and Moxham (eds), *News Networks*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁰ Giora Sternberg, ‘Epistolary Ceremonial: Corresponding Status at the Time of Louis XIV’, *Past & Present*, 204/1 (2009), pp. 33-88.

¹⁰¹ ‘orden y forma’; ‘cortesias de palabra y por escrito’: Juan Gallo de Andrada, *Pragmática, en que se da la orden y forma que se ha de tener y guardar, en los tratamientos y cortesias de palabra y por escrito, y en traer coroneles, y ponellos en qualesquier partes y lugares* (Madrid, 1586), p. 1.

¹⁰² ‘necesario y conveniente’: Ibid., p. 1.

The *Pragmática* largely argued that many princes or others with hereditary titles may be referred to as ‘Your Highness’ while letters to a monarch should end perhaps in a declaration that ‘God keep the Catholic person of Your Majesty’.¹⁰³ The text, however, assumed that there would be limited contact with the monarch or other royal persons, demonstrating that it was developed for wider dissemination than for strictly ambassadors or other political actors who would have frequent need to write to their ruler. Nevertheless, the ambassadorial dispatches examined here largely reflected the guidelines of the *Pragmática* as they addressed or referred to many royals, including Philip II, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Elizabeth I as ‘Your/His/Her Highness’, thus following the suggestions of the *Pragmática*.¹⁰⁴ Within the Anglo-Spanish context, the Spanish ambassadors in England thus inherited larger Spanish epistolary practices outlined in the *Pragmática* and other letter writing manuals, while also accounting for their unique circumstance and place in Spain’s social strata. Addresses and demarcating relative social status were therefore part of the social logic of early modern Spanish correspondence and can reveal how ambassadors conceptualised their place within Imperial hierarchies. While Philip II was often addressed as ‘Your Majesty’, and diplomatic dispatches to him remained formal, how ambassadors interacted with him and other political figures can still elucidate more complex social opinions. Thus, the ambassadors’ epistolary practices reveal a shared epistolary culture that drew from their educational background and epistolary manuals, thus influencing how they relayed news and contributed to the transformation of the spread of information in the early modern world.

¹⁰³ ‘Vuestra Alteza’; ‘Dios guarde la Catholica persona de Vuestra Majestad’: Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Su Alteza’.

Administrative Practices and Networks

While Philip's instructions and the logic behind his appointments of educated men to his embassy in England had attempted to solidifying Iberian communication networks, the ambassadors were ultimately responsible for how they engaged with—and cemented their place within—these networks and circulated information. Thus, they continually had to support and build upon these networks as needed through their communication practices, while in tandem the Spanish secretariat developed administrative practices to ensure that information was received and made accessible to relevant political actors. While some of the Spanish ambassadors were able to procure information from their international contacts, as will be seen in Mendoza's response to crises, others were sometimes excluded from domestic and international information communities, such as Feria who often apologised for his confusion or lack of information to report, creating a sense of confusion amidst the shifting political allegiances at court and in the Iberian world. While relaying intelligence to key figures was an accepted part of one's diplomatic duties, Spanish ambassadors deployed strategies to advertise their place in communication networks, and thus boast their esteem. Noting when an individual such as Alba wrote to an ambassador could be used to denote the ambassador's importance, thus advertising the ambassador's place within Habsburg communication networks and their ability to effectively send information to those administering the Spanish empire. Therefore, there were both practical and social reasons behind these references that underpinned larger networks.

Following the Dutch Revolt the ambassadors were forced to heavily rely upon communication networks in the Low Countries and had to seek out effective engagement. Prior to the 1566 nobles' petition and beginning of the revolt, both Feria and Quadra had monitored

information from the Low Countries as part of their wider engagement with Philip's empire. This had been standard Habsburg communication practice, as Charles V's ambassador in England, Eustace Chapuys, continually corresponded with the Regents of the Netherlands during his tenure, and then himself helped inform later Imperial ambassadors in England once he was reassigned to the Low Countries.¹⁰⁵ There were efforts to continue this practice and periods without this communication elucidate the later difficulties of the Dutch Revolt. As early as February 1559, Feria had noted that he had seen 'Your Majesty write a portion of a letter to the Duke of Alba in your hand', because confirming his knowledge of Philip's dealings with Alba was an important indication of Feria showcasing his information network.¹⁰⁶ However, Feria struggled to stay informed and part of international information communities during his embassy. This difficulty came despite being one of Philip's favourites, leading some to characterise Feria as 'not particularly gifted' as an ambassador.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, Philip informed Feria of European geopolitics, writing to him in April 1559 that 'the Duke of Alba, Rui Gomez [de Silva] and the Bishop of Arras have told me about their conversations with Queen [Elizabeth]'s commissioners in Cateau-Cambrésis', the treaty negotiations that ended the Habsburg-Valois Wars.¹⁰⁸ Feria had evidently not been informed about these discussions with Elizabeth's representatives and Spanish political figures, and needed the information to be confirmed by Philip.

Quadra, conversely, established a consistent correspondence with Margaret of Parma and noted to Philip when he sent copies of his letters to her, then still Governor. However, he

¹⁰⁵ C. S. L. Davies, 'Chapuys, Eustache (1490x92?–1556), diplomat', ODNB (24 July 2020) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/70785>.

¹⁰⁶ 'que V.M. escribe al Duque de Alba en un capítulo de una carta de su mano': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 130.

¹⁰⁷ Loades, 'Suárez de Figueroa', ODNB <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/70578>.

¹⁰⁸ 'me han dicho el Duque de Alba, Ruy Gomez y el Obispo de Arras en las pláticas que tuvieron con los Comisarios de la Reina en Chateau Cambresi': CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 174-5.

did not often receive replies, making Quadra uncertain of his place within the information network in practice. In March 1560, he wrote to Parma about what he understood of the Low Countries, however limited, and cautiously wrote, 'I beg Your Highness to forgive me if I dare to beg you to order [informants in the Low Countries] to answer me sometimes, as being I here [in England], I am forced to bother Your Highness'.¹⁰⁹ Here, Quadra recognised his relative status to his correspondent, and positioned himself accordingly by apologising for potentially bothering her. Quadra therefore recognised that it was his duty to inform Parma of any developments, but felt as though his position in England hindered his ability to gather intelligence and yield a reply from Iberian figures in the Low Countries. Thus, Quadra feared that his request to have her prompt a response might annoy her. The establishment and solidification of this network was therefore important to Quadra because of the significance of the Low Countries and he attempted to adapt his communication practices to better integrate into this network, despite the limited amount of information he could offer.

Communication networks, therefore, merited protection and thus the Spanish secretariat developed administrative practices to help catalogue and safeguard the information contained in diplomatic correspondence. The copies and *relaciones* made from Spanish diplomatic correspondence, and their use in Spanish council meetings, demonstrate Spain's epistolary practices, data management, and contribution to the spread of information in the sixteenth century. Once a letter had been received in Madrid, the information could be copied and disseminated in council meetings, demonstrating how dispatches were meant to be shared with governing bodies as practical, working documents. Councils thus utilised these dispatches to produce more public presentation documents referred to as *consultas*, meeting minutes, which

¹⁰⁹ 'suplico á V.A. me perdone si me atrevo á suplicarle que me mande responder algunas veces, pues estando como aquí estoy, soy forzado á ser molesto á V.A.': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 290.

might summarize an ambassador's letters regarding a specific topic or time. Members of the Council of State would thus be shown these documents and presented its main information in a digestible format. For example, just as with the Spanish ambassadors' reports from England, a *consulta* detailing the correspondence of Philip II's ambassador to Genoa notes how the ambassador had shown 'many times in all his letters', how he used his funds, without going into minute detail of his expenditure.¹¹⁰ It goes on to reference that the embassy's tasks had previously been reviewed by the council before and were in accordance with Philip's orders. This ultimately indicates the relevance of diplomatic dispatches in council proceedings and government decisions, as their main contents were the key news and information sources behind policy discussions or decisions.

Diplomatic dispatches were thus fundamental to sixteenth-century news systems and contributed to the growth of informational writing.¹¹¹ Filippo de Vivo has aptly pointed out that the increase in the amount of diplomatic correspondence in the sixteenth century contributed to an information revolution as news could only circulate if there were adequate management techniques for processing and disseminating the information contained in these letters.¹¹² The use of diplomatic dispatches in news sharing and policy decisions also elucidates the understanding that these documents did not enjoy the confidentiality or intimacy of private correspondence. Further circulating the information in diplomatic dispatches, therefore,

¹¹⁰ 'mucha instancia en todas sus cartas': AGS Estado 1931, fo. 410r.

¹¹¹ See Ann Blair and Devin Fitzgerald, 'A Revolution in Information?', in Hamish Scott (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350–1750* (Oxford, 2015), i, pp. 244–65; Giora Sternberg, 'Manipulating Information in the Ancien Regime: Ceremonial Records, Aristocratic Strategies, and the Limits of State Perspective', *Journal of Modern History*, 85/2 (2013), pp. 239–79.

¹¹² Filippo de Vivo, 'Archival Intelligence: Diplomatic Correspondence, Information Overload, and Information Management in Italy, 1450–1650', in Kate Peters, Alexandra Walsham, and Liesbeth Corens (eds), *Archives and Information in the Early Modern World* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 53–86.

remained an important administrative practice for Spanish governance and political figures throughout Europe benefitted from their receipt.

Copying, cataloguing, sending multiple copies, and summarizing letters in the form of *relaciones* for further dissemination all became integral administrative practices in combatting the unreliability of courier services and circulating news. Philip ultimately came to expect multiple copies of important letters or dispatches to be sent to him from ambassadors and expressed either confusion or concern when they had not arrived. In a letter from January 1569, Alba noted the whereabouts of some ships from England, with Philip noting on the letter ‘This must be what is missing: I do not know if the duplicate is coming, or has already arrived: if there are any [duplicates] they do come here, but it must not be something that hasn’t already been seen’.¹¹³ Producing copies was part of Philip’s administrative process and ensured that correspondence was being received and read appropriately.

Making copies of diplomatic dispatches and sending them to political figures throughout Europe also kept prominent figures informed, and such copies needed to be noted by and kept track of by a secretariat. In January 1572, Alba detailed to Philip ‘the determination of the Queen of England to expel Don Guerau [de Spes] from her court and Kingdom’ and while Alba had copies of these letters from Spes, he encouraged Philip to write to Elizabeth directly.¹¹⁴ News in these letters could also be supplemented by other letters sent to Philip that the correspondents had not seen, as Alba remarked that he knew Spes had left England and ‘perhaps Don Guerau [de Spes] has written Your Majesty in the bundle [of letters] that goes with this [letter]’.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ ‘Esto debe de ser lo que falta: no sé si viene el duplicado ó habrá venido ántes: que si los hay no vienen aquí, mas no debe de ser cosa que ya no se haya visto’: CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 539.

¹¹⁴ ‘la determinacion que la Reyna de Inglaterra havia tomado en mandar salir a Don Guerau de su corte y Reyno’: AGS Estado 551, fo. 1r.

¹¹⁵ ‘podraser que Don Guerau lo escriba a V.M. en el pliego que va con esta’: Ibid.

Therefore, to understand political tensions in England fully, Alba had received copies of Spes's letters that had been organised by a secretary, demonstrating the relevance of the English embassy to Alba and the Low Countries.

While entire letters and diplomatic dispatches might be copied and sent to various correspondents, to quickly reflect upon a letter in one's records, short summaries and comments were often made on the letter's outer fold for reference (Figure 1). The outer fold of letters also served as forums for further commentary, elucidating the recording keeping and administrative practices in Madrid regarding diplomatic dispatches. The outer fold of an August 1583 letter from Mendoza contains basic facts about the letter to allow for easy identification and record keeping, namely the writer, recipient, location, date sent, date received, and that the letter had been deciphered. Noting the dates that a letter was initially sent and received was a standard practice to ensure that no correspondence had been lost or unaccounted for. Here, while one secretary makes the brief note that the contents of the letter pertained to 'ships', Philip II himself later added a clarification that a copy of a similar letter had been made.¹¹⁶ Noting the letter's focus thus allowed secretaries to classify, and subsequently find, letters easily if relevant to further discussions, indicating how the information in diplomatic dispatches received in Spain was reflected upon and continued to be part of a communication process after receipt. It also demonstrates how diplomatic dispatches were not strictly a private forum for conversation but rather more public sources of news within the Spanish government, as the following examples further show.

¹¹⁶ 'navios': AGS Estado 586, fo. 4v.

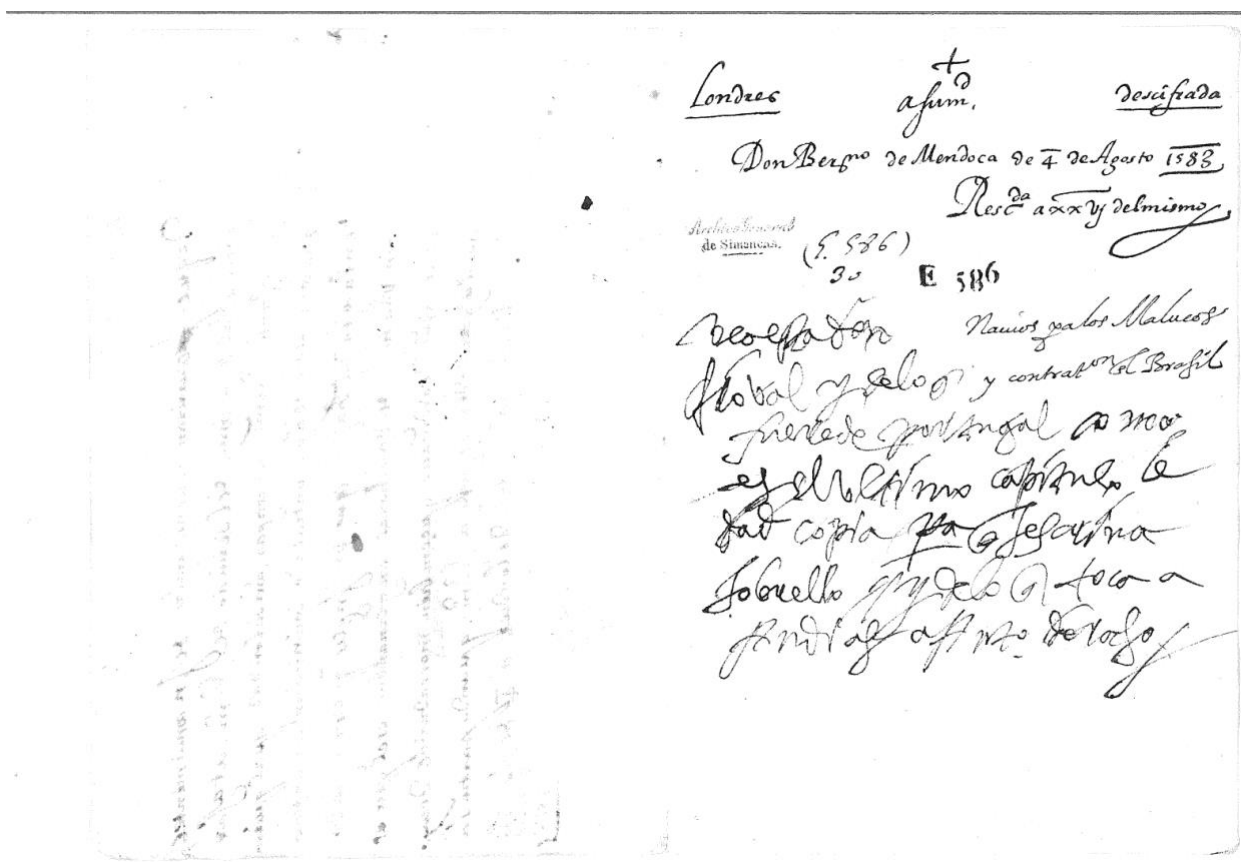


Figure 1. Outer fold of 4 August 1583 letter from Bernardino de Mendoza to Philip II, AGS Estado 586, fo. 4v.

While this letter was short, and a secretary only briefly noted its main focus, longer letters could prompt a secretary to summarize the letter in point form on the outer fold. In these instances, longer summaries demonstrate how the letter may not have been copied in its entirety, but rather that only these key points were disseminated. Inventories of diplomatic dispatches and succinct point form summaries were referred to as *relaciones* and could be quickly copied and sent to various parties, or to help identify letters pertaining to key issues (Figure 2).

contents. This format thus demonstrates how early modern news practices developed alongside the circulation of diplomatic dispatches and how they came to influence one another. However, while Venetian ambassadors prepared their *relazioni* for formal presentation, the Spanish secretariat or other notaries were responsible for recording *relaciones* and compiling *consultas* rather than the ambassadors. Therefore, *relaciones* denoted the information deemed most important by the secretary, revealing the reading process of diplomatic dispatches and their function as working documents, and highlighting the key concerns of the Spanish administration. These notes appear on many of the diplomatic dispatches to Philip II now held in the Archivo General de Simancas. However, as explored by Maria Rodríguez-Salgado, such summaries also appeared in dispatches between ambassadors in Philip's diplomatic network, demonstrating that the organisational practice was not limited to Spanish bureaucracy in Madrid but denoted a wider Iberian communication practice.¹¹⁸

Relaciones could also be copied and then further disseminated, as Silva did when serving as ambassador to Venice with those sent to him by Miguel Prado, a financial official in the Low Countries, though Silva was careful to omit any identifiers of himself and Prado to maintain anonymity.¹¹⁹ The presence of multiple copies could also obscure the intended audience as copies of *relaciones*, amongst other dispatches, were often produced and disseminated without the original author's knowledge or consent. When further identifying details were omitted, only tone or address might provide insight into the intended audience of the letter. However, the anonymity of reports did not devalue information, and the practice of sharing *avisos*, notices drafted from various letters as a kind of newsletter, was widely recognised; they were

¹¹⁸ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'Diplomatic Correspondence', pp. 18-35.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

considered reliable news sources that might have stemmed from merchants or other witnesses.¹²⁰

Avisos would arrive for Mendoza from Flanders, often accompanying a relevant letter, and served as vital news sources. In August 1579, he received an *aviso* detailing the movement of troops in Antwerp, and the figures that had arrived in the Low Countries to attempt to assure the citizens' loyalty to Philip II.¹²¹ Though without identifying details, the *aviso* continued a steady conversation and was clearly from an individual firmly within the communication network as it noted that Parma had not yet answered a petition Mendoza sent him, but gave no details of the document.¹²² The information contained in these *avisos* would subsequently be included in Mendoza's letters to Philip, along with noting who Mendoza subsequently informed of any new information, namely Parma or the French ambassador in Elizabeth's court.¹²³ The summaries of diplomatic dispatches, and the sending of *relaciones* or *avisos* thus ensured that the relevant information contained in full letters could be quickly disseminated, found, and catalogued. Allowing for news to be quickly operationalised therefore alleviated issues of news disruptions and provides insight into how the Spanish empire managed information. The circulation of these *relaciones* ultimately demonstrate the importance of diplomats in procuring and disseminating news to a wider audience, and elucidates how Spanish diplomatic dispatches and administrative practices influenced early modern news, the circulation of information, and the perseverance of networks.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 28-9.

¹²¹ AGS Estado 832, fo. 236r-v.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ AGS Estado 833, fo. 55r-v.

¹²⁴ See Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven, 2014); Simon Davies and Puck Fletcher (eds), *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections* (Leiden, 2014).

Material Engagements, Marginalia, and Editing

The plethora of diplomatic documents collected and categorised by the Spanish secretariat were thus part of an immense systemic effort of knowledge acquisition. While some scholars such as Arndt Brendecke and Guillaume Gaudin have argued that the amassed documents largely went unread, their transformation into *relaciones* and material engagements with the text indicate otherwise.¹²⁵ Material engagements therefore serve as key indicators of the use and composition of letters and elucidate the reading process behind early modern correspondence.¹²⁶ During their initial composition, and after letters were received, correspondents interacted with the text through their additional commentary or corrections. The use of blank space on the page and the marginalia thus demonstrate the continued dialogue between the correspondents or other readers and their reading process. This ultimately provides insight into the administration and intentionality behind these documents, and the collaborative process of writing, editing, and reading early modern diplomatic dispatches. Material indications of deference and social hierarchies were also prominent epistolary practices. James Daybell has championed the study of the materiality of these texts as the use of the page, one's signature, and the material used for a letter all depart social meaning.¹²⁷ As these material practices became commonplace for diplomatic correspondence, an epistolary culture formed around the Habsburg networks in which the ambassadors in England participated.¹²⁸ Blank space, referred to as 'significant space' by Jonathon Gibson, also served both practical and social purposes. While this space,

¹²⁵ See Arndt Brendecke, *The Empirical Empire: Spanish Colonial Rule and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berlin, 2016); Guillaume Gaudin, *El Imperio de Papel de Juan Díez de la Calle. Pensar y Gobernar el Nuevo Mundo en el siglo XVII* (Madrid, 2017).

¹²⁶ See James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke, 2012); The wider material culture practices of the early modern period outside of correspondence are beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 10

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 96

particularly after an initial address, was a sign of deference and reveals information about the writer's relationship to their correspondent, it also appears as a large margin for additional comments or corrections.¹²⁹ Early modern writers were aware of the importance of space, as guidelines pertaining to the use of a page frequently appeared in epistolographical manuals.¹³⁰ Examining marginalia thus demonstrates how the writer might have intended for the letter to be read, corrected, or used.

¹²⁹ Jonathan Gibson, 'Significant Space in Manuscript Letters', *The Seventeenth Century*, 12/1 (1997), p. 1.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7

ha sido muy Justificado, y que los de Los
Estados han andado y andan tan apartados del
camino derecho, que no haura nadie que no lo
Juzgue así, entendida la Verdad, pues es
muy notorio hauerle pedido cosas nuevas y
tan exorbitantes y fuera de las contenidas en el
asiento que con ellos tomo á 12 de Febrero del
año pasado, como se vea por la copia de un
escrito que se embiaion á XXV de Septiembre
cuya copia que la lleuareis con la del dicho concierto, para
vra informacion y mayor inteligencia,
y para el mismo fin, lo auise á mi her^{no}
de como os haúa nombrado para esta comisión
y que el conforme al estado en que se halla son
las cosas os embiase los aduertimientos q
se pareciesse conuenir, en pliego remitido á
Juan de Vargas Mexia, que como sabeis,
reside por mis negocios en la corte de Francia,
por donde se presupone que haueris de passar
y visitar de mi parte al Rey Ch^{mo} ya
su muger y madre, diéndoles en terminos
generales que os embio á Inglaterra por al
gunos negocios, y en particular á ver al
Rey y a su madre, que no les escriuo por hauelo
hecho pocos dias ha con Julio Gassot su secretario,
Llegado que seays ala corte de la dicha Reyna
de Inglaterra, la haueris de visitar con mi carta
y las buenas palabras que os pareciere se le
deuen decir para le dar á entender que la
estimo en lo que merece, y que tengo comella,
que el dicho Juan de Vargas
(a cuya posada os aueris de yr
a apeaar) les haga saber via
llegada, y concertara la audiencia, y os acompañara y asistira, como
yo solo escriuo y embio a mandar en mi carta q para el lleuatis / ~~al Rey~~

Agraciosamente
y al Duque de Alençon y madama
Margarita su hermana,
Serabien q se les diga
esta con m. de Vargas
su secretario y quien
dele concertara
la audiencia

Figure 3. Excerpt of a draft of Philip II's first diplomatic instructions to Mendoza in 1578, AGS Estado 831, fo. 66v

In the first set of instructions sent to Mendoza, multiple hands are present editing an earlier draft and utilising the space around Philip's initial marginalia (Figure 3). In a portion of the instructions pertaining to the French embassy, necessary contacts, and continued communication, a secretary has inserted a number of additional comments in the margins through a key and legend system in order not to overcrowd the text. However, Philip's note on audiences had taken up too much space, forcing the secretary to write around the king's comments and insert a less legible note within the text due to the insufficient space. The collaboration between the writers and editors of these texts thus represents a dialogue between these individuals in the blank space and elucidates the drafting process of the Spanish administration. Here, multiple people were involved in the writing process as the document was viewed by several people within a secretariat. This ultimately reveals how diplomatic dispatches were not privy to only the signatory and the intended recipient, but were instead much more public and collaborative documents as various members of the Spanish secretariat edited and commented on their contents.

~~pero que como tentan tan danada la fuer-~~
~~cion,~~ no solamente no admitieron ni cono-
 cieron mi buena voluntad, antes en pago
 della, ~~en durciendolos en su mal proposito,~~ a
 audieron a traer Principe extranjero para va-
 lese del, pretendiendo tomarse por su gouer.
 Sin orden ni sabiduria mia, Que ha sido
 un exceso, de sacato, y de uimiento, ~~qual~~
~~se dexa considerar,~~ ff 000

H. muy lo d. si d. lo aqui
 hen y se molexan
 q. lo por otros p. d. lo
 los con sus principes

y de tan mal exemplo para
 otros Vassallos con sus principes
 quanto se dexa considerar.

Que viendo esto, y que las blandicias que
 con ellos se vsauan, los endurecian y
 habrian mas insolentes y obstinados, deter-
 minamos muy contra mi voluntad, de
 echar mano a las armas para socorrer con
 ellas a la gran multitud de buenos Vassallos
 que en aquellos paises tenemos, y librarlos
 de la opresion, en que los malos los tienen.

Que con ser assi todo lo que esta referido,
 hauiendonos escripto a V. Mag. de Septiembre
 del año pasado, los de la Junta de Bruns
 que se dicen Estados generales, supplican
 donos los quisiessemos admitir en mi gracia
 guardando ellos la Religion Catholica Ro-
 mana, y mi obediencia de la manera que
 la guardauan en tiempo del Emper. mi s.
 que esta en gloria, acceptamos su offerta
 tan benignamente como lo vereis por la
 copia que se os dara con esta, de una ~~Indulge-~~
~~cion~~ porque despachamos a Mos de Selles
 teniente de la guarda de mis Archiegos para

escripto

Figure 4. Excerpt of a draft of Philip II's first diplomatic instructions to Mendoza in 1578, AGS Estado 831, fo. 69v

While Philip's comments were of importance, and his extensive use of marginalia contributes to characterisations of him as a micro-manager, his comments were also subject to edits and response. On a subsequent page, Philip added additional notes to the end of the first paragraph in the margin, only to have them crossed out and clarified by another reader (Figure 4). It is unclear which iteration of instructions was finally received by Mendoza, however the material engagement with the text indicate the various opinions of those involved in diplomatic circles and administration as previous comments could be kept or struck out.

se deponnan y dexaran las armas, y
consequiran la quietud y sosiego que les
conviene tener /

¶ Que tampoco ay que desir denueuo en lo que
toca a dar Successor al dicho Al^{mo} Don
Juan de Austria nuestro hermano, en el
Gouerno de aquellos Estados, pues se lo
tenemos otorgado, offresido y declarado,
por su medio tantos dias ha, que nos ma
rauillamos mucho de que ellos no se lo
huuiesse hecho saber quando nos estauo
la dicha su carta / pero que no dudamos
la haura ya entendido, de manera q
en esto tambien se ha cumplido de nuestra
parte con los dichos Estados, como la Reyna
nos lo aduerte y aconseja /

¶ Que puses assi, y tan Justificado lo que
alli se ~~va haciendo~~ ha hecho y en ha
biendo por mo hermano con orden y sa
biduria nra, tenemos por sin duda que
si los Estados no se contentan y aquietan
con lo que esta referido, la Reyna bol
uera las armas contra ellos como nos lo
offrece, Pero si acaso (lo que no creemos
miesperamos) sin embargo de lo dicho, los
quisiesse ayudar con gente y dineros, de
que cierto nos marauillariamos mucho por
ser como seria contra toda razon, y co
tra

¶ Pero que bueno sea
agora y elvándose se le
haya sal conformado
que se ofrecido ~~en~~
no se lo dexa de
sin, agora en la con
fianza causa, por lo
no se den a entender
en los Estados, mas
los que dizeis, y que
nra intencion y voluntad
es de darlos tal ^{los} ^{Successor} conforme a lo
q esta ~~en~~ les auemos offresido
queno podra dexar de ofrles
muy agradable con justa
causa /

Figure 5. Excerpt from Philip II's second set of instructions to Mendoza, AGS Estado 831, fo. 56v

Mendoza was then sent a second set of instructions providing further detail, with extensive comments in the marginalia by different hands (Figure 5). The instructions continued and stated that Mendoza should be in contact with Don John of Austria in the Low Countries and monitor England's potential engagement in the Dutch Revolt despite how it 'goes against all reason'.¹³¹ Most likely written by Philip himself, it notes the general state of confusion regarding English actions and that Elizabeth cannot be understood. While Philip wrote this comment as part of a longer paragraph, either he or a subsequent reader of the document has drawn lines in to divide the paragraph into three points, demonstrating a careful reading process. Another hand subsequently offered further commentary on the instructions. Responding to a point towards the top of the page regarding Don John's successor as Governor of the Low Countries, the reader writes that 'you will say that it is our intention and will to give them [the Low Countries] a successor according to what we have offered them'.¹³² While it is unclear if a member of Philip's secretariat, Mendoza, or Mendoza's staff was responsible for these comments, the corrections and notes made on this document demonstrate how diplomatic dispatches were read and comprehended. These multiple material engagements showcase how such documents would ultimately be read by an undisclosed audience beyond its addressed recipient, and how people might respond to and incorporate new information about the Low Countries or other political concerns. The use of blank space, secretarial markings, and the collaborative process behind corrections and comments all showcase how letters were used and understood beyond their content and news. Therefore, material indicators are also important

¹³¹ 'seria contra toda razon': AGS Estado 831, fo. 56v.

¹³² 'direis y que n[uest]ra intencion y voluntad es de darles tal successor conforme a lo q[ue] les avemos ofrecido': Ibid.

contributors to our understanding of the writing and reading processes behind these documents, and subsequently the administrative practices of Spanish governance.

Conclusion

Spanish diplomatic correspondence and epistolary practices ultimately demonstrate the changing nature of communication and news circulation in the sixteenth century. The appointments and selection of Philip II's ambassadors to England upheld basic trends, namely that the men sent were learned and/or from prominent Spanish noble families. However, throughout the Elizabethan period, Philip's appointments also developed to respond to emerging challenges of Anglo-Spanish relations and began to consider the advice of figures such as the Duke of Alba. Individuals, particularly in the Low Countries, ultimately came to influence Philip's appointments, demonstrating the importance of the Dutch context to Philip's ambassadorial networks and the relevance of these political figures. Thus, Philip began to send ambassadors who appeared better equipped and well-versed in Habsburg communication networks, once it became clear that the English embassy could not be politically neglected lest conflict ensue. His appointments responded to new developments, such as the increasing importance of the Dutch context, and drew from the influence of prominent figures in his circles. Therefore, with the emergence of greater diplomatic knowledge, Philip developed a stronger sense of strategy in his appointments to England and began to prioritise diplomatic experience and expertise. As each embassy faced its own difficulties, Philip also adapted his instructions and drew from diplomatic knowledge to augment his appointments and their diplomatic preparation, illuminating the appointment policy of the Spanish crown in sixteenth-century Europe. In the ambassadors' preparation for their embassy, they utilised this diplomatic

knowledge by referring to their predecessor's correspondence and their shared educational backgrounds allowed for them to integrate into the epistolary culture of diplomats across Europe. The information networks behind Spanish diplomacy were therefore solidified in circulating these documents and showcases how the republic of letters and Spanish epistolary networks were founded in earlier medieval and Renaissance communication practices.

This epistolary culture thus demonstrates how the ambassador drew from a shared body of knowledge and how diplomatic dispatches constituted their own genre of communication. Producing copies and sending *relaciones* reveal how Spanish diplomats contributed to the spread of news and how diplomats became important informants within early modern news processes. Further edits and material engagements with these texts subsequently demonstrate the reading process of diplomatic correspondence and the continued interactions between correspondents and the Spanish secretariat. Ultimately, Spanish diplomatic correspondence was part of an emerging genre of communication that influenced and was influenced by the cultural changes and consumption of diplomatic news in the sixteenth century. Therefore, the Spanish embassy in Elizabethan England utilised established Spanish models of diplomacy but also adapted to new demands in information sharing by drawing from and defining new communication and epistolary trends in early modern Europe. Written correspondence, however, made up only one aspect of the ambassador's information gathering practices as in-person conversation and social interactions were often the foundation of their written reports. Moving beyond their efforts to receive information in writing, their social activities and attempts to integrate into Elizabethan courtly life were at the heart of their diplomatic activities and their success and influences on Anglo-Spanish relations deserve further inquiry.

Chapter 2: The Spanish Ambassadors in Courtly Life and as Social Actors

An Actor-Centred Approach and Diplomatic Representation

The New Diplomatic History has made strides to move away from state-centred approaches in the study of early modern diplomacy, instead subscribing to Lucien Bély's notion of a society of princes to contend with the various polities and diplomatic actors engaged in European politics.¹ Scholarship on early modern diplomacy has also integrated more interdisciplinary approaches, focusing on cultural connections and individual interactions, and has employed an actor-centred approach. This allows for the study of personal interactions to fit within the broader landscape of diplomacy, and symbolic forms of communication between individuals.² Hillard von Theissen has argued that a top-down understanding of early modern diplomacy erodes the nuances and importance of relationships between local officials, the prince, and other elites in diplomatic relations.³ To von Theissen, an actor-centred approach to groups of individual brokers of power reveal true political convictions since early modern political culture and foreign policy hinged on personal relationships.⁴

Uncovering patterns of individual behaviour and their logic prioritises the study of interactions and complicates studies that view Spain or the Iberian empire as anthropomorphic actors, to instead highlight interactions and the interdependencies of individuals or small groups.⁵ This approach, ultimately, helps redefine diplomacy as both a social and political

¹ Lucien Bély, 'Souveraineté et Souverains: La Question du Cérémonial dans les Relations Internationales à l'Époque Moderne', *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, (1993), pp. 27-43.

² See Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol, Neue Forschungen zur Symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 27 (2000), pp. 389–405.

³ Hillard von Thiessen, *Diplomatie und Patronage: Die Spanisch-Römischen Beziehungen 1605-1621 in akteurszentrierter Perspektive* (Epfendorf, 2010), pp. 18-19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

activity as social interactions at the individual level worked in tandem with political negotiations to achieve diplomatic aims. The importance of social interactions in diplomatic conduct has led scholars, such as Catherine Fletcher, to assert that ambassadors had both an official and private persona, and moved between the two as necessary.⁶ This emphasis on the individual ambassador inevitably showcases their personal interests, and has led Niels May to argue that while ambassadors served as princely representatives, they also used ceremony and political negotiation to assert personal or domestic status on the international stage.⁷ In highlighting the individuality of the ambassadors and the importance of interactions, the actor-centred approach ultimately elucidates the sociability of ambassadorship and individual diplomats' agency.

The actor-centred approach and ceremonial studies also help to further expose the representative character of early modern ambassadors, as ambassadors were physical markers of their sovereign's prestige and precedence on the international stage. Early modern diplomacy was a culture of presence, and comprised of flexible acts of representation, performance, and negotiation. William Roosen has demonstrated the importance of diplomatic representation, as ambassadors were meant to reflect the status and glory of their rulers in a period when rulers were rarely physically in one another's company.⁸ Jan Hennings further argues that diplomatic protocol mirrored the political process because ambassadors helped symbolise larger political struggles through precedence at court.⁹ The choreography of the ambassador's public appearances were designed to symbolise their sovereign's rank within the society of princes.¹⁰

⁶ Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 36.

⁷ Niels F. May, 'Staged Sovereignty or Aristocratic Values? Diplomatic Ceremonial at the Westphalian Peace Negotiations (1643-1648)', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, p. 91.

⁸ William Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 53/3 (1980), pp. 455, 457.

⁹ Jan Hennings, 'The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue: Pomp and Circumstance in Tsar Peter I's Visit to Vienna in 1698', *The International History Review*, 30/3 (2008), p. 515.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

The representative aspect of early modern politics has previously been established in studies of the symbols and artistic renderings monarchs used to cultivate an image of themselves and circulate their presence. The ties between royal portraiture and political negotiations, particularly marriage negotiations, has been well documented and relied on these same notions of diplomatic representation.¹¹ Symbolic presence could be used to ‘establish, express, and modify relationships between rulers’.¹² The ambassadors’ presence at court therefore served similar purposes and was used to represent their monarch and their relative esteem.

The place of a monarch in the international hierarchy had been greatly influenced by historical tradition, in particular the ranking of Christian rulers devised under Pope Julius II.¹³ This international hierarchy of power was ultimately complicated when Charles V divided his patrimony between Philip II and his brother Ferdinand, giving Philip an empire without an imperial title.¹⁴ Philip’s ambassadors therefore had to assert their position within the international order separately from imperial ambassadors, providing the ambassadors with the opportunity and challenge of asserting a new order of precedence that suited their needs.¹⁵ Adhering to established precedence and creating a hierarchy of power was meant to settle disputes at court and internationally, but could also actualise political disputes at the individual level of the ambassador.¹⁶ Ceremonies, therefore, were a ‘surrogate war’ according to Toby Osbourne, as international rivalries over status were given a new forum, and ceremonies ‘were

¹¹ Tracey A. Sowerby, ‘“A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith”: Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture’, *English Historical Review*, 129/537 (2014), p. 297.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 329.

¹³ See Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*; Roosen, ‘Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial’, p. 460.

¹⁴ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 27.

¹⁵ Michael Levin, ‘A New World Order: The Spanish Campaign for Precedence in Early Modern Europe’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6/3 (2002), pp. 233-64.

¹⁶ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, p. 70.

themselves political struggles'.¹⁷ Ambassadors were intrinsically aware of the importance of representation and utilised strategies in their negotiations and correspondence to assert their place within this hierarchy. Diplomatic ceremonial ultimately helped determine the international order.¹⁸ While the order of precedence was theoretically set, these disputes and ambassadors' attempts at projecting esteem at court demonstrate how in reality, the order was negotiable.

Ceremonial disputes often occurred in public and court settings in order for diplomats to broadcast their monarch's precedence to a wide audience. The court has thus been recognised by scholars such as Roosen and André Krischer as a forum to determine the 'relative status of early modern countries' as ceremonial protocol indicated one's esteem.¹⁹ Ellen Welch, examining ambassadorial disputes over court entertainments, has revealed the 'double layer of theatricality' behind public engagements as diplomats' 'self-presentation manifested itself particularly acutely in their participation in lavish celebrations including spectacular court entertainments'.²⁰ Access to the monarch and visibility in prestigious events were therefore part of the reordering of 'European diplomatic society' and it is possible to view these tensions within diplomatic correspondence as ambassadors assured their monarchs of their efforts to demonstrate precedence and voiced discontent of any preference shown to other ambassadors.²¹ Ultimately, concerns over precedence and ceremonial were actualised at the individual level, therefore this chapter will uncover the importance of an ambassador's sociability and public

¹⁷ Toby Osbourne, 'The Surrogate War between the Savoy and the Medici: Sovereignty and Precedence in Early Modern Italy', *The International History Review*, 29/1 (2007), p. 18; Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, p. 24.

¹⁸ Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial', p. 474.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 460.; André Krischer, 'Das Diplomatische Zeremoniell der Reichsstädte, Oder: Was heißt Stadtfreiheit in der Fürstengesellschaft?', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 284/1 (2007), pp. 1-30.

²⁰ Ellen Welch, *Theatre of Diplomacy: International Relations and the Performing Arts in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia, 2017), p. 39.

²¹ Ibid., p. 5.

presence. This chapter will examine the social interactions of traditional accredited ambassadors to demonstrate how diplomacy operated within social settings. It will study the Spanish ambassadors' relationship with the French ambassadors in particular, highlighting how the ambassadors sought to establish precedence. It will then turn towards an analysis of the Spanish ambassadors' social engagements throughout Elizabeth's marriage negotiations to demonstrate how political circumstances influenced their access to court and how they navigated and maintained social contact throughout the period.

The Sociability of Ambassadorship and Ambassadors as Social Actors

To perform their duties of information gathering, and to create information communities in England, ambassadors had to interact and socialise with other figures at court and beyond. Personal connections were thus formed for political aims. Therefore, early modern ambassadors may also be considered social actors as their social interactions and political agendas were inherently intertwined. Diplomacy as 'an innovative political language was developed through multiple oral interactions, and organised, recorded, and transmitted in writing'.²² The importance of conversations, and the orality of early modern ambassadorship has been well documented by scholars such as Fernando Bouza and Filippo de Vivo, who characterise it as a 'performative art'.²³ Niels May has asserted that while these performative aspects of diplomacy were important in reflecting a monarch's power, they were also used for individual purposes and could help the ambassador themselves be deemed powerful by their peers.²⁴ Court

²² Isabella Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict: Italian Diplomacy in the Early Renaissance, 1350-1520*, (Oxford, 2015), p. 263.

²³ Bouza, *Corre Manuscrito*, p. 139; Filippo de Vivo, 'Archives of Speech: Recording Diplomatic Negotiation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy', *European History Quarterly*, 46/3 (2016), p. 535

²⁴ May, 'Staged Sovereignty or Aristocratic Values?', p. 82.

entertainments and festivals in particular were prominent examples of these opportunities, as early modern festival books often recorded the order in which individuals entered an event and identified members of their entourage, illuminating their importance or prestige.²⁵ Ceremonial quarrels could advance the ambassador's own individual interests and assert their own personal esteem, thus the Spanish ambassadors continually assured Philip of their ability to highlight his supremacy at court.²⁶ Within court settings or during an audience with a monarch, ambassadors understood that their conversations were in fact 'highly articulated and complex cultural' operations.²⁷ De Vivo has previously explored how, in the Italian context, ambassadors transcribed long quotations complete with a speaker's physical gestures and tone, to detail events as accurately as possible and imply certain attitudes and opinions.²⁸ While some contemporary diplomatic documents, such as Venetian *relazioni*, were meant to use a strictly neutral tone to relay and present information, the Spanish ambassadors' letters employ different strategies to spread information, suggest action, and advertise their success.²⁹

This thesis has established the official and administrative purposes of diplomatic documents; however, these documents also provide valuable insights into both formal and informal social interactions as they related to their official duties. Christine Vogel has explored how diplomatic documents were not strictly limited to relaying court events or political news, but should also be placed in their epistolary context as vehicles of private and social communication.³⁰ In this context of network practices, ambassadors deployed strategies of self-

²⁵ For a bibliography of festival books see Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Anne Simon (eds), *Festivals and Ceremonies: A Bibliography of Works Relating to Court, Civic, and Religious Festivals in Europe, 1500-1800* (London, 2000).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.

²⁷ Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict*, p. 260.

²⁸ De Vivo, 'Archives of Speech', pp. 522, 529, 535.

²⁹ De Vivo, 'How to Read Venetian Relazioni', p. 27.

³⁰ Christine Vogel, 'Diplomatic Writing as Aristocratic Self-Fashioning: French Ambassadors in Constantinople', in Sowerby and Craigwood (eds), *Cultures of Diplomacy*, p. 193.

fashioning to strengthen kinship networks, boast personal success, and achieve other individual aims within their diplomatic dispatches.³¹ Emotion and strategies of self-representation are thus present in official diplomatic dispatches as they influenced how the ambassador negotiated with other parties, and relayed information to their monarch or others.³² Isabella Lazzarini and Susan Broomhall emphasise how individual feelings and emotions were key considerations in diplomatic interaction, as ambassadors detailed emotional responses as part of their insight into the motivations and beliefs of those with whom they interacted.³³ Over time, diplomats were expected to adapt to the emotional character of their host monarch or others at court as they developed a sense of personal judgement for the emotions of those around them.³⁴ Transcriptions of these private interactions, therefore, carry some biases, but also reveal a multitude of strategies of self-fashioning and the nature of diplomatic relationships. It is then useful to recognise that letters and written accounts were not ‘a direct mirror of speech, but instead ... a self-conscious, premeditated mode of communication amenable to drafts’.³⁵ Diplomatic letters and their social interactions were ultimately coloured by personal perceptions.

Historians approaching friendly individual ambassadorial interactions may also consider the framework of friendship.³⁶ The rhetoric of friendship has often been utilised only for

³¹ Ibid., p. 202.

³² Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict*, p. 215.

³³ Ibid.; Susan Broomhall, ‘Diplomatic Emotions: International Relations as Gendered Acts of Power’, in Susan Broomhall and Andrew Lynch (eds), *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe 1100-1700* (London, 2019), pp. 293-4.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 295.

³⁵ Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England. 1500–1700* (Newark, 2005), p. 32.

³⁶ For an examination of the rhetoric of friendship and reputation in cross-cultural interactions see Francesca Trivellato, ‘Cross-Cultural Trade and the Etiquette of Merchants’ Letters’, in Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, 2009), pp. 177-93.

relationships between monarchs and while relationships cultivated by the ambassadors differ from individual relationships formed in other contexts, friendship can provide a conceptual framework in understanding instances of collaboration in lieu of a treaty. As Evgeny Roshchin has suggested, friendships ‘imply a high degree of emotional attachment’, and while it is impossible to disassociate the ambassador’s relationships from their political motivations, it is important to consider the role of trust between individuals when utilising an actor-centred approach.³⁷ Recognising the importance and utility of friendship with key political figures, diplomatic instructions could also encourage ambassadors to balance authority with friendship in their interactions at court.³⁸ For example, Guzmán de Silva recognised efforts to procure friendship from other ambassadors at court, remarking in November 1564 that the French ambassador makes friends ‘according to his orders from the [French] King’.³⁹ Monarchs also identified sources of information under the rhetoric of friendship, as Philip II wrote to Bernardino de Mendoza in his initial instructions that Mendoza had ‘the friendship’ of the French and Portuguese ambassadors in England.⁴⁰

Conceptions of *amiticia* between rulers as well as ambassadors, were part of the emotional culture of early modern diplomacy and could imply trust and intimacy between parties. However, friendship between polities and diplomatic actors were also understood to have broader legal connotations as descriptions of friendship were often used in formal treaties and business documents.⁴¹ Monarchs and ambassadors thus often portrayed amicable political relationships as an extension of friendship. For example, Silva noted a conversation with

³⁷ Evgeny Roshchin, *Friendship Among Nations: A Concept of a History* (Manchester, 2017), p. 2.

³⁸ Broomhall, ‘Diplomatic Emotions’, pp. 288-9.

³⁹ ‘por la órden que le dá el Rey’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 70.

⁴⁰ ‘la amistad’: CODOIN, xci, p. 189.

⁴¹ Randall Lesaffer, ‘Amicitia in Renaissance Peace and Alliance Treaties (1450-1530)’, *Journal of the History of International Law*, 4/1 (2002), p. 78.

Elizabeth in July 1566 where she reiterated that ‘it was not only convenient, [but] more necessary to preserve the present love and ancient friendship’ with Philip II and Spain.⁴² The Spanish ambassadors also used this language to justify actions that ‘served the love and friendship that [Philip II] has with this Queen [Elizabeth]’.⁴³ Ambassadors painted their relationships with words of friendship, noting the instances where ambassadors spoke with one another with ‘good words’. Here, friendship was thus ‘political, contractual and pragmatic’ rather than sentimental, but still could bind individuals together and create a sense of cohesion ‘within a political unit’.⁴⁴ Elizabeth herself often used terms of friendship when asking for French support in her war against Spain.⁴⁵ The contractual element of these friendships was therefore meant to enforce reciprocal promises and alliances in the absence of legal agreements.⁴⁶

These individual interactions cultivated friendships and were formed both in the context of larger events and meetings in private residences. During periods of relative cooperation amongst court members, the ambassadors might gather information from casual encounters at court and more private meetings in another ambassadors’ residence. These more intimate interactions may or may not have included dinner depending on the ambassadors’ social relationship, though the Spanish ambassadors’ correspondence suggests that most dinners were with French or Portuguese ambassadors. The ambassadors were also visited by English court members and could attend larger entertainments, though this was less common.⁴⁷ Thus, informal interactions supported the ambassadors’ official functions and were still used to demonstrate

⁴² ‘no sólo era conveniente, mas necesaria la conservacion deste amor presente y la amistad antigua’: CODOIN, xc, p. 346.

⁴³ ‘sería servido dello por el amor y amistad que tiene con esta Reina’: CODOIN, xc, p. 333.

⁴⁴ Roshchin, *Friendship Among Nations*, pp. 7, 59, 107.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ The ambassadors’ engagement with English court members is examined in Chapter 4.

public hierarchies of power. Ultimately, the distinction between an ambassador's public and private life is opaque.⁴⁸ The ambassador's house, while an important workspace for the ambassador, also served as a social space and could be a venue for informal interactions between ambassadors. Entertaining there, and inviting other ambassadors or political figures into one's home, provided ambassadors with the opportunity to form relationships and share information in the confines of social interaction and hospitality.⁴⁹ Fletcher has examined the act of inviting or being invited into these spaces as part of the 'symbolic and instrumental functions of sociability' in early modern diplomacy.⁵⁰ In the context of their own residence, social interactions in their private dwelling illuminate the ambiguity of the ambassador's role as they always functioned as an official representation of a sovereign even in seemingly personal settings.⁵¹

The prevalence of the ambassadors' residence as a performative space is evident in how the ambassadors noted the settings of private negotiations or celebrations. All of Philip II's ambassadors to England understood the importance of meeting in a private home and having access to the queen. The Count of Feria explained in December 1558 that he had seen Elizabeth twice, once in the house of the Lord of Northumberland and another in the Duke of Somerset's home.⁵² Here, Feria referred to Durham house, located on the Strand, which was the residence of John Dudley, Lord of Northumberland, until Mary I bestowed it upon the Bishop of Durham. Eventually the Spanish ambassador came to reside there in 1553, and the space was used for

⁴⁸ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, p. 170.

⁴⁹ Catherine Fletcher, "'Furnished with Gentlemen': The Ambassador's House in Sixteenth-century Italy", *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2010), p. 518.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 519.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 534-5.

⁵² CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 94.

various purposes until the Spanish ambassadors resided there again from 1559 to 1565.⁵³ Somerset House was also in the possession of the crown by this time, and after the execution of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, Elizabeth spent much time there in Mary I's reign.⁵⁴ These homes were thus crown property at the time of Feria's writing and may have been loaned out for events or gatherings, serving as forums for social and political events that Feria was excluded from. He noted that the ambassadors to Sweden had been speaking with her, while Feria was told that 'when there is something to discuss', Feria would be sent for by members of the Council.⁵⁵ Therefore, shortly after becoming a formal ambassador, Feria had been excluded from domestic spaces where political discussions were taking place. In their own dealings, the ambassadors also reported whenever a member of the English court visited them in their own residence, and sometimes stayed for dinner. These social arrangements in domestic settings subsequently demonstrate how the public and private selves worked together. While meeting in private settings suggest collaboration between diplomatic agents, it was also another arena for disputes in precedence, as the Spanish ambassadors noted preference shown to other figures, notably the French ambassadors in England.

Sociability, Precedence, and Relationships with the French Ambassadors

Throughout the Elizabethan period, there were only two resident embassies stationed in England for nearly the entirety of the period: the Spanish and French ambassador. The relationship between these ambassadors, both in times of conflict and collaboration, illuminate the sociability of early modern ambassadors, the foundations of ambassadors' relationships to one

⁵³ G.H. Gater and E.P. Wheeler, 'Durham Place', in G.H. Gater and E.P. Wheeler (eds), *Survey of London: Volume 18, St Martin-in-The-Fields II: The Strand* (London, 1937), pp. 84-98.

⁵⁴ See Simon Thurley, *Somerset House: The Palaces of England's Queens 1551-1692* (London, 2009).

⁵⁵ 'cuando hubiese alguna cosa que tratar conmigo': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 91.

another, and how a working relationship adapted between embassies spanning decades. Their interactions therefore merit further enquiry and can enrich our understanding of ambassadors' social relationships and representative character. As Spain and the Holy Roman Empire were now represented by two separate embassies, the Spanish ambassadors' interactions with the French ambassadors at the Elizabethan court provide unparalleled insight into the performative aspects of diplomacy. Their social dynamics with the French ambassadors in Elizabethan England often changed between embassies depending on concerns over precedence, political circumstance, and individual relationships, showcasing the ambassador's agency in creating their social ties. Rivalries between the Imperial and French ambassadors in the English court had occurred in the court of Mary I. Harris Harbison has examined how ambassador Simon Renard, with his increasing influence over Mary I and his promotion of her marriage to Philip II, often superseded his French rival Antoine Noailles who was socially ostracised at court.⁵⁶ Harbison argued their rivalry 'made England a battle-ground where Habsburg and Valois fought for European hegemony'.⁵⁷ However, this conflict was also burdened with battles for personal honour rather than strictly dynastic prestige, demonstrating the conception of mixed personal and public selves and the influence of individual relationships in politics.⁵⁸ These tensions and issues over precedence between Spanish and French representatives occurred throughout Europe. In 1564, for example, Pope Pius IV avoided public appearances that would see him acknowledge the precedence of either Spain or France, and seating arrangements at the Council of Trent had to be reorganised due to their struggle for supremacy on the international stage.⁵⁹ While conflicts between individual ambassadors and their soured relationships have been

⁵⁶ Harris E. Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors at the Court of Queen Mary* (Princeton, 1940), p. 136.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-2.

⁵⁹ Levin, 'New World Order', pp. 247, 254.

explored in historical scholarship, historians have not yet fully examined how conceptions of representative character and precedence could be tied to these personal disputes.

Conflict between French and Spanish ambassadors, however, was not inevitable: Bertrand Haan has argued that studies of Franco-Hispanic relations in the early modern period have been dominated by the Religious Wars, and that these histories fall short of recognising a reality of political cooperation.⁶⁰ Although the two monarchies were engaged in a struggle for hegemony, their desire not to antagonise Protestant forces in Europe and the intermarrying of their dynasties helped cooperation persist.⁶¹ Indeed, most of the ambassadors' social ties and information communities were with other foreign ambassadors, who usually represented Catholic European powers due to established ties between these European powers and the Spanish embassy. Confessional diplomacy could continue to help foster social ties between ambassadors with a shared religious identity.⁶²

At the individual level, however, incompatible political aims still forced the Spanish and French ambassadors into competition at the Elizabethan court. Therefore, the ambassadors' correspondence illuminates how either conflict or collaboration played out through their interactions with the French ambassadors, and how these dynamics changed between embassies. For instance, conflict did not immediately begin with Feria's embassy as he did not substantially interact with French ambassador Gilles de Noailles. This is possibly due to Feria's precarious position upon becoming resident ambassador, and perhaps due to his own confusion and discomfort in the role of official ambassador—he even apologised to Philip II for the

⁶⁰ Bertrand Haan, *L'Amitié entre Princes: Une Alliance Franco-Espagnole au Temps des Guerres de Religion (1560-1570)* (Paris, 2011), p. 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁶² See Roberta Anderson and Charlotte Backerra (eds), *Confessional Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2020).

‘bewilderment and confusion of my letters’.⁶³ Alvaro de la Quadra, conversely, had more contact with French ambassador Michel de Seure. Their correspondence alludes to an early struggle for precedence as each mentioned the audiences, and the rejected audiences, the other faced at the English court. David Potter suggests that Seure was an odd choice as ambassador due to his more varied experience than some other early modern ambassadors, though Quadra commented that Seure ‘was a man of ability’.⁶⁴

Quadra was aware of Seure’s difficulties and delays in securing an audience with Elizabeth because this helped Quadra gauge his relative standing to Seure at court. In September 1560, Seure wrote to Francis II about his trip to Windsor for an audience but was only permitted to see William Cecil, and was then rebuffed the next day.⁶⁵ During this period he had been staying in Quadra’s lodgings, possibly suggesting either a closeness between ambassadors, or demonstrating how while living in crown property, Quadra’s residence could be used for other ambassadorial guests. Quadra’s only dispatch from this period reiterated Elizabeth’s belief that the French had not given up in harming her, thus possibly explaining her delay of Seure’s scheduled audience at Seure’s inconvenience.⁶⁶ In Seure’s correspondence, Quadra’s interactions with the queen are also noted. Writing to Charles IX in November 1561, Seure reported that Quadra had tried to persuade Elizabeth ‘to call off the voyage of ships to the Guinea coast... on the grounds of French respect for the Treaty of Cateau-Cambr sis and the problems that would result from an armed confrontation there’.⁶⁷ Seure described Quadra as presenting himself with ‘great authority’ and receiving a more favourable response than a

⁶³ ‘el desconcierto y confusion de mis cartas’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 83-4.

