Universidad de Valladolid

FACULTAD de FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS

DEPARTAMENTO de FILOLOGÍA INGLESA

Grado en Estudios Ingleses

TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

A Machiavellian Envoy: The Polemic Figure of Gondomar as an Ambassador in England

Nuria Sánchez Zurdo

Tutor: Berta Cano Echevarría

2016-2017

ABSTRACT

Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, the Count of Gondomar, was undoubtedly one of the most influential and controversial men ever seen at the seventeenth-century English Court. However, in a time when anti-Spanish views were being disseminated not only in England but all around the world, the Spanish ambassador's strategic abilities would not be commented precisely in a positive way by English people. This dissertation studies the process by which the Count of Gondomar was added to the Black Legend that circulated since the sixteenth century. By exploring Modern views on Gondomar together with Scott's political pamphlet *Vox Populi* (1620) and Middleton's play *A Game at Chesse* (1624), the analysis shows how a flesh and blood diplomat whose professional aim was the preservation of his home state was, mostly due to subtle propaganda, turned into nothing but an evil fictional character that incited hatred all over Europe.

Key words: *Gondomar, England, Spain, ambassador, anti-Spanish, seventeenth century*

Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, conde de Gondomar, fue indudablemente uno de los hombres más influyentes y controvertidos de la corte inglesa del siglo XVII. Sin embargo, en una época en la que se difundían opiniones antiespañolas no solo en Inglaterra sino en todo el mundo, las habilidades estratégicas del embajador español no serían comentadas positivamente por los ingleses. Esta tesis estudia el proceso mediante el cual el conde de Gondomar fue incorporado a la leyenda negra que circulaba desde el siglo XVI. A través del estudio de opiniones modernas sobre Gondomar, del panfleto político de Scott, *Vox Populi* (1620), y de la obra de teatro de Middleton, *A Game at Chesse* (1624), este análisis muestra cómo un diplomático de carne y hueso cuyo propósito profesional era preservar su país de origen fue, principalmente gracias a propaganda ingeniosa, convertido en un personaje ficticio que incitaba odio en toda Europa.

Palabras clave: *Gondomar, Inglaterra, España, embajador, antiespañol, siglo diecisiete*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Toward an early modern diplomatic officer

Western Europe Renaissance diplomacy had its cradle in Italy when the so-called Italian city-states burst the feudal ties and experienced a fabulous academic and artistic advancement. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, these competitive secular states questioned the notion of war as a synonym of success, since both victorious and defeated battles carried considerable losses. Because wars soon became less decisive and more civilized, and power started depending on agile politics that would prevent bloody conflicts, a continuous vigilance in foreign affairs became crucial. Thus, a new style of diplomacy emerged. From then on, the bravery of the general would be less valued than the strategic gambits of the diplomat, whose mission was to anticipate his rivals' movements by being both a secret negotiator and a public orator (Mattingly 55-63) because, as Mattingly claimed, "Diplomacy was for rulers; war for hired men" (62).

At the end of the fifteenth century the fact that princes served as their own ambassadors started to be seen as risky in Italy. Hence, although ceremonies and procedures remained the same in essence, a new kind of diplomatic officer appeared on the Italian stage: the resident ambassador (Mattingly 101-103, 107). This new diplomat, whose work was fully respected, was appointed and paid by his home government and he proved to be a more effective weapon in the struggle for power, as his main function was to preserve peace by maintaining friendship among rulers. For doing so, he had to provide his king two valuable things: allies and a continuous flow of foreign political news. Thus, writing about everything that could have any political implication was his basic duty because, above all, the Renaissance diplomat had to be both an observer and an analyst. Daily dispatches, frequent reports and final relations that intended to provide useful information to succeeding ambassadors were the basic kinds of informative papers to be sent to the home state (Mattingly 109-13).

As the early modern period began, resident embassies started being imitated throughout Europe and medieval diplomatic institutions were gradually consigned to oblivion (Mattingly 121). But the general revival based on economic developments, overseas explorations, new monarchies and huge empires came together with the age of

dynastic and religious conflicts, for which the invention of the printing press was going to play an important propagandistic role (Mattingly 123-24). France, Germany, Spain and England were not going to enjoy the isolation that Italy did from the rest of the European powers. Birth, marriage and death were the leading threads in the sixteenth century, the basis of a new kind of political strategy: the dynastic politics (Mattingly 124-26). Moreover, the imperialistic views of the most powerful countries increased tensions and competition. However, as war had started to be seen as a serious epidemic for the government, a new system of diplomatic connections among the European powers appeared to be indispensable. In this sense, the Spanish diplomatic service was one of the first to gain prestige, especially Ferdinand the Catholic's small corps of professional experts. Most of his resident ambassadors had at least some legal training and their salaries were increased as Ferdinand became aware of the considerable success that they brought to the crown. Sometimes the Catholic king even used his diplomats to discuss political techniques and strategies and, although they belonged to different social backgrounds, there was one thing that they all had in common: loyalty to their king (Mattingly 145-52).

The rest of the European powers soon settled a network of organized foreign offices as well. Subsequently, Charles V would deem England a key post mainly due to its strategic position, because having eyes and ears there meant the possibility of an offensive across the Somme in case of a war with France. Thus, Bernardino de Mesa, bishop of Elne, was sent to England in 1514. But the following ambassadors failed in their diplomatic missions when the divorce between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon proved unavoidable. Later on, another Anglo-imperial alliance was organized by Simon Renard, the marriage between Philip II and Mary I. However, when Charles V appeared to have succeeded in his effort of placing an iron ring around France, Mary Tudor died childless (Mattingly 187-90), and her half-sister's ascension to the English throne was about to bring new hostilities between England and Spain.

The beginning of the Elizabethan Era was marked by religious differences that overcame the dynastic politics and made the Anglo-Spanish relations start to drop sharply. Philip II embraced the English Catholics who went into exile while he seemed to study the idea of a Spanish invasion to England and a unity of belief. This political and religious situation led to a shift in the way European diplomats behaved. Their personal and ideological views were hard to be ignored, and the desire of both countries

to preserve peace gradually disappeared from their minds. What before had been understood as the moral qualities of the perfect ambassador –loyalty, prudence, temperance–, turned to conspiracy and espionage. The climate of mutual hatred was even more aggravated when Nicholas Throckmorton, Elizabeth's first ambassador in France, started to hear stories about conspiracies. Diego Guzmán de Silva managed to soften somehow the Anglo-Spanish tensions but his efforts to preserve peace failed when Guerau de Espés replaced him in the English post. After being accused of taking part on the Ridolfi Plot against Elizabeth, de Espés was expelled from England. The diplomatic relations between both countries did not seem to be able to worsen more until Bernardino de Mendoza appeared on the European chessboard. Initially Mendoza was capable to carry out a conciliatory behavior between Philip II and Elizabeth I, but later on he started acting more as spy than as diplomat. His hatred toward the English heretics led him to assume a chief role in the Throckmorton plot, so he was expelled from England in 1584. One year later the Anglo-Spanish War broke out, opening a period of twenty years without Anglo-Spanish diplomatic relations (Mattingly 193-96, 198-204).

