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**The Open Ends of Diego Sarmiento de
Acuña, Count of Gondomar**

Lidia Bulnes Vicente

Tutora: Berta Cano Echevarría

Departamento de Filología Inglesa

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ABSTRACT

Diego Sarmiento de Acuña was one of the most relevant Spanish diplomats in the early 17th century, but despite his renowned career, he was afflicted by a recurrent succession of open ends throughout his life. The ambassador has left a trace that I intend to study in relation to the uncompleted nature of many aspects of his persona, as an ambassador, a courtier, and as a fictional character. To carry out this investigation, I will define the ideas of end and closure and apply the concepts to the ends that he experienced in life, his passing and the ends of his character in the following works of literature: Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* and John Reynolds' *Vox Coeli*. I intend to explore the possible reasons behind the lack of closed ends in his life and the ways in which they have affected his image before and even after his death.

KEYWORDS: Closure, Ambassador, Count, Ending, Valladolid, Gondomar

RESUMEN

Diego Sarmiento de Acuña fue uno de los diplomáticos españoles más relevantes de principios del siglo XVII, sin embargo, a pesar de su célebre carrera, se vio atormentado por una continua sucesión de finales abiertos a lo largo de su vida. El embajador dejó un rastro que pretendo estudiar con respecto al carácter incompleto de varios aspectos de su persona, como embajador, cortesano y personaje ficticio. Para llevar a cabo este trabajo, definiré las ideas de final y cierre y aplicaré los conceptos a los finales que vivió, a su fallecimiento y a los finales de su personaje en los panfletos *Vox Populi* de Thomas Scott y *Vox Coeli* de John Reynolds. El siguiente trabajo pretende explorar los posibles motivos detrás de la falta de finales cerrados en su vida y las maneras en las que le han afectado antes e incluso después de su muerte.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Cierre, Embajador, Conde, Final, Valladolid, Gondomar

INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE

The first Count of Gondomar, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, occupied more than 60 years throughout his life, defended Spain from British pirates and was a memorable representative of Spain as an ambassador in England in two different embassies. Despite having earned himself such an impressive reputation, he became infamous in Britain, a territory that was his working place for so many years; and notably forgotten in his mother country. This situation is very particular as his biography is very well documented and he participated in relevant moments of the history of both Spain and Britain. It is only recently that his presence in politics has started to be studied and his contributions to literature are being acknowledged, especially in Valladolid, where he created an impressive collection of books in the palace of Casa del Sol; and in Galicia, his birthplace where some people are currently requesting that his remains be taken back to.

There are so many different aspects in the life of this diplomat that, at first they seem to bear no relation, but once observed from a certain point of view they create a chain that retrospectively shapes his career. The neglect that he has been subjected to is a direct consequence of this connection of events, that is, the numerous instances when closure has been withheld from the Count of Gondomar. From the charges he conducted in Spain, to his embassies, his depiction in literature, his death and even his burial, the Count was met with projects that were frustrated before their consecution despite his knowledge and potential in so many diverse areas.

Some of the most relevant studies surrounding Diego Sarmiento de Acuña that I have taken in consideration and used as sources when producing this essay, as I believe them to be valuable literature, are *La casa del sol del conde de Gondomar en Valladolid* by Enrique Fernández de Córdoba Calleja (2004), *Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, conde de Gondomar (1567-1626) : erudito, mecenas y bibliófilo* by Carmen Manso Porto (1998) and *El embajador y el Rey : el conde de Gondomar y Jacobo I de Inglaterra* by Juan Durán Loriga (2006). However, these works and others that I came across while collecting information and resources focused mostly on the Count's biography, his book collection

or his work as an ambassador. What sets this academic paper apart from other works related to Diego Sarmiento de Acuña is the focal point of open ends and lack of closure in different aspects of his persona as well as in his representation in British literature during the 17th century.

METHODOLOGY

To carry out this project, I will first define what is referred to throughout this paper as ‘end’ and how it correlates to the idea of closure, both concepts that I will tackle with the help of two of the most influential works surrounding the topic, Eyal Segal’s *Beginnings and Endings* (2019) and Barbara Smith’s *Poetic Closure* (1968), from which the former derives some of the notions that he then addresses in his work. Afterwards, I will relate the contents of these essays to different facets and phases of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña’s life, which I will first introduce and delve into to the extent that is necessary in order to understand how it pertains to the purpose of this paper. Finally, I will refer to Thomas Scott’s *Vox Populi* (1620) and John Reynolds’ *Vox Coeli* (1624), the two literary works that I considered to be most representative of the Count’s perception in England during the 17th century, and I will relate the ends of the pamphlets to each other and to the almost identical demise that the character of the Count is subjected to in both stories.

What I hope to achieve is a better understanding of what led to so many of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña’s expectations to meet an unconcluded fate, what aspects of these fates coincide or differ with or from each other and whether there might be a possibility of a future closed end for what remains of him now. By merging biographical facts, fiction and the present state of affairs I am attempting to approach the figure of the Count of Gondomar from a new and unexplored perspective.

THE CONCEPT OF AN ENDING

Before tackling the study of Gondomar's ends, it is essential to understand what we are referring to when using the word "end". In order to do this, I will mainly be referring to and making use of Eyal Segal's (2019) essay *Beginnings and endings* and Barbara Smith's (1968) *Poetic Closure* and applying their ideas, which focus mainly on the temporal sequences of texts (with the latter applying a special focus to the structure of poems) to the temporal sequences in the Count of Gondomar's life. An end, whether it is of a text or of someone's life, is the unavoidable fate of anything that has a beginning (Segal, 2019). It is possible to prevent or postpone an ending, but one cannot stop something from reaching the end of its existence.