⁶⁴ Michel de Seure, *A Knight of Malta at the Court of Elizabeth I: The Correspondence of Michel de Seure, French Ambassador, 1560-1561*, ed. David Potter (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 3, 12.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Portuguese envoy received earlier regarding the same matter.⁶⁸ Ultimately, though their correspondence did not outline a close or intimate personal relationship between the two ambassadors, they each continually observed how the other was received at court and attempted to identify if the other had been given preference or precedence.

The social dynamics between the Spanish and French ambassadors changed once more under Silva as precedence became a major consideration in both Silva's public and private social interactions with Paul de Foix. In some instances, Silva felt compelled to avoid events attended by Foix in order to not cede precedence, and their own private conversations reveal how Foix tried to use Silva's absences to assert his superiority. In October 1564, Silva explained that St Michael's day had recently passed, and that the Palace had its 'ordinary rejoicing' and large festivities for the occasion.⁶⁹ While Silva did not attend the event, he was later visited by Foix who 'came by my lodgings' after the celebrations to boast of his invitation from Elizabeth.⁷⁰ Silva claimed that he had been invited to the festivities by Cecil, but since he had just arrived in England, was not able to attend.⁷¹ This contradicts Cecil's interpretation of Silva's social appearances. Cecil even once wrote to Thomas Smith, an English diplomat and parliamentarian, explaining that Silva was coming to dine with some courtiers, but only after the French ambassador had set the example and already received multiple invitations from Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester.⁷² Therefore, Silva had to justify his absence to Philip and continually assure him that precedence was maintained. Silva thus told Foix that he was simply unable to attend, but on a later St Michael's day, Silva admitted to Philip that he should rather avoid Foix

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 107-8.

⁶⁹ 'ordinarios regocijos': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 39.

⁷⁰ 'vino por mi posada': Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *Queen Elizabeth and her times; a series of original letters, selected from the inedited private correspondence of the lord treasurer Burghley, the Earl of Leicester, the secretaries Walsingham and Smith, Sir Christopher Hatton, and most of the distinguished persons of the period*, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1838), i, p. 184.

completely. Silva's avoidance of the festivities is understandable, as St Michael was the patron saint of France and French kings, meaning that Silva might have automatically been given a less prestigious place than the French ambassador at the celebration. In October 1566, he wrote

On St Michael's Day, the Duke of Norfolk held the Order's feast at his home with [the Earl of] Leicester. Both were in robes [of the order]; the French Ambassador and the other courtiers were also at the party and dinner. I was invited to come for dinner, but I excused myself by saying that I felt unwell because the French [ambassador] had been there.⁷³

The Duke of Norfolk was a member of the Order of St Michael, and as Silva again recognised the difficulty of asserting precedence during a uniquely French celebration, he claimed to have felt ill, and excused himself to avoid the concession. He continued by saying that Leicester had expressed an interest in coming to his residence to speak with him since 'I think it's because I have invited him to come for dinner on multiple occasions'.⁷⁴ Here, Silva argued that he had not ceded precedence and still secured dinner with Leicester, thus completing his political aims regardless.

Avoidance, however, was not the only method used by Silva to navigate precedence disputes. Silva was willing to attend the same public events as his French counterpart and used his proximity to Elizabeth in these spaces to speak to his relative esteem, especially at events where the French ambassador was not conventionally given a more prestigious place than the Spanish ambassador. In July 1565, Silva recounted that he had been asked to 'be in good standing' and to decline a wedding invitation because Foix was also invited and there were

⁷³ 'El día de San Miguel hizo el Duque de Nortfolch la fiesta del Orden en su casa con el de Lecester. Ambos estuvieron en el hábito; halláronse á la fiesta y comida el Embajador de Francia y los demas cortesanos. A mí me envió á convidar para la cena, yo me excusé con decir que no me hallaba en buena disposicion porque habia estado el de Francia al comer': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 385.

⁷⁴ 'creo que debe ser porque le convido á comer como he hecho otras veces': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 385.

‘some matters of difference between him and I for precedence’.⁷⁵ Silva subsequently decided to attend, noting that he dined with Elizabeth while Foix attempted to join in some tournaments that he would have otherwise avoided, had he not wanted to take attention away from Silva.⁷⁶ Therefore, events could serve as a translation of greater political power struggles as they actualised these disputes in individual social interactions.

French ambassadors were also vigilant in noting how the Spanish ambassador might gain access to the court, even in more collaborative relationships. Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, the French ambassador in England from 1568 to 1575, believed that he had a positive working relationship with Guerau de Spes, writing to Charles IX in December 1568 that he had a good understanding of the Spanish ambassador, as the ambassador would tell Fénelon of his attempts to gain an audience with Elizabeth and his actions before receiving definite word from Philip II.⁷⁷ Later, Fénelon reported that the Spanish ambassador had told him quite proudly that he had enjoyed an audience with the queen, and while Elizabeth had proclaimed that she was as a ‘good and great friend’ of the French king, Spes was responsible for inspiring Anglo-French amity based on Philip II’s orders.⁷⁸ Spes, therefore, used his audience and subsequent interactions with Fénelon as an opportunity to demonstrate his potentially fruitful relationship with Elizabeth and Philip’s political influence. Thus, even within more collaborative personal relationships between ambassadors, considerations of political hierarchy and how the ambassadors represented the international order never ceased.

Spes was not always successful in positioning himself closer to the monarch, and Fénelon was quick to notice. By August 1569, Fénelon reported that Spes kept requesting

⁷⁵ ‘tuvieses por bien’; ‘alguna materia de diferencia entre él y mí por la precedencia’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 147.

⁷⁶ CODOIN, lxxxix, p.149.

⁷⁷ CDMF, i, p. 148.

⁷⁸ ‘bonne et grande amye’: Ibid., i, p. 55.

audiences only to be refused. In 1569, the Duke of Norfolk began plotting the Northern Rebellion. During this period, Spes 'made lavish promises of aid to any opponents of Elizabeth he could find' despite Philip II and Alba showing a calmer temperament towards the upheaval.⁷⁹ Fénelon detailed how Spes deliberated not asking for any more audiences to avoid being rebuffed.⁸⁰ Spes faced a moment of tension as he recognised that the wishes of Philip II required him to request as many audiences as possible, however, Spes understood that constant rejection might give the impression that he and Spanish business were dispensable. Spes's requests for audiences eventually became more volatile. In September 1569, Fénelon described the tension caused at court when the queen eventually granted him an audience, but he refused to go, creating an air of suspense as people saw Spanish merchandise vandalised.⁸¹ Ultimately, ambassadorial audiences informed broader political relations and they were understood to represent the regard and respect that monarchs had towards one another.

Philip made his grievances towards Elizabeth known, complaining to Alba in October 1570 that issues could be resolved by his ambassador Spes, but that Elizabeth only treated Spes egregiously, 'not wanting to negotiate with him, nor have him as my ambassador'.⁸² Philip believed that Elizabeth's primary objective in treating Spes with such disgust was to 'get him out of there', and thus he asked Alba for advice on what could be done.⁸³ Alba also knew of the embassy's struggles based on the news, or lack thereof, he received from the ambassador. By November 1570, Fénelon reported that Spes finally received a letter from Philip II that could be

⁷⁹ Krista J. Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569: Faith, Politics and Protest in Elizabethan England* (New York, 2007), p. 33.

⁸⁰ CDMF, ii, p. 142.

⁸¹ Ibid., ii, p. 203.

⁸² 'y no queriendo negociar con el, ni teniendo le por mi embaxador': AGS Estado 544, fo. 34r.

⁸³ 'es procurar de echar le de alli': Ibid.

used to push forward an audience, but while Fénelon had always been able to speak with Elizabeth graciously and modestly, she did not yet want to deal with Spain.⁸⁴

As Mendoza re-established Spanish diplomatic presence in England after Spes's expulsion, he was presented the opportunity to also re-establish social dynamics with the resident French ambassador, then Michel de Castelnau, though Fénelon would also return to England for special missions. Mendoza's efforts to assert precedence and gain access to Elizabeth, however, were often thwarted by political considerations, and this influenced his willingness to speak to the French ambassador. Mendoza explained in June 1581 that he had seen the French ambassador late the night before, and while the ambassador had tried to assure Mendoza that France only sought good relations, Mendoza 'responded to him in general words' believing that concealing his thoughts was best given 'the secret conversations between the Queen and Alençon [the Duke of Anjou]' during the Anjou marriage negotiations.⁸⁵

Political circumstances alone, however, did not determine access to the queen, as an individual ambassador's social skills and relations could directly influence court access. In December 1582, Mendoza reported that Fénelon had returned to England to help conclude the marriage negotiations and, as Mendoza understood it, Fénelon had been welcomed back warmly into England by Walsingham, and assured that old friendships remained.⁸⁶ While Fénelon's ties to England were evident, Anglo-French diplomatic collaboration could not be presumed but relied on the relationship an individual had with the court. Some French ambassadors thus shared the difficulties of the Spanish ambassadors in trying to create an individual relationship with the queen and therefore procure access. According to both Castelnau and Fénelon, there

⁸⁴ CDMF, iii, pp. 378-9.

⁸⁵ 'respondí á lo demás con palabras generales'; 'las pláticas tan secretas que esta Reina pasada con Alanzon': CODOIN, xcii, p. 32.

⁸⁶ CODOIN, xcii, p. 441.

were also turns in Elizabeth's mood as she oscillated between friendly and threatening according to circumstance.⁸⁷ Fénelon had attempted to calm relations, but after the St. Bartholomew's Massacre in France, Elizabeth's anger was rekindled, and only Castelnau was able to calm her and credit the violence to sects that also threatened the Catholics.⁸⁸ Fénelon reported his astonishment at Castelnau's success, writing that Elizabeth acted more favourably than one could have hoped, and under different circumstances would have erupted in anger.⁸⁹

Mendoza often found that the French ambassador had been shown preference and given greater access to public festivities and private audiences. His resentment was evident, such as in March 1579 when he wrote that 'more than giving this French Ambassador many banquets at the occasion of the carnival... last night they were in a very big soiree where there were comedies and many special effects'.⁹⁰ Here Mendoza referred to the celebrations of Shrove Tuesday, which were traditionally celebrated by both Catholics and Protestants, from which he had been excluded. He thus tried to use letters sent to him by Philip II to demand an audience, as letters from a monarch could constitute grounds for a formal audience, something his French counterpart understood. In May 1581, he wrote 'the French Ambassador, understanding from a French courier' that 'if I asked the Queen for an audience with the letters that I had, she would give it to me' though this seemed uncertain.⁹¹ Therefore, Mendoza lacked confidence that even with letters from a monarch, he would be able to gain an audience. No doubt, this was in part due to the changed political context of renewed Anglo-French marriage negotiations.

⁸⁷ Gustave Hubault, *Michel de Castelnau: Ambassadeur en Angleterre (1575-1585)* (Paris 1856), p. 59.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ 'más de haber sido...este Embajador de Francia muy banqueteados con la ocasion del carnavel...la postrera noche estuvieron en un sarao muy grande en que hubo comedias con muchas invenciones': CODOIN, xci, p. 352.

⁹¹ 'el Embajador de Francia, entendiendo de un correo francés'; 'si yo pedia audiencia á la Reina con las cartas que habia tenido, sí me la daria': CODOIN, xcii, p. 18.

Mendoza, however, was still able to gain access to Elizabeth, though he did not conceptualise these interactions as Elizabeth showing him any sign of favour as he believed that the queen had ignored his previous requests for an audience. In July 1581, he wrote that the ‘Queen heard me in the private Chamber, [I was] climbing up a back staircase, and she ordered everyone to leave the room, leaving only Leicester, [the Earl of] Sussex, [Christopher] Hatton and Walsingham’.⁹² Mendoza explained that ‘I had asked her a second time for an audience’ to discuss new letters from Philip and business dating back to October, to which Elizabeth said that she ‘had not heard me’ or such requests.⁹³ Therefore, rather than acknowledge how an invitation into a private chamber for a meeting could be perceived as privileged access, Mendoza remained dissatisfied with his lack of a more formal and public audience, where other ambassadors might note his interactions with the queen. There was also the suggestion that Mendoza was purposefully being kept from public spaces regardless of the impetus a royal letter might carry in granting him an audience, which would suggest Elizabeth’s indignation towards Philip. Individual social dynamics between ambassadors, and ambassadors with their host monarch, thus changed due to political context and influenced how the ambassadors understood their access to court information. Here, Mendoza’s wariness towards the favour Elizabeth had shown the French ambassadors influenced his perception that she had been denying Mendoza an audience, even when he was still present in privileged spaces. Ambassadors, ultimately, represented their monarch in all social interactions, both public and private, showcasing how diplomacy operated within a culture of sociability but also how a diplomat’s formal duties and information gathering were vulnerable to and coloured by broader political changes.

⁹² Here Mendoza may be referring to the Privy Chamber, as the exact location of this encounter is unclear; ‘Reina me oyó en la Cámara privada; subiéndome por una escalera secreta, mandó se saliesen todos de la pieza, no quedando sino el de Leicester, Sussex, Atton y Walsingham’: CODOIN, xcii, pp. 69-70.

⁹³ ‘le habia pedido segunda vez audiencia’; ‘no me habia de oir’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 70.

Elizabeth's Marriage Negotiations and Changing Diplomatic Relations

The ambassadors' social relationships and interactions were instrumental for information gathering. However, these relationships were fragile and greatly influenced by political context. While political or religious tensions shifted throughout the Elizabethan period for any number of reasons, Elizabeth's various marriage negotiations had the potential to change court dynamics and the ambassadors' intelligence gathering more quickly than almost any other circumstance. Marriage negotiations thus provide an excellent case study on the sociability of ambassadors by showcasing how political changes impacted an ambassador's ability to gain information and develop social ties. In the early 1560s, England had conceived of France as their greatest threat, but by the late 1560s, it had become Spain. This was subsequently reflected in Elizabeth's marriage negotiations and the Spanish ambassadors' interactions at the English court as their social ties flourished during the Habsburg marriage negotiations while they were later excluded from information communities from 1568 onwards during the Anjou marriage negotiations.

Elizabeth's marriage negotiations have been examined in depth by Susan Doran and Anne McLaren, amongst others.⁹⁴ Additionally, Elizabeth's final decision to remain unmarried has pervaded discussions of her popular perception, and used to propagate the idea of a Virgin Queen now synonymous with Elizabeth.⁹⁵ Regardless of whether the negotiations were genuinely intended to succeed, they continued throughout Elizabeth's reign, and were used as a basis for other political negotiations.⁹⁶ Yet, historians have not assessed how the negotiations

⁹⁴ See Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London, 1996); Susan Doran, 'Religion and Politics at the Court of Elizabeth I: The Habsburg Marriage Negotiations of 1559-1567', *English Historical Review*, 104/413 (1989), pp. 908-26; Anne McLaren, 'The Quest for a King: Gender, Marriage, and Succession in Elizabethan England', *Journal of British Studies*, 41/3 (2002), pp. 259-90; Natalie Mears, 'Love-making and Diplomacy: Elizabeth I and the Anjou Marriage Negotiations c. 1578-1582', *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, 86/284 (2002), pp. 442-66.

⁹⁵ See John N. King, 'Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43/1 (1990), pp. 30-74.

⁹⁶ Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p. 99.

impacted Spanish diplomatic practice. Elizabeth's potential suitors sent special envoys or others to broker a marriage, sometimes in addition to resident ambassadors already pursuing their interests in England. This forced the Spanish ambassadors to adapt to, and attempt to gather information from, a roster of new diplomatic figures if they were to understand the marriage negotiations, ultimately raising questions about the flexibility of the ambassadors' social relationships and information communities.

From the outset of Elizabeth's reign there was speculation surrounding who she might marry, as the ramifications of binding the newly Protestant England with either a Protestant or Catholic power in Europe were obvious. In November 1558, shortly after Mary I's death, Feria reported that the English court considered themselves free from Philip II and 'any Ambassadors will come to try to negotiate marriage [with Elizabeth]' even though it should be too early to seriously discuss the matter.⁹⁷ To Feria, there was an opportunity for Philip and the Holy Roman Emperor to act on Elizabeth's availability, as the English nobles had realised that 'it is not in their interests to marry this woman'.⁹⁸ However, Feria also recognised Elizabeth's power in this forum. In April 1559, Feria reported that Elizabeth had dismissed a Swedish ambassador hoping to renew earlier marriage negotiations because she no longer responded to previous letters that addressed Madame Elizabeth, insisting that as she was now Queen of England, she was always to be written to as such.⁹⁹

One of the first major marriage negotiations were the Habsburg negotiations regarding Archduke Charles of Austria. During these negotiations, the Spanish ambassadors collaborated with Imperial ambassadors sent to England, demonstrating how the Spanish ambassadors could

⁹⁷ 'cualesquiera Embajadores que les vengan á tratar de casamiento': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 81.

⁹⁸ 'no les conviene casar esta mujer': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 82.

⁹⁹ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 160.

benefit from the social connections of different branches of the Habsburg dynasty. Quadra quickly recognised the utility of having Imperial ambassadors present in England, and even encouraged Feria to engage with them further. In May 1559, Quadra reported that the Imperial ambassador came to Feria's home and requested a meeting, which Quadra suggested Feria take.¹⁰⁰ During his own embassy, Quadra soon found himself forming an amicable relationship with Imperial envoy Baron Caspar Breuner and gathering intelligence from him. Breuner even praised Quadra in his letters to Ferdinand, commending his commitment to Christendom and helping with the marriage negotiations.¹⁰¹ Quadra reported in July 1559 that the Emperor

wrote a very good letter to the Queen stating his happiness for her determination in the matter of the marriage...and saying to her that for other matters that could occur, he wanted to have his Ambassador here [in England]...She was happy with this, but as for the marriage, she responded as she usually does.¹⁰²

While there was little to report on the actual marriage negotiations, establishing an imperial resident embassy in England could offer the Spanish ambassadors a potential stable information community at court and solidify Habsburg diplomatic cooperation. Strengthening Anglo-Imperial diplomatic relations only served Quadra as his social ties to Breuner provided him with access to social settings and information.¹⁰³ Breuner's letters to Ferdinand also indicate how Quadra seemed distant from courtly life, and how Breuner might remedy this. In December 1559, Breuner reported that the Duke of Norfolk had called him and Quadra to speak privately about the queen's potential marriage to Archduke Charles and that he was as hopeful as ever.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 192-3.

¹⁰¹ *Queen Elizabeth & Some Foreigners: Being a Series hitherto Unpublished Letters from the Archives of the Hapsburg Family*, ed. Victor Von Klarwill and tr. T.H. Nash (London, 1928), p. 86.

¹⁰² 'escribió á la Reina una muy buena carta dándose por contento de su determinacion en lo de su casamiento...y diciéndole que para otros negocios que podrian ofrescerse queria tener aqui su Embajador... Ella holgó con esto; pero en lo del casamiento ha respondido lo que suele': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 217.

¹⁰³ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 208.

¹⁰⁴ *Queen Elizabeth & Some Foreigners*, p. 165-6.

These improved social connections through Imperial ambassadors continued with Count George von Helffenstein. Throughout 1560, Helffenstein and Quadra continued to discuss the potential match and exchanged the letters they received regarding the matter.¹⁰⁵ In August 1560, Quadra received an audience and used the opportunity to insist that Elizabeth should ‘keep the word she had given to the Count of Helffenstein’ and let the Emperor know her decision.¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth’s marriage negotiations thus had the potential to provide the Spanish ambassadors with vital diplomatic representatives in England and change the nature of their interactions at court.

Silva also acknowledged that the presence of Imperial ambassadors could help him determine the state of Elizabeth’s marriage negotiations with the Archduke and exchange information.¹⁰⁷ In May 1565, shortly after an Imperial envoy had arrived, Silva reported that he had come to Silva’s residence and had stayed for the night; he and Silva discussed how best to determine the state of the Archducal negotiations and who could be trusted in England.¹⁰⁸ Imperial ambassadorial presence during the marriage negotiations had thus helped bring key political discussions into the ambassador’s own residence, and helped facilitate his access to other social and private spaces. In July 1565, Silva explained that after the Imperial ambassador spoke to Elizabeth in the hope of pushing forward the marriage proposal to Don Carlos, the ‘Count [sic] of Leicester has come to eat with me today, and those of the Queen’s Council, [Philip] Sidney, Cecil’ and others would take both Silva and the Imperial ambassador to another lodging to continue the discussion.¹⁰⁹ While Silva did interact with English councillors and

¹⁰⁵ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 289.

¹⁰⁶ ‘guardar la palabra que habia dada al Conde de Helffestain’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 308.

¹⁰⁷ CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 119.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Conde de Lecester se ha venido hoy á comer connigo, y los del Consejo de la Reina, Sidney, Sicel’: CODOIN, xc, p. 141.

courtiers alone, this level of access and the extent of these social occasions were rare, and demonstrate how important the Imperial envoys were to his access to courtiers. Yet, while marriage negotiations could help foster cooperative relationships at court, they also threatened to push the Spanish out of key information circles when the potential bridegroom was not a Habsburg.

As the Archducal marriage negotiations failed and geopolitical priorities shifted, Elizabeth redirected her focus and began marriage negotiations in 1568 with Henry, Duke of Anjou, the younger brother of Charles IX.¹¹⁰ From the beginning of her reign, France and other European powers recognised the value of brokering an alliance with England through a marriage to Elizabeth. The negotiations began in an effort to bring Anjou away from Guise influence, something Elizabeth hoped might diminish Mary, Queen of Scots's efforts for international support due to her Guise connection.¹¹¹ While the marriage negotiations initially failed, and the French had made seemingly unreasonable demands, by 1572 the negotiations continued as a basis for further diplomatic and political discussions, prompting Elizabeth to continually give the impression that hope for the match was never lost.¹¹² These negotiations were then revived by Henry's younger brother Francis, who was made Duke of Anjou in 1576 after Henry succeeded to the French throne.

As a potential Anglo-French alliance could upset the power balance in Europe and offer the Dutch rebels the necessary support to gain their independence from Philip's rule, the Spanish ambassadors were understandably anxious about an Anjou match and wary that the negotiations negatively impacted their social ties in court. The Anjou negotiations ultimately erased the

¹¹⁰ Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p. 99.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 142.

positive social interactions and information communities the ambassadors had enjoyed under the Archducal negotiations as the ambassadors were now excluded from key discussions. In July 1569, Spes wrote to Philip that while Fénelon had again requested an audience with the queen, ‘I have not yet asked for an audience, nor will I’, because it was unclear if he would be granted one, showcasing his belief that French ambassadorial presence had continually been shown preference at court, thus impacting his access and willingness to request an audience.¹¹³

The many private and informal meetings that French ambassadors attended while negotiating with the English were not open to Mendoza. Mendoza wrote in September 1579 that Anjou gave Elizabeth several gifts and at the home of the Earl of Sussex ‘she and [the French] have been celebrating, and those in her Council have been inviting [the French] to their homes’ where celebrations and well wishes continued.¹¹⁴ He complained that the English were ‘getting closer to the French every day’ as he knew the ambassadors at court would go to ‘the Count [sic] of Sussex’s house, where they all celebrate, dance, and toast to the good news’.¹¹⁵ Anglo-French marriage negotiations continuously placed French representatives at the English court, as Mendoza noted in May 1581 that Elizabeth received them warmly, ‘giving them great welcome and infinite gifts’, and directly placing them in contact with members of her council, including Leicester, Sussex, and Walsingham.¹¹⁶ Mendoza believed, therefore, that these representatives were given priority at court and that Mendoza had been excluded from festivities centered around French ambassadorial presence.

¹¹³ ‘yo no le he pedido aún audiencia ni la pediré’: CODOIN, xc, p. 258.

¹¹⁴ ‘ella y ellos grandemente festejados, y lo mismo hacen todos los del Consejo convidándolos en sus casas’: CODOIN, xci, p. 429.

¹¹⁵ ‘estrechando cada día más con franceses’; ‘en casa del Conde de Sussex, donde es todos fiestas y danzas y brindis á la buena nueva’: CODOIN, xci, p. 426.

¹¹⁶ ‘haciéndoles grande acogimiento y infinitos regalos’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 16.

These negotiations thus augmented Fénelon's relationship to the English court for the better, regardless of the negotiation's success or status. Mendoza noted that during Fénelon's time as French ambassador to England, he had 'a great closeness to Leicester, whom he has asked very earnestly to speak to privately, but Leicester has refused until now; la Mothe [Fénelon] has said that he does not have a good indication that the marriage will occur'.¹¹⁷ Mendoza therefore believed that while the results of the negotiations remained ambiguous, Fénelon and other French representatives had fostered social relationships to key courtiers, and enjoyed privileged access to the court and other social spaces. When Mendoza did manage to arrange for an audience with Elizabeth, he could also be suddenly usurped by the French. In June 1581, Mendoza explained that he had an audience organised with Elizabeth, but 'she informed me that the French Ambassadors had news that obligated them to meet with her that day, so she asked me to entertain myself until the next day, and that she would listen to me with great interest'.¹¹⁸

The Spanish ambassadors were also increasingly frustrated by the marriage negotiations because they believed Elizabeth would never marry a Catholic prince. After the Archducal negotiations had failed, the ambassadors believed that the Anjou negotiations were useless because they would also fail over religious considerations. Their insistence that foreign marriage negotiations were futile also demonstrate their perception of the Elizabethan regime's anti-Catholic outlook. Yet Quadra believed that Elizabeth would continue to have ambassadors come and 'keep them busy in discussions which later will not be of any use to her'.¹¹⁹ Similar

¹¹⁷ 'gran estrechez con el de Leicester, á quien ha enviado á pedir muy ahincadamente le dé lugar para hablarle aparte, pero el de Leicester lo ha rehusado hasta agora; ha dicho la Mota que no lo tiene por buena señal para efectuarse el casamiento': CODOIN, xcii, p. 17.

¹¹⁸ 'me avisó que los Embajadores de Francia habian tenido un correo que les obligaba á verse con ella aquel dia, y así me pedia me entretuviese hasta el siguiente, que me oiria de muy buena gana': CODOIN, xcii, p. 52.

¹¹⁹ 'por entretener á los suyos en pláticas que despues no se la dará mucho por hacer con ellas': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 198.

concerns were raised by the ambassadors during the Anjou negotiations. In August 1571, Spes wrote that negotiations seemed to mean that the duke could hear Mass and would be king with certain restrictions, but that the public was against this and everyone knew this marriage would not take place.¹²⁰ Mendoza even reported that Elizabeth ‘had given [her councillors] her word’ that she would not marry Anjou.¹²¹ Ultimately, the ambassadors came to believe that Elizabeth utilised marriage negotiations with Catholic princes for geo-political advantage.

Despite the ambassadors’ certainty that Elizabeth would not marry Anjou, his ties to the Low Countries meant that the French representatives’ dealings with the English held larger political ramifications that could not be ignored. With the confinement of Mary, Queen of Scots, in England and the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt, England’s geo-political priorities shifted and Spain continued to emerge as a greater threat than France. Castelnau even reported that Elizabeth proved to be a great manager in order to have the resources necessary to face Spain.¹²² In July 1571, even after the Low Countries had already seen a revolt crushed by Alba, Spes reminded Philip II to look into the marriage carefully because he could ‘consider the importance of it and its relevance to peace in the Low Countries’.¹²³ In February 1576, Guaras reported that the French’s ‘ambitions against the State of Flanders is rooted in the Serene Queen’s marriage to the Duke of Alençon [Anjou]’.¹²⁴ Mendoza similarly reported that ‘the French offered that the marriage would be linked to the conquest of the Low Countries’ with the discussion concerning whether they would rather see the states ‘in the hands of the French or of some other

¹²⁰ CODOIN, xc, p. 491.

¹²¹ ‘dándoles la palabra dello’: CODOIN, xci, p. 333.

¹²² Hubault, *Michel de Castelnau*, p. 58.

¹²³ ‘á que considere bien la importancia dello por convenir tanto á la quietud de los Estados-Bajos’: CODOIN, xc, p. 479.

¹²⁴ ‘sus pretensiones contra los Estados de Flándes van fundadas sobre el casamiento desta Serenísima Reina con el Duque de Alanson’: CODOIN, xci, p. 130.

Prince'.¹²⁵ By linking France to Flanders and the ongoing revolt, it became increasingly clear that the Anjou negotiations held distinct ramifications for Philip II's European empire.

Anjou, however, lacked the universal support of those in England and the Low Countries. The general perception of Anjou's competency was evident even in art, as the popular painting *Queen Elizabeth I Feeds the Dutch Cow* depicted how the Netherlands, embodied as a cow, were handled by various leaders with Anjou unsuccessfully attempting to hold the cow back.¹²⁶ It was widely believed that Anjou required Elizabeth's support. Mendoza thus reported in March 1582 'That [William of] Orange has also assured that the rebels would not submit to a Prince as scrawny and weak as Alençon [Anjou], unless it were certain that he was allied with the Queen'.¹²⁷ While the negotiations could potentially draw Anjou away from further military intervention in the Low Countries, it was clear he acted independently and was deemed reckless.¹²⁸ Doran asserts that Elizabeth overestimated her influence on Anjou as he moved forward with military intervention in the Netherlands against her wishes and expected England to support his ventures financially.¹²⁹ Elizabeth thus had Henry Cobham, her ambassador in France, make it clear to Henry III and Anjou that she would not contribute to financing a war started by Anjou without the consent of her or her council.¹³⁰ While the dangers arising from Anjou's intervention seemed to subside, Elizabeth used his involvement in the Low Countries as the ultimate reason for her withdrawing from the marriage negotiations.¹³¹

¹²⁵ 'los franceses ofresciesen que el casamiento se haria ligándose para la conquista de los Países-Bajos'; 'en manos de franceses ó de algun otro Príncipe': CODOIN, xci, p. 318.

¹²⁶ Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630* (London, 1995), p. 87.

¹²⁷ 'Que asimismo le habia asegurado el de Orange que los rebeldes no se someterian á un Príncipe tan flaco y débil de fuerzas como Alanzon, sino fuese debajo de la seguridad que estaba aliado con la Reina': CODOIN, xcii, p. 298.

¹²⁸ Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p. 147.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 183.

¹³¹ Ibid.

When the Anjou negotiations ended and the political context shifted again, Mendoza attempted to re-establish communication with Castelnau. By 1583, Mendoza had not spoken to Castelnau for some time. Now firmly believing that Elizabeth's Anjou match was no longer feasible, he suggested a marriage between Anjou and an Infanta, hoping to cultivate Franco-Spanish ties at England's expense.¹³² Therefore, Mendoza believed that Castelnau had re-emerged as a potentially useful contact at court only after the Anjou negotiations concluded, believing that Castelnau and himself could possibly work towards a more advantageous marriage negotiation for Spain. Elizabeth's marriage negotiations thus offer new insight into the fragility of diplomatic collaboration and social relationships at court. Depending on the political goals of Elizabeth's potential suitor, the Spanish ambassadors could find themselves collaborating with other foreign ambassadors sent to broker the marriage, such as when the Archduke Charles negotiations facilitated cooperation across the different Habsburg diplomatic networks. However, in the case of the Anjou negotiations, the Spanish ambassadors struggled to gain audiences or court access when the French ambassadors were shown preference during the negotiations. The ambassadors' information gathering practices and social interactions with other ambassadors during the marriage negotiations were ultimately heavily influenced by boarder political contexts and England's geo-political priorities, showcasing how diplomats' sociability actualised and represented struggles between monarchs at the individual level.

Conclusion

The actor-centred approaches of the New Diplomatic History have allowed historians to examine the representative character of ambassadors and determine how ambassadors also

¹³² John Bossy, *Under the Molehill* (London, 2001), p. 60.

functioned as social agents. Ambassadors also relied on their social interactions to gain information, assert precedence, and demonstrate notions of friendship between their polities and themselves. Social encounters and ceremonies alike were opportunities to redefine the order of precedence and secure the esteem of their monarch on the international stage, making ambassadors inherently social actors if they were to meet political aims. These social interactions, crucially though, were dependent on political context. Within Elizabeth's marriage negotiations, England's changing geo-political priorities and the shifting landscape of diplomatic representatives at court could quickly facilitate or squander the Spanish ambassadors' social connections. Diplomatic interactions and court dynamics were malleable, supporting our understanding of early modern diplomacy as a flexible social and political activity. Therefore, analysing early modern diplomacy at the individual level showcases how diplomatic communication and precedence were moulded by geopolitical priorities and demonstrated through an ambassador's social interactions, both in formal settings like audiences, and private conversations within their residence.

Thus far, this thesis has only considered the sociability and correspondence of fully accredited formal resident ambassadors in England. Not every foreign representative at the Elizabethan court was granted the same access to court or the same social opportunities, as some lacked full accreditation, and the categories of diplomatic representation could break down. This thesis will now turn towards a study of sub-ambassadorial figures that were present at court but were not considered full ambassadors, highlighting early modern understandings of who constituted an ambassador, and how this could impact their sociability and information gathering.

Chapter 3: Defining Ambassadorship: Antonio de Guaras and Sub-Ambassadorial Figures

The diplomatic authority and legitimacy of early modern ambassadors and envoys relied on protocol and convention, and whether a foreign monarch recognised them as an official representative of another ruler. Monarchs had to keep their ambassadors well informed of their wishes and appointed individuals they trusted to project their esteem and garner respect abroad. While there was still flexibility in determining and asserting diplomatic authority, as demonstrated through performance and diplomatic ceremonial, diplomacy could only be conducted if the ambassadors in question were deemed legitimate representatives. In a 1569 letter to the Duke of Alba, the Tuscan ambassador Chiappino Vitelli wrote that he had an audience with members of the English court to discuss shipping issues, but that the council ‘showed they would not consent’ to anything until it was discussed directly with the Spanish ambassadors, ‘and then the queen would not fail to offer total satisfaction’.¹ Only with the intervention of accredited ambassadors would a foreign monarch take action. Official resident ambassadors, however, were only one subset of foreign representatives present at court. Within a single court there might be envoys from small powers, official ambassadors of major European sovereigns, other agents, couriers, or representatives sent for a special short mission.² The New Diplomatic History has been useful in accounting for sub-ambassadorial actors such as agents, consuls, and secretaries at court and their influence on diplomatic relations.³ Therefore, with a

¹ ‘mostrando no poder consentir’; ‘y que entónçes la reina no dejaria de dar toda la satisfaccion’: CODOIN, xxxviii, p. 265.

² See Maurits A. Ebben and Louis Sicking (eds), *Beyond Ambassadors: Consuls, Missionaries, and Spies in Premodern Diplomacy* (Leiden, 2020).

³ Diplomatic secretaries in particular have recently begun to receive more thorough historiographical attention, see Florian Kühnel and Christine Vogel (eds), *Zwischen Domestik und Staatsdiener: Botschaftssekretäre in den frühneuzeitlichen Außenbeziehungen* (Vienna, 2021).

variety of diplomatic agents present at court, it could become difficult to differentiate an official ambassador from sub-ambassadorial figures.

Letters of credence, as an official indication of ambassadorship and the consent of the monarch to have an individual represent their polity, were especially common in distinguishing full ambassadors from sub-ambassadorial actors. Indeed, when Philip II's ambassadors arrived in England, they were often instructed to have an initial audience with Elizabeth to present her with their letter of credence and to formally declare that they had been appointed Philip's new ambassador in England. Philip even noted to Margaret of Parma in January 1564 that 'I send him [Guzmán de Silva] with my letter of credence for that Queen [Elizabeth]' to England at the start of Silva's embassy.⁴ In the case of Álvaro de la Quadra, the Count of Feria had also accompanied Quadra to his introductory audience to aid in the transition between embassies.⁵ However, it was sometimes still unclear who constituted an ambassador. One's status at court as an official ambassador or sub-ambassadorial figure fundamentally impacted one's sociability at court, ability to procure information, and physical security.⁶ Additionally, sovereigns only entrusted full ambassadors with the ceremonial honours and responsibility of demonstrating their prestige abroad.⁷ An ambassador's representative character, therefore, had to be recognised by the monarch of a host court to legitimate the ambassador's ability to represent their ruler. For example, in Silva's introductory audience in June 1564, he wrote that

⁴ 'le envío con carta de creencia mia para aquella Reina'; CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 12.

⁵ CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 182-3

⁶ Hennings, 'The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue', p. 520.

⁷ Ibid.

I was with the Queen, who stood in the same Chamber listening to a keyboard instrument and seeing me took three or four steps and embraced me, speaking to me in Italian, saying that she did not know in what language to speak to me.⁸

Silva explained that he then delivered Philip II's letter, which was read by William Cecil, and was assured 'I would be treated and looked upon according to the respects owed to Your Majesty'.⁹ Here, Elizabeth had made a public display of her acceptance of Silva into England and courtly life, as he was publically given warm regards, and verbal confirmation that he would be shown respect due to the posting he held on behalf of Philip II. Ultimately, this recognition was integral to early modern resident ambassadorship, and the lack of a formal posting or the rejection of one's diplomatic authority could hinder their ability to procure information, represent a foreign sovereign, or gain access to court spaces.

This chapter thus outlines how early modern polities defined resident ambassadorship through an examination of key instances where sub-ambassadorial figures conducted diplomatic duties and when diplomatic legitimacy was questioned. These episodes ultimately reveal the rationale behind ambassadorship and the impact legitimacy had on ambassadors' sociability. It will first examine how Antonio de Guaras, a Spanish merchant, attempted to serve as a *de facto* *chargé d'affaires* after Guerau de Spes's expulsion in 1571 left the Spanish embassy formally unoccupied until Bernardino de Mendoza's arrival in 1578. Demonstrating how Guaras was able to rely on his personal reputation to gain some status, it showcases how Guaras could integrate into existing information communities, but that consequently his lack of diplomatic immunity and protection jeopardised his efforts. It will then outline how Mendoza responded to

⁸ 'que entró conmigo hasta ponerme con la Reina, que estaba en la mesma Cámara en pié oyendo tocar un instrumento de tecla; en viéndome se vino para mí tres ó cuatro pasos y abrazóme, hablándome en lengua italiana, diciendo que no sabía en qué lengua hablarme': CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 14.

⁹ 'yo sería tratado y mirado della conforme á lo que debia á la obligacion que tiene por muchos respetos á las cosas de V.M.': CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 14-15.

and contested the diplomatic legitimacy of a variety of agents who threatened Spanish interests, and did not represent an established monarch, posing questions about how Mendoza's understanding of ambassadors was informed by Guaras's experience. Highlighting a period that saw an influx of diplomatic actors present in England, these sub-ambassadorial figures demonstrate how ambassadorship was still a malleable concept and how rulers attempted to use this ambiguity to construct parallel or quasi diplomatic networks. Supposed categories and identifications of ambassadors, ultimately, could breakdown, illuminating the assumptions and conceptions behind these identifications and their reliance on convention.

When Resident Diplomacy Fails: Antonio de Guaras as *chargé d'affaires*

In 1571, a plot to assassinate Elizabeth and place Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne, which had been planned by the international banker Roberto Ridolfi, had been discovered. Once Spes's involvement became clear, the ambassador was promptly expelled, leaving the Spanish embassy in England vacant.¹⁰ In the aftermath of the plot, Philip II was advised to appoint an agent to monitor Spanish interests in England.¹¹ Rather than establish a new formal resident embassy, Philip tasked the Spanish merchant, Antonio de Guaras, to continue Spanish diplomatic efforts by gathering information and interacting with English court members on his behalf. While these tasks mirror the official duties of any Spanish resident ambassador, Guaras poses unique historiographical questions about the definition of an ambassador due to his lack of ambassadorial credentials. Indeed, unlike the embassies Philip sent to England in the late 1550s and 1560s, Guaras did not have an initial audience arranged for him to introduce himself to Elizabeth as Philip's ambassador. Guaras had never before been expected to enter court life in

¹⁰ The ambassadors' engagement with Catholic plots and Mary, Queen of Scots, will be examined in Chapter 5.

¹¹ Antonio de Guaras, *The Accession of Queen Mary*, tr. Richard Garnett (London, 1892), p. 16.

England but possessed a great deal of personal reputation that allowed him some informal recognition as a *chargé d'affaires* and to conduct some of the duties expected of a resident ambassador. Guaras's responsibility for Spanish affairs and diplomacy in England thus prompts questions about the nature of his role at court, his access to information, and what defined an ambassador in the early modern world.¹² Playing with concepts of personal reputation and sociability, Guaras's time as a sub-ambassadorial figure in the Elizabethan court showcases the complexities and ambiguities of diplomacy and how elements of ambassadorship extended beyond the official figures which have previously dominated political histories.

Guaras had arrived in London sometime in 1533 as a child, even believing that he was born there, and came to work as a merchant. Eventually, he served as a translator for Spanish soldiers in England in the service of Henry VIII.¹³ However, he experienced his own difficulties in England and for a time he fled to the Low Countries due to the persecution of Catholics, returning to England shortly before Mary I's reign.¹⁴ Despite his many years in England, Guaras has been described by Martin Hume as a great Spanish patriot, and a 'staunch Spanish and Catholic' man.¹⁵ In his own report of Mary's coronation Guaras wrote that he was a 'true Catholic Christian' who could never be persuaded by the 'false doctrine'.¹⁶ Guaras believed that Spaniards and Catholics had been unjustifiably portrayed as England's enemies, believing 'that there are a hundred [good] Catholics for four heretics'.¹⁷ For this and his previous assistance to Spanish troops, Philip trusted Guaras and throughout the embassies he sent to England, he instructed his ambassadors to rely on Guaras as a loyal domestic information source, describing

¹² Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 204.

¹³ José Miguel Cabañas Agrela, 'Antonio de Guaras', DBE (27 May 2019).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 'acérrimo español y católico'; Martin Hume, *Espanoles é Ingleses en el Siglo XVI* (Madrid, 1903), p. 96.

¹⁶ Guaras, *The Accession of Queen Mary*, p. 107.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 114.

Guaras, amongst other Spaniards in England, as ‘my good vassals’.¹⁸ Guaras thus became the first point of contact for several of the ambassadors. For example, in September 1568, Spes detailed that even before meeting with his predecessor, Silva, he was welcomed by ‘Antonio de Guaras and all the Spaniards that live in this city, and they accompanied me with much love and zeal to serve Your Majesty as they should’.¹⁹

Even before Spes’s embassy officially began, Guaras had already disseminated information to the incoming ambassador to ensure that Spes was well equipped to deal with the possible religious tensions in England. In August 1568, Spes reported that

Antonio de Guaras has sent me two inflammatory pamphlets printed in English, that the heretics of that Kingdom make to entertain their supporters, and diminish the favours that Your Majesty sends to give the Catholics.²⁰

As a merchant, Guaras was able to learn of new prints and circulate relevant materials more readily than resident ambassadors whose status made it more problematic for them to frequent the popular book shops at St Paul’s. Printed sources and pamphlets ‘indicated the religious tenor of a country’ and served as general information sources, and thus could provide a helpful overview of contemporary religious views and their implications.²¹ Guaras even continued to access popular prints to better understand the English government’s intentions after he took on his sub-ambassadorial role. In November 1572, Guaras lamented to the Duke of Alba that ‘Everyday the controversy between heretics and the others here grows, because this week

¹⁸ ‘buenos vasallos mios’; CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 8.

¹⁹ ‘Antonio de Guaras y todos los españoles que viven en esta ciudad, y me acompañaron hasta ella con mucho amor y celo de servir á V.M. como deben’: CODOIN, xc, p. 131.

²⁰ ‘Antonio de Guaras me ha enviado dos papales infamatorios imprimidos en lengua ingleses, que los herejes de aquel Reino hacen para entretener sus secuaces, y procurar de hacer tener ménos los favores que V.M. manda dar á los católicos’: CODOIN, xc, p. 131.

²¹ Sowerby, ‘Elizabethan Diplomatic Networks’, p. 320.

printed books by those they call Puritans have been published'.²² Guaras's access to and knowledge of popular prints and perceptions bolstered Guaras's personal reputation amongst those in Spanish government, explaining how Guaras's efforts to procure information and represent Philip II was more successful than what might be expected of another merchant suddenly asked to conduct such duties. While Guaras lacked the educational background and noble status of Philip's usual ambassadors, his familiarity with England was regarded as essential and Philip helped cultivate Guaras's ties to Iberian information communities so he could disseminate information. However, while Guaras attempted to represent Philip in England and gather information in the same manner as previous ambassadors, his experience as a representative was distinct.

Guaras had undoubtedly entered a complex diplomatic situation in 1571 and required further information or support, something which was evident to all major Spanish political figures. Already in March 1572, Alba wrote to Guaras that he was unsure of how Guaras might proceed in conversations at court and that it was unclear how or even if Elizabeth and Philip's friendship might endure her request for Spes to leave.²³ Guaras was also intrinsically aware of the difficulties of serving as an ambassador amidst Elizabeth's spy network, writing in June 1569 that Philip's secretary, Gabriel de Cayas, should urge Philip to consider the danger of the ambassador's posting when sending certain letters.²⁴ Therefore, while this was an appointment of convenience, there were still some efforts made so that Guaras could be as effective an agent as possible. Once Spes had been expelled, Guaras began to receive relevant diplomatic materials and support from figures such as Alba. In October 1572, Guaras told Alba that he believed

²² 'Cada día se declara más la controversia entre los unos herejes y los otros de aquí, porque esta semana han salido libros imprimidos de los que se nombran los puritanos': CODOIN, xci, p. 60.

²³ AGS Estado 551, fo. 95r-v.

²⁴ AGS Estado 821, fo. 85r.

Elizabeth wanted to continue peaceful relations, but he had no idea of how she was planning to do so.²⁵ Thus, in January 1573, Alba sent Guaras several articles from the Low Countries regarding the state of affairs with England in an effort to prepare Guaras to speak knowledgeably to Elizabeth or others on the matter.²⁶ The articles demonstrated the hope of returning to amicable Anglo-Spanish relations, and how Cecil might present challenges.²⁷ Guaras also diligently forwarded Alba's concerns, speaking to the queen and Cecil at Alba's request in June 1573 about the number of Englishmen going to the Low Countries to support William of Orange.²⁸ Initially, these efforts appeared somewhat successful as Guaras's letters from April and May 1574 continued to detail how Cecil approached him to help deal with the issue of the Low Countries and English intervention, demonstrating how Cecil had come to view Guaras as the relevant contact for this.²⁹

Guaras ultimately had to rely on Spanish communication networks for more information and clarification, as Philip did not offer a continued or detailed correspondence, despite the difficulties Guaras faced by lacking the status of ambassador. Guaras wrote in March 1572 that the English court was frustrated by Philip's silence on certain matters, and how a lack of information inhibited Guaras's ability to determine if what Cecil had told him was true.³⁰ Therefore, Guaras faced similar difficulties to Philip's official ambassadors, namely that Philip's supposed disinterest had become a talking point at court, and so Guaras tried to encourage more steady communication.³¹ Eventually, Guaras made fewer requests for more correspondence from Philip, as they had often been made in vain. Commenting at the end of a

²⁵ AGS Estado 825, fos. 121r-122v.

²⁶ AGS Estado 556, fo. 11r-v.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ AGS Estado 827, fo. 87r.

²⁹ AGS Estado 828, fo. 51r-v.

³⁰ CODOIN, xci, p. 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*

letter written by Guaras to Cayas in July 1576, Philip remarked that ‘I do not know or I do not remember what this business is, remind me’.³² Guaras, however, did not maintain the same continued correspondence with ambassadors on the continent that can be observed in the correspondence of Philip’s formal embassies to England. In August 1577, Guaras wrote to an unidentified correspondent that while he wrote many letters to diplomatic agents, he had gone without responses as these individuals appeared uninterested in speaking about pertinent English matters with Guaras.³³

Guaras’s letters were, however, classified as standard diplomatic dispatches by the Spanish secretariat. Philip explained in October 1575 that his secretary ‘usually makes me a *relación* of the letters that you write to him...I consider myself very well served by you for this, and I will be if you continue [to do so]’.³⁴ Guaras’s letters were thus treated with the same Iberian administrative practices as fully accredited Spanish ambassadors, demonstrating how these letters were utilised by the Spanish government for the same purposes. Therefore, there was a value to his information and dispatches regarding information processing in Madrid, as the government had to disseminate and catalogue his letters as they would any formal ambassador. However, Madrid’s understanding of Guaras’s purpose in England did not ensure his success in conducting diplomatic tasks, highlighting how Spain and England could have different perspectives on Guaras’s role at court as a sub-ambassadorial figure.

Outside of the English court, it was understood that Guaras was the Spanish representative in England, and he was recognised as a direct point of contact with Philip II. Mary, Queen of Scots, thus corresponded with Guaras, as she did with Spes. In August 1572,

³² ‘No sé, ó no se me acuerda, qué negocio es este; avisadmelo’: CODOIN, xci, p. 147.

³³ AGS Estado 830, fo. 134r.

³⁴ ‘me hace de ordinario relación de las cartas que le escribís...de que me tengo por muy servido de vos, y así lo seré de que continueis’: CODOIN, xci, p. 101.

she sent Guaras her well wishes for his and Philip's health, saying she was reassured by Philip's 'perpetual friendship'.³⁵ Guaras's response later that month extended similar wishes, and asked Mary if she would tell him 'who resides in Flanders as her agent, so that [Guaras] treats him as such and interacts with him'.³⁶ Therefore, regarding communication, Guaras was treated as a *chargé d'affaires*, and took steps to understand wider diplomatic networks throughout Europe to better serve as an informant and part of diplomatic communication networks. Ultimately, Philip wanted Guaras to take on responsibilities that might seem more fitting for a resident ambassador than a diplomatic agent despite his lack of representative character and status. For example, in August 1575, Philip wrote to Guaras that he was sending a fleet to the Low Countries and had written to Elizabeth begging her to let his ships port in her kingdom if there were a storm. He then asked Guaras to also convey this message and make sure the ships are cared for according to his, and the Commander of Castile's wishes.³⁷

Though Guaras was given some of the basic tasks assigned to an ambassador, Philip could not control how Guaras was perceived and accepted by the English court. Guaras's access to court, and how other ambassadors and English councillors spoke to him helps highlight the importance of diplomatic legitimacy and how Guaras's sub-ambassadorial status could leave him outside some official diplomatic circles. While he did interact with members of the English court, namely William Cecil and the French ambassadors, these interactions did not mirror the relationships formed by other Spanish ambassadors. There is evidence that Guaras attempted to correspond with Cecil, as he wrote Cecil in July 1573 that he received no further news from Alba, but Cecil's mentions of Guaras in his surviving letters are extremely sparse compared to

³⁵ 'su perpetua amistad': AGS Estado 828, fo. 67r.

³⁶ 'que reside en flandes es su agente, para que como a tal le trate y trayga cuento con el': AGS Estado 828, fo. 67v.

³⁷ CODOIN, xci, p. 91.

the official Spanish ambassadors Cecil encountered.³⁸ In April 1572, Cecil was quoted saying, ‘If Antonio de Guaras wants to come and see me, let him come, or do as he likes’, to an unidentified party, suggesting that Cecil was willing to speak with Guaras on occasion, however seldom this was.³⁹ Shortly after Guaras began serving in a diplomatic capacity, the French ambassador Fénelon wrote to Queen Elisabeth of France that Guaras had become more assiduous at court and that Fénelon would watch for Guaras’s court dealings as much as possible.⁴⁰ Fénelon, however, did not interact with Guaras to the same extent as he did with resident Spanish ambassadors, suggesting that he found it useful to know of Guaras’s contact at court but did not recognise Guaras as a full diplomatic figure.

There was a fundamental disconnect between Guaras and resident ambassadors at court due to the inequality in official status, and because Guaras had never previously cultivated these courtly relationships in England. Writing to Alba throughout the first half of 1573 about a possible Anglo-French alliance against Spain, Guaras admitted that he relied on rumours for his reports.⁴¹ In April 1573, Guaras wrote to Alba about his interactions with the French ambassador and some news of Elizabeth’s ambassador in France meeting with the king. In Guaras’s account, he remarked on previous discussions with the ambassador, suggesting that they had a reasonable working relationship. However, it remained important to note the French ambassador’s emotions, as Guaras explained ‘it was said without passion when I saw him, because he does not get angry at anything I tell him’.⁴² The French ambassador subsequently ended the conversation by merely assuring Guaras that he would inform him of any news. Interestingly,

³⁸ CSP Simancas, ii, p. 472.

³⁹ CSP Simancas, ii, p. 382.

⁴⁰ CDMF, v, p. 56.

⁴¹ AGS Estado 827, fos. 24r-v, 41r-v, 42r-v, 45r-v.

⁴² ‘lo dicho quando le vi sin pasion, porque no se enoja conmigo de cosa que le digo’: AGS Estado 827, fo. 53v.

these interactions occurred neither in the homes of English courtiers, nor at large celebrations, suggesting that Guaras was largely excluded from certain spaces and occasions that official ambassadors more commonly attended. The news sources Guaras cited in his correspondence also raises questions about Guaras's level of access to court: he often referred to public rumours or what he had heard second hand. In October 1575, he wrote 'One has brought me notice from Court' about how the English considered the Spanish army in Flanders and matters in France. Guaras explained that 'I have at court someone who will know about them, if they [the English] try [to intervene] I will give notice later'.⁴³ Therefore, Guaras possessed contacts within courtly spaces, and could procure important information, but his lack of an official ambassadorial status made a meaningful impact on his sociability at court.

Not being an accredited ambassador at the English court ultimately had implications for Guaras's participation in information networks and communities. In February 1573, he wrote to Alba warning him that 'the public rumour is that the English captains' had a thousand soldiers and were going to Scotland to see the prince.⁴⁴ By this time the Marian civil war in Scotland had dragged on for five years, and was only ended by English intervention in Edinburgh in April 1573. Therefore, unlike previous ambassadors, Guaras had to rely on information circulating in more popular environments as he lacked privileged access to the court or Elizabeth. Guaras's news to Alba and others also cited dealings in Parliament to report on Elizabeth's policy, especially regarding Scotland, rather than individual conversations with the queen.⁴⁵ Yet, despite these difficulties, Guaras believed that he could still acquire all information needed beyond the court. In April 1572, he wrote to Alba that many at court were speaking of Cecil's

⁴³ 'Uno me ha traido despues aviso de Côte'; 'yo tengo en Côte quien sabrá dellos, si lo intentaran daré luégo aviso': CODOIN, xci, p. 104.

⁴⁴ 'el rumor publico es que los capitanes ingleses': AGS Estado 827, fo. 24v.

⁴⁵ AGS Estado 827, fo. 76r-v.

illness, and that Guaras would ‘do his best to know’ and adapt accordingly if Cecil lived or died.⁴⁶ Guaras did not appear overly concerned, writing to Alba in October 1572 that ‘In the Court, those of the [English] Council have spoken many times about what is public in this town’.⁴⁷ It is possible here, that Guaras hoped to assure Alba that his exclusion from court did not hinder information gathering practices, as the court offered no relevant news. Guaras could still, however, report on court happenings without formal audiences. In January 1576, Guaras reported that

I understand from Court that the French Ambassadors were with the Queen yesterday for two hours...at court and in public it is confirmed that these French ambassadors do not seek the ill treatment of the States, but rather truces with France.⁴⁸

Therefore, Guaras used his general access to court informants and popular discussions to understand Elizabeth’s negotiations and developments between the Low Countries and France when he otherwise was unable to confirm such information first hand.

There was still some degree of general recognition of Guaras as Spanish *chargé d’affaires*, as Elizabeth herself publically affirmed Guaras’s position as Philip’s representative. In August 1573, Guaras wrote to Alba about a small procession. While in attendance, he noted that when Elizabeth came out to see her people,

Lord Burghley saw me and told the Queen that I was there, calling me in front of the court and her people. She then spoke to me while walking for more than an hour, asking me about Your Majesty’s [Philip II] health and the Queen and children.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ ‘lo haré lo mejor que yo sabré’: CODOIN, xci, p. 7.

⁴⁷ ‘En la Côte han tratado los del Consejo por muchas veces lo que es público en todo este pueblo’: CODOIN, xci, p. 47.