After Philip's and Elizabeth's death, their successors proved clear willingness to sign peace between their countries. The first-hand contributions of Juan de Tassis y Acuña, 1st Count of Villamediana, to the signing of The Treaty of London (1604) helped to put an end to the war, which certainly softened the path to the following ambassadors. However, the anti-Spanish views that had been propagated through Europe during the politic and religious conflicts were going to hinder the establishment of a favorable system of diplomatic relations. Upon the arrival of Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña at the English court in 1613, the Spanish ambassador realized that overcoming the English prejudices toward the Spanish was going to be one of his first diplomatic missions, but he surely did not expect to become the main source of hatred himself. This dissertation intends to explore the anti-Spanish sentiment of that time, Modern views on Gondomar's embassies in London and especially the most notorious literary works of the envoy's English contemporaries, in order to show the process toward the creation of a real Machiavelli, the Count of Gondomar, one of the most legendary Spanish ambassadors ever known who saw himself turned into nothing but an evil fictional character of the seventeenth-century England.

1.

The Count of Gondomar: his two embassies in London.

Modern literature has generally accepted the false propaganda presented by the contemporaries of the Count of Gondomar about the Spanish ambassador in London. According to Carter, by 1964 the seventeenth-century Machiavellian portrayal of Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, used mainly to spread a negative view on the envoy and his homeland, was still accepted and even rehearsed without even thinking about the authors and purpose behind these writings (191-92). Thomas Middleton's play *A Game at Chess* together with the considerable amount of anti-Spanish pamphlets such as Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* have certainly been extended in time, as if the Black Legend that Spain had to deal with several centuries ago would have to be still propagated. It is striking that even today many historians feel the necessity of restudying the documents related to Gondomar and James in order to prevent historical events from being freely interpreted and bound to the alleged manipulative gambits of Sarmiento over the English king. However, was James I just a puppet on a string? And, was Gondomar the Machiavellian figure that was build up during his times in England?

The Count of Gondomar's appointment as Spanish ambassador in London has been thoroughly studied for centuries. Thanks to letters such as the ones exchanged between Fray Juan López, Bishop of Monopoli, and Fray Diego de la Fuente, Gondomar's confessor, historians have been able to learn that the envoy's appointment was probably just a mere political strategy to ensure he would stay far from the Spanish Court. At the heart of this cunning tactic was the Duke of Lerma, Philip III's favorite, who saw in the Galician noble a competent man who could easily hinder his own pretensions at Court. Indeed, Gondomar was a well-cultivated, renowned and capable man among the Spanish courtiers, but so were others, such as Don Íñigo de Cárdenas, Don Baltasar de Zúñiga, Don Francisco de Castro or the Duke of Osuna, among many others who were sent to different European states to serve as Spanish ambassadors, governors or viceroys (Manso-Porto 19-20). Lerma's honorable appointment assured him, moreover, that Gondomar's fortune would decline, as the English embassy required vast expenses. Besides, considering the fragile situation of the Anglo-Spanish relations of that moment and the unsuccessful diplomacies of the previous ambassadors, it was highly probable that Sarmiento's diplomatic service would fail (Tobío 231). In

sum, that English embassy was nothing but a well thought poisoned gift, as it had been so the appointments of Cárdenas, Zúñiga, de Castro and Osuna (Bartolomé-Benito 71).

Gondomar's honorable manners were not only well-known by the Spanish courtiers but also by Sir John Digby, the English ambassador in Madrid at that time. As his friend, the Englishman expressed Gondomar his joy after learning about his newly appointed embassy (Tobío 244). Such was the personal sympathy between both men that upon Gondomar's arrival in London, the Spanish envoy would soon notice the effect of Digby's praises at the English Court. He would be awarded a pleasant welcome and James I would make him know he had been eager to meet him (Bartolomé-Benito 77).

Don Alonso de Velasco, a good friend of Gondomar, had been serving as Spanish ambassador in England by the time Sarmiento was appointed to succeed him. Before his arrival to the London embassy, Alonso had already warned Gondomar on numerous occasions that the Anglo-Spanish relations were walking on a tightrope. Moreover, the anti-Spanish sentiment was becoming fiercer and James appeared to start feeling attraction to it. Although affectionate, Alonso had shown his indecisiveness and halting diplomatic abilities. He had been ordered to substitute the gossipy and indiscreet Don Pedro de Zúñiga, but Alonso proved not to be prepared to solve the diplomatic problems that were emerging, and his bad health condition did not help to remedy the situation. England seemed to see Spain as weak and hesitant as its ambassador, so Spain truly needed a capable diplomat in London (Tobío 231-34).

As any other European ambassador, Gondomar was given explicit instructions to be followed, as well as a vast number of documents written by previous diplomats concerning the political, religious and social situation of England (Tobío 237-38). The Galician nobleman finally embarked on his mission on 18th July 1613, and he spent most of his journey meditating thoroughly about the details regarding the situation in the Protestant country. Among other instructions, he had been specifically ordered to punish the continuous and impermissible piracies of the English, notwithstanding these practices had been expressly banned in the Treaty of London (1604). But the Spanish envoy had been also ordered to be cautious with the matter of the Catholics in England, which was still a problematic issue that added grave tensions to the Anglo-Spanish relations. Gondomar had been provided with a list of secret Spanish pensioners as well,

obviously codified to prevent any intrusion into his most important documents (Tobío 245-46).

In any case, apart from all these diplomatic dispatches, Gondomar seemed to have started his journey to England with an idea in his mind: He was sure that the Anglo-Spanish peace was convenient, but he did not want it at any cost. Furthermore, he thought that the English deemed the Spanish weak and unable to run a war and this underestimation did not contribute positively to the Spanish side. In Gondomar's views, the Count of Villamediana and the rest of Spanish members who were present the day of the capitulations had shown such eagerness and zeal to sign peace with England that now the Protestant country thought they could easily play with the Spanish's weakness. Hence, the main mission that Gondomar attached to himself was to show the English that Spain was not going to accept any mistreatment to preserve that peace (Tobío 246-47), no matter if the Spaniards were truly in a bad moment to carry out an armed conflict.

Once the Spanish ships had already reached Portsmouth's Port, there was an unexpected incident that has been on numerous occasions considered the first of Gondomar's diplomatic movements. After exchanging equal courtesies with the Channel fleet, Gondomar went ashore and was welcomed by the city fathers. As the vice-admiral was not aboard, the English captain was the one who required the Spanish commander to lower all flags to the English ones. He was referring to a strict naval tradition that had been respected by Philip II himself when he went there to marry Mary Tudor. After being forwarded the demand, Gondomar ordered the Spanish commander not to strike the flags, so the English threatened to bomb the Spanish ships (Mattingly 262-63). On this situation the envoy resolved to write a succinct letter to James I informing him about the events. He asked James to order the English captain to move away his demand; otherwise he himself would embark again and come back to his homeland. But he also warned James that if the Spanish ships were attacked, the English ones would suffer the same damage in each Spanish cost they were docked. In the midst of this imbroglio, the English king eventually determined to allow the Spanish colors stay at the masthead, although assuring that there were no precedents to such behavior. Whether Gondomar had studied this incident before docking or he actually improvised is not clear and probably it will never be. However, it is certain that James' response was highly criticized by the Privy Council, and that Gondomar's risky game

had provided him with considerably valuable information: the king of England was sensible enough to not gamble the Anglo-Spanish peace over an empty salute (Tobío 248-50).