OPEN AND CLOSED ENDINGS

As Smith (1968) puts it, there are elements whose existence is inevitably limited and elements whose existence is inevitably unlimited and we are incapable of altering this aspect. However, what can change the feeling one has towards an ending is its openness. As is generally known, an ending, especially in literature, can be closed or open depending on how much information is provided to the reader or how much information is kept hidden. The former is considered more traditional while the latter became more popular in modern literature. The consequence to each of these endings is a different degree in the sense of an ending, which is what Segal (2019, p. 1) referred to as "closure". One would assume that the most satisfactory would be the closed ending, as all the gaps in the plots would be explained to the reader whereas in the open ending the reader might be disappointed and frustrated by the abruptness and the lack of closure. However, the openness of an ending in literature often provides a more extended experience to a story in which the plot does not stop at the end, instead the reader can continue the plot with their imagination, providing all kinds of different closed endings that they might come up with, which is much more experimental and interactive than a fixed and established closed ending.

CLOSURE EFFECTS IN RELATION TO STRUCTURE

Barbara Smith (1968) also explored how closure can be connected to the resolve of previously established expectations, which we generally derive gratification from. This explains closed endings, but she also explains that it is a possibility that the experiencing of these expectations as tension on their own might provide its own kind of satisfaction, thus the postponing of the conclusion or resolve to the expectations becomes desirable. In her book she described poems as being similar to music and having a “considerably more complex” (Smith, 1968, p. 5) structure than that of language which “has semantic or symbolic as well as physical properties” (p. 4). While the pamphlets I have included in this project fall closer to the category she described as “language” (1968, p. 4), I believe I can still make use of some of the terms and ideas that she proposed regarding structure and closure in poems and apply them to the literary forms that I am operating with in my paper. In a similar manner, I will be referring to the concepts and sensations resulting from openness and closedness when tackling different ‘ends’ in the life of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, that is, they will be applied to the interpretation of real life instead of literary fiction.

CLOSURE OUTSIDE OF FICTION

When considering events and their endings in real life, we are evidently no longer working with the insight of characters and readers. On one hand, there is the experiencer who is no longer a character and, since in our case he has long passed, the only direct outlook we have of him is that of his own written productions, such as his testament. On the other hand, we have the much more extensive and abundant secondary sources surrounding his persona, for instance, biographies and historical books. I based most of the statements and conclusions that I came to in this paper on the latter sort of documentation, always bearing in mind the implication of its secondary nature. That is to say, the research of those texts was carried out with the awareness that the information they put out are accounts and not the unadulterated events of the past. Charles Frankel (1957), in his paper *Explanation and Interpretation in History* states “over and above the “explanations” the historian gives he cannot help providing an over-all “interpretation” of events as well, that this “interpretation” affects even the actual “explanations” he gives,

and that objectivity in history, accordingly, is a will-o'-the-wisp.” (p.145). In a similar way, both Glyn Redworth and Enrique Fernández de Córdoba, as well as the authors of other historical sources used in this project, refer to the same events in the life of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, but both of them are forced to fill in the blanks through a subjective interpretation that leads to the possibility of considering their texts as narratives. History’s veracity has been subjected to a similar type of skepticism in multiple occasions, but I consider worth mentioning Paul Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative* (1983), which has helped me maintain a critical mentality when approaching multiple historical sources.

When considering the end of a real life period of time, a dynasty for example, there should not be any gaps of information and closure would be the ideal sensation obtained from its ending as it is a part of history. Furthermore, for the real person experiencing various ends, the meeting of their expectations as their desired closure is so much more important than that of a piece of art like a song or a book, which is considerably easier to move on from. This is why it is so important to study how and why the ending of Count Gondomar’s life is left with so much openness in relation to the other endings in his life. The reason why the end of his life should not be studied on its own without regarding other events is because, in Segal’s (2019) words, “The understanding and appreciation of endings depend to a large extent on what has preceded them, but at the same time they tend to play an important role in retrospectively shaping it and to have a lasting impact on its evaluation” (p. 11). The existence of closure depends entirely on the existence of an ending and for us to analyze an ending, we have to understand the events that led to it.

THE MULTIFACETED NATURE OF THE COUNT OF GONDOMAR

Diego Sarmiento de Acuña was born on November 1st of 1567 into an upper-class family in the municipality of Astorga (Real Academia de la Historia, n.d.). Through his father, García Sarmiento de Sotomayor, he received the lordship of Gondomar, a municipality in Galicia that was upgraded in 1617 by King Phillip III into county, thus turning Diego Sarmiento de Acuña into the first Count of Gondomar (RAH, n.d.).

As a consequence of his second marriage with Constanza de Acuña in 1588, he began living in Valladolid, as was demanded by the bride's family. He fulfilled their request until 1594 when he moved back to Gondomar to carry out the defense of the southern coast of Galicia against British pirates under the charge of sergeant (RAH, n.d.). In 1596, he was promoted to governor and mobilized forces in preparation for a possible disembarkation of the British Armada. The following year he was assigned Corregidor of Toro, which meant he had to conduct the functions of mayor of the city. He performed the charge until 1601, the year when the city of Valladolid became the new capital and the following year he became Corregidor of Valladolid, meaning he was in charge of adapting the city to the court. He developed both duties so diligently that, from then onwards, he received a multitude of titles, charges and territories to his name such as Visitador General of the Calatrava Order (1600), Commander of Monroyo (1608) and Perpetual Mayor of Valladolid (1612) (RAH, n.d.). Despite occupying so many offices, he suffered from economic hardships, which is why he asked the Duke of Lerma to promote him to Corregidor of Madrid, when it became the new court in 1606 (Manso, 2024). Instead of granting his wish, the Duke appointed him ambassador in London in 1613, a duty which he carried out for five years and would be repeatedly assigned to him until his death (RAH, n.d.).