⁴⁸ ‘entiendo de Côte que los dos Embajadores de Francia estuvieron ayer con la Reina pasados de dos horas...en Côte y en lo público se afirma que los dichos Embajadores franceses no vienen con malos tratos contra los Estados sino sobre las treguas de Francia’: CODOIN, xci, p. 123.

⁴⁹ ‘milord burley dixo a la Reyna que estava yo alli, y llamandome su magestad delante de toda su corte y pueblo, se sirvio de hablar siempre conmigo paseandole por mas de una ora, demandome de la salud de S.M. y de la Reyna y infantes’: AGS Estado 827, fo. 169r.

Guaras therefore believed that the perception he served as a representative of Philip was shared throughout the court. In October 1572, he had already noted that Elizabeth was pleased to hear that Guaras would speak to Philip about the matters in the Low Countries and reaffirm amicable Anglo-Spanish relations.⁵⁰ This, he hoped would reverse some of the diplomatic strain caused by Spes's expulsion and Henry Cobham's subsequent yet unsuccessful attempt to re-establish the Spanish embassy in England a year prior.⁵¹ Guaras continued to remark that in England, it was understood that he served as one of Philip's primary contacts, as 'in court, after the events in France and Flanders, everyone looks at me as the principal instrument of their own good...although before they wanted to stone me'.⁵² Clearly, Elizabeth and the English court took some steps to recognise Guaras's presence in England and believed that Guaras could be a tool in approaching negotiations with Philip or disseminating information to the Iberian world.

As time went on, it became clear that the English engaged with Guaras because of his involvement in Spanish communication networks, and not out of a sense of diplomatic obligation or recognition of formal status. In May 1572, Guaras even wrote to Alba that Cecil had provided him with letters to send to other diplomatic agents in Europe.⁵³ Cecil, from the outset of Guaras's attempted integration into court, did speak with Guaras, even during his illness and in a moment of vulnerability, to demonstrate how England was inherently suspicious of Spanish activity. Guaras detailed the encounter:

although he was very sick, and seemed to have a fever...and he showed great satisfaction with the good will of His Majesty [Philip II] and Your Excellency [Alba] about concord and friendship; although he told me (responding on those particular points) that from the start of this dissension there had been news from time to time, which made the Queen's

⁵⁰ CODOIN, xci, p. 31.

⁵¹ Julian Lock, 'Brooke [Cobham], Sir Henry (1537–1592), diplomat', ODNB (17 April 2020) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5743>.

⁵² 'en la corte, despues de los sucesos de Francia y Flándes, todos me miran como á principio de instrumento de todo su bien...aunque ántes me querian apredrear': CODOIN, xci, p. 36.

⁵³ CODOIN, xci, p. 17.

Majesty and those in her Council suspicious that many things were tried against them [by Spain]...[I told him] that it was ridiculous because as Your Excellency says, His Majesty and Your Excellency have only ever wanted calmness and peace.⁵⁴

Cecil recognised Guaras as an intermediary with Philip II and subsequently began to ask Guaras to write to Philip for clarity on political discussions. Guaras explained to Alba that ‘Burghley demanded that I tell him if there were letters from Spain, and saying no, he marvelled a while because he was waiting for a response from His Majesty to the Queen’s letters’.⁵⁵ Guaras’s place in communication networks and personal reputation, therefore, had aided his efforts to speak with English officials and formal ambassadors, though his unofficial status still limited his sociability compared to official diplomats.

Guaras’s Vulnerability without Diplomatic Privileges

Crucially though, there were distinct consequences of not being recognised as a formal ambassador beyond limited sociability. While some exclusion from formal court environments inhibited how Guaras might conduct diplomatic duties, fundamentally, his lack of letters of credence in England left him more vulnerable than official resident ambassadors. Though conceptions of diplomatic immunity were negotiable and undefined in the early modern period, it was clear that Guaras did not possess the protection awarded to resident diplomats.⁵⁶ Like

⁵⁴ ‘aunque estaba bien flaco, y al parescer con calentura...y mostrar gran contentamiento de la buena voluntad de S.M. y de V.E. acerca de la concordia y amistad; aunque me dijo (respondiendo á la dichas particularidades) que desde el principio de esta disension habian tenido avisos de tiempo en tiempo, por los cuales ponian á la Majestad de la Reina y á los de su Consejo en sospechas de que se procuraban muchas cosas contra ellos...que era cosa de burla, porque como V.E. dice, S.M. y V.E. nunca tuvieron voluntad sino de toda quietud y paz’: CODOIN, xci, p. 8.

⁵⁵ ‘Burle me demandó con mucha instancia si habia cartas de España, y diciéndole que no, se maravilló mucho por estar esperando respuesta de S.M. de las cartas de la Reina’: CODOIN, xci, p. 55.

⁵⁶ Both the ramifications of the ambassadors’ engagement with Catholics and the limitations of official ambassadorship are examined in Chapter 8; See Dante Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne (XIIIe-XVIIe siècles): L’Ambassadeur au Croisement du Droit, de l’Éthique et de la Politique* (Zurich, 2017); Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity* (Columbus, 1999).

other ambassadors and Catholics, Guaras was subject to surveillance by the Elizabethan state, however, unlike official ambassadors, he was also solely subject to English authority. Stephen Alford has examined how Elizabethan ministers developed a transitory network of espionage and surveillance to mitigate the threats against Elizabeth.⁵⁷ To Alford, their efforts were tenacious as Guaras's correspondence hints at his paranoia and the surveillance he was subject to, eventually leading to his final arrest in 1577.⁵⁸ Thus, while in theory Guaras could represent Philip II and gather information, without formal accreditation, Guaras was still under Elizabeth's jurisdiction.

Guaras's vulnerability as an unsanctioned Catholic in England was already evident during his time as merely a merchant when in 1569 he was detained and arrested in a public raid on his residence. In May 1569, Spes reported the altercation:

Against all the Catholics [the English] are very dissolute, treating them with harshness, the prisons are full of them, and yesterday at midnight many armed royal officials entered Antonio de Guaras's house in search of him...and got from there a great number of devotional images and crucifixes...and in the morning, like in a procession, took them through the place with great ridicule and laughter, saying that these were the gods of the Spanish; it was with many crowds, because they waited for it to be a market day.⁵⁹

The public shaming of Guaras signalled how the English government monitored private citizens, and advertised how Guaras was firmly under their authority as an unprotected Spaniard in England. It was therefore clear that English surveillance networks were aware of Guaras's role in Spanish information communities, and that without diplomatic privileges or protection,

⁵⁷ Stephen Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York, 2012), pp. 11, 325.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁵⁹ 'Contra todos los católicos andan muy disolutos, tratándolos con todo rigor, las cárceles están llenas dellos, y ayer entraron á media noche con mano armada muchos oficiales reales en casa de Antonio de Guaras en busca de su persona...y sacaron de allí gran número de imágenes devotas y crucifijos...y como en procesion por la mañana los llevaron por la mayor parte del lugar, con gran burla y risa, diciendo que aquellos eran los dioses de los españoles; fué con grande concurso de gente, porque aguardaron que fuese día de mercado': CODOIN, xci, p. 322.

Guaras remained susceptible to punishment. The French ambassador, Fénelon, confirmed the incident in his own report, and recognised Guaras as a great servant to the Spanish ambassador, while indicating his own contempt for such brutalisation.⁶⁰ Fénelon later reported in July 1569 that the raid had influenced Spes's embassy, as he noted that Spes intended to change residences soon after the incident so that he could evade some of the English's monitoring.⁶¹ The raid undoubtedly impacted Guaras's activities and ability to procure information for a period afterwards, as he felt unable to leave his home freely. In 1571, the Portuguese representative António Fogaça wrote to Rui Gomez de Silva that 'Antonio de Guaras, very good gentleman and servant to His Majesty...has been in his house for 3 years without daring to leave it, that is a great shame'.⁶²

When Guaras emerged from his residence in 1571 as an unaccredited *chargé d'affaires*, his uneasiness and concerns over his personal freedoms were evident, as he noted indirect threats and hints made about Elizabeth's extensive spy network. He wrote to Alba in November 1572,

As the Queen and Burghley are suspicious of everything, and have disseminated spies all around the Kingdom, who give them the information they want, and about this [Cecil] told me that he and the Queen were informed that I was part of a group that plotted against the Queen, and since this is not at all true, I told him that he and the Queen had bad information, and he told me that if that were the case, they would be dissatisfied with me and would no longer discuss matters with me.⁶³

⁶⁰ CDMF, i, pp. 374-5.

⁶¹ Ibid., ii, p. 76.

⁶² 'Antonio de Guaras, muy buen gentil-hombre y buen criado de S.M....há tres años que está en una casa sin osar salir della, que es grande lástima': CODOIN, xc, p. 525.

⁶³ 'Como la Reina y el dicho Burle están sospechosos de cualquier cosa, y tienen por todo el Reino sembrados espías, les vienen con las informaciones que quieren, y sobre ello me dijo que á la Reina y á él les habian informado que yo era de la Conseja de unos que practicaban contra la Reina, y como cierto no es así, en ninguna cosa, le dije que la Reina y él tenian mala informacion, y díjome que si así fuese tendrian descontento conmigo y que no tratarian más conmigo de negocios': CODOIN, xci, p. 55.

Therefore, there were implicit threats made to Guaras that advertised the government's ability to monitor him and prohibit him from court if they felt inclined to do so. In later interactions with English councillors, these threats became more pointed. In April 1573, he remarked to Alba that the Earl of Leicester and Cecil had spoken with him only to inform him that 'an English gentleman named Juilee was imprisoned...for suspicion of having written letters here about certain state matters' as this individual was detained without being properly examined.⁶⁴ Ultimately, Guaras was made aware of how he might be apprehended in England, especially following Spes's volatile embassy, and might not be properly questioned by authorities as he held no formal diplomatic protection. Guaras's anxiety, consequently, never diminished as Guaras had developed a sense of distrust in the English at court, believing that their hospitality was disingenuous. Guaras wrote to secretary Cayas in July 1575 that 'although most of them [Englishmen] appear with good words, experience shows otherwise'.⁶⁵ He echoed this sentiment in March 1576, as he wrote that 'I know about whatever good face [the English] make' they conduct business against Spain and the Netherlands, and 'I have written about the false fashion' they treat concerns with the Netherlands and Scotland.⁶⁶

Guaras's distrust, ultimately, had been merited when he was again taken in by English authorities in 1577 once his correspondence with the captive Mary, Queen of Scots, had been uncovered.⁶⁷ Writing in October, Juan de Aguirre, a Spaniard in England, detailed the incident:

at midnight on the 19th [of October], the Sheriff of the City of London, on the Most Serene Queen's order, entered the home of Antonio de Guaras, my lord, with armed people to arrest him and take his papers, as they did, putting him into a house with a

⁶⁴ 'un gentil hombre ingles que se nombra Juilee, que esta preso...por sospecha de aver scripto aqui algunas cartas de cosas de ese estado': AGS Estado 827, fo. 53v.

⁶⁵ 'aunque la mayor parte dellos tienen apariencias de buenas palabras, y la experiencia muestra lo contrario': CODOIN, xci, p. 89.

⁶⁶ 'cualquiera buena cara que hagan'; 'escribí sobre la moeda falsa': CODOIN, xci, p. 142.

⁶⁷ For more on Guaras's support of Mary, Queen of Scots, see Martin Hume, *The Love Affairs of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 1903).

guard...where he still is, and so closely [guarded] that no one can see him nor speak to him; this is remarkable news, because there was no reason for it.⁶⁸

English authorities had raided Guaras's home again, but this time to acquire diplomatic intelligence from his personal documents rather than confiscate illegal devotional items, and without having clarified a charge against him. Aguirre went onto beg for Guaras's release and Philip's intervention, citing Guaras's service to the Spanish crown. Philip's help, however, was not forthcoming and in November 1577, Aguirre continued to beg Philip and Cayas to remove Guaras from such dangers.⁶⁹ Initially, Guaras also hoped that Philip might aid him in arguing for his release. In December 1577, Guaras wrote to Philip, 'I write this secretly and with great fright, I hope that His Majesty and His Highness will not forsake me' in releasing him from the watch of English authorities.⁷⁰ When Guaras was not immediately released, Mendoza was tasked with advocating for Guaras's freedom and encouraging Philip to communicate with Elizabeth, subsequently forcing Mendoza to confront the nature of Guaras's sub-ambassadorial position and its muddled parameters. Mendoza wrote to Cayas in March 1578 that Guaras remained in custody, and that even his servant had been imprisoned with him. He explained, 'I would be very sorry to not have a response from His Highness in two or three days, because it seems that things are as such that I should not delay seeing the Queen'.⁷¹ Philip, however,

⁶⁸ 'á media noche, á los 19 deste, entró el Xerife desta ciudad con gente armada por mandado desta Serenísimá Reina en casa de Antonio de Guaras, mi señor, á le prender y tomar todos sus papeles, como lo hicieron, pusiéndole en una casa con guarda...en donde al presente está, y tan estrechamente, que ninguno le puede hablar ni ver; que cierto ha sido una admirable novedad, pues no hay ocasion para lo hacer así': CODOIN, xci, pp. 171-2.

⁶⁹ CODOIN, xci, p. 177.

⁷⁰ 'escribo ésta á escondidas y con gran sobresalto. Espero que S.M. y S.A. no me desamparán': CODOIN, xci, p. 177.

⁷¹ 'sentiria mucho el no tener respuesta de S. A. dentro de dos ó tres dias, porque se me trasluce que están aquí de manera las cosas que podré mal dilatar el verme con la Reina': CODOIN, xci, p. 200.

remained silent and while Mendoza reported that Elizabeth supposedly agreed to have Guaras freed, she remained displeased and further action had not been taken.⁷²

Guaras's sub-ambassadorial role in England, and his lack of diplomatic immunity or privileges, were paramount to discussions of his arrest and imprisonment. Mendoza reported to Philip in March 1578 that when he spoke to the queen about Guaras's freedom, 'she told me very amazed that for being Your Majesty's vassal, she had not hanged [Guaras] for writing to her rebels and the Queen of Scotland' but that she possessed his incriminating letters and would eventually release him, though Mendoza tried to hasten the process.⁷³ Elizabeth, therefore, recognised that Guaras possessed a role in Philip's administration, and this recognition prevented her from seeking capital punishment for conspiracy against her. However, it was clear that Elizabeth did not allow Guaras the same diplomatic immunity awarded to Spes, who was expelled rather than imprisoned for his involvement in conspiracy. Fundamentally, Elizabeth believed there was an intrinsic value behind and logic to sending an official ambassador to conduct one's business. Shortly after Guaras's arrest, Elizabeth wrote to Philip in December 1577 stating that 'otherwise, we [the English] would have ordered a more solemn Embassy for Your Serenity' when she sent a representative to Spain that she might not have otherwise chosen as a diplomatic representative had she possessed other options.⁷⁴ Therefore, despite his limited access, engagement with court members, and Elizabeth's public reception of Guaras, there was an understanding that some ambassadors or embassies were considered more formal or of a higher rank than others. The stratification and categorisation of ambassadorship in the early

⁷² Guaras, *The Accession of Queen Mary*, pp. 22-3.

⁷³ 'dijome muy azorada que por ser vasallo de V.M. no le habia ahorcado por haberse escrito con sus rebeldes y Reina de Escocia': CODOIN, xci, p. 213.

⁷⁴ 'que en otra manera ordenáramos más solemne Embajada para Vuestra Serenidad': CODOIN, xci, pp. 173-4.

modern period therefore risked having individuals like Guaras, who conducted diplomatic duties without formal letters of credence, to be rejected as a formal ambassador.

Eventually, in June 1578, Guaras was brought before Elizabeth's councillors, interrogated and imprisoned in the Tower of London, prompting further pleas from other Spaniards to Philip to negotiate for his release.⁷⁵ In Guaras's own account of his arrest he wrote that he was taken prisoner, but told nothing of a crime, as the queen only cited what he had written to the Council of the State of Flanders, Philip, and Mary, Queen of Scots, in his private letters as reason for his arrest.⁷⁶ Going through Guaras's dispatches would be considered a breach of diplomatic immunity had Guaras possessed the full status of a resident ambassador. However, while Philip demonstrated outrage when his resident ambassadors' letters or embassy had been tampered with, and took steps to recall his ambassadors, Guaras was left in the Tower for years despite numerous calls to action from Mendoza and others. Philip also realised that without letters of credence and the full status of resident ambassador, Guaras held no formal legal immunity and thus Philip took no further action to attempt to defend Guaras's status. Guaras was later questioned again, as English authorities attempted to determine whether Guaras 'was a public man if not private [man], since he had no letter from the King for the Queen to show that he resided here for [Philip's] business'.⁷⁷ Therefore, letters of credence were the cornerstone of arguments against Guaras's status, even if he had been able to perform some diplomatic functions until then. Still in May 1579, Elizabeth assured Mendoza that Guaras would be released when he paid his debts, but no timeline for his release was given.⁷⁸ He was

⁷⁵ Hume, *Espanoles é Ingleses*, p. 123.

⁷⁶ CODOIN, xci, p. 175-7.

⁷⁷ 'era hombre público si no privado, pues no tenía carta del Rey para mostrar á la Reina que residia aquí por sus negocios': CODOIN, xci, p. 263.

⁷⁸ CODOIN, xci, p. 377.

eventually released later that month after having paid his debts. Guaras subsequently returned to Spain and retired, where Philip seems to have never given Guaras thanks for his time as *chargé d'affaires*.⁷⁹ Guaras, however, was not unique as a sub-ambassadorial Iberian figure in Elizabethan England and his prolonged presence at court set a historical precedence for sub-ambassadorial figures and helped inspire competing and complicated criteria to identify a formal ambassador.

Contested Diplomatic Legitimacy and Foreign Representatives

While Guaras's time at the Elizabethan court aided Spanish intelligence gathering and diplomacy, the presence of sub-ambassadorial figures could also destabilise ideas of ambassadorship and provoke complex challenges for fully accredited ambassadors unsure of who truly represented foreign monarchs. This issue was especially acute for Mendoza, who, during the Portuguese Succession Crisis of 1580-1581, faced a variety of sub-ambassadorial figures or unofficial representatives who attempted to negotiate with Elizabeth on behalf of the candidate to the throne of Portugal, Dom António, someone Mendoza argued was not a true monarch.⁸⁰ In 1580, the Portuguese King Dom Henrique passed away without naming his successor to the crown, sparking a succession crisis. Initially Dom António, the illegitimate son of Infante Luís, proclaimed himself as King of Portugal, but was soon thwarted by Philip II whose own claim to the throne led him to be crowned Philip I of Portugal shortly thereafter, therefore unifying Portugal and Spain. Dom António, once a popular figure in some Portuguese circles, thus attempted to usurp the Portuguese crown from Philip by sending several

⁷⁹ Agrela, 'Antonio de Guaras', DBE.

⁸⁰ The Portuguese Succession Crisis as a crisis for the Spanish Empire, and the impact of the crisis on intelligence gathering practices and diplomatic conduct are examined extensively Chapter 7.

representatives to various European courts to gain support against Philip. These individuals therefore represented a candidate for the Portuguese throne, rather than an internationally recognised sovereign, and showcase international interest in the Portuguese throne as several royal courts became involved in the matter. If Dom António's agents were deemed legitimate Portuguese ambassadors in foreign courts, they threatened Spanish rule of Portugal by implying that Dom António was indeed king, rather than Philip. Mendoza subsequently sought out information on who was being sent to court and how they were received, but was often barred from these spaces and could not identify them as agents or ambassadors. By challenging their diplomatic legitimacy, Mendoza's efforts placed the legitimacy of the ruler they represented at the heart of challenges to their accreditation, rather than letters of credence that dominated discussions of Guaras's status. The Portuguese Succession Crisis and its aftermath, therefore, provides a unique example of how the Spanish ambassadors contested political authority and showcases how the presence of Guaras at court informed how Mendoza dealt with these amorphous Portuguese agents.

Before the succession crisis, Mendoza had engaged with both the official Portuguese ambassador, and lower-level Portuguese representatives and envoys. For instance, in May 1579 he met António Fogaça, who 'came here to treat matters of difference with Portugal by order of the Cardinal [Henrique], who is now King' and who had spoken to those in Philip's administration and inner circles, including secretary Cayas, and passed letters from Rui Gomez de Silva, a Portuguese noble and a key advisor to Philip.⁸¹ However, when Mendoza himself went to see Fogaça, and detailed such events back to Cayas and Alba, he also explained that such letters and news were also shown to Francisco Giraldi, who 'already had the public name

⁸¹ 'vino á este Reino á tratar negocios en tiempo que tenian diferencia con Portugal por órden del Cardenal que es hoy dia Rey que gobernaba': CODOIN, xci, p. 377.

to do business on behalf of the King of Portugal'.⁸² Mendoza's identifications of official ambassadors in comparison to agents was thus complicated by the various individuals being sent from Portugal, and rested partially on his understandings of previous Anglo-Portuguese relations. Portugal and England had a history of trade cooperation. But, given the tumultuous naval relations between England and Spain, especially while Francis Drake's pirating became a growing concern, Philip might restrict Portuguese trade with England.⁸³ The long standing commercial relations between England and Portugal had been supported by the work of Fogaça and ambassador Giraldi, however the succession crisis changed the political situation. Now England's dealings with Portugal could pose as support of Portuguese independence and revive their amity.⁸⁴ Fogaça was therefore a Portuguese representative or agent, and not the official resident ambassador as Mendoza understood. Francisco Giraldi had the established legitimacy of an official ambassador of King Sebastian, negotiating with the Privy Council and Elizabeth over trading relations as the 'authorised' party.⁸⁵

The distinction between official and unofficial ambassadors, however, was not always easy for Mendoza to make once Dom António began to send a vast array of agents around Europe to negotiate on his behalf and gain support. In December 1579, Mendoza detailed that there was an understanding between the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms regarding Philip's eventual rule of Portugal, as discussed with an unspecified Portuguese ambassador. He explained to Philip that

all to say to him that it was good to see that he was in agreement with Your Majesty, his King, since there were no defensive measures in Portugal, Your Majesty should not take that Kingdom by armed force, and that they [the Portuguese] did not have any arms to

⁸² 'que tenía ya nombre en público de hacer los negocios del Rey de Portugal': CODOIN, xci, p. 378.

⁸³ David Quinn, *England and the Azores 1581- 1582: Three Letters* (Lisbon, 1979), p. 3.

⁸⁴ V.M. Shillinton and A.B.W. Chapman, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal* (Abingdon, 2005), p. 145.

⁸⁵ BL Add. MS 34,329, fo. 4r.

resist it...[the ambassador] responded that the matter was brought to justice and that according to this, he did not believe that Your Majesty wanted, being such a Christian and Catholic Prince, to use military force.⁸⁶

In this account, Philip would come to rule Portugal without opposition or armed resistance, as discussed by Mendoza and likely Giraldi, the two supposedly official Iberian ambassadors in England. However, subsequent dealings muddled this understanding as additional diplomatic figures became involved. In April 1580, Mendoza reported that the French ambassador presented Elizabeth with a letter from the King of France arguing that she might best prevent Portugal from joining with Philip's other territories since 'it was much more in her interest to prevent this because it's certain that finished in Portugal, Your Majesty's army would come here [to England] and to Ireland'.⁸⁷ Elizabeth subsequently spoke to Cecil and other members of her council and Mendoza believed that the matter should be dealt with by

Ambassador Giraldi, making them offers on behalf of the Portuguese, because I know that the Queen has his letters, and not for António de Castilho, the Ambassador who resides here...he probably represents the same offers here to help this cause on French advice.⁸⁸

Here it becomes unclear whether Castilho, a Portuguese ambassador sent to England by the deceased Portuguese king Dom Henrique, or Giraldi, or both represented Portugal.

The confusion arose from having multiple competing representatives, sent by different Portuguese rulers at different times, and it only continued when Dom António began to send 'ambassadors'. Mendoza did not make an effort to identify Portuguese representatives by name

⁸⁶ 'fué todo decirle qué bueno era de ver que estaba acordado con V.M. su Rey, pues no habia en Portugal ningunas prevenciones para defender, no tomase V.M. por fuerza de armas aquel Reino, y que ellos no tenian ningunas para el resistirlo...respondió que el negocio estaba puesto en justicia y que conforme á esto él no creia que V.M. queria, siendo Príncipe tan cristiano y católico, llevarlo por las armas': CODOIN, xci, p. 442.

⁸⁷ 'que á ella le convenia mucho más en particular estorbar esto por estar él cierto que acabado lo de Portugal la armasa de V.M. vendria aquí y en Irlanda': CODOIN, xci, p. 475.

⁸⁸ 'Embajador Giraldo, haciéndoles ofertas en nombre de portugeses, porque yo sé que vienen cartas suyas en los paquetes de la Reina, y no para Antonio del Castillo, Embajador que aquí reside...que debe representar las mismas ofertas aquí por consejo de los franceses para ayudar más la causa': CODOIN, xci, pp. 475-6.

but he disputed their position in England. In December 1579, he noted that the ambassador of Portugal had met with Elizabeth regarding some naval conflicts. Mendoza explained that this unnamed ambassador possessed letters from his master ‘ordering him that if Dom António came here [to England], he would not see him, and would ask the Queen to not accept him’.⁸⁹ This ambassador, likely sent by Dom Henrique, contested having Dom António’s representatives accepted into the English court because it would imply that Dom António would succeed as the legitimate Portuguese monarch. Dom António was thus a recognised threat once he made it clear that he hoped to succeed the Portuguese throne, therefore his representatives could neither be accepted nor regarded as ambassadors of Portugal.

The Portuguese arriving in England, therefore, held various political interests and contested degrees of diplomatic legitimacy, with the recognition of their ruler’s status at the centre of Mendoza’s considerations of their diplomatic authority and sociability. In August 1580, Mendoza notified Philip that one João Rodrigues de Sousa had arrived in England with letters from Dom António for Elizabeth and António de Castilho.⁹⁰ Ambassador Giraldi was supposedly against this as Mendoza asserted that Giraldi was ‘Castilian and affectionate to Your Majesty’s service’ and assured Philip that ‘he is a vassal [of Your Majesty], and I humbly beg Your Majesty to reward him as he deserves’.⁹¹ Mendoza’s suspicion grew over any news Elizabeth might have regarding others attempting to be King of Portugal and claimed ‘despite all this I have spies to uncover if he [a Portuguese agent] speaks to her in private’.⁹² Later that month, Mendoza spoke to Elizabeth about these agents where

⁸⁹ ‘ordenándole que si viniese aquí D. Antonio no le vea, y que pida en su nombre á esta Reina no le acoja’: CODOIN, xci, p. 447.

⁹⁰ CODOIN, xci, p. 507.

⁹¹ ‘castellano y aficionado al servicio de V.M.’; ‘es vasallo, á cuya causa suplico humildemente á V.M. le haga merced conforme él la meresce’: CODOIN, xci, pp. 508-9.

⁹² ‘yo tengo con todo esto espías para entender si le habla en secreto’: CODOIN, xci, p. 510.

she told me that if she knew a Portuguese who came here, he was sent to beg her to give him an embassy on behalf of Dom António, who was King of Portugal; but that she did not consider him [Dom António] as such, nor would she accept him... she concluded by saying that she would send a clerk from her Council to find out what the Portuguese man wanted; the clerk was Secretary [Thomas] Wilson, and the same day I met with Elizabeth, the Count [sic] of Leicester came here on her behalf, where he met with the Portuguese that night and invited him for dinner at his house.⁹³

An official embassy being recognised as representing Dom António would have acknowledged the political legitimacy of his candidacy and rule, and thus Mendoza was pleased that Elizabeth had not allowed this and that she clarified that she did not see Dom António as the Portuguese king. Frustratingly though, the representative was still given some access to court members, namely Leicester. For Mendoza, he aligned diplomatic legitimacy with a ruler's legitimacy, allowing Mendoza to challenge Dom António's sub-ambassadorial agents, while still having supported Guaras and appealing for his release since Guaras represented Philip II, a true king.

Dom António also understood the value of recognised legitimacy, and had written to Elizabeth himself to request that she accept his representatives as ambassadors. In June 1581, he asked if Sousa might have an official audience, and requested credence for him.⁹⁴ Dom António continued to write holograph letters to Elizabeth from Paris in 1582, asking her to give credence to António de Veiga and 'keep me in your good graces'.⁹⁵ Dom António hoped that if Elizabeth acknowledged his representatives as ambassadors, he could solidify their diplomatic legitimacy and dismiss Mendoza's challenges to their position. Letters still came into England in May 1582 from Dom António, written by Diogo Botelho, a Portuguese noble loyal to Dom

⁹³ 'me dijo que si conocia un portugués que habia venido, el cual le habia enviado á decir que le suplicaba le diese lugar por darle una embajada de parte de Don Antonio, que era Rey de Portugal; pero que ella no le tenía por tal, ni le admitiria...concluyó conmigo con que enviaria un clerque de su Consejo para que entendiese del portugués lo que queria, el clerque fué el Secretario Wilson, y el propio dia que yo me ví con la Reina vino con órden suya el Conde de Leicester á este lugar, donde se vió con el portugués aquella noche á quien convidó en su casa á cenar': CODOIN, xci, p. 510.

⁹⁴ CP, xiii, pp. 191-2.

⁹⁵ 'me conservi in la sua bona gracia': CP, xiii, p. 218.

António, and Francisco António de Sousa, Dom António's secretary, that attempted to 'show Elizabeth what she gains in favouring the rebels against Your Majesty'.⁹⁶ Therefore, in addition to requesting diplomatic legitimacy for an onslaught of representatives he sent, Dom António still positioned himself within a potential European collaboration against Philip's Spain.

These relative legitimacies made it difficult for Mendoza to identify individuals and understand either Dom António's network or his representatives' engagement with England. In May 1581, he wrote that another Portuguese had arrived in England from the Azores asking for help for Dom António in the form of refuge or ammunition but 'whose name I could not understand'.⁹⁷ This inability to identify these Portuguese demonstrates the difficulties in his intelligence gathering efforts when representatives of questionable legitimacy negotiated on behalf of international parties. In July 1581, he knew that Dom António had sent an agent to England with letters from Lisbon, but 'I could not identify nor understand the addresses or whom they were for, because he who told me saw him at night give money and the dispatch to Gonzalo Jorge's house, Dr Lopez's father-in-law'.⁹⁸ Mendoza believed that Jorge, a merchant refugee from the Portuguese Inquisition, was a supporter of Dom António, having learned from his son Jacobo Anes that Dom António's letters to Sousa had already come and gone.⁹⁹ This assessment, however, was a result of several degrees of communication, and Mendoza was not as confident in his findings as other notable Iberians, such as the queen's doctor Rodrigo Lopez, who were closer to the matter.

⁹⁶ 'mostrar á esta Reina lo que gana en favorecer á rebeldes de V.M': CODOIN, xcii, p. 373.

⁹⁷ 'cuyo nombre no he podido entender': CODOIN, xcii, p. 24.

⁹⁸ 'no he podido averiguar ni entender las señas ni á quién vaya dirigido, porque quien me lo ha dicho vió de noche darle dineros y el despacho en casa de Gonzalo Jorge, que es suegro del doctor Lopez': CODOIN, xcii, p. 74.

⁹⁹ CODOIN, xcii, p. 74.

While the varying degrees of diplomatic legitimacy obscured Mendoza's understandings of developments and access to intelligence, they also allowed him to contest the legitimacy of diplomatic actors who threatened Spanish interests. This episode ultimately demonstrates how individuals such as Dom António could use the ambiguities inherent in ambassadorship to attempt to legitimize themselves as a sovereign. It also showcases how diplomatic authority and representation rested on the official recognition of foreign courts, and how understandings of this differed. Elizabeth challenged the place of Guaras at court due to his lack of accreditation, making him more vulnerable than official ambassadors, whereas Mendoza, who continually hoped to see Guaras freed, challenged the place of Dom António's representatives due to the legitimacy of their ruler, not their lack of accreditation or letters of credence. Therefore, the way that Mendoza challenged Dom António's representatives was informed by Guaras's time as *chargé d'affaires*, and operated within a flexible definition of 'ambassador' that favoured Spanish interests.

Conclusion

As early modern governments slowly moved from relying on convention to determine who was an ambassador to a stronger focus on official markers of legitimate embassy, attempts to define or limit diplomatic legitimacy were often in response to when traditional models of diplomacy broke down or had failed. From the success and difficulties faced by Antonio de Guaras, suddenly tasked as de facto *chargé d'affaires*, it becomes clear that while letters of credence were integral to emerging concepts of diplomatic immunity and privilege, one's personal reputation could still be used to gain some access to court social spaces. However, as demonstrated by Guaras's experience, there was no guarantee that who Philip II accepted as an

ambassador was compatible to Elizabeth I's opinion on the matter. Additionally, the influx of sub-ambassadorial figures representing a pretender king throughout Europe forced Mendoza, amongst others, to challenge their diplomatic authority and subsequently showcase what they believed defined an authorised ambassador in the aftermath of Guaras's imprisonment. Rather than formal letters of credence, Mendoza's perception of and challenges to Dom António's representatives rested on his disapproval of the authority of their ruler himself. Considering Guaras alongside the official resident embassies Philip II sent to Elizabethan England, perhaps a working definition of an early modern Spanish ambassador is an individual trusted by the Spanish monarch to represent their interests abroad and whom the Spanish monarch purposefully integrated into communication networks for this purpose. These episodes therefore demonstrate how early modern diplomacy remained somewhat malleable and showcases how sub-ambassadorial figures could be prominent, if not complicated, forces behind early modern politics.

PART II

Chapter 4: Relationships with the English Court and Elizabeth I

To gain an intimate understanding of the English court, the Spanish ambassadors had to form working relationships with its English members. Their interactions with court members, both in public court settings and more private spaces such as their residence, were always part of their efforts to gather information and potentially influence policy. However, it has yet to be determined if the ambassadors' relationships with the English court members resembled their relationships with other foreign ambassadors in England; namely, whether shared confessional identities or political aims with English court members aided the ambassadors' efforts to gather intelligence, formulate individual relationships, or enter social spaces. The ambassadors ultimately formed opportunistic relationships with English Protestant court members and attempted to access the same information circles as Elizabeth, the Privy Council, and courtiers or other nobles to varying degrees of success. This chapter will therefore illuminate from which Englishmen the ambassadors gathered information within the court, who they believed influenced policy decisions, and how their perception of these individuals affected their operations. While the Privy Council has often been understood as the main source of policy making, historians have not yet addressed whether ambassadors' interactions with English councillors differed from those with non-conciliar courtiers based on the courtiers' roles at court. As religious and political opponents to many court members, the basis of the Spanish ambassadors' social relationships and their major considerations when approaching English court members carefully balanced, and stood at the intersection, of politics and religion.

This chapter will contribute to, and complicate, existing scholarship on the power dynamics of the Elizabethan court, its religion and political culture by (among others) Susan

Doran, John Guy, Christopher Haigh, Norman Jones, and Natalie Mears.¹ In doing so, it will showcase how the Spanish ambassadors utilised personal or political differences in court to align themselves with Protestant Englishmen for their own diplomatic aims. The possible tensions between the members of court have received extensive historiographical interest within discussions of factionalism in the Elizabethan court.² While Simon Adams has suggested that the Elizabethan court was not overburdened by factional struggles until after the death of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Mears has refuted the idea of distinct and rigid factions, suggesting that ‘the inner ring’ of Elizabeth’s councillors consistently worked together.³ However, even the most prominent court members could fall out of favour. Stephen Alford thus rejects characterisations of Principal Secretary William Cecil as an untouchable mastermind, highlighting moments where Cecil lost favour with Elizabeth and how he fought off critics and enemies throughout his career.⁴ Cecil faced his own difficulties at court as he believed that Elizabeth ‘did not always do what was best for her kingdom’.⁵ Similarly, we should still heed Conyers Read’s warning that we cannot view chief statesmen Francis Walsingham’s political beliefs as synonymous with Elizabethan policy because government policy was not defined by any one councillor.⁶ Elizabeth’s relationship with any individual councillor was therefore more

¹ See Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle* (Oxford, 2015); Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion, 1558-1603* (London, 1993); Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy, 1558-1603* (London, 2000); John Guy, *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995); Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1988); Susan Doran and Norman L. Jones (eds), *The Elizabethan World* (London, 2011); Norman L. Jones, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s* (Oxford, 1993); Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge, 2005).

² Simon Adams, ‘Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court’, in Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (eds), *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 265-87.

³ Ibid.; Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, p. 56.

⁴ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven, 2008), p. 339.

⁵ Stephen Alford, ‘The Political Creed of William Cecil’, in John McDiarmid (ed), *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 75.

⁶ Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Cambridge, 1925).

complicated than a single defining mutual goal.⁷ Tensions and political disagreements between councillors or between Elizabeth and her councillors, regardless of whether they constituted factional conflicts, were obvious and provided the ambassadors with an opportunity to make political alliances when religious divides otherwise discouraged them from engaging with Protestant courtiers.

This chapter also provides their individualised perspective on the source of power and policy making in the English court, as the ambassadors gathered information from and believed that political influence was held by a larger variety of individuals than has previously been considered. While historical scholarship has attempted to uncover the political influence of those in the Privy Council compared to courtiers or Elizabeth's other favourites, Mears has lamented that Elizabethan politics had previously been examined in institutional terms, obscuring how dynamic Elizabethan counselling truly was and how Elizabeth consulted with both councillors and courtiers with relevant knowledge on an ad hoc basis.⁸ Elizabeth took counsel from a variety of individuals at court, thus it remains debated whether the Privy Council was the central source for policy decisions, or merely determined, 'elements for its realisation'.⁹ Elizabeth's network of counsellors extended well beyond the council to include other agents at court.¹⁰ Ultimately, Elizabeth chose her advisers based on her personal relationships with them. While this could lead to an appointment to the council, it would be simplistic to view the Privy Council as the sole means of her decision making.¹¹ This chapter will first outline the ambassadors' interactions and social relationships with the queen, before examining a widening

⁷ Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 4.

⁸ See Susan Doran, 'Elizabeth I and Counsel', in Jacqueline Rose (ed), *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland, 1286-1707* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 152-72; Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, pp. 4, 47.

⁹ Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, p. 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

circle of courtiers to reveal the reality of information gathering and the political, religious, or personal factors which influenced these processes and the ambassadors' perceptions of political influence. Their perceptions of political utility continually developed due to their ability or inability to formulate relationships with court members, thus augmenting their domestic information community. These interactions, and the information gained from a variety of courtiers ultimately highlights the dynamism of information gathering, contributing to our understanding of the circles of influence at court and the nature of diplomatic relationships.

Interactions with Elizabeth I

A central aspect of the ambassadors' representative character was to fundamentally embody and actualise Philip II's relationship and friendship with Elizabeth. The ambassadors engaged with Elizabeth directly whenever they could, and coveted audiences with the queen because it presented them with an opportunity to show that Elizabeth held Philip in high esteem, and to facilitate smoother diplomatic relations between the monarchs. These audiences and more private interactions were also an opportunity to ask Elizabeth about her beliefs, intentions, and foreign policy. Their relationship with the queen, however, was often distant and like their relationships with other foreign ambassadors, could change with political circumstance. Rayne Allinson has noted that in the early years of Philip's reign, he 'let his ambassador carry the burden of responsibility for communication' as he did not often respond to direct letters, forcing his ambassadors to attempt to cultivate court relationships with little guidance.¹² Questions thus quickly emerge regarding how the ambassadors perceived Elizabeth, how her gender and religion potentially influenced their approach to her, and what information they believed was

¹² Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, pp. 59-60.

most important to gain from their audiences. There is a wealth of historiography addressing depictions and perceptions of Elizabeth, many of which engage with questions surrounding how Elizabeth's gender impacted how she addressed others and determined her political strategy.¹³ The paradox of a woman serving as the monarch of a patriarchal society and its cultural meanings have been examined by various scholars including Louis Montrose and Anne McLaren.¹⁴ Yet, the Spanish ambassadors did not fixate on Elizabeth's gender; instead their primary concerns were her unwillingness to share information, her Protestant reforms and her (potentially interventionist) foreign policy.

Elizabeth was rarely forthcoming with useful information, causing the ambassadors to speculate on her political plans based on their perceptions of her emotions. Thus, they monitored Elizabeth's mood and speech carefully, believing these provided them with an indication of her political or religious beliefs. The ambassadors often commented on the exchange of 'good words' or professions of preserving an Anglo-Spanish friendship after their audiences, though it is unclear whether they found these pleasantries to be genuine.¹⁵ While the ambassadors were comfortable characterising Elizabeth as a heretic for her Protestant faith, her tone or mood could help them gauge the degree of her religious conservatism, in effect whether she would permit Catholic practices in England. Álvaro de la Quadra attempted to understand how Elizabeth might address and instigate political or religious changes, but gained little insight from his early audiences. He reported that 'with the warmth of the new State, and with these concerns and

¹³ For more on studies of queenship and gender, see Haigh, *Elizabeth I*; Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Basingstoke, 1995); Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 1994).

¹⁴ For broader discussions of political culture in relation to gender, see Anne McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558-1585* (Cambridge, 1999); Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago, 2006).

¹⁵ For more on emotions and diplomacy, see Broomhall, 'Diplomatic Emotions', pp. 283-302; Emmanuel Lemée, 'Harnessing Anger and Shame: Emotional Diplomacy in Early Modern Context', *Diplomatica*, 3/1 (2021), pp. 1-22.

thoughts, she began in the first two audiences to treat [these matters] with more detachment...and signalled her resolution to want to be neutral'.¹⁶ Despite Quadra's difficulties in integrating into courtly life or securing audiences with Elizabeth, Philip recognised that the ambassador might gain more information from other members of the court, asserting that 'you can very well judge and understand what [the English Queen and her heretics] would do', and that Quadra had to focus on understanding the people she dealt with primarily rather than just the queen herself.¹⁷

Guzmán de Silva similarly voiced his frustrations over Elizabeth's lack of transparency. In October 1564, Silva complained that 'This Queen, possibly speaking about the beginning of her reign, told me that she had to disguise her spirit to win over her subjects in things regarding Religion...though [her religious intentions were] not as clear as I would have liked'.¹⁸ Here, Silva implied that Elizabeth presented herself as more Catholic than her public actions would lead some to believe. Historians have remained deeply divided on the nature of Elizabeth's own personal religious beliefs, citing her religious settlement, veneration of some Catholic symbols, and odd stance on preaching as indications of her hybrid Protestantism.¹⁹ While Elizabeth's indirectness allowed her to continue political and marriage negotiations, and therefore may be understood as a distinct strategy, it left the Spanish ambassadors unsure if they could gather any meaningful information from Elizabeth's own words. Their frustrations subsequently support

¹⁶ 'la cual con el calor del nuevo Estado, y con estas preocupaciones y pensamientos, comenzó en las dos primeras audiencias á tratar con más despegamiento...y particularmente dio señal desta su resolución de querer estar neutral': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 133.

¹⁷ 'vos podeis muy bien juzgar y entender lo que harian': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 520.

¹⁸ 'Esta Reina, tratando acaso del principio de su reinado, me dijo que habia tenido necesidad de disimular su ánimo para se valer con sus súbditos en los que toca á la Religion...aunque no tan claras como yo quisiera': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 47.

¹⁹ Susan Doran, 'Elizabeth I's Religion: The Evidence of her Letters', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 51/4 (2000), pp. 699-720; Patrick Collinson, 'Elizabeth I (1533–1603), queen of England and Ireland', ODNB (March 26, 2021) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8636>.

Susan Doran's interpretation of Elizabeth's political strategy, namely that the queen intentionally seemed open to some Catholic suitors to help maintain other political discussions.²⁰ Guerau de Spes also did not benefit from a cordial personal relationship with Elizabeth, and his belief that her foreign policy was designed to harm Spanish interests was evident. In his summary of his embassy, Spes concluded that the queen did not respect Philip and was set to destroy the Catholic religion and intervene in the Low Countries.²¹ Philip had even acknowledged in a letter to Alba in October 1570 that it seemed Elizabeth did not like Spes, and wanted to expel him as Philip had expelled her ambassador John Man.²²

When Bernardino de Mendoza re-established the Spanish embassy in England, he was provided with the opportunity to redefine a working relationship with Elizabeth. Initially, Mendoza appeared unconcerned with his access to the queen, writing to Philip's secretary, Gabriel de Cayas in September 1578 that the queen gave him audiences freely and that 'the English in general are not bad with me, and it seems to them that I will not treat them badly if things change'.²³ However, like his predecessors, Mendoza did not gain ample information from Elizabeth. In June 1581, Mendoza expressed his desire to see 'how indecisive the Queen was by nature'.²⁴ Interestingly, Mendoza occasionally enjoyed more intimate access to the queen and private conversations than his predecessors, but this did not provide Mendoza with a more useful impression of Elizabeth or her motives. In June 1581, Mendoza detailed how Elizabeth did 'not want to give me an audience in front of more people nor ladies... in this she was so cautious that she moved away with me, so that no one in the room could understand what we

²⁰ Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p. 99.

²¹ CODOIN, xc, pp. 541-5.

²² The expulsion of John Man will be examined in Chapter 8; AGS Estado 544, fo. 34r-v.

²³ 'quelos ingleses en general no estan mal conmigo pareciendoles que noles he de hazer mal officio si se alteraren las cosas': AGS Estado 831, fo. 233r.

²⁴ 'pusilánime es de suyo la Reina': CODOIN, xcii, p. 53.

were saying'.²⁵ While some ambassadors may have interpreted a private conversation with a monarch as a sign of favour, Mendoza's emphasis on audiences and appearances reveals his bias and interest in public affirmations of precedence. Ultimately, Mendoza, like his predecessors, came to believe that Elizabeth was never forthcoming with him, incentivising the ambassadors to turn to other influential court members.

When the ambassadors did note Elizabeth's frustration or a change in her mood, it was usually in the context of her dissatisfaction with members of her council. Contending with the possibility of the French aiding Scotland militarily in the event of an armed conflict, Quadra reported in March 1560 that 'I see in the Queen a lot of discontent, and in Cecil little satisfaction or security'.²⁶ Spes also recognised the tensions in the court, writing in November 1569, in the midst of the Northern Rebellion, that Elizabeth was greatly displeased as the 'heretics of the Council upset the spirit of the Queen', showcasing some potential divisions.²⁷ Elizabeth's supposed disappointment in her councillors was also reported by Mendoza who wrote in September 1581 that Elizabeth showed 'great anger and feelings' to her councillors and she lamented that they used her kingdom's money for their own personal gain.²⁸ These descriptions of her emotions, however, were not written in gendered terms but rather were meant to determine the disputes in court and potential weaknesses in Elizabeth's governance. Ultimately, monitoring court dynamics was part of the ambassadors' efforts to understand who maintained influence over Elizabethan policy, and where they might find relevant news.

²⁵ 'del no haber querido darme audiencia delante de más gente ni damas...y en esto anduvo tan recatada que se apartó conmigo, de suerte que ninguno de los de la pieza pudo entender palabra de las que pasamos': CODOIN, xcii, pp. 54-5.

²⁶ 'yo veo en la Reina mucho descontento, y en Sicel poca satisfaccion ni seguridad': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 289.

²⁷ 'herejes del Consejo trastornan el ánimo desta Reina': CODOIN, xc, p. 306.

²⁸ 'grande enojo y sentimiento': CODOIN, xcii, p. 113.

The ambassadors' portrayals of their interactions with Elizabeth support Mears' argument that more gendered criticism of Elizabeth's policy and her role as monarch was less frequent than previous scholarship might suggest.²⁹ The Spanish ambassadors attempted to gather information from Elizabeth and were frustrated by her indirectness, though they may have recognised that this was part of her political strategy to stall negotiations and appear neutral on certain matters. This could also give the impression that Philip II and Spain could still negotiate with Elizabeth directly, supporting historical scholarship that argues Elizabeth actively hoped to maintain diplomatic relations.³⁰ The ambassadors, while they attempted to monitor her mood and favour to determine her policy decisions, had to turn to other members of the court for concrete information. Importantly, the majority of any ambassadors' interactions at court were not with a foreign monarch, making it neither surprising nor unreasonable that Elizabeth was not their greatest source of intelligence. Many councillors at court believed that they often had to work hard to try to convince Elizabeth of what they thought was best, signifying that political influence was held by a variety of individuals who the ambassadors could seek out for information.³¹ Therefore, despite their concerns over an anti-Catholic agenda at court, the ambassadors focused their efforts towards gathering information from the Protestant councillors they believed most heavily influenced policy. Their efforts were genuine attempts for cross-confessional diplomatic relations and intelligence gathering, and balanced considerations of both political and religious difference.

²⁹ Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, p. 92.

³⁰ See Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*.

³¹ Norman L. Jones, *Governing by Virtue: Lord Burghley and the Management of Elizabethan England* (Oxford, 2015), p. 8.

Engagement with English Councillors

The Privy Council and its members have enjoyed extensive interest as a topic of historical research, and their actions are often understood as the fundamental basis of Elizabethan governance.³² There is no doubting the influence of the council and its members, and thus it is reasonable that the Spanish ambassadors attempted to formulate working relationships with English councillors to gain invaluable information. However, the ambassadors often condemned the councillors for heretical Protestant beliefs and their personal relationships with them appeared strained. Therefore, the ambassadors had to consider shared political aims and personal honour when determining whether and how they could gain intelligence from these individuals, showcasing how these relationships were heavily dependent on political circumstance and highlighting the difficulties of establishing diplomatic trust in a cross-confessional context.

The Elizabethan period also offers unique insight into how the Spanish ambassadors cultivated ties to councillors because they had suddenly lost the privileged access to the council they enjoyed during Mary I's reign. The Marian regime was ultimately politically and religiously distinct from Elizabeth's regime. During Mary's reign, Philip had successfully created a small group of English supporters, such as the Earl of Pembroke and the Earl of Arundel, through pensions, though several were in arrears by Mary's death.³³ In Cecil's own correspondence, it was understood that as representative of Mary's husband, the Count of Feria

³² See Natalie Mears, 'The Council', in Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds), *The Elizabethan World* (Abingdon, 2011), pp. 59-75; Michael Barraclough Pulman, *The Elizabethan Privy Council in the Fifteenth-seventies* (Berkeley, 1971).

³³ David Loades, 'Philip II and the Government of England', in Claire Cross, David Loades, and J.J. Scarisbrick (eds), *Law and Government under the Tudors: Essays Presented to Sir Geoffrey Elton on his Retirement* (Cambridge, 1988); Anna Santamaría Lopez, "'Great Faith is Necessary to Drink From this Chalice": Philip II in the Court of Mary Tudor, 1554-58', in Joan-Lluís Palos and Magdalena S. Sánchez (eds), *Early Modern Dynastic Marriages and Cultural Transfer* (London, 2016), p. 125.

‘had great consultation with the nobility’.³⁴ This was, however, subject to change. In the immediate aftermath of her accession, Feria reported that Elizabeth ‘said that she would like to know who these [pensioners] and the other servants were, in order to decide whether it was right or not that they should be receiving money’ from Philip II.³⁵ Therefore, it was clear that Philip was not guaranteed the pensioners’ support upon the new regime, especially as the pensions had fallen into arrears. Elizabeth’s fears may have been unfounded as David Loades has argued that Philip’s inability to secure long lasting support was due to his lack of English patronage and understanding of how to present himself, rather than lack of effort.³⁶ Shortly after becoming queen, Elizabeth selected the members of her Privy Council. This was important news for Feria, who on 21 November 1558 reported some of those named to the council, but admitted that he did not know all of them.³⁷ As for Philip’s pensioners, Feria acknowledged that he was unsure of how to proceed and procure the pensioners’ support, suggesting to pay only those that were necessary, despite Philip II having declared bankruptcy for the first time in 1557.³⁸

The Spanish ambassadors still attempted to continue their contact with former pensioners, such as Pembroke and Arundel, during their embassies, but the pensioners did not prove to be influential information sources because they did not possess advantageous positions at court or demonstrate a sense of loyalty to Spain. The Earl of Pembroke had been a Marian councillor who welcomed his new monarch and continued to serve the crown upon Elizabeth’s accession.³⁹ He received the Lord Lieutenancy for Wiltshire and Somersetshire, but otherwise

³⁴ CP, i, p. 197.

³⁵ ‘me dixo que quería saber quién eran, y los otros criados, porque ella quería ver si era bien que lleuassen dineros’: Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, ‘The Count of Feria’s Dispatch to Philip II of 14 November 1558’, in Maria J. Rodríguez-Salgado and Simon Adams (eds), *Camden Miscellany XXVIII* (London, 1984), p. 323.

³⁶ Loades, ‘Philip II and the Government of England’, p. 194.

³⁷ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 82.

³⁸ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 83.

³⁹ Narasingha P. Sil, *Tudor Placemen and Statesmen: Select Case Histories* (London, 2001), p. 155.

lacked a significant position, likely due to his failing health.⁴⁰ In the late 1560s, amid Cecil and the Earl of Leicester's disagreements regarding English intervention in the Netherlands, Pembroke remained friendly to both and his position on the matter was unclear.⁴¹ Pembroke's support of Spain was therefore neither guaranteed nor clear. In December 1558, Feria wrote that Pembroke should be paid since 'he is one of the best servants your Majesty has here and is a man of authority, and both the present and former admirals are his friends'.⁴² Yet, by March 1566, Silva described him as greedy.⁴³

The Earl of Arundel, however, appeared even farther beyond key information circles because he often seemed to lack Elizabeth's favour. Although Feria noted in November 1558 that Elizabeth did not enjoy Arundel's company, despite Arundel sometimes being suggested as a possible husband for Elizabeth, by 1565 Silva noted that Arundel seemed to be in Elizabeth's general favour and was back to 'merrymaking'.⁴⁴ Yet, Spes was aware of how Arundel might also be implicated for supposedly supporting Mary, Queen of Scots, writing in February 1566 that the French ambassador already suspected Arundel of meddling in Scotland, but he had dismissed the claims because Spes thought the French ambassador and Arundel were simply on bad terms.⁴⁵ By 1569, Spes reported that Arundel and Norfolk had sent an agent to him to continue their communication and to assure Philip that they would help restore the Catholic faith.⁴⁶ However, Spes was suspicious that Arundel was not entirely Catholic.⁴⁷ While some scholars have previously characterised Arundel as a staunch Catholic, Arundel's most

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 157.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 159.

⁴² CSP Simancas, i, p. 11.

⁴³ CSP Simancas, i, p. 531.

⁴⁴ Figueroa, 'The Count of Feria's Dispatch', p. 331; 'estas fiestas': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 72

⁴⁵ CSP Simancas, i, p. 522.

⁴⁶ CSP Simancas, ii, p. 136.

⁴⁷ Julian Lock, 'Fitzalan, Henry, Twelfth Earl of Arundel (1512–1580), Magnate', ODNB (12 April 2020) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9530>.

extensive biographer has characterised Arundel's religious stance as an extension of his philosophical ideas of moderation, explaining his identification with moderates on Mary I's council.⁴⁸ Ultimately, in February 1570, Spes reported that Norfolk, Arundel and Pembroke had all been interrogated, signifying the vulnerability of diplomatic intelligence sources. Therefore, the Spanish ambassadors did not benefit from their previous information sources from the Marian regime and had to cultivate a new working relationship with Elizabeth's Privy Council, especially its most senior councillors, if they were to understand court dynamics and Elizabethan policy.

It is clear from the ambassadors' correspondence that Cecil, later Lord Burghley, who was made Principal Secretary from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, remained an influential figure at court and a key member of the Privy Council throughout the period. By 14 December 1558, Feria already characterised Cecil as the man who did 'everything'.⁴⁹ With Cecil as a cornerstone of Elizabeth's council, the ambassadors sought out a productive working relationship despite their disdain for Cecil's religious views and agenda. Ultimately, their relationship with and ability to procure information from Cecil was fragile and dependant on court dynamics and personal factors.

Interacting with Protestants was an intrinsic part of the ambassadors' reality while stationed in England, regardless of religious differences that influenced the ambassadors' willingness to trust these individuals. This made Quadra particularly uncomfortable, prompting Pope Pius IV to write to him 'empowering him to absolve heretics in England' if they performed penance.⁵⁰ Therefore, Catholic powers recognised that the Spanish ambassadors were having to

⁴⁸ See Andrew Boyle, 'Henry Fitzalan, Twelfth Earl of Arundel: Politics and Culture in the Tudor Nobility' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2003).