The qualified effectiveness of Gondomar's embassy has been generally highlighted throughout history, although he has been accused of swaying James as well. When discussing Sarmiento's key to success in the English court, Mattingly splendidly summarized the relationship between James and the envoy:

> It was not a simple one; certainly it was not, as it has sometimes been represented, just the dominance of a weak character by a strong one; much less, the gulling of a fool by a knave. James was a complex character in whom elements of weakness were surprisingly mixed with traits of real strength; Gondomar, at least, never made the mistake of under-rating him. Nor did he achieve his influence at a stroke, or storm the King's favour with a mixture of bullying and flattery. It was the work of years. In part it was because Gondomar was able to make James like him. The Spaniard was a brilliant conversationalist and a good listener, a sound Latin scholar and an experienced politician, courtly without servility and easy without undue familiarity. (262)

Certainly Gondomar's unquestionable moral integrity and immeasurable loyalty to his king were highly appreciated by James, and what had begun as a genuine sympathy between them ended up in a close friendship, notwithstanding the incident in Portsmouth. James found in the Spanish ambassador a very cultivate man with a natural honorable personality and maybe this was a reason for which Gondomar did not really hire many spies -albeit it was a normal habit all around Europe-, as he tended to mistrust them (Manso-Porto 21-22). It was nothing but his personal virtues which made him gain real confidants among the English courtiers without forcing his game. James himself became one of Gondomar's most valuable official informants, as it was the English king who provided the envoy with a copy of Walter Raleigh's secret map about his Guiana voyage and specific goals pursued there (Mattingly 262). On the other hand, the Howard party, whom Gondomar referred to as the *bien intencionados*, supported him by favoring an Anglo-Spanish alliance over an Anglo-French one. The members of this group of well-wishers were, among others, Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, his nephew Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, and Lord High

Treasurer. Although the so-called "Spanish Party" was highly criticized at its times, one must note that this group of courtiers coincided in the idea that another Anglo-Spanish war was not convenient for England, in contrast with those belligerent powers such as the Puritans who were eager for a war between both countries (Carter 193-94).

The matter of pensions is, having reached out this point, worth mentioning. On many occasions it has been asserted that the Spanish used to buy the English friendship by means of money. It was probably Don Juan Bautista de Tassis, conde de Villamediana, the precursor of this method, since during the negotiations of the Treaty of London, he "dispensed a good deal of largesse, in both cash and promises" (Carter 194). Later Pedro de Zúñiga would receive a detailed memorandum recommending a regular pension list to be paid to specific English names, and the same happened to Gondomar. The membership and stipends were set up in this list of Spanish pensioners in which names such as the Earl of Dorset, Lord High Treasurer, Lord Admiral Nottingham, or Robert Cecil were included. It must be mentioned that these money payments were a common practice. However, as all these subsidies were gradually raised, pension obligations became a headache to Spain, and the English officials pensions were usually in arrears. Far from providing the Catholic king with any advantage or "friendship" at the English court, the hostility increased, and the system of pensions did not have valuable effect on English policies. In fact, most Howards refused to accept any payments from the beginning and many others eventually lost interest in them (Carter 194-98) because, as Carter stated, "matters simply reached a point, very quickly, where refusal to grant expected pensions would create more than normal hostility" (197).

Nevertheless, having ears and eyes prepared in every moment was still the main duty of the European diplomat. Evidence to it is the fact that the specific list of secret Spanish pensioners that had been provided to Gondomar as part of his diplomatic instructions reached James' hands thanks to Sir John Digby. James' resident ambassador in Spain had been deciphered the names and sent them straight to his king together with other important dispatches from Gondomar. However, James' response to the discovery of Spanish pensioners at his court is another proof of his genuine friendship with the Galician envoy (Mattingly 260-61). Mattingly expressed it clearly:

> James had repeatedly received lists of the secret Spanish pensioners at his court . . . and no action had ever been taken. For nearly five years James had read the most damaging selections from Gondomar's secret correspondence, and the king's affection for and confidence in the Spanish ambassador had only increased. (261)

Indeed, Gondomar himself condemned this under-cover side of his diplomatic mission since, as we have already mentioned, he was confident enough to believe he could get any valuable information by himself without needing any system of subsidies nor spies. Don Diego had even written to the Duke of Lerma during his first months of his embassy expressing that being an ambassador was a "nasty job" because one had to be involved in this kind of businesses (Mattingly 261).

The situation of both English and Spanish Catholics in England was something which Gondomar had been explicitly ordered to be cautious with. Nonetheless, his close relationship with James allowed him to release a substantial number of Catholic prisoners and improve the situation of the rest. Probably the most famous example was the pious Spanish lady Doña Luisa de Carvajal y Mendonza, a relative of Lerma and a powerful noblewoman who soon became a quite controversial figure in England. Her great religious zeal led her to embark herself in a personal mission to the Protestant England and establish her residence in London in 1605. The conversion of heretics was one of her main activities, as her ultimate goal seemed to be a Catholic England. Not only was she a consolation for the Catholic Londoners but she even endowed with her own money a novitiate to train young priests for the Counter-Reformation. Not surprisingly the lady's pursuits started to be of particular concern to the English authorities, which obviously watched closely all her movements. Already during the embassy of Don Pedro de Zúñiga, Carvajal enjoyed protection; however, Zúñiga himself together with her own friends and relatives had advised her to leave the kingdom. Although she seemed to pursue all her religious tasks more discretely, she moved to Spitalfields and a number of young Catholic English ladies cloistered themselves with the lady in her own house. In that moment the archbishop of Canterbury moved to the archiepiscopal palace at Lambeth and the hunter of papists ordered a strict surveillance of the lady until he eventually confirmed his suspicions: the pious lady had transformed her own house into nothing but a nunnery (Senning 43-48).

In a moment when James seemed to start thinking on moderating the persecution of Catholics, a book written by the Jesuit theologian Francisco Suárez was published: *Defensio Fidei*. It was basically a set of anti-Anglican refutations and open critique of James' Catholic policy, so when the English king was asked for a royal order to enter Doña Luisa's house and arrest her, Abbot rapidly procured the warrant. Carvajal and her companions were seized at the lady's house and jailed. Gondomar obviously appealed for the lady's release and, after seeing his request rejected, complained directly to James sending him a polite but firm letter. Sarmiento had the audacity to say James that the charges against the lady were false, and the English king determined the lady's release on the condition she would leave the country as soon as possible. However, Gondomar did not accept these terms and threatened to leave the country with her in case she was going to be forced to do so. In the midst of these tensions, the council eventually ordered Doña Luisa's release under no terms (Senning 49-61).

The Carvajal affair has been discussed by both amateur observers and historians. While ones have claimed that Gondomar's success is unquestionable, some others have asserted that it was clearly James who surrendered the lady and that the Spanish envoy has been always overrated. The notorious effort of keeping the English prestige over the Spanish one even in modern writings makes one think about the only consequence of this dispute: the distortion of real facts. In this regard, Senning even ventures to assert that "Gondomar had a profound personal respect and deep veneration for Doña Luisa" and that "he regarded her as a sister" (54). Obviously Carvajal ended up being a pain in Gondomar's neck as it would have been for any other capable diplomat, since she was in charge of a number of hazardous activities that could easily jeopardize his close relationship with James. She indeed was a political liability for Spain and a continuous headache for its ambassador in London, whose major concern was not precisely protecting such a burden in his important diplomatic mission.