Apart from responding to his duties and fulfilling the expectations of a first-born son by attaining a large amount of titles and overachieving as an administrator in various territories throughout Spain, his impact also reached the world of literature (Redworth, 2004). When he became Corregidor of Valladolid, he made the acquaintance of big names in the world of Spanish literature such as Góngora and Quevedo while participating in the arrangement of various royal events (Redworth, 2004). His influence in this field was

evidently reflected in works such as Góngora's poem *Llegué a Valladolid, registré luego* (1603) or even Cervante's novel *The Deceitful Marriage and the dialogue of the Dogs* (*El Coloquio de los Perros*) (1613) (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). But most significant is his reputation as a bibliophile. In Redworth's words, "he became the greatest private collector of books in Spain, with his library in the city of Valladolid cited as one of the wonders of the age" (2004, p. 2).

His affinity towards buying books to add to his library was accompanied by his habits of renovation. One of the main reasons why he acquired the Casa del Sol in 1599, so called due to the sculpture of a sun that he ordered be added to the front of the building, was his wish of buying a house in Valladolid that was in dire need of being restored, which he did consistently from its purchase until the year 1612 (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). Furthermore, as well as contributing to the decoration of the house and to the expansiveness of the library, he also constructed a family crypt (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004) in the church of Saint Benedict the Old (San Benito el Viejo), which was adjacent to the Casa del Sol and which he had ordered be ornamented with paintings of religious imagery as well as an image of his wife, Constanza de Acuña (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). This all to reflect his devotion to both Christianity and his marriage.

ENDS

COUNT OF GONDOMAR'S EMBASSIES AND THEIR CONCLUSION

Diego Sarmiento de Acuña was a very ambitious and laborious man, having assumed numerous charges and fulfilled all of them in a memorable manner. However, he is most recognized for the jobs that he had not selected for himself, but rather been assigned with by his superiors, that is, his embassies. As briefly stated previously, through his work as Corregidor of Valladolid, he came in contact with the Duke of Lerma who, as Redworth (2004) put it, “as long as he remained in power prevented him from coming too close to the king and court” (p.3). For this reason, when Sarmiento de Acuña wrote a letter to the Duke in 1612 requesting to be promoted to Corregidor of Madrid, the new capital of Spain, he was instead appointed to become Spain’s ambassador in London (Redworth, 2004).

FIRST EMBASSY

His first embassy began in 1613 and, as mentioned, it was allocated against his will, especially since he had in multiple instances refused to work outside of the Peninsula (Redworth, 2004). Thus, the beginning of his ambassadorship began with the end of his work as a Corregidor, a position which he held deeply in his heart and carried out extraordinarily as for him it had become almost a form of recreation, investing large amounts of money on it regardless of his economic struggles (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). Despite having to let go of his cherished charge back in Spain, he performed the duties of his first embassy exceptionally and he managed to maintain the relations between Spain and England for twenty years after the peace was signed in the Somerset House Treaty in 1604 (RAH, n.d).

Apart from being recognized as Count of Gondomar and possessor of one of the most comprehensive libraries of the 17th century, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña is overall a historically acclaimed ambassador. However, with the information I have so far presented and studied, I venture to propose that he had different expectations for himself and his reputation. As Segal (2019) stated, the ending of something is an “inevitable phenomenon”

(p.11), and while he was specifically speaking of the ending of a text, an administrative position necessarily ends too. A person can be fired from their position, they can quit on their own or they can work till retirement. This last possibility is what I hypothesize that Sarmiento de Acuña had planned: to work in the Spanish administration until he reached old age. Particularly, I believe he had wanted to remain Corregidor because it was his passion and it would have likely helped him reach a higher position in the Spanish court. Furthermore, it would have kept him much closer to his adored residences in Gondomar and Valladolid. It is the hindering of these wishes that prevents the soon to be ambassador from obtaining any sort of closure from the ending of his previous job. As Smith (1968) put it “the terminal event is a confirmation of expectations that have been established by the structure of the sequence, and is usually distinctly gratifying. The sense of a stable conclusiveness [...] is what is referred to here as closure” (p.2). For these reasons, this is one of his greatest losses and one of the most inconclusive endings throughout his life, as if he had retained his post as Corregidor, his career would have changed greatly, the position was instead given to the son of the Duke of Lerma, just before the celebrations for the signing of the peace with England were starting.

Although Gondomar’s aspirations did not include conducting an embassy, he quickly became accommodated to his new duties and did a commendable job his first time in London. Redworth (2004) stated that “in the first year of his embassy he wrote over 100 letters to Philip III and almost half as many to the king’s chief minister, the duke of Lerma” (p.4). However, I believe that part of the reason behind his diligence in that aspect resides in keeping close acquaintances with the Spanish court and the Duke in hopes that he might be rewarded with a position back in Spain upon the end of his ambassadorship, making it his first and his last.

During the five years that his first embassy lasted, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña gained the trust of both King James I and members of the English Court as well as the distrust of the Protestant population of England, which was a majority. His involvement in the treaty of London was particularly impactful on his reputation. His objective was to attempt to reduce English piracy in exchange for the cease of Spain’s interference in Ireland (Redworth, 2004). Tensions rose when Walter Raleigh went against King James’ word by raiding Spanish settlements. Consequently, King Philip III prohibited Gondomar from returning to Spain until Raleigh was imprisoned (Redworth, 2004). It is safely

assumed that Sarmiento de Acuña's priority was to be able to go back to his houses in Spain and that, if he satisfied the Spanish king's request, he had more chances to secure himself a position in court. For these reasons, he wrote a letter to King James I asking for the arrest of Walter Raleigh, a request which was quickly fulfilled and he soon was granted his so desired return to Spain (Redworth, 2004).