⁴⁹ CSP Simancas i, p. 10.

⁵⁰ CSP Vatican, i, p. 106.

interact with supposed heretics, but demonstrated a hope that some Englishmen could be reconciled with the Catholic Church. However, the ambassadors' ability to form meaningful relationships with councillors was hindered by many councillors' deep suspicions of a Catholic conspiracy. From the onset of Elizabeth's reign, her government equipped themselves with emergency plans against any viable threat, using espionage, surveillance, and propaganda to protect her.⁵¹ Cecil's sense of crisis in the early 1560s over British succession defined early British politics in Elizabethan England, and according to Alford, 'established the vocabulary of Catholic conspiracy and political emergency'.⁵² Francis Walsingham also monitored the Spanish embassy through an extensive spy and intelligence network, thus it is difficult to ignore the religious tensions underpinning the ambassadors' interactions with councillors.⁵³

Upon his first meeting with Elizabeth on 10 November 1558, Feria knew that the queen was planning to fill her government with mainly Protestant advisors or, as Feria described them, heretics.⁵⁴ He believed that because Elizabeth had no serious obligations to European Catholic powers, she would do as she minded.⁵⁵ This subsequently made Feria apprehensive about her councillors but also made it critical to engage with them and accurately report news from this potentially dangerous government. Cecil was entirely committed to the Protestant faith, and his more moderate approaches to imposing the reformed faith were a result of their potential political implications rather than his own lack of religious conviction.⁵⁶ It is evident from his

⁵¹ Alford, *The Watchers*, p. 11.

⁵² Alford, *Early Elizabethan Polity*, pp. 43, 209.

⁵³ Walsingham even went through the French ambassador Castelnau's correspondence because he was Mary, Queen of Scots's primary means of communicating with Paris and the continent. See Bossy, *Under the Molehill*, pp. 65-66, 109.

⁵⁴ Alford, *The Watchers*, p. 29.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵⁶ Malcolm R. Thorp, 'Catholic Conspiracy in Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 15/4 (1984), p. 432; Wallace T. MacCaffrey, 'Cecil, William, first Baron Burghley (1520/21–1598), Royal Minister', ODNB (19 April 2019) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4983>.

establishment of an intelligence network meant to monitor any Catholic activity, and his fears of a Catholic conspiracy, that Cecil was firmly anti-Catholic.⁵⁷ Quadra voiced a similar sentiment as he wrote in January 1560 that Cecil was ‘the one determined to pass on his gospel until everything is lost’.⁵⁸ Quadra also believed that Cecil supported Spain’s enemies as he wrote to Cardinal Granvelle that he had seen a portrait of Count Egmont, a vocal critic of Habsburg rule in the Low Countries, in Cecil’s study, arguing that this confirmed Cecil’s support for Philip II’s enemies.⁵⁹ Cecil, however, was notably against English intervention in the Low Countries during the Dutch Revolt, demonstrating Quadra’s own perceptions and exaggerations of political hostilities with the councillor could be intertwined with his religious or personal grievances.

Although Quadra never kept his contempt for England and the English council a secret, and ‘did his best to exaggerate the tension and discontent’, his engagement with Cecil initially followed standard practice.⁶⁰ His interactions with Cecil often related to mercantile and political concerns that he hoped to have resolved. Writing in August 1559, Quadra explained that he had asked Cecil to speak to the queen about some merchants’ concerns, though Cecil apologised for not being able to give Philip’s letter to Elizabeth ‘because he had been indisposed’.⁶¹ Despite mounting religious tensions, in April 1561 Quadra wrote that he had never stopped ‘speaking to Cecil in the same way I would to Your Majesty...in which conversation, it seems to me, nothing has been lost, least of all the warmth that I have shown them in treating this business’.⁶² Therefore, Quadra believed he had always been open and honest in discussing religious matters

⁵⁷ See Alford, *Early Elizabethan Polity*.

⁵⁸ ‘el que esta determinado de passar adelante su evangelio hasta que se pierda todo’: AGS Estado 813, fo. 50r.

⁵⁹ CSP Simancas, i, p. 276.

⁶⁰ David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (London, 2007), p. 66.

⁶¹ ‘por estar indispueta’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 229.

⁶² ‘de hablar á Sicel de la manera que á V.M....en la cual plática, segun me parece, no se ha perdido nada, ni ménos en la tibieza que tratándose deste negocio les he mostrado’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 338.

with the court and was always able to maintain communication with Cecil. David Loades has argued that their communication was mutually beneficial as Quadra could use his relationship with Cecil to display his favour at court, while Cecil could use Quadra to relay warnings to Elizabeth on English policy when Cecil occasionally found himself out of favour with the queen.⁶³

Ultimately, Quadra believed that he could still gather information from and speak with Cecil despite the councillor's strong anti-Catholic outlook, highlighting the perseverance of cross-confessional relations. In March 1561, while Quadra lamented that members of the English council were working against Catholicism in England and that Cecil was at the centre of these heresies, since he 'is the leader of these businesses', their confessional differences did not entirely halt efforts to gather information.⁶⁴ Though Quadra placed Cecil firmly at odds with Catholicism, he also detailed that Cecil wanted 'to get me to participate in these talks [at court about religion] so he knows what my intentions are...I have always refused...and in recent days he told me it might be good to have some theologians come on behalf of the Pope' to discuss Catholic doctrine in England.⁶⁵ These invitations were therefore meant to give Quadra the impression of open discussions. Describing Cecil's character in more detail, Quadra wrote that 'Cecil is very heretical, but he is neither vain nor a liar, and works to deal with me very clearly, these three points, in my opinion, are extremely important, regardless of how they might be twisted or misused elsewhere'.⁶⁶ This characterisation is interesting because, while Quadra

⁶³ Loades, *The Cecils*, pp. 66-7.

⁶⁴ 'es el caudillo deste negocio': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 330.

⁶⁵ 'meterme en estas pláticas para ver qué intencion tengo...he rehusado siempre de venir con él en estas pláticas; los días pasados me dijo si seria bien hacer venir aquí algunos teólogos, de parte del Papa': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 330.

⁶⁶ 'Sicel es muy hereje, pero no es vano ni mentiroso y hace profesion de tratar conmigo muy claro; háme concedido estos tres puntos que son, á mi parecer importantísimos, por más que los tuerza de otra parte': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 333.

depicted Cecil as a heretic and potentially a powerful enemy of Spain, he also perceived Cecil as being honest and someone that would include Quadra in certain diplomatic circles and discussions. Cecil also provided Quadra with a better understanding of court dynamics and favour, elucidating the tensions at court that Quadra might otherwise have not witnessed. For example, in January 1562, Quadra wrote in a personal letter that Elizabeth complained to Cecil that if ‘the lords of the Kingdom were as obedient as they should be to their Queen, they would not have to travel outside the Kingdom’ to understand the best decisions for England.⁶⁷ By receiving this information from Cecil, it becomes clear that diplomatic collaboration was possible to some extent.

Cecil, however, could also inhibit Quadra’s information gathering practices due to his surveillance. Quadra complained in June 1562 that ‘a servant of mine has gone on my behalf to request a meeting with Secretary Cecil many times’.⁶⁸ He explained, the

same day I returned to my house and was informed of everything that was happening by B, a spy... and by other servants of the Queen and Cecil...I am sure that he advised me as a friend of mine and is inclined to serve Your Majesty.⁶⁹

Quadra did not identify the spy, possibly because he feared having his letter intercepted and deciphered. He detailed that ‘B’ asked him to be mindful of his movements given that England’s spy network had been monitoring Quadra. It eventually became clear that Cecil had indeed been monitoring Quadra after an altercation at Quadra’s residence resulted in the perimeters being locked and carefully guarded in January 1563.⁷⁰ According to one witness, Cecil ultimately

⁶⁷ ‘que si los señores desse Reyno fuessen tan obedientes como deven a su Reyna y conformes en servirla no havria para que embiar fuera del Reyno’: AGS Estado 815, fo. 59r.

⁶⁸ ‘yendo un criado mio muchas veces á solicitar los negocios de mi parte con el secretario Sicel’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 406.

⁶⁹ ‘mismo dia que él volvió á mi casa fui avisado de todo lo que pasaba por B-, una espía...y por otros criados de la Reina y de Sicel...soy cierto que él me lo avisó sinceramente como amigo mio y muy inclinado al servicio de V.M’: CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 407.

⁷⁰ This incident and surrounding discussions of diplomatic immunity and privilege will be examined at length in Chapter 8.

gave the order to have guards arrive at the residence in the event that Quadra resisted and subsequently decided to place Quadra's residence under further security.⁷¹ Afterwards, Quadra had limited interaction with Cecil, and became more overtly critical of Cecil's religious stance, writing in June 1563 that Cecil was always working to bring Elizabeth away from the Catholic princes and towards Protestant interests.⁷² Thus, political and personal conflicts further influenced Quadra's already strong anti-Catholic perception of Cecil and halted any further efforts to interact with or gather information from the councillor.

Silva did attempt to gather information from and forward his concerns to Cecil but did not find interactions with Cecil helpful to his diplomatic duties. In August 1564, Silva addressed the Privy Council but was unsure of how to advance some negotiations. While Cecil had agreed to meet with him privately for further discussion, Cecil only gave Silva general answers and referred him to the Lord Treasurer.⁷³ Shortly thereafter Silva described how he attempted to work with Cecil, but felt that the tumultuous nature of Quadra's embassy had led to a deep sense of distrust, leading Silva to even provide Cecil with letters presumably in a show of good faith and use Luis de Paz as an intermediary. He wrote,

Luis de Paz [Quadra's secretary] brought to Cecil the letters that I wrote to him, to the Queen, and to Robert [Dudley, Earl of Leicester]...they [the council] are so suspicious and cautious after the Bishop of Aquila's [Quadra] secretary made such a bad agreement, that it is impossible to negotiate with them without a third party.⁷⁴

Thus, as his surveillance of the ambassador also made Cecil a clear political enemy, rather than strictly a religious enemy, Silva attempted to use court tensions between Cecil and Leicester to

⁷¹ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 485.

⁷² CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 529.

⁷³ CP, i, p. 300.

⁷⁴ 'A Sícel llevo las cartas que á la Reina y á él escribí y á Roberto, Luis de Paz...están éstos tan sospechosos y andan tan recatados despues quel secretario del Obispo de Aquila hizo aquel mal trato, que no se puede negociar con ellos, sino por interpuestas personas': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 34.

foster a working relationship with the latter. In June 1564, Silva detailed that shortly after his meeting with Elizabeth and the councillors, a ‘great friend of Lord Robert [Dudley] came to visit me on his behalf, and I understand from him the great feud that exists between Cecil and Lord Robert’.⁷⁵ The ambassador benefitted from Leicester’s conflict with Cecil: by drawing Silva into his information community the earl distinguished himself from Cecil, who was strictly against Spanish interests. Silva came to value his interactions with Leicester, explaining in May 1566 that when their conversations stalled, ‘Leicester told me that he regretted not having had the occasion to speak with me these past few days, I responded that it weighed on me a lot, but that whenever he wanted [to speak], I would go find him’.⁷⁶ Invitations to more private settings outside of the court, namely Leicester’s residence, made Silva believe that he had successfully used personal dynamics at court to secure Leicester as a privileged information source. However, this relationship was subject to political circumstance.

While Elizabeth had favourites within her court, it is clear that they did not monopolise her attention or affection consistently throughout her reign, but rather fell in and out of favour.⁷⁷ In January 1567, Silva reported that ‘these days the Count [sic] of Leicester is in little grace with the Queen...[she] told me that she would be glad that I showed love and good will to Lord Robert like I used to’, as Silva explained that ‘I had distanced myself from him [Leicester] a little’ due to the marriage negotiations with Archduke Charles.⁷⁸ Indications of love and loyalty, and Elizabeth’s positive reception of such compliments were part of ‘the language and code of

⁷⁵ ‘grande amigo de Milord Roberto me ha venido á visitar de su parte en este punto, y he entendido dél que la enemistad que hay entre Sichel y Milord Roberto es grande’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 16.

⁷⁶ ‘Leicester me dijo que le pesaba de no haber tenido estos dias ocasion de haberme podido comunicar; respondíle que á mí me habia pesado mucho, pero que cuando él quisiese que yo le buscara’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 325.

⁷⁷ Doran, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, p. 3.

⁷⁸ ‘estando estos dias pasados el Conde de Leicester en poca gracia de la Reina...me dijo que holgaria de que yo mostrase amor y buena voluntad como solia hacer á Milord Roberto’; ‘me habia un poco apartado dél’: CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 434-5.

behaviour called courtly love' and should not be reduced to pandering.⁷⁹ Yet only two months later, Silva wrote, 'Leicester returns to the Queen's favour' though he did not understand what further benefit this had for Leicester, whom he felt always easily found himself 'having a good place and being preserved' at court.⁸⁰ Therefore Silva had to cultivate relationships with multiple highly-placed figures if he was going to be able to access important information amidst changing court dynamics.

The ambassadors' engagements with English councillors were undoubtedly coloured by their religious differences, however, religious considerations were not independent of political factors in the ambassadors' perceptions of these individuals. In October 1568, Spes called Cecil one 'of the most dangerous heretics in all of Europe'.⁸¹ Though under Spes the Spanish ambassadorial relationship with Cecil deteriorated, as time went on, a greater hindrance to the embassy and information gathering was the rise of Francis Walsingham. Upon his expulsion in 1572, Spes's intelligence report warned that Elizabeth's council was 'purposefully formed of heretics and ill-inclined people, enriched from thefts against us [Spain]'.⁸² Spes explained that while he would speak to Elizabeth regarding Scotland, he did not expect to have any influence, but believed that compared to Walsingham, 'Secretary Cecil and the other [councillors] are more lenient; I believe...they fear what the Queen of Scotland might do to this island'.⁸³ Here, Spes hinted that Cecil could potentially be more open to negotiation and was somehow less damaging than other Englishmen because he feared the potential repercussions of provoking a military conflict. Spes did not refer to Cecil's religious conviction as weaker than

⁷⁹ Doran, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle*, p. 5.

⁸⁰ 'Leicester torna al favor de la Reina'; 'tener buen lugar y conservarse': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 456.

⁸¹ 'de los más perniciosos herejes de toda la Europa': CODOIN, xc, p. 146.

⁸² 'á propósito formado de personas herejes y mal inclinadas, enriquecidas de los robos de los nuestros': CODOIN, xc, p. 568.

⁸³ 'Secretario Sichel y los otros que están más blandos; yo creo...lo hace el miedo que tienen aquí que se revolverá esta isla por los negocios de la Reina de Escocia': CODOIN, xc, p. 272.

Walsingham's, but rather that in the issue of Scotland, Cecil might be more politically lenient in trying to reach a peaceful compromise. Therefore, religious and political factors were both key considerations in how the ambassadors determined how to formulate information circles and social relationships, and with whom.⁸⁴

There were also more personal and practical elements that influenced the ambassadors' perceptions of someone in court and attempts to gain intelligence from them. While the Spanish ambassadors depicted Walsingham as an irredeemable heretic, they also highlighted how they believed that he hindered their attempts to gather genuine news. Depictions of Walsingham as manipulative, dishonest, and disruptive to diplomatic conduct were understandably most pronounced in Mendoza's correspondence, who voiced his belief that 'the most harmful heretics' are 'people that depend on Walsingham' and his favour.⁸⁵ In June 1578, Mendoza stated that Walsingham manipulated Elizabeth into favouring Spain's enemies. Regarding the ongoing revolt in the Netherlands, Mendoza wrote that 'Walsingham is such a wicked heretic', that he further persuades the queen to persecute Catholics.⁸⁶ Conversely, by this time Cecil had made it clear that he cautioned against open intervention in the Low Countries and found himself at odds with Leicester amongst others over English support of the Dutch Revolt.⁸⁷ To Simon Adams, Cecil had to manage his 'basic sympathy for Protestant politics and his equally fundamental dislike of military overextension', suggesting an adaptability that other councillors lacked.⁸⁸ In February 1582, Mendoza wrote to Philip that 'Walsingham, as I have regularly advised Your Majesty, has tried one hundred thousand ways and [created] fictions with the

⁸⁴ Broader processes of politics and religion mutually informing change have become established historiographical topics, especially in studies concerned with European political development in the early modern period. See Joseph Bergin, *The Politics of Religion in Early Modern France* (New Haven, 2014).

⁸⁵ 'más destos puritanos perniciosísimos herejes'; 'gente que depende de Walsingham': CODOIN, xci, p. 221.

⁸⁶ 'Walsingham, que es tan endemoniado hereje': CODOIN, xci, p. 252.

⁸⁷ Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester, 2002), p. 19.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Queen to persuade her to break with Your Majesty and assist your [Philip II's] rebels [in the Low Countries]'.⁸⁹ He then detailed how a letter had come from Ireland telling Elizabeth to be brave and courageous, so that her rule there could be affirmed, but that the letter in question was written by Walsingham.⁹⁰ Mendoza did not detail how he knew this that Irish letter was supposedly a forgery. While it is possible that Mendoza did not want to reveal his sources, or perhaps Walsingham's activities were common knowledge, it may also be a possible fabrication by Mendoza. By characterising Walsingham as a liar who manipulated Elizabeth, Mendoza's description demonstrates how perceptions of one's character influenced diplomatic conduct. Additionally, identifying Walsingham as a key antagonist helped absolve Elizabeth of responsibility in Mendoza's correspondence, suggesting that Mendoza and Philip might otherwise be able to establish a relationship with the queen and English government.

Walsingham, to be sure, was not the only English councillor that Mendoza disliked and depicted as an obstacle to Spanish diplomatic goals. As early as 1574, while stationed in Brussels, Mendoza began a correspondence with Leicester and wrote of his wishes for an amicable Anglo-Spanish relationship.⁹¹ Mendoza again wrote to Leicester shortly after his arrival in England to request audiences with Elizabeth, believing that Leicester would be of some use.⁹² These early attempts to establish a correspondence and information source, however, were unsuccessful. Leicester's time as a potential ally to the Spanish ambassadors dwindled as his support for Protestant rebellions in France and Netherlands became more pronounced as a reaction to political events of the late 1560s onwards, including the St.

⁸⁹ 'Walsingham, como he avisado de ordinario á V.M., ha hecho cien mil oficios y ficciones con la Reina para persuadirle á rompimiento con V.M. y asistencia de sus rebeldes': CODOIN, xcii, p. 266.

⁹⁰ CODOIN, xcii, p. 267.

⁹¹ BL Cotton MS Galba Cv, fo. 25r-v.

⁹² BL Cotton MS Titus B VIII, fo. 186r-187v.

Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the Dutch Revolt, and perhaps his own interest in marrying Elizabeth.⁹³ By 1581, Mendoza believed that Leicester encouraged Elizabeth to 'prevent peace in the Low Countries'.⁹⁴ It was not just Leicester's staunch Protestantism, but his support of English intervention that caused political tension between him and the Spanish ambassadors, subsequently diminishing their ability to engage with Leicester.

Mendoza's frustrations at Leicester and Walsingham for pursuing interventionist policies that harmed Spanish interests continued into later international disputes. Writing in March 1582 about Dom António, a claimant to the Portuguese crown who had appealed to England for support to usurp Philip II's rule, Mendoza lamented that he did everything he could to stop Dom António but 'every day Leicester and Walsingham counteract[ed]' his efforts.⁹⁵ While Walsingham was depicted as working behind the scenes to harm Spain, upon this news of Dom António, Mendoza explained that 'Cecil rose from the table saying that the Queen and Council could not preserve peace with Your Majesty' if this continued.⁹⁶ Mendoza did not believe that Cecil actively tried to ease Anglo-Spanish relations, but to Mendoza, Cecil was more cautious than Walsingham or Leicester because he appreciated the political implications of supporting Spain's enemies.

Descriptions of these English councillors, ultimately, highlight the religious, political, and personal factors behind the ambassadors' interactions with councillors. In a comparison between their depictions of Cecil with Walsingham and Leicester it becomes clear that while the Spanish ambassadors condemned them all for being Protestant heretics, Cecil maintained a

⁹³ Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, p. 141.

⁹⁴ 'sin dar lugar que haya paz en los Países-Bajos': CODOIN, xcii, p. 81.

⁹⁵ See Chapter 7 for an analysis of Mendoza's response to the Portuguese Succession Crisis and issue of Dom António; 'me los contraminan cada día el de Leicester y Walsingham': CODOIN, xci, p. 305.

⁹⁶ 'Cecil se levantó de la mesa diciendo que mal podía la Reina y Consejo conservar paz con V.M.': CODOIN, xci, p. 305.

degree of political integrity in some of their depictions. Ultimately, the Spanish ambassadors needed to gather information from Protestant councillors, and without shared religious goals, they used political differences and tensions between councillors to gain access to information when possible. Therefore, despite the religious divide there were still instances of diplomatic cooperation between the ambassadors and councillors that has previously been ignored. The intersection of politics and religion in their information gathering strategies and relationships were thus part of the reality of cross-confessional diplomacy.

Information Gathering from Courtiers

While members of the Privy Council were some of the most prominent political figures in England and the most knowledgeable regarding Elizabethan policy, Spanish ambassadors' information circle and intelligence gathering strategies at court involved a larger and more flexible group of other courtiers and nobles. Overall, their interactions with courtiers and nobles yielded more information, demonstrating the ambassadors' perception that courtiers could be more useful than councillors despite the institutional differences in their roles and potential questions about the accuracy of information received. Therefore, while one's status in court could influence the amount and kind of intelligence the ambassadors could gather from them, one's status did not solely determine the ambassadors' willingness to socially engage with an individual at court, nor did it impact the contact's utility to the ambassador. Their engagements with courtiers were also more likely to stem from shared religious beliefs, or at least the courtier's more tolerant attitude to Catholicism. Their relationships to courtiers such as Thomas Radcliffe, the Earl of Sussex, who did not join the Privy Council until 1570, were thus distinct from their relationships with other councillors.

There is some debate on how Catholic or Protestant the Elizabethan English court can be considered, and whether the ambassadors utilised shared religious identities to gather intelligence from courtiers in the same manner as they did with other Catholic ambassadors remains to be discussed. Neil Younger argues that in the early years of the religious settlement, there were several influential court members with ambiguous or more Catholic religious attitudes.⁹⁷ Younger has suggested that figures such as Pembroke and Sussex might have felt little reluctance accepting a Catholic monarch had one presented themselves.⁹⁸ However, Susan Doran has asserted that Sussex was deeply concerned that the English population should share their ruler's religion and obey the law.⁹⁹ Sussex, as a Privy Councillor and Lord Chamberlain from 1572, was a prominent courtier frequently in Elizabeth's company who possessed privileged access to court discussions, making him a potential intelligence asset for the ambassadors. While Sussex's religious beliefs are not entirely clear, in the bill of 1566 which hoped to give the English Ordinal the authority of parliament, Sussex voted against the bill and sided with the 'Catholic contingent', suggesting that he was at least religiously conservative.¹⁰⁰ Though Younger has assumed that Sussex was Catholic, citing his support for the Anjou match, the ambassadors never identified him as a co-religionist or applauded his Catholic beliefs.¹⁰¹ Additionally, in 1579, Sussex organised an entertainment of Elizabeth that was meant to promote the match.¹⁰² While unsuccessful in securing the match, the entertainment does demonstrate broader practices of the Elizabethan political culture and how both councillors and

⁹⁷ Neil Younger, 'How Protestant was the Elizabethan Regime?', *English Historical Review*, 133/564 (2018), p. 1065.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1075.

⁹⁹ Susan Doran, 'The Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex (1526?-1583)' (PhD thesis, London University, 1977), p. 104.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁰¹ Neil Younger, 'Drama, Politics, and News in the Earl of Sussex's Entertainment of Elizabeth I at New Hall, 1579', *The Historical Journal*, 58/2 (2015), p. 347.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 354.

courtiers sought to influence policy and the queen's decisions.¹⁰³ It is unclear whether religious conservatives, or those with Catholic sympathies, were truly a great force in Elizabeth's council, however, the Spanish ambassadors considered one's toleration towards Catholicism carefully alongside their political beliefs when determining if they could gather information from an individual. Prior to Mendoza's embassy, he was given a list of individuals that were believed to be useful information sources and trustworthy, which included 'English Catholics committed to His Majesty [Philip II]'s service' though the document does not specifically identify any key English Catholics on the list apart from the Earl of Arundel.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the ambassadors were encouraged to pursue confessionally bound information communities even at court.

The ambassadors' relationship with Sussex, conversely, could be slightly more tumultuous, but Sussex eventually became a stable and consistent contact for some of the ambassadors throughout their embassies. Initially, Feria did not cultivate a relationship with Sussex, believing that he was dishonest and therefore would not be a useful ally or information source. In March 1559, Feria asserted that 'Sussex has proven to be as wicked as I have always believed of him, he never deceived me'.¹⁰⁵ Yet, Sussex's place and influence in Elizabethan government was apparent to each of the ambassadors, despite Sussex not yet serving as a formal member of the Privy Council as he still served as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In August 1559, Quadra remarked that Sussex will 'convene Parliament for St Michael's day where they will propose the mutation of the Religion' in Ireland.¹⁰⁶ While Quadra referred to Sussex as a heretic, neither a Protestant nor Catholic religious view is exceptionally apparent in his dealings, as his

¹⁰³ See Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London, 1977).

¹⁰⁴ 'Ingleses ay muchos catholicos afficionados al servicio de S.M.': AGS Estado 830, fo. 174r.

¹⁰⁵ 'Sussex es el que más se ha señalado en ser tan gran bellaco como yo siempre he creído dél, que nunca me enganá': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 139.

¹⁰⁶ 'convocar Parlamento para el día de San Miguel, en el cual se ha de proponer la mutacion de la Religion': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 232.

primary concern seemed to be procuring a Protestant settlement so that the population followed their ruler's faith and served as loyal subjects.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, when the ambassadors did cultivate a relationship with Sussex, it was not based on a shared faith, but rather mutual political goals and Sussex's toleration, demonstrating the intersection of religion and politics in how the ambassadors attempted to interact with English courtiers.

During Silva's embassy, Sussex emerged as sympathetic to Spanish interests and provided Silva with information about the marriage negotiations with Archduke Charles, a union that both Silva and Sussex supported. When Sussex returned to England from Ireland in May 1564, he had not been made a Privy Councillor to Silva's surprise, but instead served as a regular courtier, though he was consulted on Scottish affairs and the Habsburg marriage negotiations.¹⁰⁸ In January 1566, Silva reported that Sussex had said that it would be important for Silva to aid Sussex in the Archduke marriage negotiations, because the marriage would be the best for the kingdom and aid relations with Spain.¹⁰⁹ In March, 'the Count [sic] of Sussex told [Silva] that he had a good opportunity to speak to the Queen about the Archduke marriage, persuading her to just marry him', and continually passed letters to Silva regarding the match.¹¹⁰ Philip also recognised the value of Silva's engagement with Sussex, responding in October 1567 that 'it seemed good to me what you went through with the Count [sic] of Sussex' as it made it clear that Sussex supported the marriage to the Archduke.¹¹¹

Sussex deemed his connection to Silva important enough that during his time in Vienna, he sent trusted servants to Silva's residence to clarify information received at court. In

¹⁰⁷ Doran, 'Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe', p. 104.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁰⁹ CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 251.

¹¹⁰ 'me dijo el Conde de Sussex que habiendo tenido buena ocasion habia tratado con la Reina acerca del matrimonio del Archiduque, persuadiéndola á que acabase de casarse con él': CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 288, 391.

¹¹¹ 'bien me ha parecido lo que pasastes con el Conde de Sussex': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 553.

November 1567, Silva reported that a ‘Gentleman that the Count [sic] of Sussex sent to the Queen has been with her these past few days, and yesterday he came to my lodgings to give me a letter from the Count [sic], and told me that the Queen had been pleased with what was written to her’.¹¹² This relationship thus provided Silva with a better understanding of court developments, as Silva lacked this level of access to Elizabeth. Sussex also repeatedly visited Silva at his residence after his return to London to discuss his latest conversations with the queen. In March and April 1568, for instance, Silva reported Sussex and himself were visiting one another’s residences after Sussex’s latest interactions with Elizabeth, where they primarily discussed how the marriage negotiations had ceased and Catholic prisoners were set to be released if they left the kingdom or converted to Protestantism.¹¹³ Therefore, while Silva did not explicitly define Sussex as a co-religionist, Silva believed that Sussex was sympathetic to Catholics and thus willing to inform Silva of any Catholic concerns. Sussex’s proximity to Elizabeth had become more valuable after the Archduke negotiations had failed as the ambiguities surrounding Elizabeth’s religious stance had dwindled, thus increasing the ambassadors’ concerns over the state of Catholicism in England.

While religious concerns were a central part of the Anjou discussions, Spes suggested that Sussex’s support of the match did not stem from his religious beliefs or support of a league with France, but rather his rivalry with Leicester.¹¹⁴ The tensions between Sussex and Leicester were apparent soon after Sussex’s return to court, and were commented on by some of their contemporaries.¹¹⁵ Doran has suggested that Leicester criticised Sussex because his working

¹¹² ‘Gentil hombre que el Conde de Sussex envió á la Reina ha estado con ella estos dias; e ayer vino á mi posada y me dió una carta del Conde, y de palabra me dijo que la Reina habia holgado mucho de lo que se le habia escrito’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 561.

¹¹³ CODOIN, xc, pp. 32, 52.

¹¹⁴ Doran, ‘Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe’, p. 339.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

relationship with Cecil further jeopardized Leicester's chances of marrying Elizabeth.¹¹⁶ Yet, Sussex continued to share information with Spes throughout his embassy. In April 1570, Spes noted that he had maintained a steady correspondence with Sussex, with the latter notifying him on developments in Scotland and France.¹¹⁷ Therefore, while it is unclear if Sussex and the ambassadors shared religious goals, political ones, or both, Sussex had proven to be a vital information source from the English court.

Sussex also continued to be an informative correspondent of the Spanish ambassador even into Mendoza's embassy and after Sussex's appointment to the Privy Council. Once Lord Chamberlain and a Privy Councillor, Sussex was more frequently in Elizabeth's company and directed his efforts to procuring her marriage, exemplifying his utility as an information source.¹¹⁸ For Mendoza, Sussex seemed potentially sympathetic to Spanish interests and if 'properly treated', as he wrote in May 1578, would forward Philip's interests.¹¹⁹ Sussex would even make the effort to find Mendoza at court to discuss this. To Mendoza, Sussex was 'a good gentleman', who would go see Mendoza, possibly in his residence, after his interactions with the queen to report on the Anjou negotiations.¹²⁰ This was especially valuable to Mendoza, as he wrote in August 1579 that 'if anyone intervenes [in the Anjou negotiations] it is Sussex'.¹²¹ While Sussex supported the Anjou match, an information source close to the negotiations who was open to speak with Mendoza remained crucial, despite their dissimilar political interests on this matter. Ultimately, Sussex proved to be an indispensable information source for the Spanish ambassadors as they did not believe that a position on the council presupposed greater political

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 155.

¹¹⁷ CODOIN, xc, pp. 347-8.

¹¹⁸ Doran, 'Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe', p. 320.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 349.

¹²⁰ 'que es un buen caballero': CODOIN, xci, pp. 313, 318.

¹²¹ 'si alguno interviene es Sussex': CODOIN, xci, p. 417.

influence or willingness to circulate intelligence. Their relationship with Sussex thus exemplifies the dynamism of the English court and information gathering, and the key considerations of political beliefs, religion, and individual dynamics in constructing an information network in a cross-confessional diplomatic setting. Ultimately, they had a uniquely important relationship with Sussex due to his willingness to share information and collaborate, despite other court members or councillors seemingly possessing more power or political influence. Therefore, their intelligence gathering strategies included an ever increasing number of courtiers.

Outside of the council, there remained several Catholic nobles that could aid the Spanish ambassadors' intelligence gathering. One English Catholic noble that proved to be a useful ally was Anthony Browne, Viscount Montague, who voted against Protestant religious reforms in Parliament.¹²² Montague even appeared sympathetic to Quadra's struggles in England, applauding the ambassador for his patience in enduring a difficult embassy.¹²³ Michael Questier has observed that 'within the small-ish world of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English gentry/aristocratic Catholicism, people tended to know' one another.¹²⁴ Thus Montague had the potential to introduce the Spanish ambassadors to a network of English Catholic nobles that could help the ambassadors understand and potentially influence policy decisions. In the ambassadors' dispatches prior to the 1569 Northern Rebellion, mentions of conversations with Montague were often followed by mentions of those in Montague's circle, such as the Earl of Northumberland and the Earl of Westmorland.

¹²² Michael C. Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 142.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 3

Montague therefore emerged as a valuable and influential source. He shared with Quadra the letters he received from councillors such as Leicester, informing Quadra about life at court and identifying potential allies.¹²⁵ Believing that they possessed shared goals, Quadra assured Montague that ‘Spain’s amity with Elizabeth did not mean that the Spaniards had abandoned the English Catholics’ cause’.¹²⁶ Montague also had a good relationship with subsequent Spanish ambassadors. During his time in the Low Countries in 1565, Montague informed Silva of the business that England had sent him to conclude, and upon his return to England, continued to notify Silva of developments at court.¹²⁷ In 1567, Silva thus wrote that with Montague, ‘I have always shown friendship’.¹²⁸

There were also other courtiers that the Spanish ambassadors believed could serve their diplomatic goals and provide information, however, they lacked the political influence of Sussex or Montague. One example is Leonard Dacre, a parliament member turned rebel. In June 1569, Spes described Dacre as a ‘gentleman, although not of great ability, [is] courageous, witty and a good Catholic, Montague and Cumberland’s brother-in-law’, who now promised to always serve Philip whenever he sent an army to England.¹²⁹ While Dacre offered an assurance of loyalty to Philip, and could have served Philip as he was part of a noble information network and helped facilitate discussion on the matters in Scotland, he was soon apprehended. Once Dacre had returned to the north and began discussing the Northern Rebellion in late 1569,

¹²⁵ CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 342.

¹²⁶ Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 136

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 141

¹²⁸ ‘á quien siempre he mostrado amistad’: CODOIN, xc, p. 9.

¹²⁹ ‘caballero, aunque no de muy buena disposicion, valeroso y de buen ingenio y bien católico, cuñado de Montagú y Cumberland’: CODOIN, xc, p. 248; Henry Summerson, ‘Dacre, Leonard (d. 1573), rebel’, ODNB (10 May 2019) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6994>.

Elizabeth was informed that he was disloyal and had him taken into custody.¹³⁰ By 1571, Dacre found himself impoverished and living in Antwerp, where he survived on a Spanish pension.¹³¹

Assurances of loyalty to the Spanish Catholic cause came from other courtiers who similarly lacked a desirable position at court. In August 1566, for example, Silva reported that the ‘Count [sic] of Ormond spoke with me in great secrecy, telling me that he has always wanted to serve Your Majesty, but because the Queen had not given him permission’, he had not been a more prominent ally, though he had encouraged the Archducal negotiations because he recognised how it was beneficial for Spain.¹³² This conversation took place near Oxford where Elizabeth was reportedly staying, and while Ormond, Elizabeth’s distant cousin and Lord Treasurer of Ireland had offered his support to Philip, he was unable to show anything for it. A few months later Silva reported that ‘Ormond is still as he usually is; but he does not understand business or have other functions’ more than any other courtier, ‘although he is of good wit and ability’.¹³³ Ireland in particular was a great foreign policy concern for England, as further crisis in Ireland could provide Scotland and the continent with additional opportunities to antagonise England, thus Ormond could have been a valuable asset if the ambassadors deemed him knowledgeable.¹³⁴ Therefore while status influenced whether the ambassadors could gather meaningful information from certain courtiers, the ambassadors socially engaged with a variety of individuals at court. The ambassadors understood that to properly gather information, they had to establish relationships with key political figures. However, access to privileged

¹³⁰ Doran, ‘Political Career of Thomas Radcliffe’, p. 260.

¹³¹ Summerson, ‘Dacre, Leonard’, ODNB <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6994>.

¹³² ‘Conde de Hormut me habló en gran secreto; díjome en sustancia que siempre ha deseado servir á V.M., e que por no haberle dado la Reina licencia’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 366.

¹³³ ‘Hormud está todavía como suele; pero no entiende en negocios ni hace otro oficio’; ‘aunque tiene buen ingenio y habilidad’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 456.

¹³⁴ For more on Anglo-Irish relations see William Palmer, *The Problem of Ireland in Tudor Foreign Policy, 1485-1603* (Rochester, 1994).

information was not limited to only Elizabeth and a select few of her councillors as the Spanish ambassadors found that interactions with courtiers such as Sussex and Montague were also useful to their diplomatic goals. Ultimately, information and influence was shared amongst a more dynamic and flexible group of individuals than what has previously been considered in institutionally focused studies of Elizabethan governance.

Conclusion

The Spanish ambassadors ultimately attempted to gather information from all members of the English court, but with varying degrees of success. They faced difficulties with Elizabeth when trying to gather intelligence as she intentionally divulged little to the ambassadors in order to appear neutral. Understood by the ambassadors as a political strategy, it left the ambassadors frustrated, but also prompted the ambassadors to further turn to other court members for information. They were sometimes able to benefit from the personal and political disputes amongst the Privy Councillors as overlapping political goals or their perceived utility could draw them into information communities. It is ultimately surprising that in certain instances, depending on political circumstance, the ambassadors could form an amicable personal and political relationship with William Cecil, thus commenting on the ever-changing balance of religious and political considerations in forming relationships. However, these relationships were fragile, and councillors' staunch Protestant beliefs, their policies, or personal conduct determined the ambassadors' ability and willingness to collaborate with them.

The ambassadors' relationships at court also reveal that those with significant access to information and influence in government extended well beyond the Privy Council and included courtiers and other nobles, challenging institutional readings of Elizabethan government. The

ambassadors found courtiers like Sussex, who exhibited some toleration to Catholicism and remained in a key governmental position, incredibly useful even when not serving as a member of the council. This highlights that, despite historiographical arguments about the centrality of the council, in their diplomatic practices, the ambassadors found the circulation of information at court to include a larger and more adaptable group of individuals. Ultimately, it is difficult to determine the extent to which religion, politics, and individual rapport aided or hindered each interaction and relationship the Spanish ambassadors experienced at court. Rather, their correspondence demonstrates a reality of cross-confessional diplomatic relations that mirrored broader geo-political early modern relations where religion and politics continually intersected to influence diplomatic trust and relationships. The importance of religion, therefore, is not to be overlooked in the ambassadors' interactions and priorities. While this chapter has demonstrated how the ambassadors engaged with Protestants at court, it has also elucidated their efforts to connect with those tolerant of Catholicism, if not explicitly Catholic themselves. This engagement ultimately raises important questions about the ambassadors' support of Catholics, and the potential political ramifications of this engagement.

Chapter 5: Confessional and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy

The role of religion in early modern diplomatic and international relations should not be underestimated as confessional diplomacy remained a driving force in international political collaboration despite the religious changes of the sixteenth century. Rather than simply a determining factor for domestic policy, religion served as a key consideration for a polity's international outlook.¹ Benjamin de Carvalho has argued that religion in Tudor England did not only help define English collective identity, but influenced its international outlook and diplomatic priorities or alliances.² Carvalho thus states that foreign policy was intrinsically linked to domestic religious identities and beliefs.³ English confessional diplomacy has also received enduring interest as scholars, such as David Gehring, have examined how Elizabeth sought to engage with confessional allies in the Holy Roman Empire.⁴ Gehring has argued that from the German perspective, Elizabeth and England would eventually lead a Protestant league, offering Protestants across Europe a sense of mutual security amidst Catholic powers.⁵ Gehring demonstrates that pan-Protestantism or international Protestantism also facilitated contact and collaboration between different polities similar to international Catholic collaborations, and showcases how domestic religion shaped foreign affairs.⁶ Indeed, throughout Elizabeth's reign, England pursued a confessionalised foreign policy.

Sharing this emphasis on religious identities, cross-confessional diplomacy has thus established itself as a dynamic facet of early modern connected histories and cultural analysis,

¹ See Anderson and Backerra, *Confessional Diplomacy*.

² Benjamin de Carvalho, 'The Confessional State in International Politics: Tudor England, Religion, and the Eclipse of Dynasticism', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 25/3 (2014), pp. 407-31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

⁴ David Scott Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations and the Protestant Cause* (London, 2013), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

especially within the context of the New Diplomatic History.⁷ The extent to which different religious or cultural groups participated in diplomatic processes, and how diplomatic agents transcended or helped solidify boundaries within contact zones, has enjoyed lively debate.⁸ Diplomatic interaction between two distinct religious, cultural, or political groups has thus been utilised to approach questions of difference, commensurability, and cultural adaptation.⁹ Yet, cross-confessional diplomacy has largely been understood as an extra-European phenomenon. However, Christian Europe was marked by major confessional divides that impacted diplomatic practice. The Spanish embassies in Elizabethan England ultimately offer unique insight into confessional diplomacy and how religious divides could impact diplomatic practice in a European context. Resident diplomacy had developed throughout the medieval and early modern periods in a unitary Catholic Europe. Whereas Elizabeth often sent a representative to a Catholic polity, Philip was not in the habit of establishing a resident embassy in a Protestant nation. How the Spanish ambassadors navigated confessional boundaries, their perceptions of religious difference, and their hope for a Catholic revival therefore demonstrate their perception of England and English Catholics' place within Spanish diplomacy.

When choosing a diplomatic representative, it was important to consider who could establish a mutual sense of trust. Anglo-Spanish relations had previously been formed in the context of confessional diplomacy, thus new considerations emerged as confessional divides

⁷ While cross-confessional diplomacy is a more recent historiographical topic within the New Diplomatic History, interest in the role of religion in diplomacy and confessionalisation more generally is pervasive, especially regarding the Holy Roman Empire. See Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionalisierung und Staatsinteressen. Internationale Beziehungen 1559-1660* (Paderborn, 2007).

⁸ In the early modern context, the Mediterranean has been embraced as a prominent contact zone between groups of various religious, political, and cultural practices. See Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić (eds), 'Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19/2-3 (2015), pp. 93-285; Rothman, *Brokering Empire*.

⁹ See Christian Windler, 'Diplomatic History as a Field for Cultural Analysis: Muslim-Christian Relations in Tunis, 1700-1840', *The Historical Journal*, 44/1 (2001), pp. 79-106; Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters*.

impacted their established trust. The religious situation in England had changed dramatically upon Elizabeth's succession, and initially appeared unfixed. The Elizabethan Religious Settlement declared England a Protestant nation and established a new Book of Common Prayer; consequently Elizabeth's personal religious beliefs have received widespread historiographical interest, though some scholars such as Cyndia Susan Clegg have argued that Elizabeth always sought to re-establish Edwardian Protestantism.¹⁰ Avoiding religious extremes, the settlement itself 'made it difficult to know what its true theological intention was'.¹¹ Yet reaching the settlement was not a simple or straightforward process, and while Elizabeth has been commended by historians for a balanced approach and compromise, it left the Spanish ambassadors deeply frustrated.¹² In September 1561, Quadra voiced his (mistaken) belief that Elizabeth permitted Catholicism in her own home while her Protestant regime fought this perception: 'Mass is said in [Elizabeth's] house, but not without commotion and altercations from the public, which the heretics themselves have tried to calm down presently'.¹³ Norman Jones has thus asserted that the church-state relations of 1558 'became the baseline of religious change in England'.¹⁴ The court environment that the Spanish ambassadors dealt with from November 1558 onwards therefore considered religion and politics in tandem.

Cross-confessional diplomacy undoubtedly presented practical issues for the ambassadors, as it meant they no longer shared a religious identity with the monarch or influential courtiers. Garrett Mattingly's characterisation of the Spanish ambassadors in

¹⁰ Cyndia Susan Clegg, 'The 1559 Books of Common Prayer and the Elizabethan Reformation', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 67/1 (2016), p. 95; Norman Jones, *Faith by Statute: Parliament and the Settlement of Religion 1559* (London, 1982), pp. 37, 46.

¹¹ Norman Jones, 'The Elizabethan Settlement', in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford, 1996), ii, p. 36.

¹² Jones, *Faith by Statute*, p. 189.

¹³ 'En su casa se dice misa, pero no ha sido sin tumultos y alteraciones en el pueblo, las cuales los mismos herejes han procurado de sosegar por el presente'; CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 369.

¹⁴ Jones, 'Elizabethan Settlement', p. 36.

Elizabethan England as ambassadors of ‘ill will’ diminishes the difficulties of cross-confessional and cross-cultural relations.¹⁵ While individual ambassadors may have negatively impacted diplomatic relations during their tenures, uncovering the rationale behind acts of ‘ill will’ contributes to our understanding of their perceptions of confessional diplomacy and foreign affairs. Ultimately, their response to the religious divide and cross-confessional diplomacy reveals their diplomatic aims, and further consideration of their engagement with Catholics elucidates domestic information networks and the endurance of confessional modes of diplomacy.

This thesis has already established how the Spanish ambassadors utilised confessional links to English Catholics, or at least those more tolerant towards Catholics, at court when gathering information. It is unsurprising, therefore, that each of the Spanish ambassadors engaged with English Catholics more generally. This chapter outlines their interactions with and perceptions of English Catholics to argue that unlike their relationships with courtiers, their engagement and support of English Catholics was not done strictly for information gathering or to influence decisions in the English court, but was also a result of the ambassadors’ belief that these Catholic Englishmen held a distinct place in Spanish foreign affairs and deserved protection. Analysing the ambassadors’ descriptions of English Catholics thus has the potential to reveal how the Spanish ambassadors perceived confessional allegiances, Philip’s understanding of his role as a Catholic king, and the ethos of early modern Spanish diplomacy. The chapter will then turn towards their correspondence with and support of Mary, Queen of Scots, showcasing how the ambassadors pursued a Catholic restoration in England, and whether Philip’s perception of English Catholics as a universal or foreign religious concern prompted a

¹⁵ See Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, pp. 198-219.

political response. The ambassadors' involvement in the 1569 Northern Rebellion and 1571 Ridolfi plot, both conspiracies hoping to place Mary, Queen of Scots, on the English throne and reinstate Catholicism as the religion in England, will thus serve as case studies to determine how the ambassadors pursued, and attempted to convince Philip to pursue, decisive action.¹⁶ Ultimately, while confessional diplomacy remained a driving force for the ambassadors' diplomatic missions and actions, the political challenges of cross-confessional diplomatic relations inhibited Philip's desire to support his co-religionists and enthusiastically engage in Catholic plots.

Confessional Divides and Engagement with English Catholics

While confessional diplomacy facilitated contact and collaboration between nations of a shared faith, in the context of cross-confessional relations, it has yet to be seen if confessional bonds could still facilitate contact between a polity and a religious minority, or whether political considerations would prevent this.¹⁷ Questions thus emerge regarding Philip's understanding of his role as a Catholic monarch and if he believed he had a political obligation to Elizabeth to foster amicable diplomatic relations, or if confessional ties superseded other considerations, including cross-cultural divides. Philip's engagement with English Catholics, or lack thereof, in response to his ambassadors' encouragement can thus uncover his approaches to confessional diplomacy and how it influenced diplomatic conduct. Rubén González Cuerva has argued that by the end of Philip's reign, dynastic concerns had eclipsed religious concerns in dictating

¹⁶ The Throckmorton plot, another plot instigated by Catholics to free Mary, Queen and Scots, and place her on the English throne and Bernardino de Mendoza's expulsion will be examined in Chapter 8 within the context of its impact on political thought considering the limitations of ambassadors and jurisdiction over foreign ambassadors.

¹⁷ For an overview of the impact of religion on key political events of the seventeenth century see Daniel H. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change*, (Princeton, 2009).

foreign policy and engagement.¹⁸ As the ambassadors supported English Catholics, they pleaded for Philip to aid all Catholics and prioritise confessional links when determining his foreign policy. Philip's hesitancy to do so thus supports Cuerva's argument and juxtaposes Philip's perception of English Catholics to that of his ambassadors.

Catholics in England, whether English Catholics or foreign Catholic diplomats, faced a confessional divide with the English monarch and government. The experience of the English Catholics as a persecuted religious minority, and its unique effect on the formation of an English Catholic identity has been examined by scholars such as Alexandra Walsham, Michael Questier, and Ethan Shagan.¹⁹ In navigating this religious divide, Catholics balanced religious and political considerations in choosing to openly practice their faith and meet with other Catholics, leave England, or attempt to exist quietly. Depending on their position in England, and possible special privileges, the extent to which English Catholics could practice their faith became muddled. Michael Questier has argued that for English Catholic nobles such as Viscount Montague, success laid in keeping religion in his household entirely separate from politics.²⁰ Yet, this strategy was not open to Catholic ambassadors whose households were simultaneously private and political. The Spanish ambassadors, therefore, sought to overcome the religious divide by pursuing a Catholic revival, showcasing their understanding of Spanish diplomacy as a benevolent Catholic force in Europe and their natural sense of trust in other Catholics.

¹⁸ Rubén González Cuerva, 'La Mediación entre las dos Cortes de la Casa de Austria: Baltasar de Zúñiga', in José Martínez Millán and Rubén González Cuerva (eds), *La Dinastía de los Austrias: Las Relaciones entre la Monarquía Católica y el Imperio* (Madrid, 2011), i, p. 479.

¹⁹ See Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London, 2016); Michael C. Questier, 'Catholic Loyalty in Early Stuart England', *English Historical Review*, 123/504 (2008), pp. 1132-65; Ethan Shagan (ed), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2005).

²⁰ Questier, *Catholicism and Community*, p. 194.

Early indications suggested that cross-confessional diplomacy would prove untenable. Sixteenth-century Europe constantly faced the problem of cross-confessional dealings, and both sides of the confessional divide could develop a sense of distrust, especially between Protestants and Catholics.²¹ As early as 1554, the Spanish ambassador in England voiced concern that it would be heretical for the ‘Catholic and heretical advisors of the queen’ to be forced to work together or compromise, illuminating questions regarding whether Catholic ambassadors might want to seek papal dispensation to conduct business with Protestants.²² International observers also believed that Catholics in England would simply flee elsewhere. In a letter to Pope Paul IV in May 1559, clergymen in Europe posited that ‘many Catholics, as well churchmen as laymen and people of consequence, will quit that country [England]’ as the settlement had been passed.²³ However, some contemporaries thought that the Count of Feria might be able to stop England from descending further into heresy. A news report from the same month that was sent to the Pope stated that Feria ‘is doing all that he can to restrain her [Elizabeth]’ in religious matters, and was to some degree successful as ‘she has not yet ventured to declare her will’ despite mounting tension.²⁴ Cross-confessional diplomacy, therefore, was widely understood as an obstacle, though there was some optimism that the Spanish ambassador could rectify it.

Over time, confessional divides diminished the belief that the Spanish ambassador could hold a meaningful position at court as many believed that Catholic ambassadors would naturally lack Protestant statesmen’s trust. A 1562 newsletter written in Leuven suggested that Álvaro de la Quadra’s embassy had lost any meaningful use as he ‘has no longer the same influence with

²¹ See Vincenzo Lavenia, ‘La *Fides* e l’Eretico: Una Discussione Cinquecentesca’, in Paolo Prodi (ed), *La Fiducia Secondo i Linguaggi del Potere* (Bologna, 2008), pp. 201-18.

²² ‘los consejeros de la reyna catholicos y hereticos’: AGS Estado 808, fo. 101r.

²³ CSP Vatican, i, p. 11.

²⁴ CSP Vatican, i, p. 10.

the queen as of yore. The Catholic Bishops are kept in close confinement'.²⁵ As previously discussed, shared religious identities could help establish communication networks and information communities in England, thus a confessional divide posed the risk of diminishing the ambassadors' access to information at court. After his embassy, Feria warned that 'I understand that we want to have friendship with England...This friendship, if the Prince is not Catholic, I believe will be very difficult'.²⁶ Feria fundamentally believed that the Spanish could not distrust Catholics, because shared confessional identities, both with English Catholics or other Catholic forces, meant that they had to address these businesses together.²⁷ Feria also noted that on the basis of religion, 'to think that the English and French would be good friends is not possible'.²⁸ Feria thus prioritised religious identities over practical political considerations in his understanding of geo-political relations and trust. Confessional divides could also cause difficulties in maintaining the ambassadors' information networks more broadly. In February 1563, Charles Borromeo, the Archbishop of Milan, contemplated writing to Quadra, but admitted that the Pope thought nothing more should be done in corresponding with Quadra since the Pope had exhausted his efforts regarding England.²⁹

Elizabeth's own religious beliefs, and the ambassadors' potential influence in preserving Catholicism in England, was thus unclear to both Philip and the ambassadors. In July 1564, Guzmán de Silva wrote that while he had not met with Elizabeth recently, he still wanted to notify the king that 'the night of St Peter's eve....[many people] were in the main streets until morning with lanterns and rejoicing...The Queen came to the festivities secretly from

²⁵ CSP Vatican, i, p. 105.

²⁶ 'Yo entiendo que lo que pretendemos es tener amistad con Inglaterra...Esta amistad, si el Príncipe no es católico, yo creo que será muy dificultoso': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 457.

²⁷ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 459.

²⁸ 'pensar que ingleses y franceses serán buenos amigos no es verosímil': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 457.

²⁹ CSP Vatican, i, p. 120.

Richmond, and had dinner at the Count [sic] of Pembroke's house'.³⁰ Given the nature of the event and its ties to the papacy, it is highly unlikely that Elizabeth attended, demonstrating that either Silva had attempted to present Elizabeth as potentially more Catholic in the wake of Imperial marriage negotiations, or that Silva was misinformed. This did little to clarify the situation to Philip. By the beginning of 1569, Philip seemed unsure if Elizabeth's religion had sparked the growing enmity between England and Spain, and seemed cautiously optimistic that more could be done to rectify the state of religion in England. Philip wrote in February that he believed Elizabeth would 'not have me as a declared enemy, but induced by heretics and the evil councillors they have [in England], they have made her go so far'.³¹ In this muddled landscape, the ambassadors turned their attention to supporting English Catholics directly when political action stalled, demonstrating how they deemed confessional diplomacy a more fruitful endeavour and how they trusted English Catholics to be unwavering sources of support for Spanish interests, regardless of cultural divides.

As sanctioned Catholics in a Protestant nation, the ambassadors thus became a natural beacon of support for their co-religionists, and seized opportunities to support recusants and religious endeavours.³² Quadra's primary concern, as both a Spanish bishop and ambassador, was the status of Catholicism in England and the treatment of English Catholics. Quadra explained in February 1561 that 'with the Catholics, I do not stop doing the best I can', as he recognised their restricted religious rights.³³ Silva voiced a similar sentiment in September

³⁰ 'víspera de San Pedro en la noche...hasta la mañana en las calles principales, con muchos faroles y regocijo...Vino á verla desde Richamonte secretamente la Reina, y cenó en casa del Conde de Pembruch': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 17.

³¹ 'ni tener me por enemigo declarado, sino que inducida por los herejes, y malos consejeros que cabe si tiene, la han hecho pasar tan adelante': CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 558.

³² Denice Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy and English Recusancy in Early Elizabethan England', *Reformation*, 15/1 (2010), p. 174.

³³ 'con los católicos no dejo de cumplir lo mejor que puedo': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 321.

1564, arguing for confessional beliefs to guide international policy. He wrote to Don Francés de Álava, Spanish ambassador in France, who was already at work convincing Catherine de' Medici that Philip would help fight Huguenots, that Catholicism in England was weak 'not because of the power of our enemies, but in my view because of the weakness of our friends' and that if they were to truly consider themselves Catholics, they could not be careless and ignore heresy.³⁴ Guerau de Spes also often assured English Catholics that he was a 'friend to all', demonstrating how he prioritised religious beliefs in constructing his networks.³⁵ Philip, however, advised against extensive engagement with English Catholics. Philip informed Spes that while he wished Spes could do something to help the Catholic 'Religion and to protect, console and favour the good Catholics', Spes needed to exercise caution and advise Philip in detail on what was happening.³⁶ Therefore, while Philip indicated the political risks associated with supporting English Catholics, he was not exceptionally clear in dissuading Spes from prioritising confessional ties when formulating his diplomatic strategy. Subsequently, discrepancies began to emerge between the ambassadors' individual diplomatic conduct and Philip's own engagement with English Catholics.