It is true that, even after Doña Luisa had been released without commitments, her expulsion was still in the English government's agenda and especially in the archbishop of Canterbury's mind, as the lady became since the beginning "a particular thorn in the side of Abbot as well as Ellesmere and others of their faction" (Carter 201). However, soon after her release from prison, Carvajal's health condition got worse and eventually died in Gondomar's embassy palace, where she had been moved after the imbroglio (Senning 63-64). All the agitation that had been in England came to an end

with the lady's death, and whether James would have still been determined to expel Carvajal from his kingdom will always remain a mystery. What is certain is that both England and Spain could now breathe easy, as their peace was no longer going to be put at risk due to this issue.

Ten days after her death, Doña Luisa was buried in Gondomar's embassy chapel (Senning 65), although her corpse would be later transported to Spain. And even the burial of the lady did not manage to escape from contemporary and modern conjectures. On this particular subject, Senning provides a detailed account of the lady's burial with which he seems to argue one more time the "devotion" Gondomar felt to Carvajal. His conjecture goes as follows:

> The ambassador . . . showed his devotion to Doña Luisa's memory in other ways besides protecting her former companions. . . . he gave her a great funeral, the best he was able, celebrated in his embassy chapel on Sunday, January 2, with his confessor, Fray Diego de la Fuente, O.P., singing the requiem and preaching the eulogy. A sizable crowd was in attendance, including the ambassadors of France, Flanders, and Savoy, and various Italian, French, and Portuguese gentlemen, together with an appreciable number of English Catholics, who risked the displeasure of the government to come. Gondomar spared nothing for the occasion, . . . (65)

That Don Diego felt that devotion to Carvajal that Senning repeatedly emphasizes is obviously not easy to evidence, taking into account the temporal distance that separates our century from Gondomar's one. But maybe a question could be held in this regard: Could another kind of burial to a noble lady be expected by a diplomat from her same country of origin and with her same religious beliefs?

The Spanish Match, for its part, needs an analysis as well, as the alliance negotiations between Prince Charles, James I's son, and Maria Anna of Spain, Philip III's daughter, was a key part of Gondomar's diplomatic mission. The ultimate goal of Spain was to prevent an Anglo-French alliance, because that would mean a victory for the Scottish, but probably more important was the purpose of maintaining peace with the Protestant country, a purpose shared with England as well. In any case, these long and vain marriage negotiations were a source of numerous rumors that even asserted that the anti-Spanish pirate, Raleigh, had been executed in order to speed up the match,

or at least that was James Howell's opinion (Shaw-Fairman 115). In the end, the political opposition to the Spanish Match increased to the extent that it ended up in the dissolution of the Addled Parliament in 1614 by James I (Carter 198-99). In this regard, it must be mentioned that, contrary to contemporary opinion, Gondomar did not persuade the English king to dissolve the Parliament, for he and James had not met for several weeks by the time James had made the decision.[1] The truth is that both the English King and her wife, Anne of Denmark, were fervent supporters of this wedding (Bartolomé-Benito 84), so there was a mutual interest on keeping the negotiations on. As a result, there was a point when James considered the parliamentarians' opposition no longer tolerable and saw himself obliged to determine something. Hence, "though historians still sometimes assert that he did, Gondomar obviously did not use his diabolical presence to sway James's mind: he was not even there" (Carter 200).

Finally, the so controversial execution of Walter Raleigh is worth mentioning as well. Raleigh and his anti-Spanish policy were a famous issue since Elizabeth I's reign, during which the English pirate enjoyed the favor and protection of the queen. He was jailed but eventually released and, during James I's reign, Raleigh seemed to persuade the king about the fact that his expeditions in San Thomé were going to discover *El Dorado* and bring substantial benefits to the English crown. Gondomar had warned James that all those lands had been already discovered and that Raleigh was not going to take advantage of any goldmine, because that expedition was nothing but *burlería* (Manso-Porto 23-24), that is to say, deception. However, the safety of the Spanish settlements in the Guayana was guaranteed by Raleigh himself, who signed a promise to his king before embarking on his lucrative mission. Carter refers to this specific issue as follows:

> . . . James was in a quandary. He wanted to keep the peace with Spain, but he was under great pressure to let Raleigh make the trip. So he took the middle course of making Raleigh sign a promise not to violate any Spanish settlements, which Raleigh claimed did not exist there anyway. When Gondomar registered a protest, trying to get James to stop the expedition, James, in a moment of weakness, showed him the terms of Raleigh's charter and the promise

[1] See further information as to Gardiner's mistakes on his work on Carter 199-200. Carter makes here a subtle analysis of Gardiner's error regarding the still-accepted belief that Gondomar persuaded James on his decision over the dissolution of the Parliament.

> itself, in which all responsibility for any violations of Spanish settlements was accepted by Raleigh. (207)

The truth is that, despite Raleigh's signed promise, the Spanish settlements of San Thomé the Spanish were attacked (Carter 207), causing the death of a number of Spanish knights including Governor Palomeque de Acuña, a relative of Gondomar (Manso-Porto 24). Not surprisingly, when Gondomar learnt about the disaster, he hurried to claim James to keep his terms. And Raleigh was executed by direct order of the English king.

Many modern historians have been insisting on Gondomar's manipulation over James as to his decision on Raleigh's execution. However, taking into account what has been mentioned, one must bear in mind that English piracy was one of the main matters that caused tension between both countries. After all, the capitulations signed in the Treaty of London (1604) established clear conditions on the English side to put an end over their piracy, conditions that had not been respected even during Gondomar's embassy in London. In this context, James was truly in a predicament: on the one hand, he had in his hands Raleigh's own promise that he was not going to attack any Spanish colonies –but he had done so–; and on the other hand, Gondomar had asked him for an audience in which just one word was pronounced by the furious Spanish diplomat: *pirates* (Shaw-Fairman 114). Certainly he had to determine something, and James did so: as Carter stated, the Anglo-Spanish peace was not going to be jeopardized just for no more than a failed pirate who could not keep his word (207).

2.

English contemporary views on Spain and Gondomar

2.1. The Black legend.

The Spanish Match, the Carvajal affair, Walter Raleigh's execution and James I's dissolution of the Parliament were some of the most controversial events that happened to occur during Gondomar's two embassies in London. And these events were not only commented by the English Court but also by the ordinary people, which can be understood, in part, by the amount of anti-Spanish propagandistic material that was printed and spread during these times. Indeed, the possibility to disseminate political or religious ideas to a mass of people was no longer a dream but an overwhelming reality, so the birth of mass communication soon led the whole Europe to see in the printing press the fantastic device to make any kind of revolutionary idea transcend borders. Hence, propaganda was becoming another part of the daily life, with the danger that it implied. So in a time when Spain and England were political and religious rivals, the English contemporaries of Gondomar found in spreading both verbal and visual propaganda a good means to reproduce a discreditable portrait of everything that was Spanish, which had an obvious impact on the seventeenth-century people's minds.

The term "Black Legend" was first coined by Julián Juderías y Loyot in the twentieth century, when describing the image of Spain abroad in his monograph *La leyenda negra. Estudios acerca del concepto de España en el extranjero* (1914). In his essay, Juderías asserted that the Spanish reality had been distorted due to a severe Hispanophobia since the 16th century on, and that, for propagandistic reasons, Spaniards had been portrayed as intolerant, brutal and fanatical. Later on, some historians such as Arnoldsson and Pérez argued that the Black Legend actually dated back to the 14th century, due to the Italian unfavorable opinion on Spaniards mainly because of political and economic relations. In any case, it was probably since the 16th century when a series of anti-Spanish myths started taking shape in England. The popular vision on Philip II is just an example of the ideology of that time: after his marriage with Mary I, the Spanish king was continuously blamed for the deaths of the English Protestants even though Mary was the one known –and still known– as "Bloody Mary". Hence, it seemed that Mary's intolerant position towards Protestants was just "a product of her Spanish roots,

her Spanish husband and her Spanish relatives" (Edelmayer), demonizing thus the figure of Philip II in England.