For all intents and purposes, the Count's first ambassadorship was almost flawless, had it not been for Raleigh's attacks on the Canary Islands and the Guyanas (Redworth, 2004). But Sarmiento de Acuña had more than enough reasons to feel proud of how the embassy ended and finally obtained a sense of conclusiveness. He had been invited to banquets by members of the English aristocracy such as Francis Bacon; he convinced King James I to release seventy Catholic priests that had been imprisoned; and he was even granted the release of Spanish artillery that had been apprehended by English pirates (Redworth, 2004). It is also possible that his physical departure from England itself gave him a sense of closure since, according to Smith (1968), "death, night, autumn, and farewells are terminal events, that references to them would presumably signify or suggest that something was ending" (pg.177). This way, he may have associated the termination of his stay in England with the end of his ambassadorship.

However, his close association with both the English crown and aristocracy eventually brought him significant inconveniences once the relations between Spain and England began "deteriorating", as Redworth (2004, p.8) put it. Due to his spectacular work as mediator, Gondomar was once again selected as ambassador. He attempted to prolong his stay in Spain by reasserting the worsening of his health and even using the death of his eldest son as an excuse in a letter to King James I despite the tragic event having taken place over a year earlier (Redworth, 2004). But his attempts were in vain and in 1620 he sailed back to London to resume his obligations as second-time ambassador. The way Redworth portrays the end of this episode in Sarmiento de Acuña's career is as unsuccessful. In a sense, Gondomar befriended many personages in the English court including the King, the Prince and the favorite, the Duke of Buckingham, which could help him later on achieve his personal goals. But from a more general perspective, the embassy failed to put an end to Anglo-Spanish conflicts which was its main aim and accordingly caused an open end that could only be closed by another embassy. Putting his case side by side with Barbara Smith's conclusion regarding closure,

it is as if Gondomar's life was a book and he a character in it, seeking for, as Smith (1968) put it, "absence/failure of continuation" or "stability" (p.34), but his wishes go against the writer's, which are "to maintain our interest in his play, novel, or poem [...] by providing constant sources of instability" (p.34).

The beginning of Sarmiento de Acuña's second embassy, as presented in the biographies I am employing, was the cause of his demise. In a surprisingly tight timeline, the events of his charge up till his death took place between 1620 and 1626. As Segal (2004) said, it is almost impossible to consider an ending without taking into account the events that preceded it. For that reason, the detailed analysis of what took place during these six years is paramount to understanding how the Count unconsciously produced the proposition that brought upon not only the extinction of his hopes of retirement or shift in profession, but also his death. I would consider two distinct events to be the main causes of his downfall: his proposition of the Spanish Match in his first embassy and the religious unrest throughout Europe spawned by the Thirty Years' War.

The Spanish Match was the marriage of the Infanta Maria, daughter of the Spanish king Phillip III, with Prince Charles, son of the British king James I. It was proposed by the Spaniards as "a sign of goodwill" (Redworth, 2003, p.10) in one of the first procedures to establish peace between the two European nations after the signing of the Treaty of London in August 1604. It was gladly received by King James I who had just been crowned king of England and Ireland and expected to be remembered as "*rex pacificus*, Peaceful King" (Redworth, 2003, p.7). However, Spain's demanding conditions for the marriage raised qualms in the British king, so much so, that he considered marrying his heir to a French princess instead. His wavering position towards the match resulted in it being postponed until 1614, when he disastrously dissolved a Parliament without legislation or taxation. Redworth (2003) said in his extensively comprehensive book surrounding the match, *The Prince and the Infanta*, that "Gondomar saw his chance to insinuate that the House of Stuart's political problems might be eased by a Spanish marriage" (p.15). At first, both the ambassador and the English king believed that the marriage was completely feasible and would bring a mutually beneficial alliance. However, some obstacles quickly emerged, particularly the condition for England to offer a "more tolerant approach [...] towards Catholicism" in their population, that is to say, liberty of conscience (Redworth, 2003, pp.16-17). Gondomar had wrongly assumed that

that requisite was more reasonable than Prince Charles' conversion to Catholicism. Both were equally unacceptable for the English crown, thus King James I rejected the match and it was out of the question until the dissolution of another Parliament in 1622.

SECOND EMBASSY

Gondomar's second embassy began in January of 1620, while the Spanish Catholic troops entered a territory in the Palatinate in August of the same year (Redworth, 2003). The reason why this last even created an extremely complicated second embassy for Gondomar is because princess Elizabeth, daughter of King James I, ruled over part of the Palatinate as a consequence of her marriage to Frederick V in 1613. Because of this, Spain's intrusion into the territory put King James I into a conflict of interests: would he defend his family or would he prioritize peace with Spain? Confronted with the pressure of taking action instead of idling, the English king summoned a Parliament in 1621. This proved to be a mistake when its result was a further denouncing of the monarch's alleged neglect towards his daughter in favor of Spain. Subsequently, the following year the Parliament was terminated and James I considered the Spanish Match once again as he is said to have believed it would maintain peace, which was a far from correct assumption.