While the characterisation of Philip as a micro-manager has persisted in historiography, the ambassadors' correspondence demonstrates their belief that Philip did not engage or concern himself with English Catholics sufficiently. For example, in April 1571, Spes wrote to Philip's secretary Gabriel de Cayas that 'Parliament passes great things against the Catholics' but despite his sense of urgency, 'most days I do not receive letters from Spain'.³⁷ Silva had also requested

³⁴ 'y no es por la potencia a mi ver delos enemigos sino por la flaqueza de los amigos': AGS Estado 817, fo. 96v.

³⁵ Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy', p. 170.

³⁶ 'Religion y amparar, consolar y favorecer los buenos y católicos': CODOIN, xci, p.187.

³⁷ 'Parlamento passa grandes cosas contra los Catholico'; 'de España no tengo cartas muchos dias': AGS Estado 823, fo. 112r.

further guidance from Philip, if not a formal letter to Elizabeth, in an effort to provide English Catholics with some relief. In September 1564, he detailed that

what concerns Catholics I will treat with the care and order Your Majesty commands...at least for those imprisoned; those who love them have warned me that they are in great danger this winter; and that it would be advisable if I had a letter from Your Majesty for the Queen.³⁸

The ambassadors hoped to persuade Philip to take decisive action, support efforts for a Catholic revival, and protect English Catholics. Their attempts, rather than forceful provocation, were first comprised of asking Philip to speak with Elizabeth but adapted to include details of Catholic suffering, eroding cross-cultural or political considerations in efforts to bolster the universality of Philip's role as a Catholic monarch. Whereas the ambassadors sought out traditional modes of confessional diplomacy, Philip's reluctance to immediately help English Catholics elucidates his political concerns and the practical difficulties of cross-confessional diplomatic relations.

The ambassadors also attempted to offset any concerns that English Catholics' political allegiances or national identities were incompatible with Spanish diplomatic aims, insisting that cross-cultural differences were superseded by confessional ties. In April 1569, Spes wrote to Philip that 'many Catholics write me letters secretly, that seeing Your Majesty's troops in this Kingdom, all will rise to serve you'.³⁹ In September 1570, Spes continued to express optimism that English Catholics would support Philip after Elizabeth's excommunication. He argued that Catholic gentlemen might now fight the English heretics as 'they will be absolved of the fidelity

³⁸ 'lo que toca á los católicos trataré con el tiento y órden que V.M. manda...á lo ménos á los que están presos; hánme avisado personas que los aman que tienen gran peligro este invierno, y que convendria mucho se tuviese aquí alguna carta de V.M. para la Reina': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 33.

³⁹ 'muchos católicos me escriben cartas secretamente, que en viendo banderas de Vuestra Majestad en este Reino se levantarán todos para servirle': CODOIN, xci, p. 219.

and oath they made to this Queen of England'.⁴⁰ The argumentation and rhetoric, however, was not unique. While the ambassadors hoped that a shared faith would guide their political support, some English Catholics argued that their political loyalty was independent to religion as they sought to integrate into the new English regime.⁴¹ Ultimately, the separation of religion and politics was incredibly muddled.

There were, however, still questions regarding English Catholics' national or political allegiances. Antonio de Guaras thus assured Cayas that despite English Catholics publically recognising Elizabeth as head of church and state, they remained devoted Catholics. In November 1574, he detailed that Elizabeth had appointed various commissioners to examine known Catholics and deprived bishops who had been imprisoned, and that they were questioned if they 'knew the Queen as the head of the Church of England...[they were also asked] if they knew the Queen as Queen, they responded yes'. However, Guaras argued that in reality, the 'Church gathered by the Holy Spirit in Trent...is and will always be in the hearts of Catholics'.⁴² To Guaras, it seemed to be a witch-hunt as he claimed that the prisons were also full of those only suspected of being Catholic because the English authorities were incompetent.⁴³ The ambassadors were not entirely incorrect, as it has been established that English authorities monitored known Catholics for fear of conspiracy, showcasing how questions surrounding whether Catholics could be loyal to Elizabeth were also common amongst Englishmen and

⁴⁰ 'se ser absueltos de la fidelidad y juramento que á esta Reyna de Inglaterra hizieron': AGS Estado 822, fos. 159v-160r.

⁴¹ Michael C. Questier, 'Elizabeth and the Catholics', in Shagan (ed), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation'*, p. 85.

⁴² 'conocen ser la Reina cabeza de la Iglesia de Inglaterra... si conocian á la Reina por Reina; respondieron que sí'; 'Iglesia estaba congregada por Espíritu Santo en Trento...lo está y estará siempre en los corazones de los católicos': CODOIN, xci, pp. 72-3.

⁴³ CODOIN, xci, p. 84.

Elizabeth's regime.⁴⁴ Therefore, the ambassadors hoped to continue with traditional modes of confessional diplomacy.

Eventually, the ambassadors' pleas for assistance and support became more pronounced in later embassies as the religious and political context in England shifted. Religious laws tightened in the 1570s in reaction to the political crisis of the Northern Rebellion of 1569, the Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570, and the Ridolfi plot.⁴⁵ Spes already reported in May 1569, before the Northern Rebellion, that 'the Catholics are persecuted now more fiercely than ever...the preachers terribly incite this Queen to take up arms for Religion, certifying that otherwise the Papists will take the Kingdom'.⁴⁶ At the beginning of Bernardino de Mendoza's embassy in 1578, Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations had undoubtedly changed, partly due to two of Mendoza's predecessors having soured relations through their engagement with English Catholics and Catholic causes.⁴⁷ While Spes was only given general guidance for his interactions with English Catholics, Philip explicitly instructed Mendoza that 'If some English Catholics came to you, admit them gently, consoling them and encouraging them to persevere, without any talk or negotiation against the Queen'.⁴⁸ Evidently Philip responded to the previous difficulties of his prior embassies, and urged Mendoza to understand the political risks of supporting his co-religionists, demonstrating a more balanced approach to cross-confessional

⁴⁴ Questier, 'Elizabeth and the Catholics', p. 89; Both Catholics and Protestants throughout the period used prisons to find potential converts, see Peter Lake, and Michael C. Questier, 'Prisons, Priests and People', in Nicholas Tyacke (ed), *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800* (London, 1998), pp. 195-234.

⁴⁵ Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569*, p. 3.

⁴⁶ 'los católicos persiguen agora más fieramente que nunca...los predicadores incitan terriblemente á que esta Reina tome las armas en favor de la Religion, certicándola que de otra manera los papistas la tomarán el Reino': CODOIN, xci, p. 239.

⁴⁷ Incidents where the Spanish ambassadors were believed to have superseded the limitations of their posting to support Catholics will be discussed in Chapter 8.

⁴⁸ 'Si acudieron á vos algunos católicos ingleses, admitirlos heis suavemente, consolándolos y animándolos con palabras generales á que perseveren, sin entrar con ellos en ningun género de plática ni negociacion contra la Reina': CODOIN, xci, p. 189.

diplomacy. Even Mendoza's own servants cautioned against his engagement with English Catholics, fearing the potential repercussions. Mendoza outlined in December 1581 that while entertaining Catholics in his home, a servant warned the Catholics there that, if found, their imprisonment would not be in the house of a gentleman, so they left.⁴⁹

Extensive engagement with English Catholics, ultimately, possessed distinct risks given Elizabeth's surveillance networks. The surveillance placed on Catholics also intensified over time, with Mendoza lamenting in March 1583 that people could be arrested even on the suspicion that a Catholic was in their home.⁵⁰ Throughout the 1580s Mendoza detailed prisons filled with Catholics and the rigorous laws set against them by Parliament.⁵¹ Mendoza ultimately believed that their treatment was a universal Catholic concern. However, Mendoza also argued that the Catholics were patient, and no plight diminished their faith or allegiance to Philip. In October 1580, he described how the English Catholics continued to suffer patiently while the outside world did not understand what was happening.⁵² Mendoza also argued that English Catholics were willing to suffer and sacrifice their personal freedoms to maintain Catholic networks. He wrote in July 1581 that Catholics were being forced to go to Protestant churches, but would rather stay in prison and have their homes fall into disarray because otherwise they would not be able to contact or take sacrament with other Catholics.⁵³ Mendoza therefore argued that all Catholics shared a robust sense of community.

Mendoza's support of English Catholics, which normally manifested itself as alms given out by his servants in his name, was described as part of his 'service to God and Your Majesty

⁴⁹ CODOIN, xcii, p. 221.

⁵⁰ AGS Estado 838, fo. 47r-v.

⁵¹ CODOIN, xcii, p. 9.

⁵² BL Add. MS 28,420, fo. 26r.

⁵³ CODOIN, xci, pp. 63-4.

[Philip II], fulfilling what made Your Majesty send me [to England]'.⁵⁴ Mendoza even argued that any support Philip could offer was a natural extension of his previous effort to cultivate a pro-Spanish faction during his marriage to Mary I. Mendoza noted that he received letters from unnamed Catholics referencing the 'great contentment' that 'Your Majesty had done for some Englishmen, [by] giving them pensions' and how this past support caused such Englishmen to continue to write very affectionately of Philip's name.⁵⁵ Therefore, Mendoza believed that offering aid to English Catholics belonged within the ethos of Spanish diplomacy, that Philip had a duty to protect all those who devoutly followed the Catholic faith, and that his own engagement with English Catholics was a natural part of Spain's confessional diplomacy.

Mendoza, however, also feared that Protestant courtiers could manipulate English Catholics to support certain political issues by promising greater religious freedom, implying that English Catholics were also primarily guided by religion in determining their political actions. In October 1579, Mendoza warned that some courtiers and councillors

have all the English Catholics on their side, because they give the impression that with Alençon [Anjou] coming, they will be able to exercise the Catholic religion, and if without total freedom they will at least be able to hear [Mass] in his chapel.⁵⁶

While his fears speak to how the English Catholics' devotion to their faith and desire to practice Catholicism transcended further political considerations, it also highlights the fear that Protestants could easily place the Catholics under their control. Therefore, Mendoza felt that Philip needed to act to bolster these confessional ties and establish a pro-Spanish faction, and started to champion this perspective to provoke Philip into action.

⁵⁴ 'servicio de Dios y de V.M., cumpliendo en ello lo que V.M. ha sido servido de mandarme': CODOIN, xcii, pp. 124-5.

⁵⁵ 'gran contentamiento'; 'V.M. habia hecho á algunos ingleses, tornándoles á dar las pensiones': CODOIN, xcii, p. 135.

⁵⁶ 'tener de su parte el de todos los ingleses catholicos porque se dan a entender que viniendo Alençon ha de haver el exercicio de la religion catholica y quando no sea con toda libertad ten elle a lo menos para oylle en su capilla': AGS Estado 832, fo. 30r.

Philip's inaction has often been attributed to the structural problems of ruling a vast empire in addition to his messianic vision, rather than his recognition of the difficulties of cross-confessional international relations. Geoffrey Parker has argued that this messianic vision hindered Philip's strategic plans and foreign policy, as he relied on divine intervention and favour to achieve his aims rather than devise contingency plans.⁵⁷ Moving beyond arguing that supporting English Catholics was to the benefit of all of Catholicism, and that these Englishmen served as political allies, Mendoza presented support of English Catholics as a crucial aspect of confessional diplomacy and argued that Philip already possessed their trust. In April 1581, Mendoza wrote to Philip about the English Catholics' suffering, and how God had yet to help:

The Catholics of this Kingdom, with whom I regularly communicate... some are people of great spirit... cannot help but feel disgraced for having their children and descendants be seen as traitors of the Crown with the [anti-Catholic] laws made, and much more now seeing that they could contribute to the eradication of the true Catholic Religion in this Kingdom [England], if God by his infinite mercy does not remedy it....⁵⁸

Here Mendoza again highlighted his regular contact with English Catholics and reiterated their concerns that God had not freed them, thus challenging Philip's messianic vision, and arguing that Philip's obligation to other Catholics surpassed any political obligation he had to preserve amicable relations with Elizabeth. Mendoza thus implicitly argued that the English Catholics' resilience and protestations had worsened the religious situation and demonstrated that only God or another higher power could prevent England's eventual eradication of Catholicism. Mendoza therefore claimed that the English Catholics viewed Philip 'as the true supporter and

⁵⁷ Geoffrey Parker, 'The Place of Tudor England in the Messianic Vision of Philip II of Spain', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), p. 180.

⁵⁸ 'Los Católicos deste Reino, con los cuales yo tengo de ordinario comunicacion... algunas personas de mucho espíritu... no pueden dejar de sentirse como hombres el oprobio del quedar estimados sus hijos y descendientes por traidores desta Corona con las leyes hechas, y mucho más ver que podrian ser parte para desarraigar de todo punto la verdadera Religion Católica en este Reino, si Dios no es servido por infinita misericordia de remediarlo...': CODOIN, xci, pp. 565-6.

defender of the Catholic Church', who possessed an intrinsic duty to help secure their freedom.⁵⁹ It was also not unusual to champion Philip 'as a ruler divinely chosen to reunite Christendom', thus Mendoza was employing an established rhetoric in his appeal to Philip's role as a Catholic king and allude to its divine nature.⁶⁰ Philip, however, did not offer further support. In October 1581, Mendoza still detailed that 'the persecution of the Catholics' had become so great that those imprisoned might die of hunger 'because the torment is too great for them', but to no avail.⁶¹

Philip had previously acknowledged that part of his religious role was to protect Catholicism, and that this duty seemingly extended to England or other states where Catholicism was threatened, yet this did not result in acute action. In February 1569, Philip wrote to Alba that regarding religion in England, there was an 'obligation that I have to preserve our sacred faith and religion in my States, I have the same obligation to make every effort so that in that kingdom [England]' Catholicism is also protected. Here Philip demonstrated his belief that protecting English Catholics was part of his duties as a Catholic monarch, however, in practice he did not offer the support his ambassadors had hoped for due to political concerns.⁶² Philip's hesitancy towards inciting further conflict has been well established, as he balanced other international disputes during his reign and often worked through an exorbitant amount of paperwork and information in his decision making process.⁶³ Therefore, Philip and his ambassadors held competing beliefs over how to support English Catholics and their place within Spanish diplomacy.

⁵⁹ 'como verdadera columna y defensor de la Iglesia Católica': CODOIN, xci, p. 566.

⁶⁰ Parker, 'Messianic Vision', p. 173.

⁶¹ 'la persecucion de los católicos'; 'porque les sea más terrible el tormento': CODOIN, xcii, p. 124.

⁶² 'obligacion que tengo á procurar que en mis Estados se conserve nuestra santa fée y religion, me queda la misma de hacer todo esfuerzo para que en aquel reino': CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 559.

⁶³ See Geoffrey Parker, *Philip II* (London, 1988).

While Philip had seemed to believe that he would come to play a part in any Catholic resistance, political concerns augmented his perception of confessional diplomacy and the universality of his role as a Catholic ruler. In December 1569, as the Northern Rebellion was at its height, he wrote to Alba that ‘the archbishop of Cassel [has notice] that the Catholics in Ireland desire to break with the English, and given this I help declare open war’ but that it was not yet possible to act until he knew Elizabeth’s reaction, showcasing his sense of his political obligation.⁶⁴ Resistance, nonetheless, emerged as a key means for how the ambassadors sought to re-establish Catholicism in England as they continued to pursue confessionally driven diplomatic strategy regardless of Philip’s instructions or the political consequences of cross-confessional conflict.

Mary, Queen of Scots, in Spanish Diplomacy

The Spanish ambassadors, unwavering in their support of English Catholics, ultimately pursued a Catholic revival in England by supporting Mary, Queen of Scots, in her attempts to challenge Elizabeth’s rule. An examination of their engagement with Mary, and her subsequent integration into Spanish networks further elucidates the ambassador’s understandings of their confessional ties to other Catholics and obligation to support a Catholic restoration in England instead of strengthening cross-confessional Anglo-Spanish relations. Until her forced abdication from the Scottish throne in 1567, Mary was Elizabeth’s heir presumptive, and while some argued that she still remained Elizabeth’s heir after this time, Catholics could continue to support Mary as an alternative to Elizabeth. During her time in France, Mary had even used her armorial bearings

⁶⁴ ‘el arzobispo de Cassel que los católicos de Irlanda agora mas que nunca desean el rompimiento con ingleses, y dándoles yo ayuda declararse á guerra abierta’: CODOIN xxxviii, pp. 287-8.

to symbolically claim that she was the real Queen of England.⁶⁵ Her potential claim became especially worrisome during her English captivity from 1568 until her execution in 1587. For many biographers, Mary has been presented as a tragic heroine who came to die a noble death.⁶⁶ Not unlike Elizabeth, Mary's personal biography often dominates historical literature surrounding her political influence, and discussions of her gender and its representation continue to pervade scholarship on queenship.⁶⁷ More recently, however, scholars have critically assessed Mary's commitment to Catholicism in Scotland beyond its political utility, though her importance to English Catholic communities as a potential alternate monarch and means to revive Catholicism is undeniable.⁶⁸ The strength of Mary's devotion to Catholicism, however, was linked to her efforts to free herself from captivity and restore herself to the Scottish throne. Mary's contact with Catholic ambassadors in England, thus reflects this goal as she detailed her commitment to the Catholic faith in order to procure their support and achieve her political aims. While the Spanish ambassadors' correspondence with Mary has primarily been addressed in studies of the Ridolfi plot, the conspiracy of Florentine banker Roberto Ridolfi to place her on the English throne with Spain's backing, it has yet to be seen how the ambassadors incorporated Mary into their diplomatic networks, whether Anglo-Spanish cross-confessional relations faltered with Mary's presence, and if shared confessional beliefs offered Mary a place in Spanish diplomacy.

⁶⁵ See Steven Thiry, "'In Open Shew to the World': Mary Stuart's Armorial Claim to the English Throne and Anglo-French Relations (1559–1561)", *English Historical Review*, 132/559 (2017), pp. 1405–39.

⁶⁶ See John Guy, *My Heart is my Own: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 2004); Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 1969) is indicative of this literature.

⁶⁷ See Kristen Post Walton, *Catholic Queen, Protestant Patriarchy: Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Politics of Gender and Religion* (New York, 2007).

⁶⁸ See Jenny Wormwald, *Mary Queen of Scots: A Study in Failure* (Edinburgh, 2017).

Protestant members of court, notably Cecil, had long had concerns regarding Mary and a potential Catholic conspiracy, even before her return to Scotland in 1561.⁶⁹ Understanding the utility of Catholic diplomats in Britain, Mary hoped to form close relations with the Spanish ambassadors. Quadra had immediately thought it best to bring Mary into Spanish diplomatic circles and was delighted by the prospect of Mary marrying Don Carlos.⁷⁰ In September 1563, Cardinal Granvelle even wrote to Philip that Quadra's former secretary 'came to me last night to tell me a secret from the Queen of Scotland, which is how she is apprehensive about the news' of Quadra's death, given Quadra's support of her.⁷¹ Protestant councillors therefore made efforts to limit Mary's threat. In July 1567, shortly before her forced abdication, Cecil had considered the terms to bring Mary and her infant son James to England as an opportunity to calm strained relations, but decided that Mary was a liability in England despite James's minority providing an opportunity to bring him closer to Protestant interests.⁷² Ultimately, Mary's prolonged correspondence with the two Spanish ambassadors who served after her abdication, Spes and Mendoza, was established in pursuit of claiming the English throne and protecting Catholicism in Britain.

During her captivity in England, Philip encouraged his ambassadors to correspond with Mary due to their confessional ties. Spes wrote in September 1570 that, as instructed, he had always sent

letters to the Queen of Scotland praising her certainty in the Religion and declaring to her Your Majesty's good spirit and desire to see her free because the restoration of the Catholic Religion in this Kingdom depends on her freedom and marriage.⁷³

⁶⁹ See Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity*.

⁷⁰ Guy, *My Heart is my Own*, p. 174.

⁷¹ 'vino anoche a hablarme un secreto dela Reyna de escocia, que por quanto me dize y es apponente por la noticia': AGS Estado 816, fo. 186r.

⁷² Amy Blakeway, *Regency in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (New York, 2015), p. 193.

⁷³ 'á la Reyna de Escocia, con cartas alabando su constancia en la Religion y declarandole el buen animo de V.M. y desseo de verla libre y porque de su libertad y casamiento depende la restauracion de la Religion catholica en este Reyno': AGS Estado 822, fo. 159v.

Spes, however, hoped that this confessional diplomacy was meant to place Mary on the English throne as he portrayed Elizabeth as an unreasonable ruler who threatened Catholicism more broadly. In February 1569, Spes detailed that the Bishop of Ross, Mary's representative, had been detained despite having a passport because of his devotion to her. He went on to argue that while Elizabeth generally seemed reasonable, 'in important matters she is confused and unstable, as she is naturally affectionate to this heresy', therefore implying that this matter was too volatile to leave for Elizabeth, and that the confessional divide had hindered their ability to form amicable relations.⁷⁴

Mary thus used the Spanish ambassadors to speak to Philip on her behalf, demonstrating her own intention to use confessional ties to integrate into Spanish diplomatic networks and procure support. In June 1568, she begged Silva to pass her letters to Philip because 'I do not doubt that if they send me further inland into this kingdom [England] against my will, they could kill me'.⁷⁵ Her efforts to integrate into these networks despite captivity was somewhat successful, as she wrote to Spes in March 1569 that she was able to acquire relevant letters. However, she was still unable to send a representative to Alba to find a solution to her imprisonment. She begged him to help by contacting Alba to secure more resources because it was what her position as a Catholic monarch merited.⁷⁶ Mary also painted a grim picture of her captivity to Guaras, as a *relación* from her 1574 correspondence with Guaras noted that she 'had resolved to die for the religion'.⁷⁷ Mary therefore effectively convinced Spes that

⁷⁴ 'en cosas de importancia es muy confusa y instable, y como es naturalmente aficionada á esta heregia': AGS Estado 821, fo. 21v.

⁷⁵ 'no dubo que si ellos me meten mas a dentro en este Reyno contra mi voluntad, me podrian quitar la vida': AGS Estado 820, fo. 121r.

⁷⁶ AGS Estado 821, fo. 31r.

⁷⁷ 'estava resuelta de morir por la religion': AGS Estado 828, fo. 88v.

intervention from Spain was essential, as he argued in November 1571 that the English believe it is 'necessary to proceed against the Queen of Scotland for the safety of England', thus it was paramount to aid Mary as a continuation of confessional diplomatic relations.⁷⁸ Mary also wrote to Philip directly, as in June 1569 when she wrote to him that with his help and favour, he could always be assured of her devotion to him and protecting the Catholic faith.⁷⁹

The extent of her connections with Spes and Philip, however, were subject to Cecil and Walsingham's extensive spy networks. While there had already been general concern over the Spanish ambassadors' dealings, in February 1570, Walsingham wrote to Cecil that Spes and Mary's representatives had been meeting more frequently.⁸⁰ Despite security risks, Mary persisted in establishing contact, writing to Spes in May 1570 that Alba and Philip were her primary means of retrieving her throne, lamenting that if they 'do not help me [as promised] I will lose my kingdom, see my dissolution as queen of my faithful subjects, and see my son come into the hands of...the greatest enemy I have...that will cause me great pain'.⁸¹ Mary thus argued that cross-confessional relations with England were unsustainable, and that Spain should feel an obligation to aid her as a Catholic monarch with a shared religious enemy.

Mary's confessionally driven diplomatic conduct was not limited to Spain, as she hoped that her confessional and political ties to France would also elicit support. In April 1569, she begged the French ambassador to England, Fénelon, to speak to the King of France to have him reconsider sending relief to Scotland, 'my afflicted kingdom'.⁸² Mary also hoped to use Fénelon

⁷⁸ 'necessario esta forma de proceder contra la Reyna de Escocia para seguridad de la de Inglaterra': AGS Estado 824, fo. 101r.

⁷⁹ AGS Estado 821, fo. 77r-v.

⁸⁰ *Queen Elizabeth and her times*, i, pp. 386-7.

⁸¹ 'no me socorren estare a punto de perder mi reyno para siempre, y vere mi desolacion y la reyna de mis fieles subditos, y vere venir a mi hijo en manos ... la mayor enemiga que tengo ... que me sera grandissimo dolor': AGS Estado 822, fo. 87r-v.

⁸² 'à mon pouvre royaulme affligé': Marie Stuart, *Lettres, Instructions et Mémoires de Marie Stuart, Reine D'Ecosse: Publiés sur les Originaux et les Manuscrits du State Paper Office de Londres... Et Accompagnés d'un*

as a mediator, asking him in 1577 to present her needlework to Elizabeth and speak to both Cecil and Walsingham on her behalf.⁸³ While captive, Mary had gifted Elizabeth several hand crafted items, and though the gifts may have softened Elizabeth towards Mary, they never secured her release.⁸⁴ During Mary's time as queen consort, France had invested in strengthening Scotland's military defences against possible English attacks, and thus her pleas to Fénélon were based on a pre-established relationship and sense of trust.⁸⁵ However, Alexander Wilkinson has argued that after she was no longer the French queen and abdicated her Scottish throne, France could not risk being too closely associated with Mary when they needed England as an ally against Spain, thus international politics surpassed any presumed need for defending her.⁸⁶ Additionally, the French monarchy was preoccupied with the Huguenots and their recurring civil war.⁸⁷ Therefore, while some might assume that the French possessed a vested interest in Mary's well-being, the French press did not respond to her imprisonment, instead focusing on England's stances towards Catholicism more generally in a response to the Catholic exiles and recusants criticising Elizabeth.⁸⁸ Ultimately, while Mary could procure the support of individual ambassadors, European powers such as France and Spain did not support Mary based on their shared confessional beliefs as she had hoped.

Crucially, Philip and his ambassadors were not equally guided by confessional bonds as the monarch's broader religio-political considerations influenced his willingness to support

Résumé Chronologique par le Prince Alexandre Labanoff, ed. Aleksandr Iakovlevitch Lobanov-Rostovskii (London, 1844), p. 337.

⁸³ NLS MS 6137, fos. 1r-2v.

⁸⁴ Some of these gifts were also ideologically charged. Lisa M. Klein, 'Your Humble Handmaid: Elizabethan Gifts of Needlework', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 50/2 (1997), pp. 475-6.

⁸⁵ Alexander S. Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots and French Public Opinion, 1542-1600* (New York 2004), p. 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.

⁸⁷ For an overview on the concerns of the Guise family at this time, see Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009).

⁸⁸ Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots*, p. 78.

English and Scottish Catholics. He had already expressed privately that he did not believe that it was in his own interests to aid Mary. In September 1568, Philip informed Alba that Silva (who he believed had already written to Alba about Mary) had argued that Mary would die for Catholicism and admitted that ‘seeing a princess so maltreated by her own subjects, I feel sorry and want to help her in her suffering’ but wished to hear Alba’s input.⁸⁹ Philip went on to request an answer from Alba, ‘since it is clear that God will not abandon her while she follows him’.⁹⁰ Philip therefore relied on Alba to remedy the situation as he saw fit, and continued to voice his belief that divine intervention might help Mary. Sensing perhaps that his ambassadors would find this insufficient, Philip instructed Alba to keep them informed.

Philip continued to seek counsel from Alba on the issue throughout 1568 and 1569, requesting that Alba ‘write to me...and to Don Guerau [de Spes] of how to proceed with the said queen [Mary], because I have told [Spes] that he will follow the orders you give him’.⁹¹ However by the time of her English captivity, Philip instructed Alba that he should not give Spes the impression that they were committed to helping Mary.⁹² In December 1569, Philip explained that while Spes and his other ambassadors could secretly help the Queen of Scotland by giving her money, if there was a war with Elizabeth, then all resources must first be used to protect Spain and Spanish interests.⁹³ Therefore, Philip conceptualised Mary’s plight as a foreign issue and did not hope to pursue confessional diplomacy due to political concerns.

Mary, however, continued to believe that the Spanish ambassadors would aid her even after their embassies in England. Mary wrote to Mendoza in February 1583 that she had begged

⁸⁹ ‘por ver una princesa tan maltratada de sus propios súbditos, yo le he habido gran lástima y tengo voluntad de la asistir en todo lo que se sufriere’: CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 407.

⁹⁰ ‘pues está claro que Dios no la ha de desamparar mientras ella le siguiere’: CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 407.

⁹¹ ‘me scribais... y á D. Guerau de la manera que ha de proceder con la dicha reina, porque yo le envio á mandar que guarde la órden que vos le diéredes’: CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 516.

⁹² CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 516.

⁹³ CODOIN, xxxviii, p. 276.

Philip to appoint Mendoza to France because her representative in France no longer updated her on events and she hoped that Mendoza could keep her informed, which he did from 1586, when he was appointed Spanish ambassador to France.⁹⁴ Mary had found that beyond Mendoza she had few valuable information contacts in the Elizabethan court. By the 1580s she started a secret correspondence with Henry Howard, but did not generally trust him, while Mendoza paid Howard a substantial pension for information during the same period.⁹⁵ Eventually, as Howard's influence at court diminished, Mendoza complained that his utility to the ambassador and Scottish queen was decreasing.⁹⁶

Mary's persistent correspondence with the ambassadors ultimately highlights how confessional ties influenced the ambassadors' diplomatic conduct and how confessional bonds could underlie a complex diplomatic communication network. Additionally, their pleas on Mary's behalf and subsequent engagement in plots against Elizabeth elucidate their perception of Mary as the means for a Catholic revival in England. Quadra believed that a Catholic revival in England was 'one of his primary missions' as a diplomat and a clergyman, despite Philip instructing Quadra to maintain good relations with Elizabeth.⁹⁷ Though Quadra preferred a Catholic, anti-French monarch in England, his religious priorities still led him to support Mary despite her Guise connection.⁹⁸ The ambassadors therefore worked to convince Philip that Mary needed to rise as an independent ruler, potentially through violent means. Alba was also under the general impression that many in Scotland believed the best course of action was to free

⁹⁴ CSP Simancas, iii, pp. 447-8; De Lamar Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 82-6.

⁹⁵ Pauline Croft, 'Howard, Henry, earl of Northampton (1540–1614), courtier, administrator, and author', ODNB (3 Jan 2021) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13906>.

⁹⁶ Daniel Andersson, *Lord Henry Howard (1540–1614): An Elizabethan Life* (Suffolk, 2009), p. 121.

⁹⁷ Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy and English Recusancy', p. 177.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Mary, as he explained to Philip in January 1572.⁹⁹ Spes even attempted to diminish possible concerns over funding an armed insurrection as he wrote to both Philip and Alba in May and June 1569 to assure them that Mary's subjects would provide her with money given their affection for her, though Spes did not provide a source or offer an estimate of how much support Mary actually had.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, the ambassadors' pursuit of universal Catholic goals led them to compromise cross-confessional diplomatic relations with England, underlining their diplomatic priorities.

Plots and a Catholic Revival: The Northern Rebellion and Ridolfi Plot

From the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the threat that armed conflict might be used to depose Elizabeth in favour of a (most likely Scottish) Catholic monarch were tangible and guided government action. The fears of Elizabeth's ministers of a Catholic conspiracy and the surveillance networks used to combat this correctly discovered the Spanish ambassadors' involvement in such plots.¹⁰¹ This only exacerbated the religious divide. As recent scholarship on Catholic polemical works has suggested, Protestant victory could not be assured, least of all to contemporaries.¹⁰² The peace between France and Spain in 1559, according to Malcolm Thorp, caused Protestant minorities to fear a Catholic retaliation or revival.¹⁰³ The presence of Catholic ambassadors in England, therefore, made Protestant ministers anxious. While scholars have untangled the pervasive fears of a Catholic conspiracy, we have yet to utilise Catholic

⁹⁹ AGS Estado 551, fo. 1r-v.

¹⁰⁰ CODOIN, xxxviii, p. 110.

¹⁰¹ Alford, *The Watchers*, p. 11.

¹⁰² Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 1, 4.

¹⁰³ Thorp, 'Catholic Conspiracy', p. 435.

plots, such as the Ridolfi plot, and Spanish ambassadors' involvement as an opportunity to reveal how the ambassadors understood their diplomatic mission.

The importance of Scotland in stabilising or destabilising British politics was ultimately evident to the Spanish ambassadors as they hoped to utilise England's political struggles with Scotland to support their religious goals. Scottish governance in the sixteenth century experienced its own practical difficulties that affected the political landscape in Britain. Faced with the minority rule of several monarchs, Scotland had continuously preferred the rule of individual regents over councils.¹⁰⁴ Amy Blakeway has also emphasised that Anglo-Scottish relations, like much of early modern politics, could be deeply personal in nature and volatile.¹⁰⁵ Anglo-Scottish tensions were mounting and the Spanish ambassadors came to play a key part in this by supporting and communicating with the Catholic forces in Scotland after Mary's abdication and imprisonment.

The Northern Rebellion of 1569 thus impacted Spes's diplomatic practices and information networks, not least due to his support of the Catholic rebels. On 14 November 1569, the Earl of Northumberland and Earl of Westmorland stormed Durham Cathedral and held a Catholic Mass, sparking the rebellion.¹⁰⁶ The eventual aim of the rebellion was to depose Elizabeth in favour of Mary and reinstate Catholicism as the religion in England. Spes hoped to aid the rebellion any way he could, despite Philip never voicing his encouragement.¹⁰⁷ Spes, however, was subject to Elizabeth's spy network, and Alba encouraged him to not engage with

¹⁰⁴ Blakeway, *Regency*, p. 234.

¹⁰⁵ Amy Blakeway, 'Kinship and Diplomacy in Sixteenth-Century Scotland: The Earl of Northumberland's Scottish Captivity in its Domestic and International Context, 1569–72', *Historical Research*, 87/236 (2014), p. 250.

¹⁰⁶ Kesselring, *Northern Rebellion*, p. 1. Kesselring provides a detailed account of the rebellion and the evolution of the stated aims of its leaders.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

anyone who was involved in the plot.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, confessional ties still helped determine how Spes identified allies in Scotland, and influenced his diplomatic conduct as he became a communication channel for Scottish Catholic rebels. On 8 November 1569, for instance, he reported that Elizabeth wanted the ‘Count [sic] of Northumberland and others from the North of the country, that are Catholic’ to return to her court, but that they ‘do not intend to do so because of their suspicion that they will be arrested like the others; they say that they will liberate Scotland, and seize this Kingdom’.¹⁰⁹ Blakeway has argued that Northumberland’s captivity in Scotland and its surrounding diplomacy demonstrate the complexities and connection of foreign and domestic policy.¹¹⁰ Here, Spes tried to use the strength of his English Catholic connections to persuade Philip to engage with a foreign insurrection and the potential deposition of the English queen, showcasing his hope for military engagement, and his belief that Philip would always support his co-religionists. While the rebellion was unsuccessful, it prompted Spes’s later involvement in the Ridolfi plot which eventually led to his expulsion.¹¹¹

The 1571 Ridolfi plot has been perceived by some historians as an example of the ‘impact of Philip’s messianic outlook on his foreign policy’, as he believed that God would ensure its victory regardless of his own involvement.¹¹² The plot was ultimately unsuccessful, as a courier working for the Bishop of Ross was apprehended with letters detailing the plot as well as the Duke of Norfolk and the Spanish ambassador’s involvement.¹¹³ Despite suggestions that the plot would have failed regardless of its premature discovery and the debates regarding

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Conde de Nortumberland y otros del país del Norte, que son católicos’; ‘no están con intencion de hacerlo con el recelo que tienen de ser detenidos como los otros; dicen que ellos librarán á la de Escocia, y se apoderarán deste Reino’: CODOIN, xc, p. 302.

¹¹⁰ Blakeway, ‘Kinship and Diplomacy’, p. 230.

¹¹¹ How an ambassador’s involvement in a plot exceeded the boundaries of diplomatic immunity will be examined in Chapter 8.

¹¹² Parker, ‘Messianic Vision’, p. 185.

¹¹³ Alford, *The Watchers*, p. 47.

Mary's responsibility, there is no denying that Elizabeth's Protestant councillors treated all potential conspiracies seriously and recognised Spain's ability to harm England.¹¹⁴ Ultimately, Philip 'proved indecisive' in offering full support to the plot.¹¹⁵ After meeting Ridolfi in July 1571, Philip initially informed Spes that he wanted to participate in the plot, and had Spes wait for further instructions.¹¹⁶ Philip then suggested that the plot had to be started by the Duke of Norfolk or others in England rather than the Spanish ambassador.¹¹⁷ Spes also attempted to assure Philip and Alba that Ridolfi pledged his allegiance to the universal Catholic cause of restoring Catholicism in England. In February 1569, Spes assured Alba that Ridolfi was 'very much [the Duke of Norfolk and Arundel's] friend and mine' and that the Catholics in Britain believed 'that Your Excellency will favour them and that this Kingdom will not lose the friendship they have with the King, our Lord, and they say they will return to the Catholic Religion, and that there has never been a better time to do so'.¹¹⁸ Shortly thereafter, Spes wrote to Philip that Ridolfi 'many times expressed his willingness' to serve Philip, and proved this by confirming information that Elizabeth had forces in Germany ready to move against Flanders.¹¹⁹ Ridolfi, therefore, had solidified his position in Spes's information networks and earned the ambassador's trust.

Spes subsequently played a key role in attempting to procure support for Catholic uprisings and cultivating the relevant information networks. Ridolfi had even voiced concerns about the merit of the Northern Rebellion, remarking that Spes and Norfolk might be able to agree on the uprising, but that 'it was possible that it was too much effort' and unlikely to

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 320; Patrick Collinson, *The English Captivity of Mary Queen of Scots* (Sheffield 1987), p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Kesselring, *Northern Rebellion*, p. 161.

¹¹⁶ Parker, 'Messianic Vision', p. 196.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 196, 198.

¹¹⁸ 'mucho su amigo y mio'; 'que V.E. les favorecerá y este Reino no perderá el amistad del Rey, nuestro Señor, y dicen que volverán la Religion Católica, que les parece que nunca hubo mejor ocasion': CODOIN, xc, p. 190.

¹¹⁹ 'muchas veces á decir la voluntad': CODOIN, xc, pp. 228-30.

succeed given Elizabeth's resources.¹²⁰ Highlighting Elizabeth's spy network, Ridolfi understood that he had to exercise extreme caution and cultivate international support in secrecy. Still, Spes trusted Ridolfi to manage matters discreetly, writing to Alba in May 1570 that in regards to securing money for the resistance in Scotland, the rebels have been promised help which 'Ridolfi will [keep] secret'.¹²¹ Ridolfi also requested more information and clarification from Spes, writing that month that 'I wish Your Excellency will help me understand' the actions of those such as Philip and Alba, as Ridolfi helped set out the expenses and financial support for the Scottish cause.¹²² Their relationship thus became mutually beneficial. Spes later clarified to Alba that upon receipt of any further letters from Alba, he would forward them to Ridolfi since Ridolfi had become a primary information source for Spes.¹²³ Ridolfi also presented himself to Spes as genuinely concerned for all Spanish interests, writing to Spes that a Spanish merchant had gone to Antwerp, and since Ridolfi feared the merchant was in trouble, Ridolfi had reached out to Alba for permission to involve himself and help.¹²⁴ Feria even championed the Ridolfi plot from Spain.¹²⁵

Spes's conviction was evident, as he did not believe that his station as an ambassador limited his ability to engage with Catholic causes, but rather that such engagement was inherently linked to his role. In June 1569, Spes wrote to Alba that 'I told Ridolfi that, in having the complete freedom as His Majesty [Philip]'s ambassadors usually have, I will listen to them [the Catholics in Scotland]'.¹²⁶ Spes also assured Philip that he had a great deal of control over

¹²⁰ 'fuesse possible que demas de haber esfuerço': AGS Estado 824, fo. 189r.

¹²¹ 'en lo queal ere que Rodolfi sera secreto'; AGS Estado 822, fo. 100r.

¹²² 'desseo que Vu[estra] Ex[celencia] me haga favor de hazer entender'; AGS Estado 822, fo. 99r.

¹²³ AGS Estado 822, fo. 97r-v.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Parker, 'Messianic Vision', p. 197.

¹²⁶ 'Yo le dije al Ridolfi, que en teniendo entera libertad como suelen tener los Embajadores de S.M., yo les oiré': CODOIN, xc, p. 250.

potential dealings involving Catholics and that Ridolfi improved his information gathering. He explained, ‘Last night Ridolfi wrote to me, and said that Cecil had called for him and invited him to eat, and begged him to go to me, because Cecil wants to agree with me on everything, and so I await him’.¹²⁷ This stood in stark comparison to Spes’s own interactions with Cecil, thus the invitation to speak to Cecil and reach an agreement revolved around the presence of Ridolfi. In Mary’s own correspondence with Ridolfi, she also described ‘the miserable state and appearance of great cruelty and tyranny against the Catholics’ to elicit his full support. Additionally, she argued that while God gave no remedy for their struggles despite their devotion, they were still able to rely on ‘the just title that the Queen of Scotland has in both those Kingdoms [England and Scotland]’.¹²⁸ Mary also issued further instructions to Ridolfi, which reiterated the plight of the Catholics and that she was Catholicism’s means of survival, but also asserted that despite his presence at the English court, Norfolk was truly a Catholic whom people would follow in Mary’s name.¹²⁹

Madrid, however, did not offer the same unconditional trust to Ridolfi as Spes had, as Philip’s secretary Cayas wrote to Spes in April 1571 that Ridolfi ‘must bring things of substance’ for anything to continue.¹³⁰ By July 1571, Philip confirmed to Spes that Ridolfi had arrived and passed on Spes’s letters. He stated that regarding Mary and the Catholic faith in England, ‘I keep trying to do what is convenient...so you will make them [Mary and the Catholics] understand it cautiously, encouraging them to be firm and in good hope and

¹²⁷ ‘Anoche me escribió Ridolfi, como el dicho Sichel le habia enviado á llamar y convidado á comer, y rogado que venga aquí á mí, porque el dicho Sichel quiere concertarse conmigo en todas maneras, y así le aguardo’: CODOIN, xc, pp. 250-1.

¹²⁸ ‘el miserable estado y la apparenceia que ay de mayor crueldad y tyrania contralos Catholicos’; ‘el justo titulo que la Reyna de Escocia tienen en ambos estos Reynos’; AGS Estado 824, fos. 162r-5v.

¹²⁹ AGS Estado 830, fo. 171r-v.

¹³⁰ ‘debe traer cosas de sustancia’: CODOIN, xci, p. 452.

emphasising the secrecy of this'.¹³¹ Philip, however, had doubts about the viability of establishing Mary's English rule. In June 1571, he had already informed Spes that Ridolfi might have much to fear since Elizabeth could execute Mary 'with enough reason, [due to] her bad spirit', suggesting that Ridolfi's plot might prove ineffective and that no plan could account for Elizabeth's character.¹³² Yet only two months later, Philip assured Spes that the business with Ridolfi had been 'treated with truth and simplicity' and there should be no suspicions in their efforts to aid the poor Queen of Scotland.¹³³ The Ridolfi plot, more than a case study on Philip's decision making process, reveals how the distinction between foreign and shared issues was blurred, and that unlike Philip, the ambassadors understood a Catholic revival in England as part of the ethos of Spanish diplomacy.

Upon his expulsion for his involvement in the Ridolfi plot, Spes's conviction had not wavered. In his report of his embassy from 1572, Spes asserted that 'the Queen of Scotland must be brought forward as legitimate Queen with order of marrying her to Don Juan of Austria or another person of this house [the Habsburgs]'.¹³⁴ Spes thus believed that Mary still remained a powerful means for the universal preservation of Catholicism, and explicitly tied her success in this matter to a possible union to and the cooperation of the House of Habsburg. Spes also felt that Ridolfi had served a great purpose in disorienting England and that Spain should intervene. In July 1571, he confided to secretary Cayas that given the ongoing tensions with France and the Low Countries, it would be good to 'take advantage' of the destabilising effect Ridolfi had in disrupting England.¹³⁵

¹³¹ 'quedo tratando dello con ánimo de hacer cuanto convenga...así se lo hareis entender cautamente, animándolos á que estén firmes y con buena esperanza, y encargándoles mucho el secreto': CODOIN, xc, p. 478.

¹³² 'con causa sobrada, su mal ánimo': CODOIN, xc, p. 473.

¹³³ 'trata con verdad y llaneza': CODOIN, xc, 493.

¹³⁴ 'la Reina de escocia delante como de legítima Reina con orden de casarla con el Sr. D. Juan de Austria ó otra persona desta casa': CODOIN, xc, p. 569.

¹³⁵ 'sacar proveiso del': AGS Estado 823, fo. 173r.

While Philip did not engage in the plot to the extent the ambassadors had hoped, after the role of his ambassadors in such plot came to light, England retaliated. The discovery of the Ridolfi plot provided the Privy Council with an opportunity to justify already published anti-Marian materials in circulation.¹³⁶ These seem to have had the desired effect -- discussions of Mary in the 1572 Parliament have been used by Patrick Collinson to argue that ‘the image of an adulterous murderess’ was secure in the minds of most informed men.¹³⁷ Philip subsequently financially supported the polemical works of English Catholics in exile in response to libellous texts from London throughout the 1580s.¹³⁸ Eventually, the Ridolfi plot and Mary, Queen of Scots, were no longer concerns for the English government or Elizabeth. The extensive correspondence networks utilised by Mary, Ridolfi, and Spes, however, showcase that Spes believed that Mary and a Catholic revival were part of the intrinsic goals of his diplomatic mission, whereas Philip II considered the political interest of cross-confessional diplomacy to a far greater extent than what has previously been attributed to him.

Conclusion

The Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England attempted to operate under previous modes of confessional diplomacy in their extensive engagement with English Catholics, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Catholic conspirators. Historians should not overlook or diminish the shock and difficulty facing the ambassadors who had to suddenly navigate a religious divide when Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations had once developed in a unitary Catholic context. Protecting the Catholics in England despite potential political ramifications demonstrates how the

¹³⁶ Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?*, p. 41.

¹³⁷ Collinson, *English Captivity*, p. 7.

¹³⁸ Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?*, p. 338.

ambassadors perceived the protection of Catholicism as part of their diplomatic mission, and highlights the enduring confessional divide in England. As the ambassadors cultivated Catholic communication networks, they encouraged Philip to intervene by supporting English Catholics, Mary, and a potential uprising. Malcolm Thorp has argued that the belief that Philip was behind Catholic plots was ‘instrumental to the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations’, as conspiratorial thinking superseded practical realities of France and Spain’s own international difficulties.¹³⁹ While the engagement in plots certainly harmed Anglo-Spanish relations, this should not be solely accredited to Philip as this chapter has demonstrated that early modern ambassadors could be imperfect representations of their monarch’s foreign policy as the ambassadors continually pursued confessional ties despite Philip’s hesitation. The case of Spes’s support of Mary and the ambassadors’ engagement with Catholics therefore elucidate issues of diplomatic representation.

While Philip may have believed that his duties as a Catholic monarch extended to protecting Catholicism in England, unlike his ambassadors, Philip did not offer English Catholics or Mary, Queen of Scots, unwavering protection or support. Thus, within the scope of cross-confessional diplomatic relations, political considerations limited Philip’s willingness to formulate diplomatic relations solely based on confessional ties. While Philip cautioned engagement with Catholics, and only offered assurances of support, his instructions did not adequately limit his ambassadors’ engagement, showcasing their individual agency and the importance of individual actors in early modern diplomacy. Rather than dismissing their individual conduct as a result of ‘ill will’, it is thus more useful to examine their embassies as having been driven by conceptions of confessional diplomacy if historians are to determine the

¹³⁹ Thorp, ‘Catholic Conspiracy’, pp. 431, 447.

ethos of early modern Spanish diplomacy and the role of ambassadors. Ultimately, their hope for a Catholic revival in England and their efforts to protect English Catholics elucidates questions about confessional ties, and individual conduct as cross-confessional diplomacy challenged established conventions of early modern politics and trust.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ See Peter Schröder, *Trust in Early Modern International Political Thought, 1598-1713* (Cambridge, 2019).

Chapter 6: The Spanish Ambassadors' Response to the Dutch Revolt

While the Spanish ambassadors' primary focus in England was to see to Anglo-Spanish political relations, the ambassadors contended with broader international crises that affected the Spanish empire throughout their tenures, prompting their participation in and engagement with European communication and diplomatic networks. This thesis has established the importance of diplomatic correspondence, the basis of the ambassadors' engagement or relationships with other ambassadors or English courtiers, and the ambassadors' political and religious priorities, all of which served as foundational elements of their response to these crises. Observing crises from the ambassadors' perspectives, thus showcases the management of diplomatic dispatches, spread of information, and the role of one's representative character and sociability in practice especially amidst overlapping political and religious developments. Early modern Anglo-Spanish relations did not simply exist within a vacuum, and encompassed a flexible and large array of international disputes, placing the embassies in England within much larger information and communication channels. Chapters 6 and 7 will examine two distinct crises to highlight how the ambassadors responded to different international political concerns and how they continued to participate in Iberian networks while stationed in England.

The first crisis examined, the Dutch Revolt, spanned decades, forcing the ambassadors to communicate with a vast array of political figures on the continent, continually assess England's role in the dispute, and inherit or augment diplomatic strategy between embassies. This chapter will first outline their attempts to gather information at court before tracing their use of alternative news sources, showcasing the flexibility of diplomatic strategy during a crisis, use of informal information communities, and the ambassadors' new diplomatic contacts. As England weighed considerations of Anglo-Spanish relations in their decisions to intervene and

court members recognised the ambassadors' contact with figures in the Low Countries, the Dutch Revolt had placed the Spanish embassy in England at the heart of larger information networks. Ultimately, their engagement with non-diplomatic information sources and Dutch communities demonstrate the difficulties of assessing and managing political and religious allegiances when constructing one's networks. While the second crisis examined in the subsequent chapter, the challenge of Dom António to Philip II's Portuguese rule, was limited to Bernardino de Mendoza's embassy rather than serving as a concern throughout several Spanish embassies in England, it similarly forced Mendoza to expand his networks to include new information sources relevant to the crisis. Crucially, an examination of these crises and the different facets of the ambassadors' response exemplifies how diplomatic strategy operated in practice and locates the English embassy in the context of international Spanish concerns and correspondence networks.

The Dutch Revolt in Context

The Dutch Revolt, as a prolonged crisis of the Spanish monarchy from 1566 until the mid-seventeenth century, served as a chief concern for Philip II's ambassadors throughout Europe as the conflict constantly evolved and threatened Habsburg authority. Prior to some of Alexander Farnese's limited victories against the rebels, a climate of anxiety amongst Spanish ambassadors throughout Europe emerged as a result of the Dutch rebels' use of print to garner support, Alba's difficulties with Spanish forces, and the seizure of Spanish pay ships. Due to the multifaceted nature of the revolt, the Spanish ambassadors in England therefore had to manage and understand a volatile and dynamic situation, especially if they hoped to contribute to the circulation of information. Beginning with political grievances, the conflict also

undermined Philip's empire religiously and economically, eventually calling for military suppression. Philip had initially appointed Margaret of Parma as Governor of the Low Countries, but she was soon faced with the Nobles' petition in 1566 and a series of iconoclastic riots. The Duke of Alba arrived thereafter with Spanish forces to attempt to suppress the revolt. However, the revolt continued and increased in scope. As the States General met to negotiate the Pacification of Ghent, and stadholder Prince William of Orange became a key figure of the revolt, Spanish political authority in the Netherlands faltered.¹ Therefore, as European powers came to recognise the potential vulnerability of the Spanish empire, the perception of a weakened Habsburg rule aided the rebels' calls for international support. The importance of the Dutch Revolt in Spanish diplomatic strategy is evident as Philip incorporated diplomatic experience in the Low Countries into his choice of ambassador and their preparation. Alba even advocated for Bernardino de Mendoza as a diplomatic appointment on the basis of Mendoza's experience in the Low Countries, writing in July 1568 'that [Philip II] can count on those [like Mendoza] that serve him so well'.² In Philip's instructions to Mendoza, Philip assured Mendoza that he would serve well in England after 'having served in the Low Countries for so many years' as a commander.³ Knowledge of the Low Countries had thus become integral to diplomatic success and intelligence gathering for the Spanish embassy in England. The relevance of England in Spanish diplomatic networks during the revolt is therefore evident, and new individualised perspectives of English engagement in the revolt reveal how Spain understood England's part in the conflict.

¹ For an overview of the Dutch Revolt, and its ties to Spanish governance, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (London, 1977).

² 'que tenga cuenta con los que tan bien le sirven': CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 305.

³ 'mis países Bajos, en que me habeis servido tantos años': CODOIN, xci, p. 182.

Due to England's indirect interventionist policy throughout the 1570s, the Spanish ambassadors had to understand the religious, political, and financial nature of English support when this was purposefully hidden from them. England permitted volunteer military forces to travel from England to the Low Countries to aid the rebels.⁴ While Elizabeth's support of the Dutch has been framed as either a political act against Philip or due to confessional ties to the Low Countries, according to Paul Hammer, English intervention was truly an effort to curb growing French domination.⁵ Thus her foreign policy might be understood by the concurrent goals of avoiding war with Spain and diminishing international French influence.⁶ Elizabeth even secretly hired German mercenaries to aid the rebels and have deniability, but this came with a hefty financial cost.⁷ In June 1573, Guaras was ordered by Alba to complain to Elizabeth and William Cecil that 'so many Englishmen went to Holland in support of Orange', though the queen insisted that they had not gone on her orders.⁸ Thomas Morgan commanded the first Englishmen in the Netherlands in 1572, but was dismissed by Orange by the end of 1573 due to lack of funds.⁹ Yet, by 1575 Orange was again recruiting Englishmen and in 1578, Elizabeth provided a loan allowing him to recruit 3000 men under John Norris.¹⁰ Given Elizabeth's regular embassies to Orange, English support was not without foundation. This effort also came as a continuation of Anglo-German relations; indeed David Gehring has argued that Anglo-German collaboration created and perpetuated ideas of an emerging 'Pan Protestantism' across Europe as Elizabeth's ties to Protestant German princes were held together by the ideological

⁴ See Paul E.J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Basingstoke, 2003).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁶ Peter Limm, *The Dutch Revolt: 1559-1648* (New York, 1989), p. 36.

⁷ Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 105.

⁸ 'de que huviessen ydo tantos Ingleses á Holanda en favor del de Orange': AGS Estado 827, fo. 87r.

⁹ Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, p. 179.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

bond of opposing Catholicism.¹¹ To Simon Adams, the English troops sent to the Low Countries in the Dutch service would possess a sense of puritanism for generations as the ‘religious element in the Anglo-Dutch relationship’ could not escape either side.¹²

The revolt itself has received extensive historiographical attention, with discussions on the nature of the revolt elucidating the emerging political configuration of the Low Countries and Spain’s response.¹³ This chapter will examine the communication strategies that the Spanish ambassadors in England adopted in domestic and international information communities, and will situate the English embassy within Habsburg news networks to understand how the ambassadors conceptualised England’s involvement in the conflict. As a case study, the Dutch Revolt provides unique insight into how Iberian embassies operated and collaborated during a prolonged crisis, revealing the effectiveness of diplomatic practice and the fluidity of political negotiations at the individual level.¹⁴ The ambassadors ultimately had to adapt their intelligence gathering efforts. Popular prints and Dutch communities thus emerged as new intelligence sources while the ambassadors’ relationships with established court contacts was fundamentally altered by the revolt. Introducing questions regarding the popular political language utilised by the rebels, more recent scholarship, such as Hugh Dunthorne’s work, has explored English perceptions of the revolt to better understand the popular political dialogue between the rebels and various states.¹⁵ Subsequently, modern scholarship has also turned towards discussions of state privileges in the Low Countries, and how power dynamics in Madrid between nobles

¹¹ Gehring, *Anglo-German Relations*, p. 7; See E.I. Kouri, *England and the Attempts to Form a Protestant Alliance in the Late 1560s: A Case Study in European Diplomacy* (Helsinki, 1981).

¹² Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, p. 190.

¹³ Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, p. 13; Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London, 1990); Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, 2018).

¹⁴ For how the revolt related to existing anti-Spanish sentiments see K.W. Stewart, ‘The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War’, in J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands* (Dordrecht, 1975), pp. 36-57; Carrió-Invernizzi, ‘A New Diplomatic History’, pp. 603-18.