By the reign of Mary Tudor's half-sister, Elizabeth I, the conflict between both countries intensified, especially when Spain saw that she did not only support English pirates but even protected them. Later on, the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588) was an added element to discredit the Spanish, as the English understood their victory as God's judgment, and so they portrayed it. On the other hand, Antonio Pérez, Philip II's secretary, published his *Relaciones*, a brief anthology of grave accusations against his king that was taken by the anti-Spanish propagandists as more than welcome material. But Bartolomé de las Casas' *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552) is undoubtedly the work that inflicted the most negative impact on the image of Spain. Having said to be the precursor of the Black Legend, las Casas depicted the Spanish behavior in America in terms of the brutality that the native inhabitants suffered at Spanish hands. With de las Casas' account, the reputation of Spain was completely ruined in England (Edelmayer).

Yet although it was certain that the Spanish conquest of the Indies carried slaughters –in any case, one wonders whether there have been many colonizations without killings throughout history–, it is also true that las Casas exaggerated a great deal of the historical events, arguing that there were from 15 to 20 million Indian deaths (Keen 710). Notwithstanding the facts and figures presented in his work were not accurate, they were taken as so by his audience. Nowadays it can be asserted that the Spanish behavior in America was not precisely one that should be taken as an example. However, las Casas' exaggerated work portraying his countrymen as merciless and cruel did have a serious impact not only in England but in the whole of Europe.

But the great atrocities carried out by the Spanish in the New World were not the only subject of the Black Legend. The personal life of Philip II was another breeding ground for anti-Spanish views. Philip's son Don Carlos died under strange circumstances and the king, after the death of his wife Elizabeth of Valois, ended up marrying his son's bride Anna of Austria. In the meantime, the situation in the Netherlands was becoming worse and William of Orange, the main leader of the Dutch revolt, even ventured to claim that Philip II had not only murdered his son but also seduced his bride. Fernando Alvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, the 3rd Duke of Alba,

governor of the Spanish Netherlands, carried out many political persecutions against his opponents and, in part due to his governorship, a large portion of anti-Spanish propaganda was printed there. Hence, the marked hostility towards Spain and the Spanish was more and more evident (Edelmayer) and upon Gondomar's arrival in England, the Black legend was more than established there.

2.2. Gondomar in the spotlight: *Vox Populi* and *A Game at Chesse*.

By the times Sarmiento arrived in London to start his diplomatic mission in 1613, there was in England a serious anti-Spanish ideology that had been undoubtedly prompted, in part, by propagandistic means. Nevertheless, Gondomar's diplomatic affairs during his two embassies in London became a source of discussion as well, and the Spanish envoy saw himself forced to deal with a number of written materials that openly discredited him. Two examples that caused great furore and scandal in England were Thomas Scott's pamphlet *Vox Populi* (1620) and Thomas Middleton's play *A Game at Chesse* (1624).

Before analyzing in detail the portrait of Gondomar that was presented in both works, it should be mentioned that the international rivalries based on political issues were not the only reason for an anti-Spanish propaganda: religious conflicts played an important role (Castilla-Urbano and Villaverde-Rico 30). When commenting the social displeasure of the English on James' policy of "appeasement" toward Spain, Wright expressed that the English Protestant clergy, in particular, was highly anti-Spanish:

> The most consistent and violent opponents of the King's Spanish policy were the Protestant clergy, who saw in collaboration with Spain the opening wedge of Catholic domination of England. Unceasingly the preachers worked to undermine the negotiations with Spain. Their fury reached a climax . . . when the proposed marriage . . . seemed likely to become a reality. . . . the Spanish ambassador to England was Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar, who became, in the eyes of the preachers and of many other Englishmen, the symbol of all that was treacherous and evil. . . . indeed, to many a preacher the ambassador was the Devil incarnate and the agent of Antichrist. From the pulpit he was thus portrayed to Englishmen ready to believe the worst of any Spaniard. (149)

In the midst of this panorama, there appeared numerous clerical writers who carried on a campaign of anti-Spanish propaganda. The Reverend Thomas Scott, rector of St. Saviours, Norwich, was probably the most prolific and skillful of those writers, not just because of the large number of vigorous pamphlets he published but because of the large audience he gained, undoubtedly due to his clear and concise way of expressing himself (Wright 172). One of Scott's most notorious pamphlets was printed in 1620 and entitled *Vox Populi*. The radical opponent of the Jacobean regime presented here the devious machinations of Gondomar and James' pro-Spanish policy. The complete title of the treatise could not be more revealing: *Vox Populi. Or Newes From Spayne, translated according to the Spanish coppie. Which may serve to forewarn both England and the United Provinces how farre to trust to Spanish pretences. Imprinted in the yeare 1620.* One can state that the title was extremely appealing, as it supposedly offered the readers recent news coming directly from a "Spanish coppie", which gave the whole pamphlet a sense of veracity. Obviously everything was a Scott's fabrication but certainly such an engaging title would be the perfect means to assure him a great audience. And so it proved to be: in spite of the censorship of the English state, there were four editions in 1620, two years later it was published as the first item together with other pamphlets written by the preacher, and even a French version of *Vox Populi* appeared in 1621 (Wright 160).

We are presented in *Vox Populi* a specific setting: the Spanish council of state presided by the Duke of Lerma, deliberating about the Anglo-Spanish relations and especially addressing Gondomar to know in detail his mission as an ambassador in England. Having Lerma set up clearly the Spanish purpose –"to advance the Catholike Romane religion, and the Catholike Spanish dominion together" (A6)–,[2] Gondomar begins his speech to show the council his machinations in order to contribute to the Spanish aims. He asserts that James I "extreamly hunts after peace" (B1) so he proposed the English king the so-called Spanish Match, toward which the envoy had found two groups of supporters: some begging English courtiers and the Roman Catholics, who sought to the restoration of their religion (B2). This was obviously an underlying attack to these two groups of English men whose pro-Spanish views were highly damaging England.

[2] I have used this kind of references since the original text does not provide pagination as such but some pages follow a sort of page-numbering pattern using letters –A, B, C and D–.

Gondomar also explains proudly that he has persuaded James I to mistrust the Parliament so that the English King will not summon a new one, and Scott makes the envoy describe his cunning methods used to this aim:

> A Parliament . . . nay therein lies one of the principal services I haue done in working such a dislike betwixt the King and the lower house by the endeuor of that honourable Earle and admirable Engine (a sure servant to us and the catholike cause while he lived) as the King will never indure Parliament againe, but rather suffer absolute want then receive conditionall relief from his subjects. (B3)

With this assertion placed in the diplomat's mouth, Scott was presenting the audience the source of James's tyrannical policy, the Count of Gondomar, whose cunning interference in domestic affairs seemed to be clear (Wright 156). Regardless, Spain had also managed to gain the support of a group of timeserving courtiers who were convincing James that "he may rule by his absolute prerogative without a Parliament" (B4). Furthermore, a large group of important landowners were of Spanish faction and "respect[ed] their owne benefit or grace rather then their countries good" (B4). This open attack toward the Spanish diplomat should not be underrated, as the prevention of summoning a Parliament was being discussed seriously all over England by the time *Vox Populi* was published, and it was a source of hatred toward Gondomar.