In 1622, Gondomar's second embassy ended and he left England having agreed with Prince Charles that he would be allowed to "collect his bride" (Redworth, 2004, p.10) if he were to "mount Spain" (Redworth, 2003, p.54), that is, go to Madrid to meet with the newly crowned King Philip IV. As it turns out, the Spanish king had no say nor had he been informed of the Prince of Wales' intent to visit Spain, instead it was all Gondomar's strategy to guarantee that the Spanish Match took place and he be granted a higher status of nobility for his successful diplomacy. At first his plan seemed to work considering that Prince Charles did indeed arrive at the capital on March of 1623 and not only did King Philip IV excitedly welcome the British prince, but the ambassador was promptly promoted to councilor of state.

However, this victory was shortly lived as the conditions for the marriage established by the Pope reached the Prince who asked to return to England to discuss the demands with his father in person, a request which was denied to him and suddenly he

found himself “captive in a foreign land” (Redworth, 2003, p.111). From then on, England did everything that was on their hands to bring back their prince, but since they never managed to reach an agreement, prince Charles resolved to convincing his hosts that he agreed to all of their conditions up until the last day of his stay in Madrid (Redworth, 2003). The prince left the capital without his bride and revoked the marriage before even leaving the country.

The end of the Spanish Match, Gondomar’s golden plan during his embassies, could not have been more catastrophic both for Spain and for him. Not only did it give rise to a declaration of war from England, but it also gave way to prince Charles’ marriage with the French princess, Henrietta María, facilitating the Anglo-French alliance that Spain had tried to prevent. Despite his efforts, the defeat of his matrimonial project also meant Sarmiento de Acuña’s defeat as an ambassador. Much to his dismay however, and despite his huge previous failure, the imminent Anglo-Spanish war called once again for his talents and he was proclaimed ambassador for the last time in 1624. By then his health condition was a real impediment and not just an excuse, but he only managed to postpone his charge for five months. Though he started the journey, he never reached London, instead his well-being was finally taken in consideration and he was allowed to return to Spain. On his way back, he was aware of the severity of his health and, after rushing to write his will in February of 1626, he soon passed away in a town in La Rioja, leaving his third embassy incomplete and almost all of his projects frustrated.

Each time the Count of Gondomar was appointed ambassador he evaded the profession in every way he found possible, thus we can easily conclude that he profoundly rejected the position. It is documented that whenever he moved to London he would constantly be afflicted with nostalgia for his wife, his library and his homes (Redworth, 2003). And everything he did and proposed during his ambassadorships according to his biographers who base their claims on his frequent correspondence, was with the aim of being rewarded a high position at court back in Spain (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). How is it then that he got himself stuck on a loop of undesired embassies? In order to find a probable and logical solution to this inquiry, I will be making use of Smith’s (1968) similar questions surrounding poems, those being, “What keeps it going?” and “What stops it from going?”. Additionally, I will refer to Segal’s (2004) solution to those questions in the field of narrative, which I will then apply to Gondomar’s embassies.

According to Segal (2004), regarding the former question, what prompts the continuation of a text is “narrative interest” aroused by “informational gaps” (p.15), that is, the lack of information at some level in the narrative and which the reader at some point expects will be filled in. Similarly, ambassadors are required to represent their country abroad to broach any possible lack of information in diplomacy that might engender conflict between states. And particularly in Gondomar’s case, the most significant gap was that of the Spanish Match that always seemed within reach, but he never managed to finalize. As for the second “corollary” (Smith, 1968, p.4) question, it demands the knowledge of the origin of closure, which Segal (2004) attributes to the end of narrative interest. This way, closure is the resolution of information gaps while openness is the prolonging of information gaps. If we apply this to the case of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, the reason behind his reiterated appointment as ambassador would be his failure at solving some gaps in the communication and relationship between Spain and England.

THE DIFFERENT FATES OF COUNT GONDOMAR IN FICTIONAL WORKS

Both of the literary works that I will be addressing and analyzing for the purpose of this research were produced by English Protestant writers during the 17th century. A brief exploration of the historical context is essential for a proper understanding of how the figure of the Count of Gondomar is portrayed in these texts and the end of both the fictional stories as well as that of the character of the ambassador. Due to the clear religious differences between England and Spain in the 17th century, an anti-Spanish sentiment had spread and deeply rooted itself in the English Protestant community. For this reason, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña's embassies, whose main objective was the marriage of their Protestant prince with a Spanish Catholic princess, was met with an extreme disdain towards his persona in this segment of population of England (Álvarez, 2009). It is because of this reputation that in both works the ambassador is portrayed as an evil Spanish man who has intruded the English monarchy to corrupt their king and spread Catholicism through Europe, thus his demise in both works is celebrated.

VOX POPULI

One of the most important and controversial literary texts that criticized Diego Sarmiento de Acuña and his reliability as an ambassador was *Vox Populi* or *Newes from Spaine*, Thomas Scott's first political pamphlet published anonymously in 1620 (Álvarez, 2009). The title can be translated as "the voice of the people" and it is a reference to the discontent of the British population regarding the political situation at the time in their country. Thomas Scott belonged to a large group of English Protestant artists and writers that rose against Spain's intrusion into their monarchy by producing politically and religiously motivated works of fiction (Álvarez, 2009). Despite the censorship that was put in place to defend the English king's reputation, which affected Thomas Scott's pamphlets among other similar works, *Vox Populi* still managed to gain a significant amount of public attention and is considered the start of the anti-Spanish propaganda in England in the early 17th century (Álvarez, 2009).