¹⁵ Hugh Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt, 1560-1700* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 2.

altered understandings of the division of power.¹⁶ This historiography, however, has only applied this understanding of flexibility and need for international support to studies of rebels' communication with political leaders, omitting serious considerations of court dynamics and diplomatic responses.¹⁷

Approaching the revolt through the different perspectives of the ambassadors and assessing their communication and intelligence gathering strategies also elucidates how contacts and practices could, or could not, be inherited between embassies or whether they were contingent upon individual relationships. Therefore, while England seemed on the periphery of the conflict, physical presence in the Low Countries held little influence in one's ability to report news. Indeed, the English embassy had not been considered a valuable posting.¹⁸ Ultimately, an in-depth analysis of the ambassador's response to the Dutch Revolt reveals the difficulties of gathering information in England and maintaining Habsburg information networks during a prolonged crisis, the relevance of England to Spanish information networks, and the revolt's impact on Anglo-Spanish relations.

Information Gathering at Court

Domestically, the Spanish ambassadors approached both established contacts and new communities specifically interested in the revolt, though with uneven results. This thesis has demonstrated how the ambassadors often attempted to use other foreign ambassadors and English courtiers as sources of information, with this effort remaining constant throughout the

¹⁶ Gustaaf Janssens, 'Los Privilegios: Justificación para la Oposición Leal y para los Rebeldes en sus Acciones contra la Política de Felipe II en Flandes (1559-1581)', *Philostrato. Revista de Historia y Arte* (2018), p. 51; Violet Soen, 'Philip II's Quest: The Appointment of Governors-General during the Dutch Revolt (1559-1598)', *The Low Countries Historical Review/Bijdragen en Medelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 126 (2011), p. 21.

¹⁷ Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*.

¹⁸ See Levin, *Agents of Empire*.

revolt. This was notable in their contact with the Duke of Alba, whose time as Governor General has received extensive historical inquiry as he oversaw military attempts to suppress the revolt, incurring widespread hatred from contemporaries.¹⁹ Alba's political influence was evident, with foreign ambassadors dealing directly with him if they wanted matters resolved quickly or more information.²⁰ In turn, Alba also relied on the Spanish ambassadors for information, though the quality of information gained from the ambassadors varied. In June 1569, Alba assured Philip that though 'I cannot gather a lot from what Don Guerau [de Spes] writes to me about England, like [to] Your Majesty'.²¹ The ambassadors' communication with Alba and other political figures in the Low Countries was widely known and constant throughout the revolt. The revolt and this contact subsequently augmented the perception of the Spanish ambassadors at the English court, as their place in Iberian and Habsburg information networks made them appear knowledgeable and valuable to court members, therefore yielding greater communication with them. For example, Guzmán de Silva noted in May 1568 that his local interlocutors asked 'for what I understand again in the States of Flanders', telling them in sum 'what I have learned through the Duke of Alba's *avisos*'.²² Silva was also often in communication with Margaret of Parma, writing to her about the general state of political developments in England, because 'I thought that you also wanted to deal with me in these matters from Flanders'.²³ Ultimately, Silva was able to gather information from key figures in Iberian networks in the Low Countries

¹⁹ Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 106; Monica Stensland, *Habsburg Communication in the Dutch Revolt* (Amsterdam, 2012), p. 27.

²⁰ Henry Kamen, *The Duke of Alba* (New Haven, 2004), p. 67.

²¹ 'En lo de Inglaterra yo puedo sacar poca luz por lo que D. Guerau me escribe, como V.M.': CODOIN, xxxviii, p. 178.

²² 'por lo que entendia de nuevo de los Estados de Flándes'; 'que habiendo entendido el Duque de Alba por algunos avisos': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 58.

²³ 'pense que me queriades tambien tratar en los negocios, de flandes': AGS Estado 817, fo. 64r.

during his diplomatic postings, just as Philip had hoped when he sent Silva on a mission to the Low Countries before Silva's embassy in England.

Cecil in particular sought out Silva due to the perceived utility of his connections. In February 1566, Silva wrote that Cecil, Nicholas Wotton, and another gentleman, possibly Christopher Hatton, came to his lodgings 'to discuss the business in Flanders, as I have particularly written to the Duchess of Parma'.²⁴ Silva thus reaffirmed his engagement with the Low Countries as Nicholas Wotton, an English diplomat and Christopher Hatton, a Member of Parliament and one of Elizabeth's favourites, recognised the potential value of Silva's correspondence with Margaret of Parma. Silva then went onto detail how Cecil assured him that England sought to preserve its friendship with Spain. He explained that Cecil, along with others in the English court, hoped to take control of the matter and the Archduke's actions, but that the French were an obstacle and shared enemy.²⁵ This assurance of Anglo-Spanish collaboration, whether legitimate or performative, indicates how information from the Spanish ambassadors could be highly valued due to the revolt. Acquiring information from the ambassadors, however, was not strictly collaborative.

Guerau de Spes, ultimately, did not inherit his predecessor's networks or success. Instead, he experienced combative encounters with Englishmen attempting to gain his information on the revolt by force. In March 1569, Spes complained that the English seized the letters he had written to key figures in the Low Countries, including Alba, Philip II and the Spanish ambassador in France, Don Francés de Álava. Letters from Álava were especially valuable as piracy in the Channel between 1568 and 1569 had disrupted communications from

²⁴ 'para tratar sobre los negocios de Flándes, como escribí á la Duquesa de Parma particularmente': CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 259.

²⁵ CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 259-60.

the Low Countries, making Álava suddenly the best information source Philip had regarding the revolt.²⁶ Simultaneously, Alba relied on Álava for crucial news on France.²⁷ The letters to Álava were thus incredibly valuable within Habsburg communication networks and the breach of Spes's diplomatic postbag put these information communities in jeopardy. The English who took Spes's letters reportedly proceeded 'to curse against the Duke of Alba as if it were his right to punish him, and he greatly threatened me, his threats were at least in part not made in vain'.²⁸ Spes was thus unable to utilise his contact in the Low Countries to exchange intelligence in England, highlighting that relationships at the English court were not seamlessly passed down through the Spanish embassies.

For Antonio de Guaras, his perceived connections to the Low Countries provided him with the opportunity to integrate into court environments, however, his precarious position as a sub-ambassadorial figure jeopardized his efforts.²⁹ He explained to Alba in October 1572 that 'in court, after the events in France and Flanders, everyone looks at me as the principal instrument of their own good...although before they wanted to stone me'.³⁰ Although Guaras recognised how his contact with Iberian networks could potentially shift how court members viewed him, he also acknowledged that the revolt had worsened existing hostilities against Philip II. He explained to Alba that at court,

they suspect that for a short time His Majesty [Philip II] will conserve peace [with the Low Countries], and that in time he will punish Orange and his friends as our rebels, and afterwards will not keep his word in continuing peace, so that at a convenient time when they lack friends, he will conquer and constrain them to be Catholics.³¹

²⁶ Rodríguez-Salgado, 'Diplomatic Correspondence', p. 20.

²⁷ CODOIN, iv, p. 465.

²⁸ 'comenzó á bravear contra el Duque de Alba como si fuera en su mano el castigarle, y asimismo me amenazó á mí mucho, y sus amenazas en parte no salieron vanas': CODOIN, xc, pp. 210-11.

²⁹ See Chapter 3 for an examination of Guaras as a representative and the nature of his role at court.

³⁰ 'en la córte, despues de los sucesos de Francia y Flándes, todos me miran como á principio de instrumento de todo su bien...aunque ántes me querian apredrear': CODOIN, xci, p. 36.

³¹ 'que tienen sospecha que por algun poco tiempo S.M. les conservará la paz, y que en este tiempo castigará al de Orange y á otros sus amigos destos, como nuestros rebeldes, y que despues no les guardará la palabra de

The English court's perception was that the Spanish sought complete political and religious domination of the Low Countries, therefore it would be naive to trust Spanish declarations of peace. To Guaras, further English intervention seemed likely as hostilities grew. He detailed to Philip's secretary Gabriel de Cayas in December 1576 that '[Elizabeth] and those in her Council want to get the Spaniards out of the Low Countries as much as the Flemish do'.³² This determination echoed earlier letters from Spes who warned Philip of English arrogance and intervention in the revolt. Guaras thus found that some court members, steadfast in their desire to see Spanish suppression of the revolt fail, did not want to engage with him, hindering his ability to gain information from court members.

Philip, however, was initially hopeful that Mendoza would be able to use his knowledge of and connections to the Low Countries to cultivate relationships at court. In September 1578, Philip instructed Mendoza to try to preserve a working relationship with England, and to 'cautiously win over the Ministers that show good will to our [the Spanish] cause'.³³ In light of the complexity of 'the assistance that [Elizabeth] gives the rebels in my Low Countries', Philip hoped that Mendoza might be able to use his presence at court to learn about and influence policy decisions, and curtail England's indirect support in the delicate balance of avoiding an Anglo-Spanish war.³⁴ Elizabeth had no intention of accepting the sovereignty of the Low Countries (which she formally rejected in the Treaty of Nonsuch in 1585), but had made it clear that she believed the Low Countries should not be subject to foreign rule, making English

continuacion de paz, y que en tal tiempo conveniente los conquistará ó constringirá á que sean católicos cuando estarán sin amigos': CODOIN, xci, p. 47.

³² 'desea ella y los de su Consejo echar los españoles de los estados más que los mismos flamencias': CODOIN, xci, p. 152.

³³ 'granjear cautamente á los Ministros que muestran buena voluntad á nuestras cosas': CODOIN, xci, p. 285.

³⁴ 'de la asistencia que da á los rebeldes de mis Estados-Bajos': CODOIN, xci, p. 285.

involvement a tangible threat. Therefore, as the situation in the Netherlands had deteriorated throughout the 1570s, Mendoza's diplomatic strategy was to seek out a more sympathetic faction amongst the English councillors and courtiers by aligning shared political goals. Indeed, English councillors appeared divided over the issue of military intervention as Cecil opposed the Earl of Leicester's desire to intervene, possibly allowing for Mendoza to communicate with certain council members.³⁵

Finding courtiers sympathetic to Spain, however, appeared unlikely, as is evident in Mendoza's private conversations with Elizabethan councillors. In June 1580, he detailed a conversation with Leicester that denoted the strained relationship between the Spanish embassy and English court. He wrote that Leicester had 'told me that he not only wanted to serve Your Majesty', but would facilitate an alliance with Philip II and Elizabeth.³⁶ This encounter, while strictly joking, appeared as a veiled threat as it pointed to England's involvement and power in the matter. Mendoza 'replied, amusing him', that Leicester would be an important part in ensuring that England did not support the Dutch rebels.³⁷ Here, Mendoza portrayed the encounter as teasing, with both himself and Leicester acknowledging England's unofficial engagement with the rebels, with Leicester having openly supported military intervention.

More public interaction with the council and Elizabeth were similarly unproductive for Mendoza. In March 1578, he met with Elizabeth and her council to discuss any developments in the Low Countries, since 'she has sent to Your Majesty [Philip II] and the Governors of the States [the Low Countries] eight or nine Ambassadors'.³⁸ Elizabeth was thus gathering her own

³⁵ Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, p. 19.

³⁶ 'me ha dicho que no solamente queria servir á V.M.': CODOIN, xci, p. 485.

³⁷ 'le respondí, divirtiéndole': CODOIN, xci, p. 485.

³⁸ 'y que para esto ha enviado á V.M. y gobernadores de los Estados, ocho ó nueve Embajadores': CODOIN, xci, p. 210.

intelligence about the state of Habsburg authority in the Netherlands. Additionally, English councillors including Cecil and the Earl of Sussex, flaunted the perceived vulnerabilities of Philip's Low Countries to Mendoza. Given the ambassadors' previously fruitful relationship with Sussex, it was evident that the issue of English intervention and the revolt had harmed Mendoza's networks at court. Mendoza detailed how they scoffed at him, explaining that Alexander Farnese, then a general in the Low Countries, 'has given the Low Countries the impression that he cannot keep the accord of peace made with them, which the States have not written about to Your Majesty'.³⁹ The English therefore appeared confident that Spain could not manage the crisis.

Given England's support of the rebels, Mendoza tried to gain insights into English policy from Elizabeth directly. In an audience in April 1578, he reported that Elizabeth said

that she did not think of them as rebels...and that she did not want the French to step foot in the Low Countries, nor did she want Spaniards to govern them, and she would defend this until there was no one left in her Kingdom.⁴⁰

By pledging her own resources in support, Elizabeth clearly signalled English involvement to Mendoza but also that she was acutely aware of the international dimensions of the conflict. Elizabeth could thus use audiences as part of a larger political dialogue and urge Spain to withdraw from the Netherlands. In July 1580, Elizabeth told Mendoza that given France's talks with the Low Countries, 'one could undoubtedly believe that they [the French] would take possession of them because they were ahead in this matter, if Your Majesty [Philip II] does not

³⁹ 'daba á entender á los Estados que no se les guardaria el acordio de las paces hecho con ellos, sobre lo cual los Estados no habian escrito á V.M': CODOIN, xci, p. 211.

⁴⁰ 'que ella no los tenía por rebeldes...y que de ninguna manera queria que metiesen franceses pié en los Estados, ni que españoles los gobernasen, y que esto lo defenderia hasta no quedar hombre en su Reino': CODOIN, xci, p. 215.

quickly make an agreement with them'.⁴¹ Mendoza was thus encouraged to turn his attention away from English involvement since France was also heavily involved.

Mendoza could not understand why, since the beginning of the conflict, England had offered the rebels support and loans, as he explained to Philip in June 1580 that 'it was a very dangerous thing for any Prince, especially the Queen, to assist rebels'.⁴² Understanding that the rebels had requested more naval resources from England, Mendoza 'asked for an audience with the Queen and her Council', though he did not want to outline the dangers of English involvement, 'that could occur to them if they aided rebels of Your Majesty [Philip II], which I did not specify because they should be right in front of them'.⁴³ To Mendoza, the political ramifications of provoking the Spanish empire and aiding the rebels seemed obvious, but he hoped to gauge Elizabeth's ongoing involvement since information circles at the English court more generally had proven unhelpful. Yet Mendoza ultimately came to believe that engagements with Elizabeth were futile, as the Dutch rebels had already secured international support. In June 1581, he lamented that while councillors such as Leicester and Cecil seemed to encourage him to speak with Elizabeth about French involvement in the Low Countries, this was useless since he already had news that the French had organised their forces in the Netherlands.⁴⁴

Therefore, the ambassadors had varying degrees of success in utilising court spaces to understand English support of the revolt, as English councillors occasionally sought out the ambassadors for information, but also restricted their political influence in court. Silva enjoyed

⁴¹ 'que indubitablemente se podria creer el apoderarse dellos por estar muy adelante el negocio si V.M. no hacia con brevedad algun acordio con ellos': CODOIN, xci, p. 498.

⁴² 'para que cualquier Príncipe era muy perniciosa cosa el asistir á rebeldes, principalmente á la Reina': CODOIN, xci, p. 485.

⁴³ 'pedí audiencia á la Reina y á su Consejo'; 'que les podian ocurrir para el ayudar á los rebeldes de V.M., los cuales no les referia, pues de razon los debian de tener muy delante de los ojos': CODOIN, xci, p. 484.

⁴⁴ CODOIN, xcii, p. 41.

some success as courtiers hoped to utilise his connections to and previous experience in the Low Countries to communicate with key Iberian political figures and gather intelligence. While this highlights some of the effectiveness of Philip's diplomatic strategy, as sending Silva to the Low Countries before his tenure in England had proven to be fruitful preparation, Silva's successors did not enjoy the same degree of communication with courtiers regarding the revolt. Rather, the revolt could also jeopardise their information gathering at court as the revolt went on and England became more engaged in the conflict. Relationships at court were thus volatile, and reliant on individual relationships and broader political circumstance, rather than strictly being inherited between embassies. While Mendoza eventually tried to use shared political goals to find an information community amongst courtiers more hesitant about English intervention, it became clear that the ambassadors were not gathering adequate intelligence from court, a worrisome reality given England's involvement. Therefore, the ambassadors turned to print sources and wider communities in England, remarking a distinct change in their information gathering strategies and the influence of the revolt on how they situated the English embassy within Habsburg communication.

Information Beyond Court

Ultimately, the ambassadors constructed an informal information network in which they utilised sources beyond the English court, such as prints, merchants, and Dutch communities, to understand England's reaction to the revolt. The use of non-diplomatic information sources therefore ran parallel to established diplomatic networks. In the absence of meaningful intelligence from court, popular prints, such as pamphlets, became useful information sources because they could be used to contextualise wider perceptions of the Spanish within Anglo-

Spanish relations. The ambassadors largely did not detail how they came to acquire these pamphlets, with the exception of Spes noting that Guaras had sent him prints in 1568.⁴⁵ This suggests that the ambassadors were either sent these prints or tasked members of their household to acquire these materials. These prints and pamphlets, both printed in England and abroad, highlight the importance of popular perception in the revolt and the role of popular discourse in shaping the revolt and the ambassadors' understandings of the conflict. Ambassadors had to access and exploit news in order to conduct their business and prints could indicate a country's political and religious tenor.⁴⁶ The Spanish ambassadors' use of popular prints also showcases how the relationship between literary texts and diplomacy extended beyond courtly environments.⁴⁷ This raises questions about how print news could inform and influence an embassy, and how engaging with print might encompass elements of public diplomacy in the early modern world.⁴⁸

The perception of the revolt was a chief concern for Philip as he feared that the rebels might manipulate and construct an image of tyranny and cruelty, justifying their cause on an international stage. Philip explained to Mendoza that as the rebels and 'those who have lost their way' had successfully spread 'falsehoods and inventions', it was Philip's 'right to want to oppress them'.⁴⁹ Mendoza, therefore, was to make it known that

it has never been our intention to take away their privileges, goods, or customs, nor have them oppressed, nor to reduce them to a province, as they want people to believe, but

⁴⁵ CODOIN, xci, p. 131.

⁴⁶ Raymond and Moxham, 'News Networks in Early Modern Europe', pp. 1-16; Sowerby, 'Elizabethan Diplomatic Networks', pp. 305-27.

⁴⁷ Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood, 'Introduction', in Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood (eds), *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 1-24.

⁴⁸ Helmer Helmers, 'Public Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe', *Media History*, 22/3-4 (2016), p. 401-2.

⁴⁹ 'los desviados'; 'las invenciones y falsedades'; 'que mi voluntad iba enderezada á quererlos tener opresos': CODOIN, xci, p. 186.

only to make them show me [Philip II] the obedience they should, as Prince and Sovereign Ruler, according to how they showed the Emperor, my father.⁵⁰

How the revolt was perceived in the Low Countries and abroad therefore influenced discontent and the rebels' calls for international support, especially as the Black Legend started spreading ideas of Spanish cruelty. In the 1570s, much of the Low Countries had developed their 'language of civic order and virtuous citizenship' in reaction to Alba's havoc, and utilised prints to gain international assistance.⁵¹ While the Low Countries had seemed to reach a peace agreement with the Perpetual Edict of 1577, tensions between Protestants and Catholics, in addition to the controversy of William of Orange's influence, led to the competing Union of Arras and Union of Utrecht which saw some provinces return to Spanish rule while others continued their open rebellion.⁵² Hugh Dunthorne has examined how texts about the Dutch Revolt circulated in England, and how Elizabethans might have related to the anti-Spanish sentiments of the uprising.⁵³ For instance, by 1573 *A brief and true rehearsall of the noble victory and overthrow*, which retold Protestant victories against Alba, had been printed in London.⁵⁴ Additionally, English translations of Orange's *Apology* reached London in 1584.⁵⁵ These prints were also part of a larger anti-Spanish sentiment in England as texts such as Thomas Wilson's translation of *Demosthenes* had also been meant to warn the Elizabethan government about the

⁵⁰ 'nunca ha sido ni es nuestra intencion de les quitar sus privilegios ni las buenas y loables costumbres, ni tenerlos opresos, ni reducirlos en forma de provincia, como se lo han querido dar á entender, sino solamente hacerles venir á la obediencia que me deben, como á su Príncipe y Sobrano Señor, segun y como la dieron y tuvieron al Emperador, mi padre': CODOIN, xci, p. 187.

⁵¹ Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, & Civic Patriots*, p. 259.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 104-5.

⁵³ Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *A brief and true rehearsall of the noble victory and overthrow* (London, 1573).

⁵⁵ William I, *The apologie or defence of the most noble Prince Willian, by the grace of God, Prince of Orange...against the proclamation and edict, published by the King of Spaine*, tr. Pierre Loyseleur (London, 1584).

rise of Spain.⁵⁶ The ambassadors, however, did not identify the specific prints they engaged with, nor did they detail many points within the text, suggesting that the ambassadors used the texts to survey broader sentiments rather than concrete sources of news or information that should be detailed to Philip II. Therefore, the ambassadors could use prints to understand popular sentiment towards Spain and the conflict, as the English populace seemingly held distinct influence in the revolt.

For Mendoza, public texts remained relevant in his endeavours to understand English support of the rebels. In January 1583, he detailed that ‘I have understood that most of the Flemish heretics here claim to be dealing with Alençon [Anjou] by [William of] Orange’, and that Mendoza had made efforts to see to it that ‘they don’t publish here, as they first write in Antwerp and other places’.⁵⁷ The Dutch that had come to England claiming to represent Orange hoped to negotiate with the French, and were bringing in prints from Antwerp that served their endeavours. Understanding their threat, Mendoza hoped to curb any potential foreign publications from circulating in England as it could promote anti-Spanish sentiment. Yet, despite recognising that the Dutch in England could pose a threat due to their political and religious beliefs, if the Dutch remained loyal Catholics and subjects to Philip II then Mendoza believed they could be of use.

Mendoza’s contact with the Dutch communities thus marks a departure from his already established information communities, demonstrating the difficulties and malleability of diplomatic cooperation when national and religious allegiances were intertwined or muddled.

⁵⁶ Alastair J. L. Blanshard and Tracey A. Sowerby, ‘Thomas Wilson’s Demosthenes and the Politics of Tudor Translation’, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 12/1 (2005): pp. 46-80.

⁵⁷ ‘yo por haber entendido que los más herejes flamencos que están aquí dicen ser trato del de Orange con Alanzon’; ‘para que no sólo lo publiquen aquí, primero escriban en Amberes y otras partes’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 469.

In May 1581, he detailed that Arnold Burcaut and Henry Court, men who had previously done business with the Dutch rebels at sea, now wished to serve Philip because they had yet to be paid by Dutch forces. Burcaut, described as a lawyer in Antwerp, was thus put into contact with Parma and offered his intelligence regarding the revolt.⁵⁸ Mendoza notified Parma of this, ‘telling him that of what I could judge in the Low Countries with what happened, it seemed to me to be a matter of great consideration’.⁵⁹ His contact with figures such as Burcaut, however, were not unique as Mendoza often mentioned receiving information from contacts in the Low Countries, though he rarely identified them. For instance, later that month, Mendoza reported that ‘I have written to Flanders’ with the help of a wheat seller.⁶⁰ Eventually, as in July 1583, Mendoza described his Dutch contacts in the Low Countries as only ‘people of intelligence [who] write to me from Holland’ informing him of political developments that had the potential to weaken the provinces.⁶¹

Crucially, as Mendoza was able to procure some information from contacts in the Low Countries, he was also able to use his connections to establish information communities with Dutchmen in England. In May 1581, Mendoza reported that by utilising financial resources procured by his informants in the Low Countries, ‘All this money has given me a vassal of Your Majesty here named Joos Vaverpe, born in Flanders...[he] assists me with everything that concerns this, which has been cause to write to Parma’.⁶² Vaverpe was meant to correspond with Parma particularly about attitudes towards Philip. It is unsurprising, however, that

⁵⁸ CODOIN, xcii, p. 3.

⁵⁹ ‘diciéndole que yo de lo que podía juzgar de las cosas de los Países-Bajos con lo que habia residido en ellos, me pareció negocio de gran consideracion’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 4.

⁶⁰ ‘he escripto á Flándes’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 30.

⁶¹ ‘Escribenme de Holanda personas de inteligencia’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 522.

⁶² ‘Todo este dinero me ha dado aquí un vasallo de V.M. que se llama Joos Vaverpe, nacido en el Condado de Flándes...asiste á todo lo que toca á esto, lo cual ha sido causa de escribir al Príncipe de Parma’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 8.

Mendoza's contacts had stemmed through financial considerations. Indeed, in October 1580, Mendoza had already seemed optimistic that English support of the Dutch rebels might cease, detailing how the 'Queen has pressed the state rebels in Flanders to repay the principal loans that she has made...[otherwise] they would be forced to surrender to Your Majesty'.⁶³ Mendoza stated that this had caused the rebels to pay back much of the loan's interest, but had yet to pay off the actual loan. As Burcaut and Vaverpe's loyalty to Spanish interests seemingly came from concerns over their pay, Mendoza's contacts elucidate the financial factors of the revolt and how it could be the key to Spanish success. However, it also showcases how the exchange of information could be transactional, and falter if not properly bought. This ultimately prompted extensive engagement with merchant communities, that while valuable, also highlights how the ambassadors cultivated relationships with only select individuals, thus potentially skewing the information they received.

By the late 1560s, conflict between England and Spain had already increasingly taken to the sea, with Spain outraged by English piracy and England concerned for English sailors who had been arrested by the Spanish Inquisition.⁶⁴ Alba retaliated by seizing English goods in the Low Countries, and Elizabeth soon followed suit with Spanish goods in England.⁶⁵ Therefore, economic struggles became a proxy for engagement in the revolt. The ambassadors thus monitored English piracy and these economic disputes closely within the context of the revolt, understanding that financial resources were a determining factor in English engagement in the Low Countries. Throughout 1569, Spes voiced concern to Alba that money sent to Flanders from Spain to help pay the mercenary army suppressing the revolt was vulnerable

⁶³ 'Reina ha apretado á los Estados rebeldes en Flándes la pagasen el principal de los empréstitos que ha hecho... les sería fuerza entregarse á V.M.': CODOIN, xci, p. 520.

⁶⁴ Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 81.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

because ‘of the French and English, that together stole from all the ships’.⁶⁶ Spes, reminding Philip that Alba had already written to him to come to a quick resolution, detailed English confidence on the matter, explaining in April that those in the council ‘believe that even without a war, they [the English] will keep this great wealth that they have already stolen’.⁶⁷ For Spes, the English were arrogant about their affairs in the Low Countries, writing to Philip in June 1571 that ‘they think that the State of Flanders is already theirs’ due to their financial gains.⁶⁸ In 1573, even Alba had begun to repeatedly ask Philip for more money to deal with the revolt, writing that ‘I dare to beg Your Majesty to quickly provide this’.⁶⁹ The question of financial resources and weaknesses could ultimately sway the result of the revolt and the balance of power in Europe.

The financial devastation of the revolt was well known, as the ambassadors detailed and circulated information on English and Spanish retaliation. Mendoza reported to Philip in October 1581 that Alba successfully seized English assets in Antwerp due to insider information.⁷⁰ Meeting with the English, Mendoza asserted that Elizabeth could not complain and ‘that if she did not return that of [Francis] Drake, undoubtedly she believed that Your Majesty would order the arrest of all English goods in your Kingdoms to satisfy your subjects’.⁷¹ Mendoza thus viewed Alba’s retaliation as a just response to English piracy, as he explained that after everything Francis Drake had taken from the Spanish, Elizabeth and her government should not protest Alba’s seizure of English ships. However, this would only continue to erode

⁶⁶ ‘franceses é ingleses, que juntos por allí robaban todas las naves’: CODOIN, xc, p. 178.

⁶⁷ ‘piensan que aunque no haya rompimiento de guerra, se quedarán con esta grande riqueza que particularmente han ya robado’: CODOIN, xc, pp. 217-18.

⁶⁸ ‘piensan ya que los Estados de Flándes han de ser suyos’: CODOIN, xc, p. 476.

⁶⁹ ‘me atrevere a supplicar a V.M. que con toda brevedad provea esto’: AGS Estado 8335, fo. 5r.

⁷⁰ CODOIN, xcii, p. 3.

⁷¹ ‘que si no hacía restituir lo de Drake, indubitadamente creia que V.M. mandaria arrestar todos los bienes de ingleses que se hallasen en sus Reinos para satisfacer á sus súbditos’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 162.

England and Spain's previously fruitful economic trade. Additionally, Mendoza also hinted that Elizabeth was aware of the pressure Philip's subjects had placed on him to seize all English resources.

Merchant communities were thus especially useful in understanding English piracy and how English forces attempted to gather further economic resources. In turn, the merchants hoped that the ambassadors might alleviate their concerns, demonstrating how these communities were willing to share information with the ambassadors only if they deemed the relationship to be mutually beneficial. As the mercantile disputes grew, Spes was pressured by merchants angered by the piracy to advocate their concerns. In April 1569, Spanish merchants had requested Philip's help to resolve the piracy, writing to Spes that Elizabeth seemingly did not want to settle the matter with Spes, 'but this business gets worse each day, causing great harm and inconvenience to Your Majesty's service'.⁷² Therefore, the merchants used Spes as a mouthpiece to voice their concerns and frustrations to Philip. This dynamic thus demonstrates the various ways in which the ambassador could engage with merchants, and how these relationships were opportunistic for both parties.

Merchants also engaged directly with Alba in order to get Philip's attention. As Alba explained to Spes in December 1571 that 'an English merchant has arrived here [in Brussels] with great diligence with a bundle [of documents] from the Queen with two letters, one for His Majesty [Philip II] and the other for me'.⁷³ Alba informed his representatives that many pirates would steal from Philip and his ships, but while 'they come in part from the pirate rebels of

⁷² 'lo serán para que este negocio vaya cada día de mal en peor, de lo cual seguirían muy grandes daños é inconvenientes al servicio de V.M.': CODOIN, xc, p. 225.

⁷³ 'ha llegado aquí un mercader inglés por la posta en gran diligencia con un pliego de la Reina en que había dos cartas, una para S.M. con su copia y otra para mí': CODOIN, xc, p. 540.

Flanders, the total force is English, done so as to not break into war'.⁷⁴ It is thus understandable, given the economic conflicts behind the revolt and English engagement, that Mendoza was ultimately able to cultivate connections with Dutchmen in both the Low Countries and England that were disgruntled by lack of pay. Allies like Vaverpe and those sympathetic to Spain, however, were only a subset of Dutchmen living in England, revealing the fragility of Mendoza's information communities and how he had to continually assess whether he and his contacts shared religious or political agendas.

It is important to note that while some Dutchmen in England were loyal to Habsburg rule, others were Protestant exiles. Thus, while little is known of Mendoza's contacts such as Burcaut or Vaverpe, the Spanish ambassadors likely relied nearly exclusively on economic factors to formulate Dutch information communities as religious and national considerations often put them at odds with those from the Low Countries. Early modern authors framed exile primarily as a religious matter as persecution became intertwined with Protestant discourses and had been a cornerstone of Protestant identity since the 1560s.⁷⁵ As Philip took action in the Low Countries, Silva became suspicious of Dutch rebels fleeing to England for safety. Shortly thereafter, Silva reported that

The heretics are displeased at seeing the great successes in the States of Flanders; so they always come here [to England] fearing the punishment that they believed the Duchess of Parma will inflict upon them, understanding the valour and prudence she has shown in these matters.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ 'valiendose en parte de los pyratas rebeldes de Flandes aunque toda la fuerça esta en los Ingleses, de manera que sin romper guerra': AGS Estado 825, fo. 15r.

⁷⁵ Jane Dawson, "'Satan's bludy clawes": How Religious Persecution, Exile and Radicalisation Moulded British Protestant Identities', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 71/3 (2018), p. 285.

⁷⁶ 'Muy grandes desplaceres han tenido estos herejes de haber visto los buenos sucesos de los Estados de Flándes; siempre se viene aquí gente huyendo dellos temiendo el castigo y lo que piensan que hará la Duquesa de Parma acerca dello, sintiendo mucho el valor y prudencia que ha mostrado en estos negocios': CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 480.

To Silva, England served as a place of political and religious refuge for Dutch rebels, therefore, Dutch contacts had to be vetted and support Spain if they were to be trusted.

While recent Dutch refugees to England were largely anti-Spanish, London had an established community of Catholic Dutch merchants that were loyal to the Spanish crown and disgruntled by the guild trades of London limiting their economic prosperity. The English government thus sought to limit the number of Dutch entering England from the early 1570s in the interest of national security.⁷⁷ Though mercantile ties between England and the Low Countries had experienced previous difficulties, an established and mutually beneficial wool trade persevered. However, the 1560s saw a series of ruptures in their economic ties that threatened to damage their political relations.⁷⁸ As Antwerp closed to English business, England had also seen a considerable reduction in their second best export market, Spain, as the international situation of Alba's attempted suppression of the Dutch rebels and the French Huguenot struggle complicated issues.⁷⁹ Merchants in London and the Low Countries were thus irredeemably harmed by the political arena, providing Mendoza with an opportunity to form working relationships with merchants and traders exhausted by the conflict and willing to cooperate with the ambassador for pay. It was thus paramount that Mendoza be able to trust his informants and accurately assess their interests if he was able to gather relevant information.

Like any diplomatic contacts, however, Mendoza's sources were vulnerable. For instance, he noted in June 1581 that one of his Dutch informants had been discovered and that 'it is a great thing that people [of the representatives of Orange] were not willing to be found to

⁷⁷ Lien Bich Luu, "'Taking the Bread out of our Mouths': Xenophobia in Early Modern London", *Immigrants and Minorities*, 19 (2000), p. 10.

⁷⁸ George Daniel Ramsay, *The Queen's Merchants and the Revolt of the Netherlands: The End of the Antwerp Mart* (Manchester, 1986), p. 31.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116; See George Daniel Ramsay, *The City of London in International Politics at the Accession of Elizabeth Tudor* (Manchester, 1975).

execute him'.⁸⁰ This vulnerability was also true of his Dutch contacts in England, inhibiting Mendoza's ability to establish a sense of trust with these figures. For example, in June 1581 Mendoza detailed an altercation at his residence. He explained that the secretary of the Prince of Orange, along with some of his guards and two constables,

arrived at my door while I was at the French Ambassador's residence and between four or six of my servants, and a woman guarding the son of the Dutchman (who is 11 years old), one of the Constables took him...my servants began to argue with them when I arrived, and seeing the uproar and how they [the constables] claimed to be the Secretary of [William of] Orange...I did not allow further disorder, believing that it had been agreed upon between [Francis] Walsingham and Orange.⁸¹

Here Mendoza described how a Dutchman's son being kept at Mendoza's residence had been taken by some constables supposedly reporting to the Prince of Orange despite the protest of several of Mendoza's servants and a woman looking after the boy. Mendoza attempted to halt the disagreements, but the boy was taken in what Mendoza believed to be a joint venture between Francis Walsingham and the Prince of Orange. This episode highlights Mendoza's relationship with his Dutch informants, as he even allowed one Dutchman to have his son stay at Mendoza's residence for his safety, since the father might be in danger. There was therefore a sense of trust and collaboration between Mendoza and the Dutch contact he hoped to help. However, this dynamic quickly changed, demonstrating the difficulties Mendoza faced in attempting to formulate diplomatic relationships with the Dutch in England against a backdrop of muddled religious, economic, and political interests.

⁸⁰ 'ser una gran cosa que la gente no estuviese apercebida para hallarse á ejectuarle': CODOIN, xcii, p. 44.

⁸¹ 'llegaron á la puerta de mi posada estando yo en casa del Embajador de Francia, y entre cuatro ó seis criados míos y una mujer que guardaba el hijo del holandés, que era de once años, le tomó uno de los Condestables...en esta sazón que mis criados empezaban á porfiar con ellos acerté yo á llegar, y viendo el alboroto y que decían ser Secretario del Orange...no dí lugar á que hubiese ninguna desórden, juzgando que era cosa acordada con el Walsingham y el de Orange': CODOIN, xcii, p. 45.

Mendoza went on to meet with the council to discuss the incident, and while Mendoza voiced his disdain to Philip that he believed the English had interfered with his residence and contacts, he also admitted that the Dutch he was aiding were not loyal to the Spanish cause.

Mendoza asserted:

there was no place more secure for the Dutchman's son than in my residence, with only the Queen's arm being able to remove him, and I can definitely certify to Your Majesty that when the Dutch left here, when they left the boy in my hands, they proceeded well, but later they were heretics and changed their purpose, revealing themselves to others.⁸²

This altercation elucidates the difficulty of assessing the allegiances and loyalty of one's informants. Though Mendoza assured Philip that while the Dutch were present in England they had served Mendoza well, Mendoza subsequently revealed that the Dutch were heretics and disclosed their ill wishes to others. Mendoza's experience therefore brings into question his ability to distinguish those committed to Spanish suppression of the revolt or Catholic goals, from those Dutchmen who cultivated contact with Mendoza for their own purposes.

Ultimately, Mendoza's contact with Dutchmen in both the Low Countries and England was opportunistic, largely stemming from the economic disputes that had made the Dutch exhausted of the revolt and thus willing to serve Spanish interests. While these economic factors helped, Mendoza widened his information circle and shifted his diplomatic practice accordingly, inadvertently skewing the information he received as his contacts were largely Dutch merchants. Therefore, in the context of the Dutch revolt, the Spanish ambassadors were able to use informal information sources beyond court environments to understand perceptions of Philip and the economic foundation of English involvement. The difficulties of assessing

⁸² 'yo en este particular no he podido tener con más seguridad al hijo del holandés que en mi posada, de la cual sino fuera con el brazo de la Reina no le sacaran della, y aseguradamente puedo certificar á V.M. que hasta el partir de aquí los holandeses, cuando me dejaron el muchado en las manos procedian bien, pero despues el ser herejes los haria mudar de propósito, descubiéndose á otros': CODOIN, xcii, p. 46.

their contacts' allegiances and the basis of their Dutch information communities thus raise questions about the merits of diplomatic relationships formulated on more temporary considerations such as pay compared to enduring confessional or political beliefs.

The English Embassy in the Revolt

While the ambassadors modified their information gathering strategies as a result of the revolt, the conflict also revealed their individual priorities and situated their English embassies within the context of broader Iberian political and religious concerns. Ultimately, each of the Spanish ambassadors in England were fearful of the confessional and political alliances the revolt could inspire against Philip's empire, demonstrating their understandings of confessional and cross-confessional diplomatic relations across Europe. These concerns, and the place of England in Spanish diplomatic networks, thus had a practical effect on the ambassadors' actions and intelligence gathering strategies. England's confessionally driven support of the Protestant Dutch rebels, and France's political coalition against Spain were both major risks to Spain's suppression of the conflict, and the ambassadors' concerns elucidate their understandings of the power balance in Europe and the vulnerability of Philip's authority. As such, Silva and Spes each believed the revolt threatened Catholicism. As several ambassadors demonstrated a belief in a universal Catholic cause, they sought to protect Catholic communities in England, and thus were similarly concerned about the well-being of English recusant communities in the Netherlands. The iconoclastic riots throughout the revolt had also showcased the religious dimensions of the conflict and the Protestant-Catholic dichotomy in the Low Countries.

Silva feared the revolt's potential impact on Catholicism, and linked the revolt to religious struggles in England. Silva recognised that due to the religious elements of the revolt

and the iconoclastic riots, English Catholics took a specific interest in Spanish suppression. In January 1567, Silva wrote that English Catholics were pleased with how Margaret of Parma had broken up rebel forces.⁸³ Additionally, Silva feared that English Protestants looked to the revolt in the Low Countries as a source of encouragement, therefore he corresponded with Catholic communities about the revolt to champion Spanish suppression as a religious cause. Silva wrote in March 1567, ‘the Catholics are as happy and content as they are sad’ as they rejoiced at some of Margaret of Parma’s victories, but were largely saddened by the continuation of the conflict.⁸⁴ As Philip’s commitment to going to the Low Countries seemed to wane, Silva wrote in May 1567 that

The entrance of the Duchess of Parma in Antwerp, and the great successes that God has given those States, has given great displeasure to the evil heretics, and great contentment and hope to the Catholics...with the arrival of Your Majesty....their spirits are up.⁸⁵

Therefore, just as the ambassadors had done in detailing the plight of Catholics in England and Mary, Queen of Scots, Silva portrayed the revolt as a religious struggle with intrinsic value to the Catholic cause and pursued a confessionally driven mode of diplomacy in encouraging Philip to further engage with the Catholic population in the Low Countries.

Spes also feared that shared confessional beliefs might inspire Protestant networks in England and Europe to support the rebels in the Low Countries financially, demonstrating the prevalence of confessional ties in his approach to international political conflicts. In January 1570, Spes reported that Cardinal Chatillon, Odet de Coligny, ‘has personally gone through the Protestant churches in France to ask for help’ and Spes feared that from what ‘I understand that

⁸³ CODOIN, lxxxix, pp. 426-7.

⁸⁴ ‘los católicos están tan alegres y contentos, cuanto ellos tristes’: CODOIN, lxxxix, p. 463.

⁸⁵ ‘La entrada de la Duquesa de Parma en Amberes, y los buenos sucesos que Dios ha dado en aquellos Estados, ha dado gran desgusto á los malos herejes, y gran contentamiento y esperanza á los católicos...que con la venida de V.M...y así tienen levantados los ánimos’: CODOIN, lxxxix, 478.

some Flemings expect that the Low Countries will secretly receive much from this effort'.⁸⁶ Here, the French monarch offering overt financial resources was not a concern, despite the ongoing Anjou negotiations often bringing the question of French aid into the matter. Rather, Spes was focused on the activities of Coligny travelling through Protestant spaces and networks in France to gain further resources for the revolt. By this point a Calvinist convert, Coligny was closely connected to the leaders of the Huguenots, and thus worryingly might convince the French Huguenots to join the Dutch rebels. Carrying a letter from Orange as an indicator of his legitimacy, the Low Countries were assured this support, though Spes needed to 'see if I can discover who in the Low Country will give this promised help'.⁸⁷ Therefore, regardless of England's potential place on the periphery of these communication networks, Spes hoped to further engage with European networks to monitor more informal Protestant networks that operated behind official government policy or action.

As the revolt went on, the ambassadors became increasingly fearful of international coalitions against Spain, whether they were formed on religious or political grounds. To England, the fear that Philip sought complete dominion over the Low Countries, with total religious and political control, could therefore be seen as a precursor to his international ambitions to create a universal monarchy, making the revolt a concern to other European powers.⁸⁸ The Spanish empire, however, also had financial weaknesses. Philip had to consider the revolt against the defence of the Mediterranean, as both served as serious financial burdens. Eventually, Philip found himself unable to provide the army of Flanders with sufficient funds,

⁸⁶ 'personalmente ha ido estos días por las iglesias de los protestantes franceses á pedir socorro'; 'y entiendo que algunos flamencos pretenden que de los países-Bajos secretamente sacarán mucha cantidad para este efecto': CODOIN, xc, p. 332.

⁸⁷ 'yo tengo ojo á ver si podré descubrir quien serán los del país-Bajo que darán el dicho socorro': CODOIN, xc, p. 332.

⁸⁸ Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt*, pp. 33-4.

having prioritised the Mediterranean.⁸⁹ The ambassadors ultimately feared that the Dutch could procure the necessary support to fight Spanish rule, posing as a catastrophic loss to the Spanish European empire, especially as it was believed that the nature of opposition to Alba's authority would stem from those in exile or by foreign invasion.⁹⁰ Tensions between England and Spain over the revolt were thus increasing, and stretched the financial resources of Philip's empire as victory could not seem completely assured.

While the conflict carried strong religious undertones, with some like Leicester committed to an international Protestant cause, there was still a possibility for a cross-confessional Anglo-French coalition against Spain. This potential collaboration thus mirrored the ambassadors own conduct at court, as they formed information communities with their co-religionists, but also based some relationships on shared political goals as they occasionally communicated with Protestant English councillors. Their fears, therefore, showcase the entanglement of confessional considerations and cross-confessional diplomacy in broader European conflicts. Additionally, the Dutch rebels' possible alliance with French Huguenots created concern of growing French influence in the region, particularly as Orange seemed hopeful of a French military invasion into the Low Countries in 1572.⁹¹ Yet, as England weighed their own engagement, they remained mindful of their religious and political relationship to the French, hoping to also prevent their overwhelming power base in Europe and the Low Countries. Thus, Anglo-French political relations became a key concern for the ambassador and underlined England's impact on the revolt.

⁸⁹ Parker, *Army of Flanders*, p. 234.

⁹⁰ Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, p. 118.

⁹¹ Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 87.

These fears eventually became increasingly evident in the Elizabethan marriage negotiations with Anjou as the latter brought discussions of the Dutch Revolt into political forums the Spanish ambassador could not access. The Spanish ambassadors in England ultimately needed to observe ongoing marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and Anjou, as the issue of French and English intervention in the Low Countries became intrinsically linked with the potential marriage. More than a simple annoyance to the Spanish ambassador denied access to Elizabeth, these negotiations worryingly created the impression of a strong Anglo-French alliance that could potentially counteract Spain. Anjou's intervention in the conflict would undoubtedly increase English presence in the Netherlands, and thus in 1578 Elizabeth had a mercenary army led to Brabant by John Casimir.⁹² Mendoza was aware of the practical realities of the conflict and a coalition against Spain, and thus tracked any financial negotiations between England and France. He told Philip in June 1581 that the King of France would always need money in order to invade the Low Countries, so Elizabeth offered £500,000 in support if such plans came to fruition.⁹³ Mendoza, however, did not believe that Elizabeth made a genuine offering, rather 'although they are fake words, [they] would move Alençon [Anjou] to hope to take advantage of them by coming to ask [for this support]'.⁹⁴ To Mendoza, Elizabeth manipulated Anjou and France's desires for support in the Dutch Revolt through empty promises, as she and Mendoza recognised the material shortcomings of France to intervene alone.

Ultimately, the Spanish ambassadors in England needed to understand the likelihood and nature of international involvement in the Dutch Revolt, considering both England's

⁹² Limm, *Dutch Revolt*, p. 50.

⁹³ CODOIN, xcii, p. 43.

⁹⁴ 'aunque son palabras que dice con artificio, moverian á Alanzon para esperar sacar fructo dellas viniendo á pedir las': CODOIN, xcii, p. 43.

confessional ties and France's political concerns in their assessment of this threat. While Elizabeth seemed adamant that the revolt appeared just, English engagement was indirect, through volunteer forces and piracy, creating new venues for the conflict that saw England diminish Spanish resources without declaring war. This indirect control of the revolt also influenced the Anjou marriage negotiations. While the marriage never occurred, the negotiations were continuously linked to a potential Anglo-French alliance that would aid the rebels and harm Philip's empire. The ambassadors' concerns, both religious and political, and the information they sought out ultimately contextualise the English embassy within the Dutch Revolt. The ambassadors' concerns and anxieties mirrored the larger religious and political developments of the sixteenth century and thus, the ambassadors attempted to bring their embassies into conversation with new relevant information networks. While the religious and political foundations of English engagement have been largely approached through studies of Elizabethan policy and European power dynamics, the ambassadors' fears and diplomatic response ultimately shed new light on Spanish diplomacy and the ambassadors' understandings of the Dutch Revolt.

Conclusion

The Dutch Revolt ultimately provides insight into the adaptability of ambassadorial conduct and the Spanish ambassadors' evolving efforts to understand the political, religious, and economic implications of a conflict spanning decades. The revolt served as a unique challenge, as Habsburg rule of the Low Countries faltered, creating an ever-fluctuating uncertainty and anxiety within Iberian networks. The Spanish ambassadors' correspondence demonstrates the extent to which contacts could be inherited between embassies as Silva's success within court

was not repeated by his successors. The ambassadors' subsequent efforts to gather information widened their contacts and sources, turning to prints and Dutch communities and thus creating a non-diplomatic information network. While these contacts help elucidate the importance of popular perception and the economic dynamics behind the revolt, as they procured and actualised support of the rebels respectively, it also reveals the complexity of augmenting one's intelligence gathering strategies. Crisis altered their information networks, and the ambassadors' efforts highlight the importance of their sociability and the circulation of diplomatic dispatches, as showcased in Part I, to their ability to gather information. By relying on Dutchmen, usually merchants, disgruntled by their own economic difficulties, Mendoza had adopted new diplomatic strategies. However, these contacts were highly vulnerable, and their support of Spanish interests was not enduring but opportunistic.

Political interests, financial considerations, religious concerns, and national identities were thus considered in tandem when identifying information sources. Within the context of international crisis, these factors could prove to be an unsurmountable challenge for the ambassadors as they struggled to gather information or exert political influence. These considerations, however difficult, demonstrate that in practice, the ambassadors attempted to form information communities based on far more topical and malleable overlapping interests than have previously been considered. While the role of religion and confessional diplomacy cannot be understated, their reactions to the Dutch Revolt demonstrate that it would be simplistic to understand religion as their only concern during their embassies. Similarly, though the importance of England in the Dutch Revolt has been established by the diplomatic preparation of Philip's ambassadors and the wealth of scholarly works on Elizabeth's indirect intervention, the Spanish ambassadors' efforts in England reveal their embassies' place within

Habsburg communication. Their engagement with news networks from England, despite the undesirability of their posting, provides new insight into the circulation of information in the early modern world. Additionally, their concerns elucidate the potential vulnerability of Habsburg authority and the diplomatic efforts to combat this across Europe. Ultimately, the Netherlands were an important part of Spanish diplomatic networks and a crucial source of instruction, making the Dutch Revolt and ambassadors' responses an invaluable opportunity to examine early modern Spanish diplomacy in practice, and locate the English embassy within Spanish religious and political concerns.

Chapter 7: Bernardino de Mendoza's Response to the Portuguese Succession Crisis

Before his expulsion from England in 1584, Bernardino de Mendoza's embassy marked a tumultuous period of Anglo-Spanish relations, made only more difficult by the Portuguese Succession Crisis of 1580 and the challenge of Dom António. Unable to reflect upon any prior diplomatic experience in Portugal or the knowledge of his predecessors in England, the crisis suddenly placed the English embassy in conversation with larger Iberian networks beyond northern Europe, demonstrating how Mendoza could quickly adapt his diplomatic strategy and attempt to protect Spanish interests from England amidst a new political power struggle. This chapter will thus examine a previously unexplored episode in Anglo-Spanish relations to showcase how a challenger to Philip altered diplomatic strategy in England and throughout Europe. It will examine Mendoza's international and non-diplomatic information contacts to demonstrate how information circulated beyond court environments and Mendoza's adaptability to an acute crisis. Already of concern during the Dutch Revolt, this chapter will illuminate Mendoza's fears of international support against Philip to highlight the perceived vulnerability of Philip's empire and help situate Mendoza's English embassy within European power struggles and networks.

Challenging the Iberian Union

In 1578, King Sebastian of Portugal was unexpectedly killed in a battle in Morocco, leaving the Portuguese Crown to the elderly Cardinal Dom Henrique. Before his death in 1580, the Cardinal King had not appointed an heir, and his brief reign has been understood as an elderly man's attempt to resist Philip II's inevitable rule of Portugal.¹ Dom Henrique favoured the Duchess of

¹ Queiroz Velloso, *O Reinado do Cardeal D. Henrique* (Lisbon, 1946), p. 282.

Bragança, however the majority of the nobility had already been swayed by Philip's promises.² While Philip appeared to have both the strongest dynastic claim to Portugal and considerable support, the greatest challenger to Philip's Portuguese rule was Dom António, Prior of Crato, the illegitimate son of the Infante Luís. Even before Dom Henrique's death, Dom António attempted to assert his legitimacy in the hope of succeeding the throne. Dom António declared himself the Portuguese King in Santarém in June 1580, only to be defeated by the Duke of Alba in the battle of Alcântara shortly thereafter.³ Eventually, Philip II of Spain was crowned Philip I of Portugal by the Courts of Tomar (1581). Thus, the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns were brought together in the Iberian Union, a dynastic union that lasted until 1640. However, Dom António continued to present himself as a candidate for the Portuguese throne, sparking the Portuguese Succession Crisis. His enduring support in some circles thus highlights the heterogeneity of the Iberian empire.

As Dom António built a parallel European communication and support network to challenge Philip II's rule of Portugal, the consequences of this crisis were also felt in England, prompting Mendoza to reconfigure his diplomatic strategy between 1580 and 1583 in order to manage the crisis and receive information. This was only made more difficult by the broad geographical scope of the issue and the fact that Mendoza had never previously engaged with contacts in areas relevant to the crisis. Dom António had fled to the Azores Islands, where he was able to secure some local support, causing the islands to resist Spanish rule. They served as Dom António's primary base with French help until 1583, when they eventually withdrew

² Jacqueline Hermann, 'An Undesired King: Some Notes on the Political Trajectory of D. Antônio, Prior do Crato', *Revista Brasileira de História*, 30/59 (2010), p. 149.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

support after a series of defeats.⁴ While the Azores' resistance has been portrayed as an expression of Portuguese patriotism, Dom António's supporters later fled to avoid further violence.⁵ The evident international dimensions of Dom António's resistance necessitated that Philip's diplomatic agents correspond with sources throughout Europe to understand international political developments and circulate news.

The Iberian Union has been the subject of extensive historiographical discussion, encompassing broader discussions of empire, the governing organisations of early modern Spain and Portugal, and the nuances of Hispanic-Portuguese relations.⁶ While there has been an important turn from the nationalistic histories of the twentieth century that portrayed Portugal as a Spanish territory towards studies which recognise the importance of Portuguese local elites in Iberian politics, historians have yet to fully unravel how actors such as Mendoza addressed the heterogeneity of the Iberian empire in Europe.⁷ The Portuguese Succession Crisis and Mendoza's diplomatic response thus contribute to our understanding of early modern empire and diplomatic contact, especially within connected histories.⁸ How international communication networks responded to a potential challenge to Philip offer important insights into diplomatic practice, the prerogatives of Philip's ambassadors, and the networks underpinning Iberian authority.

⁴ Ruth Mackay, *The Baker who Pretended to be King of Portugal* (Chicago, 2012), p. 76; Jacqueline Hermann, 'Between Prophecy and Politics: The Return to Portugal of Dom Antônio, Prior of Crato, and the Early Years of the Iberian Union', in Ana Paula Torres and Luís Filipe Silvério Lima (eds), *Visions, Prophecies, and Divinations: Early Modern Messianism and Millenarianism in Iberian America, Spain, and Portugal* (Brill, 2016), p. 114.

⁵ Alberto Virgínio Baptista, *Os Açôres e o Governo do Rei d. António Prior do Crato, 1580-1583* (Barcelos, 1932), pp. 34, 61.

⁶ For an overview of the historiography of the succession crisis as it relates to Iberian global history, see Heather McTaggart, 'Dom António and the Early Modern Iberian World: Global Approaches to the Portuguese Succession Crisis of 1580', *History Compass*, 19/7 (2021), pp. 1-12.

⁷ Fernando Bouza, *Portugal no Tempo dos Filipes: Política, Cultura, Representações (1580-1668)* (Lisbon, 2000), pp. 21-2.

⁸ See Subrahmanyam, 'Holding the World in Balance'; Yun-Casalilla, *Iberian World Empires*.

Thus far, English historians such as David Quinn have approached the Dom António episode within the confines of early modern Anglo-Portuguese relations and foreign policy, giving little mention to how English involvement impacted Anglo-Spanish relations.⁹ Yet what Dom António represented in various international contexts elucidates Spanish diplomatic relations, the potential precariousness of Philip's rule in Europe, and the adaptability of diplomatic communication. Mendoza and other diplomats across Europe carefully monitored the crisis, however, scholarship has not yet addressed the international dimension of the Dom António episode or how Philip's networks mobilised against Dom António. It has also failed to introduce the interdisciplinary methodologies of the New Diplomatic History to this topic. From England, Mendoza utilised broader diplomatic networks to understand developments throughout European courts and attempted to gain local information from the Azores Islands, which had not previously proven to be significant to his embassy. Ultimately, intelligence gathered by Mendoza in England had serious ramifications for how Philip's government might understand an international attempt to undermine his rule, and thus the diplomatic context of this episode provides new perspectives on early modern European geopolitics.