Although Gondomar's trickeries are displayed all over the pamphlet, it is, in my view, the mention of Sir Walter Raleigh one of the most powerful messages Scott conveys. Not only does the preacher suggest that it was the Spanish hostility what favored Raleigh's execution, but he presents a Gondomar who is extremely satisfied over the pirate's death, by saying "I would bring to an ignominious death, that old *Pyrat*, who is one of the last now living, bred under that deceased English *Virago*, and by her flesht in our blood and ruine" (C). To make his dream come true, Gondomar had many agents, among which there were courtiers anxious for Spanish gold and other Englishmen who had numerous quarrels with Raleigh, but most importantly "the Romish faith", which was by the Spanish side (C). This was not a mere criticism of Gondomar, whose influence upon James, together with his various supporters, was being made obvious one more time; this comment was a way to stir the English anger toward Sarmiento, considering that there was a serious wave of indignation over the

recent execution of Raleigh, regarded by many as a national hero who was leaving England for the sake of colonial expansion.

In one way or the other, Scott presents an England that is absolutely under the Spanish yoke. Gondomar assures, during his speech to the Spanish council of state, that the commons are coward men, so the Spanish "onely negotiate for our owne gaine, and treate about this marriage for our owne ends, can conclude or breake off when we see our time, without respect of such as can neither profit us, nor hurt us" (C-C1). But here a very relevant issue appears: the poor condition of the English army. Gondomar had already credited himself with influencing James to neglect the Navy, "once the strongest in Christendome" (B5), but now he asserted that the English were "so ill provided, that one corselet serveth many men", affirming that if the Spanish king resolves to invade England, that is the perfect moment, as the English are "unprovided of shippes and armes, or hearts to fight" (C1). Obviously this was another criticism to James and his neglecting of army issues, but it was also a serious comment on Gondomar, who was being revealed as spy rather than as diplomat, since he seemed to know in detail the condition of the English army in terms of military defense.

With regard to the Catholic cause –assistance to English Catholics–, as Gondomar calls it, he asserts throughout the entire pamphlet that he has helped to advance it, and the envoy expresses his desire to see the heretics found and eliminated. He credits himself of managing to bring to jail some clergymen but, most importantly, Gondomar boasts to have bought up a large number of books and manuscripts in order to prevent the heretics from reading them. In this case, Scott appears to omit consciously the genuine interest that the learned diplomat felt toward all kind of books and manuscripts, something that had contributed to James's admiration toward the Spanish ambassador and that was evidenced in the famous personal library he had in his house at Valladolid, always treated with great zeal by him.

Scott wrote more than twenty-five propagandistic pamphlets that advocated war against Catholicism, fiercely attacked James' pro-Spanish policy, claimed the necessity to endure friendship with the Protestant Netherlands, and reiterated his defense of James' son-in-law, the Elector of the Palatinate (Wright 161). So his message was clear: preventing all these measures would mean neglecting the safety of the state. After the publication of *Vox Populi*, a "Second Part" of the pamphlet was published, although the

exact date of its first publication is not known. In any case, the title of the second edition published in 1624 is, in my opinion, as the First part was, explicit enough to reveal its topic: *The Second Part of Vox Populi or Gondomar appearing in the likenes of Matchiauell in a Spanish Parliament, wherein are discouered his treacherous & subtile Practises To the ruine as well of England, as the Netherlandes Faithfully Translated out of the Spanish Coppie by a well-willer to England and Holland. The Second Edition*. Certainly, it was another exposure of Gondomar's trickery, as the envoy disclosed that, for example, he had numberless agents spread all over England so that no information could escape him.[3] But this time Scott signed his initials, since by the time *The Second Part of Vox Populi* was published, he was safely settled in Utrecht (Wright 169).

P.G. Lake commented that obviously the political system of James I could not be openly questioned neither in *Vox Populi* nor in any other written material, so Scott used the figure of Gondomar as the "evil counselor, since he could be denounced in the most extravagant terms and yet the essential soundness of the English political system and church remain untouched" (818). Indeed, the fact that all the deliberations presented in the pamphlet were placed in the mouth of Gondomar evidently provided Scott protection, as he could attack James' foreign policy in an indirect way. However, was Gondomar a mere means to criticize the English King and his pro-Spanish policy? Scott's effort on drawing a Machiavellian figure of the Spanish ambassador may lead to question this idea. After all, the preacher was fiercely engaged in anti-popish and anti-Spanish activism and Gondomar and his machinations were the protagonist in most of his political pamphlets. Hence, the hatred toward the Sarmiento that was being prompted all over England should not be put on the back burner.

Thomas Middleton's satirical play *A Game at Chesse* (1624), because of its theatrical character, was probably a much more powerful material added to the propaganda that was being disseminated in England in order to discredit the Spaniards and the Jesuits. By the time the play was published, the long-projected negotiations of the marriage between Prince Charles and Infanta Maria Anna had failed, and James' son had come back from his unsuccessful visit to Madrid after being rejected by the Spanish princess. Anti-Jesuit writings then started to appear since, as Howard-Hill stated,

[3] To read more details about the topics *The Second Part of Vox Populi* conveyed, see Louis B. Wright, especially 166-169.

"England's escape from a Spanish alliance was seen as a patriotic victory comparable to the destruction of the Spanish Armada and the frustration of the Gunpowder Plot" (*A Game* 16). Middleton's play ran for nine consecutive days, a sequence that was completely rare at that time, and it soon caused a furore in London, becoming a spectacular success among the popular audience. During its nine performances, the Globe was packed with Londoners (Cogswell 273) who were undoubtedly anxious to see in the form of a play the contemporary political debate.

But it was not that Middleton was a brilliant chess player and due to his abilities could write such a literary work. As Yachnin argued, technical precision was not important for him; it was the allegorical significance of the chess which he really cared about (318). In any case, taking into account that the play presented a virulent anti-Catholicism and Hispanophobia, much of the modern literature about Middleton's play has been concerned about the names under its sponsorship,[4] since representing contemporary Christian kings in plays was not allowed. In fact, that was the specific reason given by James for which the play was eventually suppressed.

Thanks to the historians' and critics' labor, the identities of the figures in *A Game at Chesse*, the structure of the play, its political enigmas and the imaginary used by the author are easier to sort out. Middleton's metaphorical device was based on the presentation of a chess game with two rival houses: the Black and the White one. The Black figures corresponded to some relevant Spanish contemporaries, while the White figures stand for English ones. Thus, the usage of a chess game allowed Middleton to establish a clear dichotomy between Spain and England. Among all the figures, there were two characters that were blatantly impersonated: the Black Knight was the Count of Gondomar, and the Fat Bishop was Marc Antonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalato. As the play advances, the identification of the rest of the figures is made easier to the audience. Hence, the roles played and the relationships amongst the White King, Knight and Duke enabled us to know that they were James I, Prince Charles, and the Duke of Buckingham respectively, while the Black King was obviously Philip IV. The interpretations among contemporary commentators about the identification of the rest of the pieces strangely varied (Howard-Hill, "Political Interpretations" 275-76). However,

[4] There is still a discussion about who were the political sponsors for Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, as there is no evidence but just hypotheses. In any case, the play's sponsorship has been generally related to the English Court, as otherwise the play would have never been put on stage. See Howard-Hill, "Political Interpretations", especially pages 278-82, to read more about this issue.

it seems there is an agreement on the identities of the White Bishop, which is probably Archbishop Abbot, and the Black Bishop, which has been associated with the Father General of the Jesuit Order (Sargent 723). The rest of the figures are rather minor characters who were not that familiar to Londoners.