The pamphlet depicts a fictional meeting of the Spanish Council of States upon the arrival of the Count of Gondomar from his first embassy in 1618. The narrative is structured as a dialogue with some interventions from an omniscient narrator. The

political figures present in the council ask Gondomar questions regarding his success carrying out Spain's plots to create a universal church and a universal empire under the guise of honest policies (Álvarez, 2009). The character of the Duke of Lerma, one of the attendants, begins the dialogue saying "Howe vnhappy are the people where you haue beene, first for their soules (being heretikes) then for their estates, where the name of a Favorite is so familiar" (p. 2). This first utterance already sets up expectations for a satisfactory ending considering the desired readership of the story. The main purpose of Thomas Scott's pamphlet was to encourage the Protestant population of England to conduct their civic duties by warning their king about the disservice that Spain's presence was doing to the security of their country. That is to say, the pamphlet was meant to be read by Protestants, which is why having Catholic characters in the story calling Protestants in England "heretikes" (Thomas Scott, 1620, p. 2) already sets these characters up to be dislikable and villainous.

The character of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña in the pamphlet is especially important as the plot revolves around him. It is his return from England that prompts the reunion between Spanish political figures and most importantly he serves as a means to indirectly transmit Scott's opinions. If the author were to make direct statements, he would risk being affected by King James I's censorship or even get arrested. However, by making the character of the Count of Gondomar confess his success diminishing England's strength, he justifies his anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic stance safely and presents the ambassador as the ultimate evil in the narrative. For this reason, it is likely that the character of the Count will be the most ill-fated by the end of the story, which in part provides a more than fulfilling closure for English readers. According to his biographies, Gondomar had intended to be a genuine ambassador, but in Scott's work, as Leticia Álvarez (2009) said in her essay *Opposing the Spanish Match: Thomas Scott's Vox Populi*, "Gondomar's mission is described as a scheme devised by the Church of Rome to spread Catholicism on the continent" (p. 9). Furthermore, making the narrative take the shape of a conversation forces the character of the ambassador to blatantly admit in first person the alleged greed behind every decision he took during his embassy. It almost resembles a confession, which, considering the pseudo-realistic setting of the story, has a significant harmful effect on his reputation.

The final events in the plot which I consider to be the end are carried out in a rather swift and abrupt manner that surprises both the characters and the reader. Although perhaps this last aspect is due to a modern reading of the story which lacks the experience of living in 17th century England when the matters tackled in the pamphlet were current and relevant. Regardless of this digression, the repetitive and static format of the plot where a character asks a question and Gondomar responds is in the final pages suddenly interrupted by an intrusion that puts an end to both the meeting and the story. On his final statement, the character of the Count of Gondomar boasts about how he took advantage of his position as ambassador to “buy all the manuscripts, & other auncient & rare authors out of the handes of the heretikes” (Thomas Scott, 1620, p.14), distorting the real ambassador’s interest in book collection; and is in the middle of proposing his next plan to create more internal differences in the English clergy to facilitate Spain’s intrusion when a secretary enters the room to deliver some letters to the attendants. The letters’ authors are not revealed to the reader. But we do know is that they were written by a group of people that are also involved in Spain’s and the Pope’s plans of creating a “Western Empire” as the letters begin by addressing the progress of their stratagems through England and Germany thanks to their espionage. However, this introduction is followed by the authors of the letter lamenting that their true intentions have been unveiled and that, consequently, they should cease their schemes, put an end to their consultation and regroup to decide how to proceed.

The attendants to the council react to the message with surprise and desolation, but they immediately follow its instructions adjourning the meeting and leaving. That is the extent of what we are explicitly told of the after events to the council, but before the pamphlet concludes, Thomas Scott includes the following passage:

In the meane tyme, Let not those be secure, whom it concernes to be rowsed up, knowing that this aspiring Nebuchadnezar wil not loose the glorie of his greatness, (who continueth still to magnifie himselfe in his great Babel) until it be spoken, thy kingdome is departed from thee (p.15)

According to Álvarez (2009), the quote is the final segment of Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar II’s dream in *The Book of Daniel* and, in her words, “For anti-Catholic English writers, Nebuchadnezzar’s imperialistic ambitions and

invasion of Jerusalem worked as a perfect parallel for the Spanish monarch's intention to attain Universal Monarchy" (p.18). In short, the pamphlet ends with a reference that serves both as a morale and as a forecasting message. It is a last instance of encouragement for English Protestants to conduct their civic duties by fighting against the Spanish cause and it is a prediction of Spain's failure on their plans to expand their monarchy and spread Catholicism through Europe.

In the pamphlet, the character of the Count of Gondomar's last words perfectly follow Segal's (2019) principal ideas regarding endings in relation to what precedes them, that is, they can only be properly understood when knowing what the Count has said previously, while at the same time adding more meaning or nuance to those previous words or, as he says, "retrospectively shaping" them (p.1). Throughout the entirety of the pamphlet, the character of the ambassador is happy to oblige to the council attendants' demands and questions, boasting about the work he has done to progress Spain's stratagems in England without being discovered and his last speech is no different. His last segment serves to conclude the conversation by showing no development of his character as he is completely proud of deceiving the British court and their monarch. In such a way, if one were to only read the Count's last utterance, they would miss his non-dynamic nature and would not understand that he is completely static and only has one goal; but at the same time, the Count's last chance to speak serves as a summary of everything that he has previously said and so closes off his discourse while serving as a reflection of the character on its own.