Dom António's strategy of negotiating with Spain's enemies also affected Mendoza's use of information networks, and prompts new questions about the allegiance of Iberian networks. Mendoza's reactions to Dom António's political trajectory subsequently indicate the heterogeneity of Iberian actors across Europe as he had to determine which Iberians to rely upon for information. Therefore, Mendoza's ambassadorial conduct, new communication strategies, and the individuals he utilised for intelligence gathering offer new insights on how information circulated in the early modern world, and how European geopolitics influenced Anglo-Spanish

⁹ Quinn, *England and the Azores*.

relations. The crisis ultimately illustrates the dynamism of Mendoza's embassy, the entanglement of diplomatic and non-diplomatic intelligence networks, and the ambiguities of Iberian interests after Philip's annexation of Portugal.

International Support and the Vulnerability of Philip II's Portuguese Rule

To procure support against Philip, Dom António appealed to numerous local and international political figures potentially interested in undermining Philip's Iberian empire. While it is clear that Dom António was ultimately unsuccessful, as he did not secure a grand international coalition against Philip that awarded him the Portuguese throne, it should not be assumed that Mendoza was confident in Philip's success. Rather, Mendoza's anxiety towards France and England's political stance highlights the perceived weakness of Philip's empire and Habsburg authority, thus situating the crisis within broader political struggles. Initially, Dom António was unable to assert his legitimacy and claim to the Portuguese throne, and in December 1578, was ordered to leave the Portuguese court by King Cardinal Dom Henrique. However, he could still threaten Philip's rule by diminishing his power base in Portugal, and supporting specific anti-Habsburg initiatives, already of grave concern given the ongoing Dutch Revolt. Worryingly, there was the understanding that 'he was very well loved' within some Portuguese circles.¹⁰ There were also other international candidates for the Portuguese throne, including Catherine de' Medici, demonstrating the complexity of the succession issue and the presence of wider anti-Habsburg sentiments across Europe. Therefore, Philip's agents had to monitor potential threats and understand an increasingly complicated and heterogeneous Iberian conglomerate.

¹⁰ 'Ihe era mui amado': ANTT Manuscritos da Livraria 1147, fo. 59r.

Mendoza, ultimately, was aware of the vulnerability of Philip's newly established rule and feared that surrounding debates on Philip's right to the Portuguese throne meant that his rule rested on the relative acceptance of the Portuguese themselves.¹¹ While the nationalism underpinning Portuguese scholarship has neglected Philip's need to cultivate support, Pedro Cardim has highlighted Philip's efforts to appease Portuguese elites dissatisfied with being brought into his increasingly heterogeneous empire.¹² Cardim's argument that Philip attempted to create the notion that he had 'won Portugal' by conquest, inheritance, and negotiation is corroborated by the propagandistic images released at the time.¹³ Additionally, Philip lacked the support of some of the Portuguese clergy, who took no uniform position.¹⁴ A public speech in 1579 even declared Philip a pretend king, and interestingly, noted that 'the people are in charge' of such matters.¹⁵ To earn support, Philip awarded titles to local elites, amidst other promises, to create a loyal nobility, not unlike the pensions he had given English nobles when establishing a pro-Spanish faction in England during his marriage to Mary I.¹⁶ For example, in a letter written in May 1580, Philip offered Portuguese noble Francisco de Resende several favours only once the kingdoms were justly joined together.¹⁷ Philip's Portuguese rule thus relied upon specific political actors in Portugal. These connections would eventually create new diplomatic networks for Mendoza to call upon as he assessed threats to Philip.

¹¹ See Bouza, *Portugal no Tempo dos Filipes*.

¹² Pedro Cardim, 'Portugal's Elites and the Status of the Kingdom of Portugal within the Spanish Monarchy', in Robert von Friedeburg and John Morrill (eds), *Monarchy Transformed: Princes and their Elites in Early Modern Western Europe* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 213.

¹³ Pedro Cardim, *Portugal y la Monarquía Hispánica (ca. 1550-ca. 1715)* (Madrid, 2017), p. 43; Bouza, *Felipe II Y el Portugal Dos Povos*, p. 15.

¹⁴ José Pedro Paiva, 'Bishops and Politics: The Portuguese Episcopacy during the Dynastic Crisis of 1580', *e-Journal of Portuguese History*, 4/2 (2006), p. 2.

¹⁵ 'o Povo a seu cargo', ANTT Manuscritos da Livraria 1147, fo. 64r.

¹⁶ See Loades, 'Philip II and the Government of England', pp. 177-94.

¹⁷ ANTT Manuscritos da Livraria 1147, fo. 61r.

Dom António corresponded with various European powers, especially France, and dispatched a network of envoys throughout Europe, challenging Mendoza to understand how the crisis unfolded in relation to the Dutch Revolt and ongoing power struggles in Europe. It has been accepted that England and France, as enemies of Spain, supported Dom António's claim if only to prevent Philip from consolidating more power in Europe, increasing the international dynamics of the crisis. Information regarding his support and political trajectory spread internationally and reached Mendoza both via official diplomatic actors, and informal communication channels.¹⁸ Additionally, it demonstrates the difficulties of early modern communication and correspondence as various sources in Mendoza's intelligence network only presented partial information, forcing Mendoza to attempt to reconcile disparate data to reconstruct Dom António's network and strategy.

Mendoza's embassy was only further complicated by the rebellions in the Low Countries, as he recognised that threats against the Spanish empire worked in tandem, and thus French support of both Dom António and the Dutch rebels was a serious concern. In February 1582, Mendoza reported that Dom António had been trying to coordinate having armed ships leave from the Low Countries to plunder Spanish ships in his name, thus demonstrating how Dom António could capitalise on the conflict in the Low Countries.¹⁹ While tensions between England and Spain grew, due to prior diplomatic strife and seizures of Spanish ships, Philip's primary concerns were Portugal and the Low Countries throughout the 1570s, and thus he ignored papal proposals to launch a crusade against England.²⁰ It is clear from the breadth of material in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the non-existent requests for further

¹⁸ See Chapter 3 for a discussion on the representatives sent to England by Dom António and Mendoza's challenges to their diplomatic legitimacy and status.

¹⁹ CODOIN, xcii, p. 289.

²⁰ J. Lynch, 'Philip II and the Papacy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 11 (1961), p. 36.

correspondence, that Philip wrote to his ambassador in Paris, Juan de Vargas, in the 1570s far more consistently than to his ambassadors in England.²¹ This corroborates the notion that the embassy he sent to France might have been his greater concern, as he exhorted Vargas to preserve friendship with France despite his concerns about them aiding the Dutch rebels.²² Recognised as a relevant actor in this issue, Vargas was duly instructed to provide Mendoza with intelligence.²³ The Spanish embassy in France was therefore a key information haven due to French involvement in the crises of the Spanish empire, and Mendoza needed to monitor French intelligence reports carefully if he were to contribute to the spread of news across Iberian networks, especially as he received little correspondence from Philip himself.

French involvement in the Dom António issue was a key political concern for diplomatic agents throughout Europe. The Venetian ambassador in Paris, Lorenzo Priuli, reported that Catherine de' Medici had dismissed the current royal Portuguese family as illegitimate, proclaimed herself heir, and appointed the Bishop of Comminges to argue her case.²⁴ After Dom António was defeated, Catherine welcomed his envoy in France, and declared to a Spanish witness that 'she reserved the right to defend her claim to the Portuguese crown, which Philip had usurped'.²⁵ This public remark may be interpreted as a direct threat, presenting France as another challenger to Philip's Portuguese rule. Other ambassadorial accounts also noted that French involvement in the succession issue was linked to their involvement in the Low Countries, and an extension of growing animosity towards Spain. In August 1582, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, an Imperial ambassador, wrote that after a defeat against Dom António,

²¹ The relevant correspondence can be found in BNF Manuscrits Espagnol.

²² BNF Manuscrits Espagnol 132, fo. 7r-v.

²³ BNF Manuscrits Espagnol 132, fo. 14r-v.

²⁴ Robert J. Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici* (New York, 1998), p. 207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

the French ‘will hurry with redoubled zeal into the Netherlands – whether to avenge their countrymen’s fall or share it, God only knows’.²⁶ As Dom António reportedly returned to France in January 1583, Busbecq noted that he had been meeting with Catherine de’ Medici, and that the French, exasperated by the conflict, were ‘against the Spaniards’ and ‘eagerly...desire war’.²⁷ Therefore, diplomats observing courtly interactions were a key method of gathering and spreading intelligence across Europe, and information given in these public environments could be widely disseminated.

Given Spain’s vulnerability due to the Dutch Revolt and the importance of French involvement, Mendoza closely monitored the intelligence reports coming from the English ambassador to France, Henry Cobham, to track Dom António’s French support. France even advertised their potential backing of Dom António to Philip and the rest of Europe with public news in 1581 stating ‘that Dom António was alive and safe’.²⁸ In February 1581, Mendoza noted that Cobham’s letters confirmed that Dom António was in France.²⁹ Mendoza explained that he understood things only ‘from the notices that Ambassador Cobham gives Elizabeth, referring to them by a person who sees the same letters, it is difficult for me to have other [letters/news] by other means’.³⁰ Cobham’s letters had also been shared with other members of court, as the Earl of Sussex also commented to William Cecil that ‘by letters from Sir Henry Cobham, it seemeth that the [French] King will do little in the causes of Portugal or the Low Countries before the conclusion of the marriage [negotiations between Elizabeth and Francis, the Duke of Anjou]’ and Dom António’s presence in France ‘would have to be kept secret,

²⁶ Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, ed. and tr. C.T. Forster and F.H.B. Daniell, (2 vols, London, 1881), ii, pp. 146-7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 161-2.

²⁸ ‘que Don Antonio está con vida y en parte muy segura’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 40.

²⁹ CODOIN, xci, pp. 545-6.

³⁰ ‘por los avisos que el Embajador Coban daba á esta Reina, refiriéndolos persona que vé las mismas cartas, siéndome difícil cosa tener otros por otro medio’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 552.

although indeed it be openly spoken of'.³¹ This strongly suggests that Mendoza was outside of the key information community in England. It is unclear if Mendoza had a mole in the secretariat who passed along information from Cobham's correspondence, as Mendoza was more likely to have been given specific information in public court settings.

Mendoza believed that supporting Dom António was part of France's broader political strategy against Habsburg Spain. Mendoza thus feared that French support of Dom António could ultimately help erode Philip's political stronghold in Europe. In 1581, Cobham wrote to Cecil that Dom António believed that further support 'would be profitable as well for France as England, considering it should be a ready means to impair the increasing greatness of the Spanish King', and that the French queen welcomed Dom António as 'a person descended of royal parentage'.³² However, an Anglo-French coalition against Spain was also contingent on their own relations beyond possessing a common enemy. Cobham later wrote to Cecil that Catherine de' Medici continued to think about the support that should be given to Dom António but that 'the King will attempt nothing with the [English] Queen against Spain without the marriage' between Elizabeth and Anjou, who continued their marriage negotiations until later that year.³³ Therefore, both the information networks Mendoza utilised, and the key characters involved, demonstrate his increasingly international diplomatic strategy.

English Support of Dom António and the Embassy in England

International threats to Spain were inherently linked, as Spain's enemies could share resources and collaborate. Therefore, Mendoza's efforts were also meant to monitor and assess the

³¹ CP, ii, p. 394.

³² CP, ii, p. 408.

³³ CP, ii, p. 422.

possible nature and extent of English support of Dom António and showcase England's perceived role in Iberian politics. By the end of 1581, Mendoza had identified that Dom António's secretary, Francisco António de Sousa, had come to England on French advice and, now that Elizabeth seemed willing to involve herself in the war, Sousa planned to go to Antwerp to continue to negotiate with Elizabeth's suitor, Anjou.³⁴ In January 1582, Mendoza reported that Dom António had supposedly written to Anjou and 'that if he secured some money and ships from the Queen [Elizabeth], it will trouble Your Majesty so that you cannot help in the resistance of the Low Countries'.³⁵ English engagement with the crisis, therefore, also threatened to derail Philip's efforts to subdue the Dutch Revolt by splitting his resources.

While Mendoza understood that England and Portugal had established trading relations, the succession issue augmented their relationship as Elizabeth was presented with the opportunity to undermine Philip's Portuguese rule.³⁶ In February 1580, the Portuguese ambassador met with the queen to discuss navigation issues, but could not identify those parties that might best deal with the issue 'until the succession of the [Portuguese] crown is declared', though Mendoza believed that it was within the Portuguese's best interests to simply declare Philip king.³⁷ Mendoza assured Philip that he made Philip's right to the Portuguese throne clear to Elizabeth, writing in March that during an audience,

I told her that before his death, the King [of Portugal] declared in the Courts Your Majesty's right, and that the nobles and ecclesiastics were of the same opinion, and

³⁴ CODOIN, xcii, p. 223.

³⁵ 'que si porcura que la Reina le asista con algun dinero y navíos, que le inquietará de manera á V.M. que no pueda asistir á hacer resistencia para las cosas de los Países-Bajos': CODOIN, xcii, p. 239.

³⁶ For an overview of Anglo-Portuguese relations see Susana Oliveira, 'Networks of Exchange in Anglo-Portuguese Sixteenth-Century Diplomacy and Thomas Wilson's Mission to Portugal', in Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and Berta Cano Echevarría (eds), *Exile, Diplomacy and Texts: Exchanges between Iberia and the British Isles, 1500-1767* (Leiden, 2020), pp. 32-54.

³⁷ 'hasta que se declare lo de la sucesion de aquella Corona': CODOIN, xci, p. 457.

although some people and some in Lisbon did not agree, the matter was simple, and there was no need to deal with it.³⁸

Regardless of Mendoza's hope that the matter was laid to rest, shortly afterwards the Portuguese ambassador had a letter for Elizabeth from the Governors of Portugal that argued it was necessary 'to defend the freedom of their Kingdom if Your Majesty [Philip II] denied them the opportunity to name the successor to the [Portuguese] Crown, and to the same [purpose] they wrote a letter to France'.³⁹ For England, support of Portugal might also protect their trading interests as Spain could restrict Portuguese trade given the tumultuous naval relations between England and Spain, especially while Francis Drake's pirating became a growing concern.⁴⁰ Therefore, there was an opportunity for Anglo-Portuguese collaboration against Spain.

Mendoza was concerned about the possibility of English support, particularly regarding the Azores Islands as English financial support could solidify Dom António's stronghold. Dom António's agent Diogo Botelho had even hoped to discuss the Spanish occupation of the Azores with the English, though initially Elizabeth's support of Dom António was not forthcoming.⁴¹ Botelho's friendship with Dom António may have begun when they were involved in rescuing the captured Portuguese nobles in Morocco after the battle of Ksar el-Kebir in 1578.⁴² In December 1580, Mendoza voiced his concerns over Elizabeth sending a small ship to the Azores, given that Mendoza knew details of how Dom António had escaped from the Azores.⁴³ Mendoza later mentioned that the Earl of Leicester had informed Dom António's representative,

³⁸ 'díjele que haber hecho declarar el Rey, ántes que muriese, en las Córtes que el derecho era de V.M., y que los nobles y eclesiásticos eran de la misma opinion, y que aunque parte del pueblo y algunos de Lisboa no la seguián, era negocio llano, y como tal no habia que tratar dél': CODOIN, xci, p. 471.

³⁹ 'para defender la libertad de su Reino en comun si V.M. se la quieses quitar no dejándoles nombrar sucesor de la Corona, y en la misma conformidad escribieron á Francia': CODOIN, xci, p. 474.

⁴⁰ Quinn, *England and the Azores*, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴² Ronaldo Vainfas, *Dicionário do Brasil Colonial (1500-1808)* (Rio de Janeiro, 2000), p. 185.

⁴³ CODOIN, xci, p. 526.

João Rodrigues de Sousa, that the English had tried to procure the help of a captain from the Azores, which Mendoza feared would help Dom António escape elsewhere.⁴⁴ English nobles were thus in contact with Dom António's network early into the crisis. Mendoza warned Philip that Dom António presented himself as 'having a greater right than Your Majesty to the Portuguese Crown, and that the Queen wished to favour him; that they [the English], would be more profitable when [Dom António] possessed your kingdom, lent him some money'.⁴⁵ If England truly intended to back Dom António's claim to the Portuguese throne, then Mendoza feared military conflict.

There was still time however, to navigate English support as Mendoza wrote in July 1581 that Elizabeth 'did not know if she would help Dom António or not'.⁴⁶ But by the end of 1581, tensions were mounting, with Mendoza warning Philip that if Elizabeth were to engage in war over the issue, it would be Mendoza amongst others 'who would notify Your Majesty immediately'.⁴⁷ Mendoza's objections to England's support were well known. He explained in July 1581, that he continually spoke to Cecil and other councillors, but that there was 'great insolence and arrogance from these people and Queen, that no other way could signify such shamelessness to Your Majesty in this matter'. Mendoza argued that 'to welcome and help [Dom António] with great care so publically' meant that Philip needed to intervene and speak directly with Elizabeth, though his pleas were again largely ignored by Philip.⁴⁸ The public court setting of the supposed English support of Dom António also suggests that Elizabeth was

⁴⁴ CODOIN, xci, p. 546.

⁴⁵ 'tenía mayor derecho que V.M. á la Corona de Portugal, y que la Reina deseaba favorecerle; que ellos, pues les vendria más provecho en el comercia viniendo él á tener posesion de su Reino, le prestasen sobre buenas prendas algun dinero': CODOIN, xcii, p. 115.

⁴⁶ 'no sabía si ayudaria ó no á Don Antonio': CODOIN, xcii, p. 66.

⁴⁷ 'lo cual avisaria á V.M. al momento': CODOIN, xcii, p. 203.

⁴⁸ 'es tanta la insolencia y arrogancia desta gente y Reina, que de ninguna manera podria significar á V.M. con la desvergüenza que tratan en esta materia'; 'asistirle y acogerle con grandes caricias y tan en público': CODOIN, xcii, p. 75.

making pointed threats by advertising how, as with the Dutch Revolt, English intervention held distinct ramifications for Philip's throne and empire.

To Dom António, England could be a source of financial gain, and Mendoza was careful to track the relative value of possible English support to assess the severity of the crisis. Dom António also still had his own personal wealth he could use to obtain the military resources he needed. In September 1580, Mendoza reported that a Portuguese had arrived at court on behalf of Dom António to sell some jewels to Elizabeth's two Principal Secretaries, Thomas Wilson and Francis Walsingham, but that 'they have disillusioned him because no help nor support given here would arrive in time to help Portugal'.⁴⁹ Here again there was an international dimension to his efforts as by November 1580 Mendoza already knew that Elizabeth 'had received [a letter] from Dom António via France, urgently asking her to send him gunpowder, artillery, and arms'.⁵⁰ These requests for aid and arms only continued despite lukewarm responses from Elizabeth.

Mendoza also identified the English noblemen and councillors with whom Dom António was in contact, learning that Dom António also reached out to Leicester and Walsingham to request financial aid.⁵¹ By July 1581, Mendoza understood that Dom António had been in Setúbal and still had Botelho's support, though the journey had been difficult.⁵² Yet, Mendoza was suspicious that Dom António might 'go to the Brazilian coast...because there are no forces there able to resist' him.⁵³ Therefore, there was also a broader global imperial threat that Dom António posed for the Spanish empire if he were to successfully rally support in Spanish oversea

⁴⁹ 'le han desengañado de que ninguna ayuda ni socorro que se la dé aquí puede ser ya á tiempo para lo de Portugal': CODOIN, xci, p. 514.

⁵⁰ 'ha tendio cartas de Don Antonio por vía de Francia, pidiéndole encarescidisamente le envíe pólvora, artillería y armas': CODOIN, xci, p. 523.

⁵¹ CODOIN, xci, p. 423.

⁵² CODOIN, xcii, p. 72.

⁵³ 'á la costa del Brasil...que no hay fuerzas en ella para poder resistirle': CODOIN, xcii, p. 73.

territories, thus weakening the empire. To Mendoza, Leicester and Walsingham had been heavily involved in this business and that they were ‘left with more than a million, both in money and jewels, hidden by their friends in Portugal’.⁵⁴ Tying Dom António to key political figures in Europe was a sobering thought for Mendoza as he was concerned that the English could offer the financial support Dom António needed to seriously challenge Philip both within Europe and globally, even though Mendoza remained unsure of the financial value of their potential support. This dynamic therefore made Mendoza’s relationship with the English nobles around him in court more fraught as he was conscious of their influence on Iberian politics, and thus could not freely engage with them on this issue. Ultimately, the English embassy held a distinct place within what has previously been considered a uniquely Iberian political concern, as Mendoza feared that English intervention had the potential to unravel Philip’s empire.

Mendoza’s Diplomatic Networks and Questions of Iberian Allegiance

Mendoza’s diplomatic strategy was therefore impacted by the Dom António episode, as its international dimensions broadened the scope of information Mendoza needed, encouraging him to engage with both diplomatic and non-diplomatic actors. This thesis has established that Mendoza often received information in court from English courtiers and fellow foreign ambassadors, though he also corresponded with local Spanish and Catholic communities in England for information when relevant. On the Dom António issue, however, Mendoza had to adapt his diplomatic practices because the key figures involved were scattered across various European courts. While England had emerged as an important consideration due to their potential support of Dom António, Mendoza and his usual contacts were not within the epicentre

⁵⁴ ‘haber dejado más de un millon, así en dinero como en joyas, escondido en poder de sus amigos en Portugal’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 73.

of key political developments in the crisis. To successfully gather and relay news to Philip, Mendoza thus engaged with a larger Iberian information community when he had previously utilised contacts mostly from within England or the Low Countries.

The Dom António affair also brought into sharp relief the heterogeneity of Philip's empire, highlighting how the seemingly uniform Iberians were comprised of different interest groups that supported either Philip or Dom António. Therefore, while Mendoza integrated himself into wider intelligence networks, he simultaneously had to identify the political allegiances of those he turned to for information. Prior to his challenge to Philip's rule, key figures in wider Iberian correspondence networks were familiar with Dom António, and he was included in their intelligence communities. In 1572, the Duke of Alba informed Philip that Don Pedro de Velasco, a Spanish nobleman who later helped establish Philip's Portuguese rule, had written to both Dom António and Philip's secretary Gabriel de Cayas about Elizabeth's supposed determination to expel then ambassador Guerau de Spes from her court.⁵⁵ Alba went on to request that Philip write to Elizabeth personally to try and deal with the matter. Dom António's place in this ciphered letter, and his incorporation into the Europe-wide networks of the Spanish nobility, demonstrate how, despite his bastardry, he had not been barred from Iberian communication networks. Consequently, when Mendoza needed to learn of Dom António's political strategy, he could call upon individuals in these networks to learn of Dom António and his agent's activities. However, the uncertainty of the allegiance of Iberians in Europe marked a new challenge in Mendoza's embassy and illustrates the unpredictability of Iberian actors' interests in the crisis. Because Dom António mobilised envoys across Europe, information networks across Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and England became active in this issue and who

⁵⁵ AGS Estado 551, fo. 1r.

could provide Mendoza with reliable information was contingent on their interests. Mendoza's efforts ultimately reveal the extent to which Spanish diplomatic networks effectively cooperated to share information, and the difficulties posed by gathering intelligence across a politically diverse and geographically vast empire.

The difficulty of calling upon international diplomatic networks becomes clear in the partial information Mendoza received as the increasing cast of actors muddled Mendoza's understanding of new developments. In June 1581, for instance, Mendoza explained that he had written to Don Juan Idiáquez Olazábal, the Spanish ambassador to Genoa, who had heard from the Portuguese João Rodrigues de Sousa and Elizabeth's Portuguese doctor, Roderigo Lopez. Mendoza informed Philip that Lopez had a friend, 'an Italian, who was already in England [who] was going to find Dom António, having arrived by boat to Calais and disembarked with eight or ten Portuguese', and there was the possibility that Dom António would soon go to Henry Cobham's residence to dine with him.⁵⁶ Here, there was a comprehensive cast of Iberian contacts used to retrieve information, elucidating the scope of Mendoza's diplomatic network. While information was shared between official ambassadors of Philip, they cited conversations with Sousa, an agent of Dom António, in addition to the queen's doctor and an unidentified Italian whose court status remains unclear. A variety of spheres and communities were present in this encounter, indicating who had access to intelligence in the Iberian world. While a Portuguese agent and Elizabeth's physician were linked to Dom António's contacts, the official Spanish ambassadors Idiáquez and Mendoza, were beyond the intimate information circle speaking with Dom António and were instead reliant on others for news. Therefore, Mendoza's network was both comprehensive and incomplete, having included a variety of agents with

⁵⁶ 'un gran amigo suyo, italiano, que iba á encontrar á Don Antonio que estaba ya en Inglaterra, habiendo venido á Cales en un navío y desembarcado con los ocho ó diez Portugueses': CODOIN, xcii, p. 62.

varying degrees of diplomatic legitimacy, but also demonstrating his separation from the matter as he could not confirm Dom António's dealings with Elizabeth's ambassador to France.

Mendoza's efforts to leverage his English contacts for intelligence were also inconclusive, and he struggled with his distance from the key European courts active in the issue. In January 1581, he wrote that an Englishman had news that 'the King of France has sent a Councillor to meet with Dom António to tell him to go to Alençon [Anjou], and that he could help Dom António's claim with the help of the rebels in the Low Countries to arm some ships'.⁵⁷ While the Englishman had not identified where Dom António was, Mendoza believed that João Rodrigues de Sousa might be better informed and that this information 'was true even though they did not have a dispatch from their Ambassador [in France]'.⁵⁸ This exchange is exemplary of the difficulty of understanding Iberian information communities as ambassadorial dispatches did not always confirm potential news, and Mendoza remained concerned that another Iberian figure, Sousa, would be better informed due to his more advantageous position within the information network related to the crisis.

National loyalties, however, could be usurped by shared political interests as Mendoza also relied on Portuguese residents in England for information. One such figure was António Fogaça, a Portuguese agent first sent to England by Dom Henrique, and who had been identified as useful to the Spanish cause. Writing in the 1570s, Jayme Burges attempted to identify and list those individuals that he believed Mendoza could trust in England. While established names, such as Antonio de Guaras and more generally 'English Catholics committed to His Majesty's

⁵⁷ 'que el Rey de Francia habia enviado un Consejero suyo para que se viese con Don Antonio y á decirle se fuese para Alanzon, que él podria asistir á su pretension con ayuda de los rebeldes de los Países-Bajos para armar algunos navíos': CODOIN, xci, p. 544.

⁵⁸ 'era cierto aunque no tenía aviso de su Embajador dello': CODOIN, xci, p. 544.

[Philip II] service', appear on his list, Fogaça is also listed as a good Portuguese.⁵⁹ Mendoza also advertised Fogaça as a useful information source to Philip. In April 1579, before the crisis, Mendoza wrote that 'There can be a lot of suspicion that the Portuguese will strengthen their friendship with those from this Kingdom [England], so it is good to be aware of this...For this, I believe that António Fogaça will be useful'.⁶⁰ Mendoza spoke positively about Fogaça who had a domestic established information community that Mendoza could access. Mendoza found similar utility in António de Castilho, the Portuguese ambassador to England originally sent by Dom Henrique and who still answered to the Junta of Governors, the governing council of Portugal.⁶¹ Castilho worked with Mendoza to move against Dom António, demonstrating how Iberian figures throughout Europe held different interests in the Portuguese Succession Crisis on the international stage. Since Fogaça and other Portuguese sources had not previously been heavily utilised by Mendoza, he therefore deemed them relevant, and valuable, for this issue and augmented his diplomatic practice accordingly.

As Mendoza identified and benefitted from Portuguese agents in England, he had effectively expanded his intelligence network. Mendoza also spoke affectionately of Castilho, believing that he 'merited Your Majesty's mercy and favour...and he will be a very suitable person to serve in that Kingdom [Portugal], because he has a good understanding of it', and arguing that Philip should employ Castilho in his ministry.⁶² However, Castilho was susceptible to surveillance. Only shortly after advertising his utility, Mendoza wrote to Philip in May 1581

⁵⁹ 'Ingleses ay muchos catholicos aficionados al servicio de S.M.': AGS Estado 830, fo. 174r.

⁶⁰ 'Mucha sospecha se puede tener de que en este tiempo los portugueses estrecharán su amistad con los dese Reino, y así conviene que esteis los ojos abiertos para saber lo que en esto hubiere...Para esto creo será de provecho Antonio Fogaza': CODOIN, xci, p. 370.

⁶¹ Jacqueline Hermann, 'Politics and Diplomacy in the Portuguese Crisis: The Candidacy of Dom Antônio, Prior of Crato (1578-1580)', *Giornale di Storia*, 13 (2013), pp. 21-2.

⁶² 'ha merecido la merced y favor que V.M. ...y para servir en aquel Reino será muy conveniente su persona, porque tiene bien entendidas las materias dél': CODOIN, xci, p. 530.

to ask him to send Castilho away as the ‘Portuguese that are naturalised here [in England], with which António de Castilho first communicated with upon his arrival here, are now spying on him’.⁶³ This monitoring exemplifies the competing political agendas of international Iberian groups and how some groups could compromise Mendoza’s networks.

The English authorities also continued to monitor the Portuguese information sources Mendoza relied upon as they sought to limit information that circulated back to the Spanish crown. In December 1581, Mendoza informed Philip that António Fogaça had been arrested ‘for deviating from the ordinary route when embarking’ from England, despite having a passport to do so.⁶⁴ The letters he carried were subsequently searched, and according to Mendoza, he was put in the Tower. While searching through an ambassador’s letters and imprisoning an ambassador would have otherwise been regarded as a breach of diplomatic immunity, Fogaça’s imprisonment may be viewed as an indication of his sub-ambassadorial status, similar to Guaras during his own arrest.⁶⁵ Mendoza resolved that upon his own departure from England, he would ask for Fogaça’s freedom.⁶⁶ In 1582, after Fogaça had spent several months in the Tower, Mendoza explained that Fogaça had written to others in Philip’s network, including Cayas and Alba, and ‘merited the mercy and favour of Your Majesty’, not only for his service, but because he was a good and moral man.⁶⁷ The English authorities’ incarceration of Mendoza’s potential domestic information sources limited and changed the information Mendoza, and subsequently Philip, could receive, thus prompting Mendoza to continually expand his information network.

⁶³ ‘Portugueses que están aquí naturalizados, los cuales tuvieron comunicacion con el Antonio del Castillo al principio que llegó á este Reino, y agora le andan espiando’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 21.

⁶⁴ ‘por desviarse del camino ordinario al embarcarse’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 213.

⁶⁵ For a discussion on diplomatic immunity and privileges, see Chapter 8.

⁶⁶ CODOIN, xcii, p. 214.

⁶⁷ ‘ha sido muy mérito la merced y favor que V.M.’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 323.

Merchants as a Non-Diplomatic Communication Network

Mendoza's existing diplomatic information networks were of limited value during the crisis. For instance, his relationship with the French ambassador in England remained tense and counterproductive due to France's potential support of Dom António. Therefore, Mendoza increased his use of international merchants and information communities beyond diplomatic circles to supplement official intelligence reports. Similar to his attempted engagement with merchants regarding the Dutch Revolt, his contacts further demonstrate how ambassadors moved beyond court environments for information in times of crisis and the prominence of merchants in non-diplomatic information networks. In August 1580, he explained that 'the English come to see me to ask about the news I had regarding Portugal' because he had many copies of letters from merchants in Antwerp and Portugal.⁶⁸ Merchants were incredibly valuable in providing a more general understanding of political developments in public settings, as they were better able to assess Dom António's resources than those within court environments like Mendoza.

One example can be seen in Mendoza's letter to Philip from August 1581 as he reported that Dom António had attempted to sell some jewels in England, including '150 pearls worth 12,000 ducats and 7 diamonds set in gold' according to a Portuguese silversmith named Amador Rodrigues that Mendoza had previously met in Antwerp.⁶⁹ Mendoza estimated that the jewels came to a handsome cost, and might go to the English nobility, including Leicester.⁷⁰ This episode showcases how Dom António could utilise his network and resources to procure international financial support to hire mercenaries and pose as a greater military threat. Though,

⁶⁸ 'del venirme ingleses á pedir las nuevas que tenía de Portugal': CODOIN, xci, p. 506.

⁶⁹ '150 perlas de valor de 12.000 ducados y 7 diamantes empestados en oro': CODOIN, xcii, p. 91.

⁷⁰ CODOIN, xcii, p. 92.

strikingly, it also mentions that Mendoza's source was a Portuguese silversmith that he knew from Antwerp, highlighting the non-diplomatic actors that Mendoza was now calling upon for news of political developments and estimations of Dom António's resources. The validity of the silversmith's information and the integrity of the silversmith rested on Mendoza's personal assessment and relationship to the individual, and underscores Mendoza's continued use of informal contacts in the Low Countries. This brief note is therefore indicative of the shift in Mendoza's ambassadorial conduct as a wider network was utilised, and remarks how the Spanish annexation of Portugal divided Iberian communities across Europe that might otherwise have remained neutral or ambivalent to Spanish diplomacy prior to 1580.

Already visibly annoyed by the French ambassador's access to court regarding Elizabeth's marriage negotiations, in May 1581 Mendoza explained that 'a Portuguese had come with these Frenchmen to help Dom António, who claims to be in Mazagan and have some claim to some of the islands of the Azores, from what I understand from the letters of merchants on those same islands'.⁷¹ Therefore, there were official channels of information from ambassadors and court, but also informal channels that emerged in response to the succession crisis. Merchants in Azores were also used by Mendoza to learn of Dom António's whereabouts because they were physically located where Dom António maintained support and Mendoza did not enjoy privileged access to English nobles or other communities that might otherwise have clarified this. However, the information was partial. Mendoza understood that a Portuguese party had associated himself with Frenchmen to aid Dom António, but he did not, or could not,

⁷¹ 'ha venido con estos franceses un portugués sobre el ayudar á Don Antonio, que afirma estar en Mazagan y tener su nombre algunas de la islas de los Azores, lo cual entiendo por cartas de mercaderes de las mismas islas': CODOIN, xcii, pp. 17-18.

identify them, demonstrating that while merchants could offer valuable information, they too were denied access to specific spaces and could not always provide a full detailed account.

Letters continued to come from the Azores Islands, providing witness accounts of Dom António's envoys and resources. These letters also travelled through various other European courts, demonstrating the wider circulation of news before it reached Mendoza. The ambassador explained that these letters from the Azores 'had passed through France to communicate, from what I understand, to the Count of Vimioso the resolution that the Queen and Ministers have to support that island'.⁷² Dom Francisco de Portugal, Count of Vimioso, served as an agent of Dom António by travelling to France to earn support, and was one of the few Portuguese high nobles to support Dom António. After Catherine de' Medici offered asylum to Portuguese subjects who felt persecuted by the Spanish, in March 1581 the Count of Vimioso tried to sell jewels to Anjou and the French to raise funds for mercenaries.⁷³ Mendoza then assured Philip that he informed the ambassador to France, Juan Bautista de Tassis, of the situation and any possible dangers arising therefrom, because Tassis was in a more suitable position to address it in France.⁷⁴ Here again, Mendoza recognised that he was not best situated to deal with new developments or first learn what was happening. Thus, despite any difficulties in corresponding with Portuguese merchant communities, Mendoza was forced to rely upon them for further news. To Mendoza, the value of informants and their reports was correlated with their physical proximity to developments and the spaces they occupied, notions which changed with and reflected the physical dimensions of the crisis. Therefore, the peripheral and central points of Mendoza's diplomatic sphere were malleable.

⁷² 'han pasado en Francia á comunicar á lo que entiendo con el Conde de Vimioso la resolucion que habian hecho esta Reina y Ministros para el socorro de aquella isla': CODOIN, xcii, p. 26.

⁷³ Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 208.

⁷⁴ CODOIN, xcii, p. 26.

The merchant networks, however, remained difficult to control and were susceptible to corruption or interception. In July 1581, Mendoza reported that merchant letters had arrived ‘to pay the Portuguese ambassador, João Rodrigues de Sousa’ but that he believed they should be aware of ‘the danger of accepting or paying for letters this way’, as other merchants had started warning of this practice due to conflicting reports and interests.⁷⁵ Sousa was affiliated with Dom António, therefore Mendoza found this transaction suspect and also found it difficult to assess the information offered when bought correspondence possibly represented a variety of Iberian political interests. Conflicting interests and the importance of loyalty were primary preoccupations when gathering intelligence, but national identities did not necessarily predetermine allegiances as Mendoza utilised Portuguese individuals in England to better understand developments regarding Dom António. While it remained important to assess the validity of intelligence coming in from various reports, the difficulty of relying upon different actors in a heterogeneous Iberian empire is evident in Mendoza’s confusion. Ultimately, the conflicting allegiances of merchant and diplomatic actors across the Iberian world presented both opportunities and new challenges for intelligence gathering.

Aftermath

As the resistance continued Mendoza grew wary of Dom António and was not hesitant to inform Philip of his grievances. The conflict, however, eventually ended as Dom António lost support throughout Europe. England received no concrete assurances that France would offer any aid if Spain were to reprimand the English for assisting Dom António and thus support dwindled.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ ‘á pagar á Juan Rodriguez de Sosa, Embajador del Rey de Portugal’; ‘peligro se ponen en aceptar ni pagar letras en esta forma’: CODOIN, xcii, p. 79.

⁷⁶ Quinn, *England and the Azores*, p. 7.

Terceira was the last of the Azores Islands to resist Spanish rule, but surrendered in 1583 despite Dom António maintaining some lingering English support.⁷⁷

Mendoza, however, continued to utilise a wide diplomatic network to monitor the situation. In 1583, he wrote that Juan Bautista de Tassis had written to him from Paris regarding those who had been with Dom António, as they attempted to understand why a *fidalgo* (a Portuguese nobleman without hereditary titles) might continue to follow Dom António.⁷⁸ Therefore, while Mendoza and Philip's other ambassadors no longer conceived of Dom António as a viable threat, they still attempted to identify supporters that withheld allegiance to Philip. Dom António also still travelled on the vessels of Francis Drake, going in 1588 to the Court of the Emperor of Morocco to take news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada.⁷⁹ He eventually died in 1595 and in his last will and testament his loyal supporter Diogo Botelho appears as a signatory witness, with Dom António signing as King of Portugal.⁸⁰

The crisis concluded as Philip established his Portuguese rule and Iberian Union, though the episode still presented England with an opportunity to substantiate the Black Legend with tales of Philip's supposed suppression of the legitimate Portuguese king. Claudius Hollyband published *The Explanation* in London in 1585 and was sympathetic to Dom António's cause. It argued that Dom António had been the rightful heir to the throne, and had been warmly received by the Portuguese people, nobility, and King Henrique.⁸¹ While, Hollyband, a Franco-English author and translator, addressed the questions around Dom António's legitimacy, he portrayed

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁸ AGS Estado, 586 fo. 28r.

⁷⁹ ANTT D. António Prior do Crato e seus Descendentes 1, fo. 142r-v.

⁸⁰ ANTT D. António Prior do Crato e seus Descendentes 2, fo. 267r-v.

⁸¹ Claudius Hollyband, *Explanation of the true and lawfull right and tytyle, of the most excellent prince, Anthonie the first of that name* (London, 1585), p. 5.

Dom António as a just ruler whose power was ‘afflicted and oppressed by tyranny’ and argued that King Henrique moved against Dom António only from fear of Philip.⁸²

Conclusion

Crises, therefore, serve as opportunities to see the foundations of diplomacy operate in practice and understand how a particular embassy fit within international networks. The Portuguese Succession Crisis influenced Anglo-Spanish relations by forcing Mendoza to adopt new diplomatic strategies and maintain an expansive communication network that included Iberian ambassadors across Europe and merchant communities. The international dimension of Dom António’s possible support from England and France demonstrates how international collaboration and support of the candidate could harm Philip’s power in Europe. Yet, the candidacy of Dom António has largely been approached as an inconsequential episode in Anglo-Portuguese relations as the Iberian Union ultimately reconfigured government structures and lasted until the mid-seventeenth century. The crisis ultimately augmented already tense Anglo-Spanish relations, placing Mendoza’s English embassy in conversation with larger Iberian information channels and highlighting England’s ability to harm Spanish imperial interests. Mendoza’s diplomatic response and strategy therefore elucidate the complex entanglement of information networks and the various interests within what is too often considered the uniform political group of the Iberian empire. When Mendoza was excluded from intelligence networks in the English court, and found himself on the periphery of international networks, he utilised merchant communities and other Portuguese agents in England to corroborate incoming diplomatic dispatches. These non-diplomatic communities

⁸² Ibid., pp. 21, 56.

emerged as vital information sources and demonstrate how the political interests of Mendoza's contacts were not predetermined by national identities.

Mendoza's sources thus reveal the bilateral relationship of official and unofficial intelligence networks, and once more how key political information was circulated through diplomatic dispatches. While Mendoza did not possess a pre-established relationship with the main political figures of the succession crisis, unlike the correspondence he enjoyed with Alba and Parma throughout the Dutch Revolt, he again adapted his diplomatic strategy to include a larger, and more informal, network of informants. Though information sources regarding the Dutch Revolt had also included popular prints, Mendoza's response to the Dom António issue and each of the Spanish ambassadors' response to the turmoil in the Low Countries included engaging with merchant communities, demonstrating how crises inspired more flexible information gathering strategies. Additionally, turning to Dutchmen and Portuguese contacts during each of these crises highlights the ambiguities of national identity and political allegiances or interests, and how ambassadors were forced to contend with these nuances to determine their allies and information sources. Ultimately, the Spanish ambassadors in England did not strictly inherit information gathering strategies or contacts, as each faced developing crises that forced them to adopt new diplomatic strategies. However, their concerns throughout the Dutch Revolt and Mendoza's fears during Portuguese Succession Crisis showcase the enduring importance of the English embassy within Spanish diplomacy throughout the early modern period, the malleability of diplomatic strategy during political crises, and the vital role of individual ambassadors in collecting and disseminating information.

Chapter 8: The Limitations of Ambassadorship and Diplomatic Privilege

Following this series of extraordinary political and religious crises, and the unprecedented challenges of the Spanish ambassadors' continuous support of English Catholics in a cross-confessional environment, as this thesis has outlined, the ambassadors' actions had raised meaningful questions about the limitations of ambassadorship and the basis of special diplomatic privileges. While this thesis has primarily concerned the diplomatic activities of the Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England during their tenures, and refuted teleological narratives of the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations, it is impossible to ignore the conflict of some of the ambassadors' embassies, and how these conflicts were framed as the ambassadors having exceeded any privilege and the boundaries of their posting. Primarily, Álvaro de la Quadra's embassy provoked outrage over his religious practices and the embassies of Guerau de Spes and Bernardino de Mendoza both ended in expulsion due to charges of conspiracy against Elizabeth. These conflicts, however, should not be dismissed as the result of broader Anglo-Spanish tension, but instead examined as part of an ongoing process of determining the limitations of ambassadorship and the suitable punishments for ambassadors which exceed their post. Diplomatic immunity, the notion that a foreign ambassador was not subject to local jurisdiction and might also enjoy certain privileges, was a contentious issue throughout the Spanish embassies sent to Elizabethan England.

The rationale behind awarding diplomatic immunity had been to aid ambassadors in their ability to conduct their missions, serve their monarch, and maintain amicable diplomatic relations.¹ This included, but was not limited to, physical protection on both the voyage to their mission and during their stay. However, the monarchs they represented were ultimately

¹ Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory, and Administration*, 2nd ed. (London, 2010), p. 50.

responsible for determining the limits of an ambassador's diplomatic privileges and how limitations in diplomatic conduct were enforced, raising questions about the inviolability of the ambassador and how their actions influenced diplomatic relations. Additionally, local authorities could breach diplomatic immunities for various reasons, highlighting their vulnerability. The Spanish ambassadors and English authorities superseded and breached diplomatic immunities respectively. While diplomatic immunity and privileges were not created during the early modern period, and can be observed to varying extents from antiquity, the diplomatic disruptions of the early modern period challenged previously accepted ideas of ambassadorial conduct and its boundaries in Europe. Diplomatic immunity and privileges had been largely recognised without formal codification, leaving rulers and diplomats ill prepared to respond to the political and religious changes of the sixteenth century, their impact on determining a host monarch's authority over foreign ambassadors, and the competing viewpoints between political and ecclesiastical authorities regarding diplomatic immunity.²

In the Anglo-Spanish context, the process of granting religious privileges and policing ambassadors who theoretically enjoyed diplomatic immunity was volatile, providing historians with an opportunity to observe both the limitations of ambassadorship, and the supposed jurisdiction of the early modern ruler receiving a foreign ambassador. It would also be simplistic to suggest that there was a linear development from the inviolability of embassies witnessed from antiquity and the early modern period, towards modern conceptions of immunity or toleration. Throughout the sixteenth century, opinions and practices on diplomatic privilege widely varied, and responded to a changing international situation and acute crises, leading many to deviate from theoretical writings on the nature of ambassadorship in practice.

² For an overview of this scholarship, see Frey and Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity*; E. R. Adair, *The Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1929).

Additionally, distinctions between the public and private self as they pertained to an ambassador's representative character were unclear and cause for frequent debate on the limitations of diplomatic conduct and privilege. This chapter will first outline theoretical discussions of diplomatic immunity leading up to the sixteenth century, its foundations, and the applicability of concepts such as immunity and extraterritoriality to the period before examining the lived experiences of the Spanish ambassadors in Elizabethan England. Approaching incidents where diplomatic privileges and immunity were ignored or the limitations of ambassadorship were superseded, in light of contemporary discussions, it becomes evident that the Spanish ambassadors ultimately changed the terms of diplomatic immunity and inspired further consideration in legal texts and ambassadorial treatises. This chapter demonstrates that diplomatic immunity, in the context of cross-confessional diplomacy, was adaptable and encompassed previous legal foundations of immunity, and concepts of reciprocity. Building upon the ambassadors' understandings of their diplomatic missions as seen through their support of Catholics and response to various crises, this chapter showcases the ambassadors' impact on political thought of ambassadorship. Through an examination of religious privileges, and the expulsion of Bernardino de Mendoza after his support of the Throckmorton plot, a 1583 conspiracy again seeking to overthrow Elizabeth in favour of Mary, Queen of Scots, this chapter reveals that diplomatic privileges, and their limitations, responded to and were influenced by broader political or personal tensions that encapsulated sixteenth-century fears of religious conspiracies and dissent.

Conceptions and Foundations of Diplomatic Immunity and Privileges

Between antiquity and the modern age, diplomatic immunity had possessed a varied and widespread history and could rely on either secular or ecclesiastical authorities, or both, to be maintained. Modern conceptions of diplomatic immunity and privileges are often tied to international legal institutions and prescribe the notion of extraterritoriality, defined as treating an individual, and possibly their entourage, as if they were still within the territory of their home country rather than host country.³ However, during the early modern period, diplomatic immunity was rooted in the concept of the inviolability of the ambassador rather than a defined and universally accepted notion of extraterritoriality that clearly designated jurisdiction over the ambassador to their home ruler. While diplomatic immunity itself was widely accepted during the early modern period, the foundation of immunity, and thus its fragility, was the subject of extensive theoretical discussions and was influenced by various opinions. Early discussions of diplomatic immunity or privileges were largely indebted to Roman law, which provided the theoretical basis for immunity in the early modern period. Fifteenth-century theorists, such as Gondissalvus de Villadiego, cited Roman law in arguing that ambassadors, or other individuals in public service, enjoyed certain diplomatic privileges such as full restitution.⁴

While theorists turned to the previous legal, religious, and practical justifications of diplomatic immunity, it became increasingly difficult to divide the secular and ecclesiastical authority held over envoys if they engaged in both political and religious activities.⁵ Therefore theorists began to consider the practical limitations of diplomatic immunity and an

³ Grant V. McClanahan, *Diplomatic Immunity: Principles, Practices and Problems* (London, 1989), p. 30.

⁴ See Waldimir E. Hrabar, *De Legatis et Legationibus Tractatus Varii* (1905); Dante Fedele, 'The Renewal of Early-modern Scholarship on the Ambassador: Pierre Ayrault on Diplomatic Immunity', *Journal of the History of International Law*, 18 (2016), p. 3.

⁵ Hamilton and Langhorne, *Practice of Diplomacy*, p. 48.

ambassador's inviolability more thoroughly. Pierre Ayrault, a Parisian lawyer and alderman of Angers, wrote in his *De l'ordre et instruction iudiciaire* that an ambassador was inviolable so long as he had stayed within the bounds of his posting, leaving him susceptible to punishment if they were to break the law as any other foreigner.⁶ Even Roman law had underscored the responsibility and accountability of the envoys.⁷ Debates surrounding what privileges were within one's diplomatic posting thus persisted and showcased that while rulers and diplomats accepted inviolability as a theoretical framework for immunity and privileges, there were competing understandings of what this meant in practice.

With the Reformation, the relationship between ecclesiastical and political authority became more complicated as monarchs now had to decide if and how they would extend certain religious privileges to foreign ambassadors that had previously been able to freely worship their shared faith during their embassy. Throughout the sixteenth century, diplomatic immunities responded to the practical problems of cross-confessional diplomacy and determined 'the way [a] host government should act towards resident ambassadors'.⁸ In some territories, these immunities began to include the privilege of allowing an ambassador to hold private religious services which were contrary to the faith of their host court. The jurisdiction and the legal framework which ambassadors operated within was ultimately unclear and had to determine the authority of individual monarchs over diplomatic relations.

The representative aspect of ambassadorship, as previously established in this thesis, was also paramount in considerations of diplomatic immunity as punishing a foreign

⁶ Fedele, 'Renewal of Early-modern Scholarship', p. 8.

⁷ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 107.

⁸ Susana Oliveira, "'The Intolerable Business': Religion and Diplomacy under Elizabeth's Rule", *SEDERI*, 26 (2016), p. 168.

ambassador could be interpreted as a monarch exercising jurisdiction over another sovereign.⁹ The representative nature of an ambassador also implied that they were meant to continue to represent their ruler's religion, in addition to political interests, while stationed abroad, further obscuring distinctions in jurisdiction and religious privilege when faced with confessional differences. Some early modern jurists, such as Ayrault, asserted that the power of one's home monarch was all encompassing and that an ambassador could never leave the sovereignty of their monarch, unless they received permission.¹⁰ However, such assertions that the ambassador was not subject to another country's civil laws were not based on modern ideas of extraterritoriality that see ambassadors as individuals occupying foreign soil while on their mission, but again were inherited from Roman legal doctrines.¹¹ It is thus important to note that, critically, understandings of the boundaries of one's diplomatic posting, and whether laws should apply to foreigners and citizens equally, were negotiable and while Ayrault and other authors cited examples from antiquity, they were responding to the religious and political upheavals of the early modern period.¹² Therefore, while certain actions, such as conspiracy, were widely considered beyond the boundaries of an ambassador's posting, and could see his inviolability rescinded, how to address the matter was unclear. The muddled degrees of authority monarchs had over foreign ambassadors in their court also demonstrated that in practice, immunities and privileges were often breached.

⁹ Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, p. 411.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 388, 416.

¹¹ Adair, *Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors*, p. 68.

¹² Fedele, 'Renewal of Early-modern Scholarship', p. 15.

The Ambassador's Personal Privileges: Correspondence and the Embassy Chapel

The immunities an ambassador possessed to conduct their business, such as the protection of their correspondence and safe passage to their host court, were established traditions and standard diplomatic practice. However, one's diplomatic immunity and privileges were negotiated by monarchs and authorities whose individual interests could lead them to breach previously assumed immunities and privileges, such as the inviolability of an ambassador's correspondence. Breaches of diplomatic immunity and trust thus demonstrate how immunity could not be assumed and relied on various factors, such as full diplomatic status. For example, diplomatic correspondence was violated when John Leslie, the Bishop of Ross was imprisoned in the Tower of London from 1570 to 1573, and later freed and expelled.¹³ In May 1571, Spes reported that the English had closed the ports and not allowed any mail to leave, possibly because of Ross's detention, as they had gone through all of Ross's correspondence and searched for his letters in various houses, though found nothing.¹⁴ Whether English authorities had limited foreign ambassadors' correspondence and freedom of movement because Ross represented Mary, Queen of Scots, and thus did not warrant diplomatic privilege or protection, because they hoped to uncover a wider network of Mary's supporters, or both, is unclear. However, this was not an isolated incident and exemplifies the vulnerability of diplomatic correspondence.

Immunity was also not guaranteed while in transit as ambassadors throughout sixteenth-century Europe were susceptible to capture. In 1541, Antonio Rincón and Cesare Fregoso, two French diplomatic agents travelling from Italy to the Ottoman Porte, were ambushed and killed during their journey. Charles V denied responsibility, but it was widely believed that he

¹³ Frey and Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 176.

¹⁴ CODOIN, xc, p. 463.

orchestrated the plot against the agents.¹⁵ The attack became one of the most famous episodes of the violation of diplomatic immunities, and attributed to the wider rivalry between the Valois and Habsburgs.¹⁶ However, Rincón, born a subject of Castile, and Fregoso, also born under papal jurisdiction, could therefore be regarded by Charles V as rebels, placing them beyond the purview of diplomatic immunity and inviolability.¹⁷ Additionally, Daniel Rogers, who established himself in both Dutch and English political circles, was sent by England on a special mission to the Low Countries to negotiate Elizabeth's policies in 1577. When journeying to see Rudolf II in Germany in 1580, Rogers was captured by Baron von Anholt and held for ransom at the encouragement of Philip II. Rogers was eventually freed in 1584 after William Cecil secured the ransom for him.¹⁸ An ambassador, therefore, had to be aware of the differences between immunities that were granted by explicit mutual agreements between rulers, and those that were only established by custom or political convenience.¹⁹ Privileges, as they pertained to the ambassador, their household, or their residence were at the mercy of other political or religious interests.

In the first instance, diplomatic privileges could be understood to apply to the individual resident ambassador, and perhaps to some extent, their household. While in theory, immunity posited that an ambassador could have full protection from foreign ministers, in practice these privileges were fragile in the wake of the political and religious tensions of the period and

¹⁵ Megan Williams, 'Re-orienting a Renaissance Diplomatic Cause Célèbre: The 1541 Rincón-Fregoso Affair', in Gábor Almási, Szymon Brzezinski, Ildikó Horn, Kees Tszelszky, and Áron Zarnóczy (eds), *A Divided Hungary in Europe: Exchanges, Networks and Representations, 1541–1699* (2 vols, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), ii, p. 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Mark Loudon, 'Rogers Daniel (c.1538-1591)', ODNB (Sept 10, 2021) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23969>.

¹⁹ Daniela Frigo, 'Ambasciatori, Ambasciata e Immunità Diplomatiche nella Letteratura Politica Italiana (secc. XVII-XVIII)', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 119/1 (2007), p. 41.

illuminate the negotiation process of determining immunity and inviolability.²⁰ The English government's pervasive fear of a Catholic conspiracy had led to their constant monitoring of Spanish and other Catholic ambassadors, and occasionally violating conventional and widely established diplomatic immunity when English authorities intercepted these ambassadors' correspondence.²¹ For example, in June 1562, Quadra complained to Margaret of Parma, then Governor of the Netherlands, that Elizabeth's ministers took a servant who had worked in Quadra's residence for years, 'and they have made him reveal all the secrets he knew of what I am dealing with here', while trying to get hold of Quadra's correspondence.²² Quadra referred to his secretary Borghese Venturini, who had been successfully bribed by English authorities, causing the ambassador to face a significant number of charges from the Privy Council.²³ Here, authorities also demonstrated their belief that the ambassador's household members were under their jurisdiction if they committed a crime, therefore interfering with the ambassador's household and showcasing how immunities could be limited to the ambassador. These altercations, however, were not reserved to Quadra. After the discovery of the Ridolfi plot, Elizabeth had Spes's steward arrested, and though Spes complained, the steward's fate was left up to England.²⁴ Thus, it was clear that in practice, there was a distinction in the extent of legal protection enjoyed by the ambassador and that of his household.

Correspondence networks and couriers were also incredibly fragile and susceptible to interference, jeopardising the supposed inviolability of an ambassador's dispatches. The seizure of diplomatic documents therefore remained the most common violation of an ambassador's

²⁰ Ibid., p. 40.

²¹ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 163.

²² 'le han hecho descubrir todos cuantos secretos sabía de lo que yo aquí trato': CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 405.

²³ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 165.