By using an Induction at the beginning of the play, the viewers were prepared for what they were about to see on stage, so Middleton used the dream form in order to somehow shadow the reality that was being conveyed behind the whole allegory (Howard-Hill, *A Game* 35). Thus, Ignatius Loyola appears together with a companion, Error –a personified character–, who dreams of a game, "the noblest Game of all, a Game at Chesse / twixt our side and the Whitehouse" (Ind. 43-44). In this way, by using the figure of Error, Loyola's side in the game is clearly set up for the spectators. Then, the beginning of the game is prepared after all the actors take up their positions as if they were chess pieces. The audience thus learns that an allegorical chess game is going to be the basis of the play, and the main plot is presented from the very beginning to avoid any possible initial confusion (Sargent 722-23). The induction is, therefore, the part of the play that enabled Middleton to present a very specific scenario: the Spanish intention to overthrow England and establish Roman Catholicism. And the dream form was just a means to escape responsibility.

Throughout the play the white figures are evidently presented as more than human, while the black ones are completely dehumanized, as moral principles seem not to be important for them. Certainly, Middleton conveys an underlying message: the Spaniards way of life is that of believing that they take part in a game, so that the end justifies the means (Sargent 724). Moreover, the Spanish aim is shown in the first scene of Act I, where the Black Knight, that is to say, Gondomar, says:

> so, so,
>
> the Busines of the Vniuersall Monarchie
>
> goes forward well now, the great Colledge pott,
>
> that should bee alwayes boyling wth the fuell
>
> of all Intelligences possible
>
> thorough the Christian Kingdomes, . . . (1.1. 263-68)

Taking into account that the political struggle for power between the two opposing forces is the basis of the play, one may think that both kings, James I and

Philip IV, are the most relevant figures in the game, but actually they are not. Critics have been generally agreed on the idea that both the Black Knight –Gondomar– and the Fat Bishop –de Dominis– are the two main characters of Middleton's play, since the title page of the play shows both characters, the main plot develops with them and their hateful nature is shown from the very beginning.[5] In this regard, their dialogues –more than their actions– speak for themselves, making a very specific portrait of both chess pieces: that of evil and treacherous figures that will surely make use of any despicable method in order to achieve their aims.

The protagonist role of Gondomar in *A Game at Chesse* can be proved by the number of interventions that the Black Knight makes on stage: he is the first in extent of lines (Howard-Hill, "Political Interpretations" 284). Besides, Gondomar's identity is probably the most transparent of all presented by the Jacobean playwright. Not only there are repeated references to his well-known fistula but the actors who played the Black Knight even acquired somehow the Spanish ambassador's sedan chair, which had been adjusted for his anal wound (Howard-Hill, *A Game* 24). Furthermore, from the three levels of allegory that are present in the play –moral, religious and political–, Howard-Hill states that the political allegory is "based on the Black Knight's intrigues against the White House and, particularly, his plot to lure the White Knight to the Black House, a representation of Charles's Madrid visit" (*A Game* 37). Howard-Hill argues as well that that unsuccessful visit to Madrid had religious significance, "for Prince Charles was the future head of the Church of England and if he had in fact been 'Ensnared, entrapped, surprised amongst the Black ones' as the White Queen feared (IV.V.2) the consequences for both church and kingdom would have been serious" (*A Game* 37). Religion and politics were then completely linked together.

Having mentioned that Gondomar's role in the play is central, one must say nevertheless that none of Middleton's characters is deeply portrayed in terms of its personality, and the Black Knight is no exception. Certainly there is a clear opposition between the Black House and the White House, and Middleton's use of colors was not mere coincidence: he wanted the audience to understand the blackness of the Black

[5] Apart from the main plot, the action taken by the pawns is the so-called subplot, whose events present the audience the evilness of the Jesuits. The pawns do not stand for specific people but for "unknown men and women who, in following their own paths, are yet contributing a necessary part to the design" (Sargent 724). To know more about the subplot and the story it is based on, and for a more comprehensive analysis of the whole play in terms of its structure and theme, see Sargent's "Theme and Structure in Middleton's "A Game at Chess"".

house –Spain– as evil and dissembler, and the whiteness of its rival –England– as good and agents of truth (Sargent 727-28). When analyzing the imaginary used in Middleton's play, Sargent concluded that Spain was equated to the Devil (730). Indeed, when examining it closer, the reader can see that the Black chess pieces are altogether related with speeches full of words such as "falsehood", "obscurity", "serpent" or "poison". However, coming back to the personality of Middleton's characters, we notice that they are flat, so it seems that it was not of Middleton's particular concern to present their complexity in depth. In any case, although Middleton made direct use of Scott's *Vox Populi*, apart from other contemporary works, in speeches that involved the Black Knight (Howard-Hill, *A Game* 29), probably it was the allegorical message conveyed in the play and not the characters what really mattered to him.

The ending of *A Game at Chesse* is rather foreseeable: the Black chess pieces' devious plot is discovered by the White House, and the Black House is given a "checkmate by discovery". After the Black Knight's last words, "Ime lost, Ime taken" (5.3. 359), the black pieces are bagged, suggesting that their fate was just going to Hell.

By the time *A Game at Chesse* was started to be performed at the Globe and then published, Gondomar had finished his second and what was going to be his last embassy in England. But although he was absent, there were rumors of his return. It was from Don Carlos Coloma, Spanish ambassador in London between 1622 and 1624, that James first heard of the play, as the envoy complaint to the king as soon as he learnt about its direct attacks to Spain and the former ambassador (Howard-Hill, *A Game* 20-21). In this context, although Gondomar was undoubtedly, together with De Dominis, the prime satirical targets of Middleton's play, "neither of them was in a position to protect himself against unflattering stage depiction" (Howard-Hill, *A Game* 23).

The same as Scott had done in *Vox Populi*, Middleton presented in *A Game at Chesse* the world domination and the establishment of Roman Catholicism as the very aim of the Spanish. Monarchs, noblemen and statesmen were part of the discourse of this kind of controversial written materials, so that Spanish relevant figures such as Philip IV of Spain or his ambassador in England, the Count of Gondomar, were portrayed or even impersonated in the theatre in subtle ways. Both Scott's and Middleton's works, as many other that were published by Gondomar's times, were the materialized form of contemporary political debate in England and sought to spread,

above all, a general anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic view, something that is part of the Black Legend that was being disseminated at that time. It is not rare, therefore, that they gained great success and popularity. However, they were also probably aimed to stir up English patriotism in a period in which it seemed to be needed, so relevant contemporary men such as the eminent diplomat Gondomar, whose close relationship with the English king was widely commented and criticized, appeared to be the perfect target to create a Machiavellian figure.

Conclusion

As we have already seen, Gondomar did not buy any friendship at the English court by means of money, as pensions were usually in arrears and therefore did not provide any valuable effect on English policies (Carter 197). Besides, the list of pensioners together with Gondomar's secret correspondence reached James' hands and far from making him take any action, his affection toward the distinguished diplomat only increased (Mattingly 261). As for the matter of spies, Gondomar did not employ many because he did not trust them and preferred to rely on his own abilities to obtain information (Mattingly 261). Therefore, neither tardily paid subsidies nor spies helped Gondomar to carry out a good diplomacy in England. It was his genuine friendship with James I what precisely allowed him to carry out satisfactorily his principal mission: to preserve peace with the Protestant country.