The character of the ambassador's last words would have been the perfect conclusion to the council of states, that is, his promise that, thanks to his diplomacy, Spain has a great opportunity of taking advantage of England's internal conflict to advance their plans. It provides a positive prediction for the future of their complot and leaves an impeccable image of the character of the Count of Gondomar as Spain's most reliable pawn in their game of conquest. As Torgovnick (1981) states in her book, *Closure in the Novel*, "An ending is the single place where an author most pressingly desires to make his points—whether those points are aesthetic, moral, social, political, epistemological, or even the determination not to make any point at all." (pp. 160-168). The Count would have thus given himself a perfect closed ending if it had not been re-opened and

subsequently overturned by the message in the letters, which completely discredits everything he had bragged about and crushes the promise he made at the end.

It is the twist provided by these letters that brings us to the real ending of the story and the pamphlet, which is the end to Spain's evil stratagems. This final ending is also closed, but it is the complete opposite of the one promised by the character of the ambassador as it puts an end to the character's ambitions and his and all the other council attendants' plans to spread the Catholic Empire. It terminates the character of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, almost prophesizing the failure of the real one. This kind of alternated ending is nothing new and Segal (2019) addressed it in stating "that altering the ending can strongly influence the work as a whole even without taking the trouble of meticulously rethinking and rewriting that whole: a substantial effect achieved with relatively little effort" (p.11). He focused on endings that had to be altered by the author in order to please the audience, meanwhile the altered ending that we appreciate in Scott's pamphlet is inside the plot and while it is expected by the readers, it is apparently unpredictable by the characters, especially that of the Count of Gondomar. Despite the text preceding the real ambassador's death by six years, it surprisingly parallels the way the Count used his embassies to try to receive a position in the Spanish Court only for his embassies to be unsuccessful and follow him till his death.

VOX COELI

The popularity of Thomas Scott's pamphlet gave way to a multitude of other similarly themed and inspired texts aimed at the defamation of Spain and its political representatives, particularly the Count of Gondomar. John Reynolds was one of the authors that took after Scott and produced an equally polarizing pamphlet in 1624, that is, *Vox Coeli, or, Newes From Heaven*. In parallel to Scott's work, John Reynolds' pamphlet is also presented as a fictional dialogue between political figures. However, the fictional aspect of this pamphlet is significantly more palpable than its predecessor as it depicts a consultation carried out in heaven between deceased members of British royalty now alive as spirits. The pamphlet possesses a second title that serves as a brief summary of the plot:

OF A CONSVLTATION THERE HELD BY THE HIGH and mighty Princes, King HEN. 8. King EDW. 6. Prince HENRY. Queene MARY, Queene ELIZABETH, and Queene ANNE; wherein SPAINES ambition and treacheries to most Kingdomes and free Estates in EVROPE, are vnmaskd and truly represented, but more particularly towards ENGLAND, and now more especially vnder the pretended match of Prince CHARLES, with the Infanta DONA MARIA. (p. 1)

In other words, the reason behind their meeting postmortem is the discussion of the Spanish Match and its possible benefits or detriment to England considering Spain's acts of treachery towards other European States throughout history.

After a preface where the author justifies the publication of his work, which I will omit as it does not pertain to our discussion, the fictional account begins with the reunion of the characters. The first spirit to make an appearance is that of Queen Elizabeth I who has just become aware of the situation in England regarding the Spanish Match (Reynolds, 1624). Particularly alarmed by Spain's and the Pope's objective of creating a Western Empire, she transmits the information to her nephew, Henry Prince of Wales, who is also in heaven (Reynolds, 1624). He then promptly informs his mother, Queen Anne of Denmark, while Queen Elizabeth tells her brother, King Edward VI, and they together tell their father, King Henry VIII (Reynolds, 1624). They all make the choice to invite Mary Queen of Scots to the consultation with the hope that she reveals secret information about Spain's plots that they may be unaware of, considering her distinct preference toward Spain instead of her own country (Reynolds, 1624).

With God's consent, they start the consultation and King Henry asks that before addressing the Spanish Match, they review what Spain's monarchs have done in Europe throughout the last century (Reynolds, 1624). They tackle Navarre, the West Indies, Portugal, Italy, Venice, Switzerland, Grisons, Savoy, France, the Netherlands, and finally, England (Reynolds, 1624). The structure of the consultation is always the same: King Henry asks what relations a nation has had with Spain in the last century; the other kings and queens of England will bring up various acts of betrayal by Spanish kings towards that Estate; Queen Mary defends these acts with the excuse that Spain loves said nation

and that the Catholic king can do no wrong; and finally the other English monarchs disprove and refute her reasoning and move on to the next Estate.

The Count of Gondomar does not participate in the fictional dialogue, unlike in this pamphlet's predecessor, *Vox Populi*. Nevertheless, he is still a character and equally depicted as the villain. Furthermore, the character is once again of extreme importance to the plot since the event that triggered the consultation itself was the Spanish Match, a proposition constantly pushed by the ambassador. In this way, he becomes one of the central topics that the queens and kings discuss in the last segment surrounding Spain's threat towards England.

The character of the Count of Gondomar is mentioned for the first time when the monarchs address the unusable state of the English Royal Navy and the general negligence of King James I towards their war materials (Reynolds, 1624). Queen Mary then says "both Gondomar, King Phillip his Master, the Pope, my selfe, and all the Romane Catholiques of Eng-land reioyce hereat, for the Impotency and destruction of this Royall Nauy" (Reynolds, 1624, p. 36). The rest of the consultation follows a similar pattern to this where the Count of Gondomar is blamed for events that have troubled England in the last century such as the liberation of priests and Jesuits from British prisons; the beheading of Walter Raleigh; the passiveness of King James I; or the use of British fleets "to secure the Coast of Spaine, against the Turkish Pyrates, vnder colour of going to Ar-gier and Barbary" (Reynolds, 1624, p. 43). Afterwards, Queen Mary praises Gondomar's policies and Spain's ambitions always regardless of their detriment to England, which helps paint the picture of Gondomar as England's worst enemy.