²⁴ Adair, *Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors*, p. 132.

immunity.²⁵ English authorities' breach of diplomatic immunities was also counterbalanced by the Spanish Inquisition's own surveillance measures. The Spanish Inquisition examined any written materials entering Spain closely for Protestant writings, even breaking into the trunks and private writings of Thomas Chaloner, Elizabeth's ambassador to Spain, in 1561, and John Man when he arrived as ambassador to Spain in 1567.²⁶ Spes thus believed that passports or other formal recognition of the right to reside and conduct business in England, for any foreign representative, yielded little protection or privacy. He had even written to Alba on occasion to express a shared concern amongst foreign representatives in England that despite having a passport, that should guarantee safe free passage without interrogation, English authorities would freely go through their documents and correspondence, compromising their intelligence gathering.²⁷ Ultimately, immunity could not be assumed and personal privileges or protection were determined by foreign powers that had a vested interest in monitoring potential threats and conspiracy. Additionally, while some privileges such as the inviolability of an ambassador's correspondence and person were well established, the Spanish embassies in Elizabethan England contended with new questions regarding their other personal privileges.

Though diplomatic immunity was a widely accepted concept before the early modern period, the immunities that diplomats enjoyed in the Middle Ages had rarely, if ever, violated the host country's religious laws. In the context of cross-confessional diplomacy, rulers had to determine whether to allow ambassadors to practice their own faith, even if they did not permit their own citizens to dissent from the monarch's faith. However, as part of the ambassador's representative character, it was assumed that an ambassador would still represent their

²⁵ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 142.

²⁶ Adair, *Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors*, p. 97.

²⁷ AGS Estado 821, fo. 6r-v.

monarch's religion in foreign settings. Embassy chapels and the practice of hearing Mass in England, therefore, were controversial in Elizabeth's reign as they seemingly circumvented England's acts of uniformity and supremacy.²⁸ It is thus unclear if the permission to hold and hear Mass in an ambassador's embassy was due to diplomatic immunity making them exempt from English laws that enforced attendance to Protestant services, or the inviolability of the ambassador's person and chapel.²⁹ Therefore, within one's embassy, it was neither obvious nor codified what protection and freedoms an individual ambassador was ensured.³⁰

Ultimately, there were debates surrounding whether religious privileges were extended to the ambassador's entourage. The ambassador's residence would be home to a number of different figures in the ambassador's entourage, including but not limited to their chaplain, secretary, servants and other household members, the immunity of which had not always been fully outlined or maintained. The rhetoric of family in the early modern period also encompassed these diverse members of the household, rather than strictly blood relatives, suggesting that it may have been considered natural to extend certain privileges to all household members if the ambassador's family was considered immune.³¹ Questions could thus emerge as to whether policing an embassy chapel could be interpreted as the intrusion of the political sphere into the ambassador's household. The issues surrounding the inviolability of the chapel and chaplain were therefore linked to questions regarding the inviolability of the ambassador's residence, where many ambassadors in the sixteenth century claimed to enjoy asylum and

²⁸ Benjamin Kaplan, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Devotion: Embassy Chapels and the Tolerations of Religious Dissent in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6/4 (2002), p. 343.

²⁹ William Raleigh Trimble, 'The Embassy Chapel Question, 1625-1660', *Journal of Modern History*, 18/2 (1946), p. 107.

³⁰ Frigo, 'Ambasciatori, Ambasciata e Immunità Diplomatiche', p. 45.

³¹ See Naomi Tadmor, 'The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past & Present*, 151/1 (1996), pp. 111-40.

performed their diplomatic duties.³² Differentiating what the ambassador did in the purview of his personal self, even regarding private religious practice, and what the ambassador did as a representation of their monarch is difficult. Considerations of the embassy chapel and religious practice carefully weighed the diplomatic benefits against religious strife as English recusants turned to Catholic ambassadors for support.³³ The English council's anxiety over Catholic embassies, and their embassy chapels, being used as a religious asylum for recusants, thus led to authorities attempting to police the boundaries of these spaces or, at times, raiding the embassy.

The issues surrounding diplomatic privileges and religious practice in Elizabethan England were arguably most poignant during Quadra's embassy. The privilege to hold Mass was not taken lightly and Elizabeth's councillors and spy networks carefully monitored when and where Mass was heard, regardless of whether it was permitted or not.³⁴ Quadra, as a bishop, was one of the most vocal and contentious diplomatic figures in England when it came to arguing for the protection of Catholic practices, as demonstrated by his support of English Catholics. Quadra often allowed them into his embassy chapel to hear Mass and offered them 'items such as consecrated oils and communion wafers', activities which were understood by the English authorities to be limited to Quadra as part of his personal religious privileges.³⁵

Eventually, issues surrounding Quadra allowing English Catholics to hear Mass came to a head. On 3 January 1563, English authorities reported a violent altercation in the streets of London, near Durham Place where Quadra resided. It was determined that the perpetrator, a young Italian man referred to only as Andrea, took refuge in Quadra's home where he was then

³² Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, p. 429.

³³ Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy and English Recusancy', p. 173.

³⁴ Alford, *The Watchers*, p. 320.

³⁵ Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy and English Recusancy', p. 178.

able to escape English authorities through a back gate with Quadra's aid. English authorities subsequently entered the residence and Quadra was arrested. Martin Hume has argued that during this altercation, Quadra was treated with unwarranted roughness, and threatened by Cecil with a violent mob or English officers.³⁶ During the raid both Englishmen and Spaniards in attendance were arrested and questioned by the authorities, with many admitting to having gone to hear Mass.³⁷ Only days afterwards, the back gate that had supposedly allowed for Andrea's escape had been locked. Carlos del Gesso, a servant of Quadra, reported that on January 6, 'the day of the Kings, at 10 in the morning, when about to say Mass, two locksmiths came to Durham Place, where the Ambassador lives, to put a lock on the door that leads to the river' and claimed that they had been sent by Elizabeth's councillors.³⁸ The fugitive's escape through Quadra's backdoor therefore provided English authorities with a convenient excuse to control Quadra's residence and movements, thus curtailing his privileges and freedoms.³⁹

Crucially, however, the back gate that had been locked was the entrance Quadra had used to allow English Catholics into Durham Place to hear Mass. Quadra was enraged and believed that there was an inherent prejudice against Spaniards in England, thus he raised questions regarding English authorities' jurisdiction over foreigners and the extent of his personal privileges. Quadra demanded an audience with Elizabeth, and was told by the council that regarding the altercation, the councillors could 'very well distinguish between your actions as an Ambassador...and your other biases', thus attempting to separate his official duties from

³⁶ CSP Simancas i, p. xlv.

³⁷ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 484.

³⁸ 'día de los Reyes, á las diez horas de la mañana, estándose para decir la misa, vinieron dos cerrajeros en esta casa de Duranplaza, donde el Embajador posa para meter una cerradura y llave sobre la puerta que sale al rio'; CODOIN, lxxxvii, pp. 515-6.

³⁹ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 178.

his personal interests or conduct.⁴⁰ During his formal testimony regarding the issue on 7 January 1563, the councillors made it clear that the

false door that goes out to the water, has for a long time given a large number public access to your home, [including] a large number of people subject to the Queen's Majesty...to hear Mass, which has kept them living in disobedience and against the laws of this Kingdom.⁴¹

The lords thus believed that Quadra would not have 'allowed something against the Queen or in disturbance of the Kingdom if it were not Religious matters'.⁴² Therefore, while the English argued that the altercation revolved around the legal issues of Englishmen hearing Mass, Quadra believed that the altercation was due to his refusal to 'renounce his role as a spiritual leader for any Catholic in need'.⁴³

Quadra was undoubtedly aware that the English extensively monitored possible religious dissent and sought to punish Englishmen under their authority, as he had already written to Philip in May 1562 that a commission had been formed to bring some Catholics prisoners, including bishops, to trial.⁴⁴ In the immediate aftermath of the raid, Quadra believed that he was unable to continue his ambassadorial duties from Durham Place. Only three days after meeting with the council, on 10 January 1563, Quadra complained that

because the Queen wants to keep me locked up in this house, this seems more like a prison than a lodging, and I asked them to return the keys to me as I had always had

⁴⁰ 'pueden muy bien y saben hacer distincion entre vuestros hechos como un Embajador...y los otros vuestros hechos parciales'; CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 457.

⁴¹ 'puerta falsa que sale al agua, ha habiedo de largo tiempo público acceso á vuestra casa de gran cantidad y número de personas súbditos de la Majestad de la Reina...para oír á vuestra misa, lo cual ha sido causa de mantenerlos, vivir en desobediencia y contra las leyes deste Reino'; CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 455.

⁴² 'prometido alguna cosa contra la Reyna o en desasosiego del Reyno sino fuese en negocios dela Religion'; BL Cotton MS Vespasian C VII, fo. 75r-v.

⁴³ Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy and English Recusancy', p. 185.

⁴⁴ CODOIN, lxxxvii, p. 513.

them, or to provide me with another lodging where I could be free and do my business without being guarded.⁴⁵

He then went onto detail how Elizabeth also no longer wanted him to reside in her property, and that he would be moved once another suitable residence could be found for him.

Questions surrounding immunity and personal religious privileges were also complicated by the concept of the ambassador's private and official selves, and if immunity was reserved to only their official self or both. When determining the inviolability of the ambassador, monarchs thus had to distinguish what the ambassador did in his position as a foreign representative, and what as an individual with his own personal rights. It has been argued that ambassadors often had to move between public and private personas as appropriate.⁴⁶ This understanding was largely shared by the English council. In January 1562, Quadra approached the council to discuss what he believed were infringements of his privileges as ambassador. The council responded by stating 'that a distinction is to be made betwixt your doings as an ambassador, which is to mantanie amities, and the doings tending to the hindrance of the same, for the one you shall be honorable used for the other you ought to behave your selves to our Lawes'.⁴⁷ Therefore, English authorities argued that diplomatic immunity was reserved for activities an ambassador performed in pursuit of maintaining peace and one's diplomatic duties, and thus on behalf of his public self, while an ambassador's actions done in pursuit of personal interests and his private self were subject to England's laws. As previously established, Quadra believed that the preservation of Catholicism in England was a fundamental

⁴⁵ 'porque quererme la Reina tener cerrado en casa, esto parecia más cárcel que posada, y que les pidia que ó me restituyesen las llaves como las he tenido siempre, ó me mandasen proveer de otra posada en que yo pudiese estar libremente y hacer mis negocios sin guardas'; CODAIN, lxxxvii, p. 461.

⁴⁶ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ BL Cotton MS Vespasian C VII, fo. 259r.

part of his diplomatic mission, demonstrating how the notion of the two selves, each subject to a separate authority, could become incredibly unclear especially when it came to matters of religion, and contributed to the negotiability of privileges and the parameters of an ambassador's immunity.

The ambiguities surrounding religious practice and inviolability, however, were not reserved to the Spanish ambassadors but affected other Catholic ambassadors whose religious practices and personal privileges were heavily monitored. In October 1568, Spes reported that the Portuguese ambassador informed him that during Mass, 'the Bishop's [Edmund Grindal] ministers entered his house to take the English who were there listening to Mass as prisoners'.⁴⁸ This would not be an isolated incident for the Portuguese embassy sent to England, as in March 1573, the residence of ambassador Francisco Giraldi was again raided by English authorities during Mass.⁴⁹ After *Regnans in excelsis*, the Ridolfi plot, and St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the 1570s saw a rise in the regulation of Catholic practices.⁵⁰ Susana Oliveira has argued that the raid signified a power struggle between the Bishop of London and Giraldi as the prelate was concerned that political matters were eclipsing the need to eradicate Catholicism in England by allowing diplomats religious freedom.⁵¹ Elizabeth, however, not wanting to further disturb any foreign affairs, upheld the importance of maintaining diplomatic ties with Portugal so no further action was taken against Giraldi.⁵²

The embassies, ultimately, were guarded spaces because while the degree to which a host country controlled the activities within an embassy was unclear, they could take steps to

⁴⁸ 'entraron en su casa ministros del Obispo deste lugar á tomar presos los ingleses que allí oían misa': CODDIN, xc, p. 148.

⁴⁹ Oliveira, "The Intolerable Business", p. 159.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 161.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 163-4.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 166-7.

advertise their control of its perimeters. In February 1568, Philip lamented to Alba that Elizabeth had placed a guard outside of Spes's residence, but that despite the hostility of this act, she would not dare to actually declare war against Spain.⁵³ Authorities thus seemed somewhat limited in the steps they took against ambassador's misconduct due to political considerations, so they attempted to curb potential offences by policing the embassy's boundaries. The concept of diplomatic privileges and religious practice within an embassy was also unclear given that many resident ambassadors in England lived in Elizabeth's property or a public location during their tenures, rather than privately owned residences, giving the English government greater control over the properties and their prestige. For example, the Privy Council appointed Spes to reside in Ely house, a property customarily used by the Bishop of Ely, during his tenure likely because of its public location, much to the bishop's disapproval.⁵⁴

The issues surrounding the embassy chapel were ultimately enduring, with James I eventually requesting in 1610 that ambassadors not allow English Catholics into their chapels, stating that while the ambassadors' residences were indeed 'privileged places', once English Catholics left the premise, they could be arrested.⁵⁵ Thus throughout the seventeenth century, troops stationed outside Catholic embassies in London were prepared to arrest English Catholics seen leaving the embassies.⁵⁶ Raids on embassy chapels were not uncommon and arrests of English Catholics present in these chapels were widely recorded.⁵⁷ However, the Privy Council was still informed of large crowds gathering at chapel embassies to hear Mass, including the Spanish embassy.⁵⁸ The embassy's chapel, therefore, had little legal protection and there was

⁵³ CODOIN, xxxvii, p. 558.

⁵⁴ BL Lansdowne MS 11, fo. 60r-v.

⁵⁵ Trimble, 'The Embassy Chapel Question', pp. 97-8.

⁵⁶ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 180

⁵⁷ Oliveira, "'The Intolerable Business'", p. 169.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

not an established custom for religious privileges.⁵⁹ Ultimately, an ambassador's personal privileges were negotiable and highly contentious as they encapsulated the ambiguities between the public and private selves, the questions of jurisdiction of a host country over ambassadors, and the difficult realities of governments breaching assumed privileges through surveillance. Indeed, without formal codification, issues surrounding the diplomatic immunities and religious practice could be determined by reciprocity and precedent, as demonstrated by the case of John Man's embassy in Spain.⁶⁰

Reciprocity and Custom

Sixteenth-century diplomatic immunity was ultimately influenced by understandings of custom and reciprocity. This was not an entirely novel concept, as this thesis has already established how rulers and ambassadors used convention and reciprocity in ceremonial displays of respect and in both receiving and acknowledging foreign embassies sent to their court. While ceremonial displays could be used to reflect or challenge an international order, the fortification of diplomatic privileges reflected a certain degree of trust and respect. Linda and Marsha Frey have argued that while diplomatic immunity was 'sanctioned by custom', it was 'fortified by reciprocity'.⁶¹ Therefore, monarchs had come to expect, if not demand, equitable, and reciprocal treatment of their resident ambassadors in order to maintain amicable relations, lest they revoke such privileges. Thus, Man's embassy to Spain helped contribute to wider debates on diplomatic privilege and influenced the Spanish ambassadors' embassies in England. While the charges laid against Man were far less severe than the accusations of conspiracy levelled against Spes

⁵⁹ Kaplan, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Devotion', p. 359.

⁶⁰ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 8.

⁶¹ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 4.

and Mendoza, Man continued to permeate discussions of the treatment of ambassadors in cross-confessional settings.

Generally, English ambassadors believed that in practice their residences were neither inviolable, nor safe when stationed in Madrid. In November 1560, the cook of the English ambassador in Madrid had been taken by the Inquisition and charged with heresy. Writing to Elizabeth, Thomas Chamberlain stated that this incident was a breach of his privileges as an ambassador.⁶² Envoys thus began to explicitly request that within their residence, their household members should enjoy inviolability. Madrid also appeared as an undesirable posting as it seemed to be on the outskirts of European politics, with Thomas Chaloner having often complained of the lack of amenities and the hostile environment he faced throughout his tenure in the early 1560s.⁶³ Once Chaloner's embassy in Spain ended due to his ill health in 1565, it was not obvious that Elizabeth would send a replacement, only doing so after Philip encouraged her to retain diplomatic representation in Spain.⁶⁴

The effect of reciprocity in discussions of ambassadorial privileges, especially religious privileges, ultimately became clear after Man's embassy to Madrid. Amidst already tense Anglo-Spanish relations, Man found the situation in Madrid nearly impossible.⁶⁵ Notably, Man was denied the use of the Book of Common Prayer while in Madrid.⁶⁶ Elizabeth thus argued that Man had not been shown reciprocal treatment as Guzmán de Silva enjoyed personal religious freedom in London, and had threatened to recall Man if Philip did not grant him the same privileges, showcasing how Elizabeth believed that reciprocity underpinned religious

⁶² BL Cotton MS Vespasian C VII, fo. 133r-v.

⁶³ Gary M. Bell, 'John Man: The Last Elizabethan Resident Ambassador in Spain', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 7/ 2 (1976), p. 77.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁶⁵ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 177; Bell, 'John Man', p. 75; Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 202.

⁶⁶ Bell, 'John Man', p. 88.

privileges.⁶⁷ Eventually, over dinner in his residence, Man described the pope as a ‘canting little monk’.⁶⁸ Once Philip heard of Man’s remark, he avoided giving Man an audience.⁶⁹ Man was eventually declared a *persona non grata* in 1568 and his embassy ended shortly thereafter, however, Man believed that he had not received reciprocal diplomatic treatment to his Spanish counterpart in London, as Silva could hear Mass in his embassy chapel but Man could not speak of his religious views in his home at the dinner table.⁷⁰ As Man had argued that he and his household should be inviolable, and determined that his residence was an asylum from Spanish authorities, the outrage over Man’s comment highlights competing understandings of immunity. Upon his return to England, Elizabeth absolved Man of any blame, arguing that Man had been slandered by the English Catholic exile community when he was a perfectly suitable ambassador.⁷¹ Spes refuted this idea, assuring Philip that ‘the English were not a part of it’ and that Man alone was responsible for his behaviour and overstepping the boundaries of his post.⁷²

Philip was aware that his ambassadors in England enjoyed religious freedom in their residence, thus his refusal may highlight his understanding of Protestantism and religious freedoms as they related to diplomatic privileges. While Catholicism had been the accepted faith of European polities for centuries, Philip may have believed that he was within his right to refuse the religious practice of a dissenting faith, but that Elizabeth had to allow for Catholic practice because this was customary. These arguments were not entirely new, as in 1551, the English ambassador to the Imperial court, Sir Richard Morison, greatly offended Charles V for

⁶⁷ Adair, *Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors*, p. 183.

⁶⁸ Bell, ‘John Man’, p. 88.

⁶⁹ Frey and Frey, *History of Diplomatic Immunity*, pp. 177-8.

⁷⁰ Bell, ‘John Man’, p. 88; See also Albert J. Loomie, ‘The Armadas and the Catholics of England’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 59/3 (1973), pp. 385-403.

⁷¹ Bell, ‘John Man’, p. 89.

⁷² ‘los ingleses no fueran parte para ello’; CODOIN, xci, p. 144.

demanding that he be allowed to practice his Protestant faith as a matter of reciprocity.⁷³ Additionally, Philip did not possess other resident embassies in Protestant nations, while Elizabeth frequently sent diplomatic representation to Catholic countries, making him less familiar with allowing alternative religious practices. Man even petitioned Philip to allow him greater religious privileges, arguing in 1566 that he should have an English chaplain in his home so that he would enjoy the ‘the same ceremonies and rites’ he did in England.⁷⁴ Man thus argued that Elizabeth permitting Silva to hear Mass set a precedent for his own treatment in Spain, while Philip’s reluctance further soured Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations.

The Man episode also highlights the rhetoric surrounding the limitations of ambassadorship that would later impact the Spanish embassies in England. Philip thus wrote to Silva that ‘I will always welcome an Ambassador and treat them well as is required by our friendship and brotherhood, in so far as he does his part, which is only that he does not exceed the limits of his position’.⁷⁵ This sentiment was reiterated by Alba writing to Henry Cobham in December 1575, who had hoped to re-establish the English embassy in Spain, as Alba argued that the English embassy in Spain had always sought to preserve friendship ‘until the time of John Man who, for having exceeded [his position], was forced by His Catholic Majesty to leave these Kingdoms...[Elizabeth] understood well why it was done so according to such reason’.⁷⁶ The episode thus had lasting implications for Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations and how ambassadors and rulers discussed religious privileges and reciprocal treatment. For example, in

⁷³ Tracey A. Sowerby, *Renaissance and Reform in Tudor England: The Careers of Sir Richard Morison, c.1513-1556* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 199-200.

⁷⁴ BL Cotton MS Vespasian C VII, fo. 299r-v.

⁷⁵ ‘que al Embajador que me enviare le haré siempre el buen acogimiento y tratamiento que requiere nuestra amistad y hermandad, haciendo él de su parte lo que debe, que solamente es que no exceda de los límites de su cargo’; CODOIN, xc, p. 90.

⁷⁶ ‘hasta tiempo de Juan Man que por haber excedido dello, fué forzado S.M. Católica á mandarle salir destos Reinos...lo tomó á bien por haberse hecho con tanta razon’; CODOIN, xci, p. 109.

response to the Man incident, in 1577 John Smith had been sent to Madrid on a special mission and formally requested that Philip let ‘the Ambassadors of England be allowed to live with their families in this court in accordance to the laws of their home country, only in their private residence’.⁷⁷ Thus, there was a presumed need to determine and request who enjoyed inviolability and immunity, rather than strictly rely on reciprocity as, in the context of religious privileges, this had competing interpretations.

More than a simple principle of reciprocity, Man’s case set a precedent that could be cited if the Spaniards complained about English restrictions of their religious freedom and influenced discussions of the treatment of Spanish ambassadors in England. It also helped establish a rhetoric of seeking expulsion if an ambassador was believed to have gone beyond the boundaries of their privileges and position. Despite the Spanish ambassadors in England subsequently engaging in far worse transgressions against England than Man had committed against Spain, discussions of the Man incident illuminated ideas of jurisdiction over resident ambassadors. After the discovery of Spes’s involvement in the Ridolfi plot, in December 1571 Spes wrote to Alba that he had been asked to leave within three days with no concessions because Philip had refused to speak with Man or accept Man’s petitions when he was asked to leave Spain in 1568.⁷⁸ While the greater severity of Spes’s crime was evident, Spes still argued that the treatment of one ambassador had set a precedent for the treatment of another, highlighting his own conception of reciprocity in diplomacy. Ultimately, the Spanish ambassadors were acutely aware of how their counterparts were treated abroad because of its

⁷⁷ ‘los Embajadores de Inglaterra se permita ellos con sus familias puedan vivir en esta córte conforme á las leyes de su patria, tan solamente en su posada privadamente’; CODOIN, xci, p. 153.

⁷⁸ CODOIN, xci, p. 530.

potential impact of their own privileges and inviolability, demonstrating the negotiability of diplomatic immunity and the competing interpretations of their boundaries.

Debates over Diplomatic Immunity and Ambassadorial Handbooks

Amidst the uncertainty and negotiability of the limitations of ambassadorship, attempts to codify ambassadorship and immunity began partly in response to the difficulties surrounding the Spanish embassies in England. Eventually in 1584, the Spanish ambassadorial presence in England was ended with Bernardino de Mendoza's expulsion for his involvement in the Throckmorton plot. Like the Ridolfi plot, the Throckmorton plot sought to depose Elizabeth in favour of Mary, Queen of Scots, and to restore Catholicism in England. Sir Francis Throckmorton was subsequently arrested and executed for orchestrating the plot, and his communication with Mendoza incriminated the Spanish ambassador, leading to Mendoza's expulsion. While the plot itself has been widely discussed, primarily within analyses of Catholic plots and the fears of a Catholic conspiracy, how the theoretical discourses and treatises written shortly thereafter encompassed ongoing negotiations regarding diplomatic privilege has yet to be fully untangled.⁷⁹

Harming or committing a crime against one's host monarch was widely understood as a punishable offence, however, conspiracy could be interpreted differently and any transgression still prompted questions about who possessed the authority to punish an offending ambassador. The Mendoza case, therefore, helped further develop political thought on the nature of an embassy as theorists began to incorporate discussions of plots and the limitations of an ambassador's immunity in their treatises. Spes had already been implicated in the Ridolfi plot

⁷⁹ See Alford, *The Watchers*; Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?*; Stephen Budiansky, *Her Majesty's Spymaster: Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Birth of Modern Espionage* (New York, 2006).

over a decade before Mendoza, but the issues of what to do, how to punish Mendoza, and even if Elizabeth could punish Mendoza were still debatable and led the Privy Council to refer to two legal scholars for advice: Alberico Gentili and Jean Hotman. Thus, Gentili and Hotman's advice regarding Mendoza's treatment, and the treatises on diplomatic conduct to emerge thereafter attempted to serve as a process of codifying previously negotiable diplomatic privileges and immunity. This ultimately provides unique insight into the recognised limitations of diplomatic immunity and code of conduct, and elucidates the assumptions that had previously underpinned immunity and privileges.

Alberico Gentili was an Italian jurist living in England who taught law at the University of Oxford.⁸⁰ Jean Hotman, Marquis de Villers-St-Paul, was a French diplomat educated at Oxford, and worked as one of Earl of Leicester's secretaries.⁸¹ Gentili is now best known for his contribution to the conception of the law of nations, relying on earlier ideas of natural law, Roman law, and the supremacy of sovereignty to formulate his framework.⁸² Gentili and Hotman ultimately recommended expulsion rather than execution, and Mendoza was not formally tried, a seemingly radical decision.⁸³ Several of the ancient texts often utilised by early modern thinkers interested in diplomacy had outlined that ambassadors who plotted against a monarch would have their diplomatic privileges and immunity revoked. For instance, Theodatus, a sixth-century ruler of the Ostrogoth kingdom, argued 'that it is lawful to kill an

⁸⁰ Artemis Gause, 'Gentili, Alberico (1552-1608)', ODNB (Oct. 17, 2021) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10522>.

⁸¹ See G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *Jean Hotman's English Connection* (Amsterdam, 1990).

⁸² Rafael Domingo and Giovanni Minnucci, 'Alberico Gentili and the Secularization of the Law of Nations', in Rafael Domingo and John Witte Jr. (eds), *Christianity and Global Law: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2020), p. 98.

⁸³ Joanna Craigwood, 'Sidney, Gentili, and the Poetics of Embassy', in Robin Adams and Rosanna Cox (eds), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 85.

ambassador, if he conspires against the Prince to whom he is sent'.⁸⁴ Gentili and Hotman had thus deviated from previous thought in their decision. The Privy Council abided by their verdict and Mendoza returned to Spain, leaving the Spanish embassy in England unoccupied until the Jacobean period. Mendoza, however, faced no ramifications in Spain and was subsequently named Philip's ambassador to France, indicating that Philip did not believe him to be an unfit ambassador. Gentili and Hotman eventually published treatises that in part explained their recommendation to expel Mendoza, *De Legationibus Libri Tres* and *The Ambassador* respectively.⁸⁵ These texts thus showcase the process of deciding the limitations of ambassadorship and the factors that should influence the jurisdiction of monarchs on resident embassies when diplomatic relations broke down.

The exact nature of their discussions of whether to expel Mendoza or not, and the degree to which either men influenced one another or the final decision, however, is unclear. Later in Hotman's career, he would assert that he had come to his conclusions without the consultation of others and that it was an honour to have authorities seek out his guidance on the matter.⁸⁶ Early editions of Hotman's treatise also make no mention of Gentili or his part in the legal decisions of the case.⁸⁷ Gentili, however, noted in *De Legationibus* that the discussions had also taken place with the Earls of Leicester and Pembroke and did not claim to have been directly consulted or the deciding factor in Mendoza's expulsion.⁸⁸ Therefore there was a multitude of opinions and legal experiences that helped determine the verdict and paved the way for further

⁸⁴ Quoted in Richard Zouch, *A dissertation concerning the punishment of ambassadors, who transgress the laws of the countries where they reside: founded upon the judgment of the celebrated Hugo Grotius*, tr. D. J. Gent (London, 1717), p. 28.

⁸⁵ See Alberico Gentili, *De Legationibus Libri Tres* (London, 1585); Hotman, *The Ambassador*.

⁸⁶ Mordechai Feingold, 'What's in a Date? Alberico Gentili and the Genesis of *De Legationibus Libri Tres*', *Notes and Queries*, 64/2 (2017), p. 313.

⁸⁷ Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, p. 399.

⁸⁸ Feingold, 'What's in a Date?', p. 316.

theoretical discussions as these tracts carefully considered Mendoza's case in the framework of representing a sovereign.⁸⁹

Gentili's *De Legationibus Libri Tres* makes the argument that an ambassador who commits a major offence should be expelled, but not put to death as this measure would be excessive.⁹⁰ Thus, Gentili prioritised immediate political order, and hoped to avoid an international incident. Hotman recalled in his own writings not instantly considering expulsion, but urging the English government to inquire whether Philip intended to renounce Mendoza.⁹¹ It is unclear if Gentili agreed with Hotman at the time, as Gentili later argued that the monarch of the accused ambassador should be prepared to give the offended monarch jurisdiction or immediately recall the ambassador for punishment in his home polity.⁹² Gentili and Hotman, while arguing that the civil laws of the host country (i.e. local domestic laws) did not apply to a foreign ambassador, subsequently implied that an ambassador was anyway subject to a law of nations or general code of conduct which was meant to maintain the international order.⁹³ The emphasis on political order, and the assumption or hope of monarchs recognising their own ambassador's misdeeds in order to recall them, thus reveals a perception that monarchs also shared in the responsibility to maintain amity, a stance that could implicitly also blame Philip's lack of engagement amidst deteriorating Anglo-Spanish relations.

The recommendation for expulsion carefully considered the nature of Mendoza's crime and was novel, highlighting how plans and concrete actions differed in the context of a diplomatic offence. It was clear that Gentili, amongst other jurists, considered conspiracy

⁸⁹ Craigwood, 'Sidney, Gentili, and the Poetics of Embassy', p. 89.

⁹⁰ Adair, *Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors*, p. 18.

⁹¹ Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, p. 399.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 455.

against a sovereign as the most severe crime an ambassador could commit.⁹⁴ Gentili did, however, argue for Mendoza's expulsion despite the severity of the crime, because he believed that punishing Mendoza would prescribe only to civil law, and not natural law as punishing a foreigner for a failed conspiracy would go beyond a country's limits to its own defence.⁹⁵ He did clarify that had the conspiracy been successful, the ambassador could be put to death.⁹⁶ Gentili explained the decision by differentiating between mere plans and concrete actions against a monarch, and wrote disapprovingly of the Duke of Milan who had executed a French ambassador on the charge of plotting a revolution.⁹⁷ The charge of conspiracy did not clearly indicate if the offending ambassador's sovereign was also involved, or even aware in the plot.⁹⁸ This highlights the limitations of considering an ambassador as an anamorphic representation of their sovereign, and differentiates the ambassador's actions and intentions from their ruler. In extreme cases, an ambassador's transgressions could be blamed on their personal self in order to attempt to maintain diplomatic relations between polities, thus considering the ambassador's actions as only their individual conduct rather than official ambassadorial conduct.

The considerations of the supremacy or jurisdiction of civil laws or foreign monarchs thus raise the question of how Mendoza's case impacted contemporary thoughts on diplomatic immunity, punishment, and inviolability from jurists across Europe. Regarding immunities, Hotman maintained that it should be widely understood that 'the person of an ambassador hath in all ages...[been] inviolable'.⁹⁹ This conception of inviolability was thus extended to members of the ambassador's household as Hotman argued that if an ambassador 'hath no jurisdiction

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 395.

⁹⁵ Alberico Gentili, *De Legationibus Libri Tres*, tr. Gordon J. Laing (New York, 1924), p. 111.

⁹⁶ Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, pp. 397-8.

⁹⁷ Richard Langhorne, 'Alberico Gentili on Diplomacy', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 4/3 (2009), p. 314.

⁹⁸ Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, p. 450.

⁹⁹ Hotman, *Ambassador*, p. 54.

over those of his owne householde, he hath lesse over the other subjects of his Master'.¹⁰⁰ Discussions of the ambassadorial household as they related to the ambassador's privileges were thus beginning to emerge in the aftermath of the challenges explored in this chapter. Gentili also upheld the idea of the inviolability of the individual ambassador.¹⁰¹ Hotman ultimately ascribed to the idea that home monarchs held jurisdiction over their ambassadors when they were abroad, as he explained that ambassadors sent to foreign nations were still 'nothing lesse the subjects of their naturall Lord, not anything lesse to be ordered by justice by him' if they committed an offence.¹⁰² However, this did not include every possible transgression, as 'in bargaining they [the ambassador or their servants] ought to be subject to the jurisdiction of the place where they are'.¹⁰³ Therefore, some believed that different actions or offences should be subjected to different jurisdictions and bodies of authority.

Mendoza's case ultimately became part of wider discussions across Europe as various European thinkers attempted to codify conceptions of immunity through examinations of both ancient texts and contemporary cases. Lucien Bély has examined how various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theorists, including Hotman, believed that the ambassador's residence was an asylum that existed between the legal spheres of the laws of their host country, home country, and the international order.¹⁰⁴ Bély has examined how it was commonly accepted that an ambassador's servants also enjoyed their master's special privileges.¹⁰⁵ The rationale of extending privileges to one's household was that an ambassador had to protect the members of their household and maintain good order in a similar nature to princes maintaining order in their

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁰¹ Fedele, *Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne*, p. 393.

¹⁰² Hotman, *Ambassador*, p. 69.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰⁴ See Lucien Bély, 'L'Ambassade et ses Immunités chez les Juristes de Langue Française (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle)', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 119/1 (2007), pp. 17-30.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

society.¹⁰⁶ Yet, there were still competing understandings of the limitations of one's immunity. For example, Francis Thynne, writing in 1578, argued that an ambassador's 'Immunitie should be such as they ought not to be touched for any offence in their Legation, no not for conspiracie against another Prince'.¹⁰⁷ Daniela Frigo has showcased that while ambassadors were entitled to the inviolability of their person and their home, defining such immunities was not a peaceful process but was instead marked by legal disputes and considerations of how monarchs exercised their jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸ The process of determining one's immunity, and its boundaries, began to be able to rely on a genre of theoretical literature responding to breakdowns in diplomatic relations. However, immunities were still determined by each monarch and influenced by their understandings of custom, religious freedom, or reciprocity and over time drew from different ideas or experiences. For example, when Italian jurists of the seventeenth century started to define extraterritoriality, they relied on conceptions of courtesy.¹⁰⁹

The verdict of the Mendoza case also helped jurists consider the ramifications and difficulties of cross-confessional diplomacy more generally, helping to codify the place of religion in diplomacy and whether religious privileges were integral to diplomatic relations. Hotman was clear in *The Ambassador* that religion was a driving force behind international relations and diplomatic conduct as he argued that 'Religion hath had more force with some Princes than monie: [w]hereof in our time, wee have hadde experience'.¹¹⁰ In *De Legationibus*, Gentili maintained that ambassadors had an important role in foreign relations and that their embassies should be unaffected by religious change or difference.¹¹¹ He likened relations

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁰⁷ Francis Thynne, *The Perfect Ambassador: treating of the antiquitie, priveledges, and behaviour of men belonging to that function* (London, 1652), p. 82.

¹⁰⁸ Frigo, 'Ambasciatori, Ambasciata e Immunità Diplomatiche', pp. 31-50.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹⁰ Hotman, *Ambassador*, p. 37.

¹¹¹ Domingo and Minnucci, 'Alberico Gentili', p. 100.

between Protestant and Catholic sovereigns in a European context to the already established diplomatic relations between Catholic rulers and the Ottomans.¹¹² Gentili, however, was not accounting for the difficulties of religious change as Europe was no longer a unitary Catholic environment, and thus now contended with religious difference. This distinction between religion and political relations may have also been influenced by Gentili's own bias. It is difficult to overlook how Gentili's perspective may have stemmed from his experience of immigrating to England from Italy due to his Protestant religious leanings.¹¹³ Gentili, therefore, aimed to separate the international order and diplomatic relations from religion, while still upholding the importance of both.¹¹⁴ Ultimately, there was a hope that diplomatic relations need not heavily consider religious difference after religion had played a substantial factor in the difficulties of the Spanish embassies in England.

Eventually in 1620, the first major Spanish treatise on the nature of ambassadorship was published by Juan Antonio Vera y Zúñiga. Zúñiga's text echoed some of the thoughts of early modern jurists, namely, that he also attributed many of the ambassador's rights and privileges to ancient models of diplomacy.¹¹⁵ Zúñiga did however implicitly respond to the difficulties faced by the Spanish embassies in England. For example, he argued that merchants did not constitute ambassadors and should not be used as such.¹¹⁶ While he did not mention Antonio de Guaras by name, it is unlikely that Zúñiga would have been unaware of Guaras's time as *chargé d'affaires* in the absence of an official ambassador. Additionally, while Zúñiga subscribed to the notion that an ambassador was effectively two people, one representing the monarch and

¹¹² Langhorne, 'Alberico Gentili on Diplomacy', p. 315.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 316.

¹¹⁴ Domingo and Minnucci, 'Alberico Gentili', p. 104.

¹¹⁵ Juan Antonio Vera Zúñiga y Figueroa, *El Enbaxador* (2 vols, Madrid, 1620), i, pp. 39-40.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., i, p. 25.

one representing themselves, he clarified that each self retained two different modes of actions.¹¹⁷ This suggests that a ruler could potentially defend their ambassador in the event that the ambassador offended their host monarch, by arguing that the official self of an ambassador could not be held accountable for the actions of their personal self, thus preserving diplomatic relations.

Faced with the question of an ambassador who deals with a monarch that lacks the true religion, Zúñiga argued that one should be ready to write against their tyranny and spread the truth.¹¹⁸ However, he did not codify the limitations of this given the intricacies of diplomatic privilege. To Zúñiga, personal privileges and immunity naturally extended to the members of the ambassador's household, yet, he also argued that steps should be taken to ensure that the ambassador and his servants would all be suitable to adjust to life at their host court without annoyance or provocation.¹¹⁹ Zúñiga posited that 'in faith of the freedom that they [the ambassador's household] will be allowed, they are more infamous than free', and thus would be carefully watched.¹²⁰ Choosing a Catholic bishop as one's resident ambassador in a newly converted Protestant nation, as Philip did when he selected Quadra as ambassador to England in 1560, would thus be viewed disapprovingly as Zúñiga demonstrated his awareness of the surveillance placed on ambassadors and the potential for religious strife.

These texts ultimately showcase an ongoing dialogue regarding the jurisdiction of sovereigns, the distinction between the ambassador's two selves, and the place of religion in diplomacy. Responding to the breakdowns and challenges presented by the Spanish embassies in Elizabethan England, these texts began to critically assess and challenge predetermined

¹¹⁷ Ibid., i, pp. 116-7.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., i, p. 44.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., ii, pp. 28-9.

¹²⁰ 'en fê de la libertada que se les á de permitir, son mas insolentes que libres'; Ibid., ii, pp. 28-9.

customs and assumptions of diplomatic privileges and immunity, demonstrating how these concepts were negotiable and flexible. While most thinkers asserted the importance of peace in arguing that diplomatic immunities were intrinsically necessary to conduct one's duties, this could be disassociated from one's representative self in order to pursue peace. What emerges from Mendoza's expulsion, rather than the end to a Spanish resident embassy in England, is a complicated and evolving discussion of the role of ambassadors in diplomatic relations and the ways in which they could or could not operate within the international order.

Conclusion

Issues surrounding the limitations of diplomatic privilege thus reveal the foundations and assumptions behind diplomatic immunity, and highlight how the changing political and religious make up of Europe challenged such privileges and how they were negotiated. The jurisdiction of foreign monarchs over the ambassadors resident in their courts thus became a contentious issue as it was ambiguous if and how privileges and immunity pertained to the inviolability of the individual ambassador, the space of their embassy, or both. The surveillance and interception of the ambassadors' correspondence, and the policing of the ambassadors' embassy chapel could therefore be understood as breaches of diplomatic immunity, but to an unclear extent. Without codification, monarchs turned to reciprocity to determine an ambassador's privileges, especially regarding religious practice, showcasing the more informal nature of early modern diplomacy. The breakdown of English diplomatic presence in Spain therefore elucidates understandings of privileges and immunity. Philip's perception of reciprocity, as it pertained to Man's religious practice and private comments, ultimately influenced Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations and the rhetoric surrounding his ambassadors'

freedoms in England as Elizabeth protested that Man had not been treated equitably. Additionally, while Mendoza's involvement in the Throckmorton plot was widely understood to have exceeded the boundaries of his privileges, it was unclear how the ambassador was to be dealt with, who ultimately held authority over an ambassador, and how crimes committed by ambassadors were understood. The turbulence of the Spanish embassies to Elizabethan England ultimately held unparalleled influence on discussions and understandings of immunity and ambassadorship.

The writings and diplomatic treatises to emerge from Hotman and Gentili after they considered the case, and from jurists on the continent, subsequently demonstrate how there was no universal understanding of diplomatic immunity and that privileges were contingent on other political factors or personal relations. Poor individual relationships proved highly influential in diplomatic relations and were resilient. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Cecil was quick to write to Mendoza, then stationed as the Spanish ambassador in Paris, as if he were a papist, in what can be interpreted as mockery.¹²¹ The role of individual ambassadors, and their understanding of the nature of ambassadorship, in early modern diplomatic relations can thus not be diminished. Foreign monarchs continually negotiated how ambassadors' public and private selves could operate in a foreign court, constantly skewing and redefining the nature of ambassadorship and its boundaries.

¹²¹ BL Lansdowne MS 103, fo. 55r-v.

Conclusion

This thesis has ultimately showcased the interconnectedness and interdependence of Spanish diplomatic networks, while simultaneously illuminating the place and relevance of Elizabethan England in early modern Spanish diplomacy, a place that had long been disregarded in oversimplistic narratives of inevitable conflict. It has thus revealed how the Spanish ambassadors in England contributed to wider European diplomatic practices and defined both conflict and collaboration. Maria Rodriguez-Salgado has aptly questioned why historical literature has overlooked the relative peace that continued until the Spanish Armada in 1588 in favour of narrative of overarching conflict, arguing that the Anglo-Spanish war was certainly not inevitable.¹ While Elizabethan Anglo-Spanish relations have been predominantly studied within the framework of conflict, there have been some earlier attempts to understand the dynamism and mutual exchange between England and Spain. The works of Albert Loomie, written in the 1960s, may thus be seen as an early precursor to recent interest in sixteenth-century Anglo-Spanish cultural exchanges.² This thesis has brought the Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relationship into conversation with the New Diplomatic History and confessional diplomacy to understand the place of Philip's embassies to Elizabethan England within the diplomatic, religious, and political changes of the period. Engaging with cultural historical methodologies and utilising an actor-centred approach has served as a meaningful contribution to the study of early modern diplomacy and showcased diplomatic processes that defined the early modern world well beyond Anglo-Spanish relations.

¹ Maria J. Rodriguez-Salgado, 'Paz Ruidosa, Guerra Sorda. Las Relaciones de Felipe II e Inglaterra', in Luis Antonio Ribot García (ed), *La Monarquía de Felipe II a Debate* (Madrid, 2000), pp. 63-119.

² See Albert Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (New York, 1963).

Given the importance of diplomatic epistolary networks in the circulation of information, the omission of serious enquiry into the information gathering strategies and communication practices of Iberian diplomats has previously hindered historians' understanding of Spanish diplomacy. More than simply remedying this omission, this thesis has proven that the lived experiences and priorities of diplomatic representatives determined key aspects of early modern Spanish governance and the circulation of information, and thus must be considered as an integral part of global histories of the Spanish empire. The ambassadors' intelligence gathering helped inform Spain's political strategy in both the Dutch Revolt and in responding to Dom António, highlighting the ambassadors' place in Spanish imperial histories and their contribution to Philip II's attempts to consolidate his empire. Emphasising the ambassadors' individual agency, cultural activities, and the performance of their diplomatic duties as they reacted to broader political issues, this thesis has therefore addressed Rodríguez-Salgado's concerns to broaden our understanding of England in Spanish diplomacy and the practices underpinning diplomatic engagement. The Spanish embassies in Elizabethan England ultimately elucidate the processes of learning to conduct cross-confessional diplomacy in a European context, and challenge historians to engage with questions regarding how diplomats balanced their own perceived responsibilities with their monarch's wishes and instructions. By doing so, we further our understanding of how individual ambassadors fit within broader political processes, and the considerations and assumptions behind their status and intelligence gathering strategies.

While it is impossible to disregard the tensions and difficulties of the Spanish embassies, especially those embroiled in conspiracy, it would be naive to continue to characterise the

ambassadors as Garrett Mattingly's ambassadors of 'ill will'.³ This characterisation has reduced the ethos of early modern Spanish diplomacy and governance to purposefully inciting conflict, eroding the nuances of how ambassadors conceptualised their diplomatic missions and faced considerations of their duties, Philip's empire, and the state of Catholicism in Europe. Indeed, there was certainly no shortage of reason for earlier military involvement, as the tumultuous embassy of John Man in Spain, England's support of Spain's political enemies, concerns of pirating, and the Spanish ambassadors' involvement in conspiracies against Elizabeth could each have served as justification for acute military intervention prior to the Anglo-Spanish war. However, given the extent of England's importance to Spanish diplomatic networks, diplomatic relations persisted and were driven by individual ambassadors who considered both Philip's foreign policy and their own perceptions.

Part I has shown the core foundations and rationale of early modern Spanish diplomacy, revealing the administrative practices of the Spanish government and the sociability of ambassadorship. Crucially, Part I has argued that ambassadorship and diplomatic practice was far more flexible and ambiguous than has previously been assumed in teleological narratives of the supposed professionalization of ambassadorship during the early modern period. In reality, despite formal diplomatic function and protocol, an ambassador's individual conduct and relationships influenced early modern politics and thus an actor-centred approach has enabled this thesis to uncover how an ambassador's cultural activities were shaped by their diplomatic needs. The ambassadors' relationships with other Catholic ambassadors, particularly the French resident ambassadors, is indicative of the entanglement between formal diplomatic representation and social ties in their pursuit of precedence and information. This thesis has

³ Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, pp. 198-219.

therefore contributed to a more multifaceted and interdisciplinary study of early modern ambassadorship, and encouraged the field to engage with further cultural studies given the demonstrated importance of an ambassador's cultural activities. Isabella Lazzarini's assertion that diplomacy was a flexible political activity, encompassing social and communication practices previously considered separate, has thus been supported throughout this study.⁴

There was a distinct epistolary culture which the ambassadors operated within and helped define over time, formulating communication networks that informed major policy decisions in Madrid. While scholars may be inclined to read diplomatic correspondence as a conversation, the epistolary culture and practices uncovered here reveal that there was another layer of readership as demonstrated by the material indications of the Spanish secretariat's interactions with, cataloguing, and editing of correspondence that was meant to enable the information to be utilised well beyond a letter's addressed recipient. In its examination of the ambassadors' correspondence, this thesis has discovered the previously unexplored administrative practices of the Spanish government, advancing our understanding of the institutional mechanisms of the Iberian empire and how many of these dispatches were the basis of the circulation of news. Amidst recent scholarship on the institutions underpinning early modern Iberian governance and rule, this thesis has therefore contributed to discussions of both information networks and empire as it has highlighted how diplomatic dispatches were disseminated and used to formulate Spanish policy and Madrid's response to crises such as the Dutch Revolt.⁵

⁴ Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict*, p. 4.

⁵ See Pedro Cardim, Antonio Feros, and Geatano Sabatini, 'The Political Constitution of the Iberian Monarchies', in Fernando Bouza, Pedro Cardim, and Antonio Feros (eds), *The Iberian World: 1450-1820* (London, 2019), pp. 34-61.

Beyond correspondence, the ambassadors' social interactions were also part of much larger political dialogues as both their official diplomatic duties and private conversations were rooted in their representative character, proving the importance of the Spanish ambassadors' individual actions. Thus, Chapter 2 has argued that the distinction between their public official self and their personal self was muddled as ambassadors represented their monarchs beyond court environments and more intimate interactions were still in pursuit of political aims and information gathering. An examination of the Spanish ambassadors' conflict or cooperation with other ambassadors in England during Elizabeth's marriage negotiations demonstrates how individual social interactions were part of intelligence gathering strategies, and how relationships were vulnerable to political circumstance. Diplomacy was a political dialogue manipulated by both monarchs and foreign ambassadors. While the ambassadors continually used their interactions to gather information, there was a performative and theatrical dimension to the ambassadors' audiences and conversations. By always considering their monarch's esteem, the court can be understood as a forum for international disputes as ambassadors both embodied and actualised the international order through their day-to-day activities.

Additionally, the classification of an early modern ambassador itself has also proven to be contentious. Thus, this thesis has accounted for and showcased the influence of the diplomatic activities of sub-ambassadorial figures previously excluded from diplomatic history. Ambassadorship could break down, giving rise to sub-ambassadorial figures such as Antonio de Guaras who still attempted to access court, share information, and influence policy. While this aided Spain in the aftermath of Guerau de Spes's expulsion as Guaras could serve some diplomatic function, it also allowed for Dom António to claim the legitimacy of a recognised monarch by sending his own representatives to England. The New Diplomatic History has thus

proven critical in encouraging the study of sub-ambassadorial figures, though further research on the ambassadorial household and secretariat is needed to uncover the full extent of these actors' political influence.

Part II has ultimately shown the principals of early modern diplomacy in practice, exemplifying the flexibility of diplomatic strategy in reaction to political circumstance or larger crises through various cases studies. Each case study has thus, in various contexts, highlighted the ambassadors' intelligence gathering strategies, how they utilised their representative character in their interactions with others, and how the information in their dispatches sought to inform policy decisions. Through an examination of their relationships at court, diplomatic priorities, and reactions to crises, it has become clear that the ambassadors held competing diplomatic priorities to Philip and often pursued confessional modes of diplomacy. However, they struggled with elements for its realisation and had to manage a reality of speaking to Protestants and representing Philip in a cross-confessional setting. Rather than dismissing their conduct to a disregard for Anglo-Spanish relations, this thesis has argued against narratives of the strict secularisation of diplomacy in the period to showcase the ambassadors' individual agency, their religious concerns, and understandings of confessional diplomacy. These case studies have thus placed the English embassy within both the larger religious concerns and acute political crises of early modern Spain.

Crucially, Chapter 4 has revealed the importance of cross-confessional diplomacy and the processes of learning to conduct diplomatic relations shortly after the Reformation. It has showcased that, perhaps unexpectedly, the ambassadors made genuine attempts at court to foster working relationships with Protestant courtiers because this was beneficial to their diplomatic duties and ability to spread information. Narratives of perpetual conflict have otherwise

dismissed the possibility of interactions with English Protestants, and while these relationships could be highly fraught, it has been proven here that the ambassadors interacted with William Cecil and other Protestant courtiers to a far greater degree than has previously been assumed. This study ultimately complements existing scholarship on Anglo-Spanish relations during Mary I's reign and the seventeenth century that have challenged narratives of antagonism. Indeed, recent works have strived to demonstrate the exaggeration of Hispanophobia in early modern English historiography, and build upon arguments that Philip operated more as Mary's co-monarch rather than king consort.⁶ Additionally, the importance of England and Spain to one another's domestic policy has emerged in examinations of Anglo-Spanish diplomacy in the seventeenth century.⁷ Studying the Spanish embassies and Anglo-Spanish relations of the Elizabethan period thus similarly reveals meaningful diplomatic engagement. While shared confessional identities have emerged as key considerations in the ambassadors' information gathering strategies and willingness to form diplomatic relationships, it was by no means their only consideration. At all times, the ambassadors balanced religious toleration, political goals, personal esteem, and national allegiances when they conducted their business, opening discussions about the negotiations and compromises behind cross-confessional interactions.

This thesis has also disproven assumptions that ambassadors, despite their representative character, were accurate anamorphic characterisations of their monarch, devoid of individual beliefs, interests, or agendas. While Geoffrey Parker has demonstrated that Philip II championed himself as a Catholic king and relied on divine intervention to achieve his goals, their correspondence shows that despite some shared recognition that the preservation of English

⁶ See Samson, *Mary and Philip*; Glyn Redworth, "'Matters Impertinent to Women': Male and Female Monarchy under Philip and Mary", *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), pp. 597-613.

⁷ See Fernández, *England and Spain*.

Catholicism was a key part of Philip II's cause, in reality his ambassadors in England hoped in vain for decisive action.⁸ The importance of their individual perspectives in shaping their diplomatic conduct becomes evident in their unwavering support of English Catholics, and hope for a Catholic revival in England despite this not being strictly compatible with Philip II's own political strategy. The role of individual ambassadors in shaping early modern politics, and the key differences between them and their rulers, can no longer be overlooked or diminished. The case of Mary, Queen of Scots, has also illustrated the endurance of confessionally driven modes of diplomacy and the ambassadors' perception of Philip II's universal Catholic mission. Fundamentally, there was a discrepancy between the ambassadors' concerns and king's actions that has previously remained unexplored, prompting new discussions of ambassadors' individual agency and the difficulty of governing such a vast diplomatic network.

As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the ambassadors also engaged with larger political crises from England, thus contextualising England within Iberian politics. There were extensive, and overlapping, religious and political crises for the Spanish ambassadors in England to respond to and gather information about, allowing historians to understand how diplomatic networks and practices work, and the relevance of England to Spanish diplomacy in greater detail than when diplomacy operated smoothly and without event. Both the Dutch Revolt and challenge of Dom António threatened Spanish rule, and in each instance, English support of these threats could de-stabilise Habsburg authority. Victory was not assured, and historians should not diminish the ambassadors' anxieties or sense of crisis as their efforts to illuminate and combat English involvement elucidate the perceived vulnerabilities of the Spanish empire and the tangible threat of an international coalition against Philip. In the wake of these crises,

⁸ See Parker, 'Messianic Vision', pp. 167-221.

the ambassadors attempted to quickly adapt their diplomatic strategy to gather information from larger and informal information communities that included Dutchmen, prints, and Portuguese merchants. Therefore, these crises reveal the value of non-diplomatic information communities that ran parallel to court communities, and how ambassadors contended with the heterogeneity of the Iberian world. While the ambassadors could inherit shared diplomatic practices and culture, they would ultimately have to continually adapt their intelligence gathering strategies to include knowledgeable sources if they were to circulate news, again emphasising how information from England was valuable to early modern Spanish governance.

This thesis has therefore shown the interdependence, perseverance, and importance of Spanish diplomatic networks operating in Elizabethan England to refute linear narratives of the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations leading to military conflict. While it is important to reiterate that several of the Spanish embassies were tumultuous and ended in expulsion, these conflicts uniquely unveil the ambiguous assumptions behind ambassadorship and diplomatic conduct, prompting new developments in political thought and discussions on the role of ambassadors in the early modern world. Cross-confessional diplomacy, and the ambassadors' individual interpretations of whether or not to pursue cross-confessional relations presented real practical difficulties for their embassies and led them to supersede the limitations of their position and diplomatic privileges to support Catholic causes and conspire against Elizabeth. Though it was no question that any ambassadors who had conspired against a monarch would be punished, it was unclear whether England or Spain held legal jurisdiction over the ambassadors. The decision to expel Mendoza and the surrounding discussions have thus proven that diplomatic privilege and immunity were the result of a process of negotiation and should not be assumed. Their actions then went on to inform later understandings of diplomatic

privilege, immunity, and the purview of ecclesiastical and legal authorities on ambassadors far beyond Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations. Therefore, even within periods of conflict, the Spanish embassies should not be diminished to mere contributing factors to the Anglo-Spanish war, but instead used as a lens to observe the foundations and assumptions of ambassadorship and diplomatic privilege, and viewed as a conduit for broader developments in diplomatic practices and political discussion. Ultimately, this thesis has offered a new perspective on the Spanish empire through an examination of the individuals informing Spanish governance, and contributed to recent scholarly works on the Iberian world and Spanish diplomatic networks.⁹ It has therefore aligned Spanish imperial historiography with the interdisciplinary methodologies of the New Diplomatic History to reveal the tensions and broader considerations of previously overlooked ambassadorial agents, and critically introduced new discussions of cross-confessional diplomacy in Elizabethan Anglo-Spanish relations.

⁹ See Bouza, Cardim, and Feros (eds), *The Iberian World*.

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