Avoiding an armed conflict between England and Spain was precisely the purpose behind the so controversial Spanish Match, which found the support of the Howard Party notwithstanding the opposition of the vast majority of its countrymen. But the so-called "Spanish Party" supported the proposed marriage because its members supported peace, while the Jesuits were eager to a war between both countries. Evidently the long –and finally vain– marriage negotiations were extended in time in order to preserve peace, but both England and Spain showed willingness to keep the match going.

On the other hand, the Treaty of London (1604) had explicitly banned English piracies in Spanish coasts but, by the time Gondomar started his first embassy, the English still continued not respecting the capitulations. James I was aware of it and, before Walter Raleigh's trip in search for *El Dorado*, he made the pirate sign a promise that he would not attack any Spanish settlements. However, Raleigh's lucrative mission ended up in a catastrophe so, when James learnt that the pirate had not kept his terms, he saw himself obliged to order his execution. Since the desire to preserve peace was shared by both England and Spain, Gondomar did not use his persuasion gambits to make James decide over the pirate's life. It was Raleigh who condemned himself to death by signing that promise to his king.

Historical events such as Raleigh's execution or James' dissolution of the Parliament appeared in Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* (1620), but Gondomar's trickeries

were also displayed in Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chesse* (1624), as the Spanish ambassador was a main character in both works. He was portrayed as treacherous and manipulative, and James' appeasement toward Spain was subtly connected with the diplomat's persuasion qualities. In the case of *Vox Populi*, presenting a Spanish ambassador as the very cause of all the English problems was a very powerful message that would stir people's anger and hatred toward what they deemed the Anti-Christ – Spain and Rome. In the case of *A Game at Chesse*, presenting allegorically an England under the Spanish yoke by means of the evil Black Knight –Gondomar– assured Scott a great audience and, as P.G. Lake stated, the possibility to criticize James' policies in an indirect way (818).

The Spanish intention to overthrow England and establish Roman Catholicism was a continuous nightmare on the English ordinary people's minds, and *Vox Populi* was a consciously well-written political pamphlet that put into words that contemporary fear. In the same way, *A Game at Chesse*, definitely a skillfully constructed play, was intended to make the audience enjoy the physical representation of the contemporary political debate. And in that debate Gondomar happened to be a crucial figure. It is clear that both Scott's pamphlet and Middleton's play sought to give a message to the English: Spain was the rival and so the Spanish had to be portrayed as evil. Although obviously this message just shows the thoughts and sentiments of that time, it must be mentioned that such works did not precisely help to undo the anti-Spanish views that had already been circulated all over the world since the 16th century. This kind of political works were part of the Black Legend that discredited the Spanish, and Gondomar, one of the most influential men at the English court, was meant to be the evil figure that represented an evil country. Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña stopped being an ambassador, in the strict sense of the word, the same day he was appointed so, because his figure was destined to be turned into a wicked fictional character that would appear in a number of political and literary writings of his times.

Evidently Gondomar's portrait has to be understood together with the historical context in which the Spanish ambassador lived: not only England and Spain were political and religious rivals, but also the previous ambassadors that had preceded Gondomar did not precisely contribute to clean the image of Spain. Thus, Scott and Middleton just portrayed the world the way they saw it. However, when exploring modern writings on Gondomar, one concludes that rehearsing the anti-Spanish message

conveyed by Scott and Middleton does not mean providing real historical facts but distorting them. So much to say that James I was a mere puppet as claiming that Gondomar has been overrated along history means surpassing the limit of objectivity. The temporal distance that separates our century from the one in which they both lived hinders critics', historians' and amateurs' effort to know the truth. In any case, when analyzing Gondomar's figure as an ambassador in England there should not be forgotten that he had been appointed by his home country to carry out a specific job. He was a diplomat, and, as such, having ears and eyes prepared in every moment was his main task. After all, although he found a close friend in James I, Gondomar had not been sent to England to lose loyalty to his king.

Bibliography

Bartolomé-Benito, Fernando. *Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Conde de Gondomar: el Maquiavelo español*. Ediciones Trea, 2005. Print.

Carter, Charles H. "Gondomar: Ambassador to James I." *The Historical Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1964, pp. 189-208. Print.

Castilla-Urbano, Francisco, and María José Villaverde Rico, editors. *La sombra de la leyenda negra*. Tecnos, 2016. Print.

Castilla-Urbano, Francisco, and María José Villaverde Rico. "Estudio preliminar. La leyenda negra: existencia, origen, recepción y reacciones." *La sombra de la leyenda negra*, edited by Francisco Castilla Urbano and María José Villaverde Rico, Tecnos, 2016, pp. 11-98. Print.

Edelmayer, Friedrich. "The "Leyenda Negra" and the Circulation of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Spanish Prejudices." *European History Online* (EGO). Institute of European History, 2011. Online.

Howard-Hill, T.H. ed. *A Game at Chess. Thomas Middleton.* Manchester University Press, 1997. Print.

Howard-Hill, T.H. "Political Interpretations of Middleton's 'A Game at Chess'." *The Yearbook of English Studies*, special issue of *Politics, Patronage and Literature in England 1558-1658*, vol. 21, 1991, pp. 274-85. Print.

Juderías, Julián. *La leyenda negra: estudios acerca del concepto de España en el extranjero.* Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 2003. Print.

Keen, Benjamin. "The Black Legend Revisited: Assumptions and Realities." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 4, 1969, pp.703-19. Print.

Lake, P. G. "Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match." *The Historical Journal*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1982, pp. 805-25. Print.

Manso-Porto, Carmen. *Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, conde de Gondomar (1567-1626): erudito, mecenas y bibliófilo*. Xunta de Galicia, 1996. Print.

Mattingly, Garrett. *Renaissance Diplomacy*. Jonathan Cape, 1955. Print.

Middleton, Thomas. *The Collected Works*. Edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, Clarendon Press, 2007. Print.

Moore, J.R. "The Contemporary Significance of Middleton's Game at Chesse." *PMLA*, vol. 50, no. 3, 1935, pp. 761-68. Print.

Pierce, Helen. "'Unseemly Pictures': Political graphic satire in 1620s England." *The British Art Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2005, pp. 56-61. Print.

Redworth, Glyn. *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*. Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.

Senning, Calvin F. "The Carvajal Affair: Gondomar and James I." *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 56, no. 1, 1970, pp. 42-66. Print.

Shaw-Fairman, Patricia. "Testimonios ingleses contemporáneos sobre la figura de Gondomar." *ES. Revista de Filología Inglesa*, 1979, pp. 111-32. Print.

Tobío, Luis. *Gondomar y su triunfo sobre Raleigh*. Bibliófilos gallegos, 1974. Print.

Vox Populi. Or Newes From Spayne, translated according to the Spanish coppie. Which may serve to forewarn both England and the United Provinces how farre to trust to Spanish pretences. Imprinted in the yeare 1620. London, 1620. Print.

Wright, Louis B. "Propaganda against James I's "Appeasement" of Spain." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1943, pp. 142-72. Print.

Yachnin, Paul. "A Game at Chess and Chess Allegory." Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, vol. 22, no. 2, 1982, pp. 317-30. Print.