The consultation concludes with King Henry asking the present members to vote whether to allow or prohibit the Spanish match, which as expected, has five votes against and a single vote in favor from Queen Mary (Reynolds, 1624). This result is brought upon God who approves it and reprimands Mary for her disloyalty against England (Reynolds, 1624), indicating that even he disproves of the marriage. Finally, those who voted against the match are asked to send printed copies of the consultation to the British authorities. Meanwhile, Queen Mary chooses to warn the Roman Catholics of England and the Count of Gondomar with two letters of her own (Reynolds, 1624). This letter to the ambassador urges him to make an effort to conduct the match regardless of the outcome of the

heavenly suffrage; to prepare their fleets to transport the Infanta to England; and to arm Spain in preparation for a war if necessary (Reynolds, 1624).

This ending is particularly interesting because it parallels and at the same time differs from the conclusion that Thomas Scott chose for his pamphlet. *Vox Populi* had what I consider to be two endings, one original and one definite. This is unique because the first ending is not the end of the text, we can tell that there is more to be read, and this creates even more expectations for the true end and its conclusion. Segal (2019) tackled these possibilities in his essay, *Beginnings and Endings*:

As the text's termination point, especially if considered as intentionally designed as such, the ending obviously plays a crucial role with regard to our ability to determine the nature and degree of the text's closure. As long as the end has not been reached, such judgments would always be open to readjustment (including a complete reversal), because what is left of the text may contain further developments: what appears open may yet be closed, and what appears closed may yet be reopened. (p.12)

Vox Populi's first ending is the one that the character of the Count of Gondomar expected, that is, finishing off the reunion having convinced the attendants of his victorious complot against England and promising them a future success in Spain's conquering of said nation. The second and real ending is the final one where both the consultation and Spain's and the Pope's ambitions are dissolved by the uncovering of their true intentions. This second ending serves to appease the readers and offer them a satisfactory conclusion.

Meanwhile, in *Vox Coeli*, we have a similar pair of endings, but their purposes are reversed. The first one would have provided a closed end both to the consultation and to the pamphlet where the majority of the monarchs in heaven oppose the Spanish Match and their position is supported by God who then commands them to inform England of their resolution. This should have been the perfect ending to the story, assuring the readers that the highest authority in heaven would never allow the Spanish Match to happen. Nevertheless, John Reynolds then adds a continuation to what appeared to be a closed ending through Queen Mary's determined nature which moves her to write the encouraging letter to Gondomar. I believe this ending is much more powerful than *Vox*

Populi considering the shared purpose of their pamphlets: civic duty. If the intention that they had was to scare English Protestants and instill in them a strong impulse to rise against Spain in defense of their country, an ending where the threat is imminent is much more incentivizing than one where the danger has already been thwarted.

By all means, the real and final end to *Vox Coeli* is that provided by the letters written by Queen Mary of Scots since, quite literally, nothing follows afterwards but a blank space. Additionally, the sense of closure of this end is intensified by the typical inclusion of the innately conclusive word in capital letters ‘*finis*’, which is the perfect example of Smith’s (1968) concept of closural allusion as a device used to conclude poems in her book, *Poetic Closure*. She states that “One of the most obvious ways in which a poem can indicate its own conclusion thematically is simply to say so” (p.172). By this she is referring to the explicit use of words such as “last”, “finished”, or “end” (Smith, 1968, p.172) in the final position of a poem providing a direct sense of finality. However, this all concerns the textual end of the pamphlet. When it comes to Gondomar’s fate at the end of the story, our knowledge is much less certain. What we know with a fair amount of confidence is that the character of the ambassador in the story, upon the arrival of the letters will feel thwarted and disappointed that all of the work he has done to make progress in Spain’s grandiose goal of the Western Empire is suddenly put an end to by forces much stronger than him. This would greatly resemble the unresolved fate of the ambassador in *Vox Populi*. It is true that here he is prevented from losing all faith thanks to the character of Queen Mary who is determined to see the universal reign of the Catholic king come to fruition by any means. But having said this, regardless of how many weapons and fleets Spain could have gathered to ready themselves for war, not only would England also have time to arm themselves, but they would have the aid of three kings and two queens in heaven and, most importantly, the favor of God. Due to the power of these spiritual beings, the chances of the character of the Spanish ambassador in this story being victorious and having his desired closed ending were always meant to be second to none.

THE DEATH OF THE COUNT OF GONDOMAR

Diego Sarmiento de Acuña passed away at the age of 58 in the province of La Rioja on the 2nd of October in 1626 after being granted permission to cease his activities as ambassador and return to Spain, as stated at the end of the segment regarding his embassies. The Count of Gondomar was a diligent man as his extended and varied career in diplomacy reflects. Nonetheless, I believe it is safe to presume that he had not intended to work till the last days of his life. Having been aware of his indisposed condition and using it as defense for his refusal to conduct a third embassy, he was likely attempting to grant himself some years of peace and comfort before his passing, which we know he foresaw by his preemptive writing of his testament. Instead, his death was sudden and occurred before he could even reach his home, meaning he was not allowed any of his last wishes in life and his family was left with his testament to put his memory to rest. According to Fernández de Córdoba (2004), the last visit the Count made to his beloved Galician house in Gondomar was at the end of his second embassy in 1622 and it did not last more than a few days. And, despite being given the title of perpetual alderman of Valladolid in 1623, he similarly had no chance to visit the city where his renowned library stood. In Fernández de Córdoba's (2004) book, *La Casa del Sol del Conde de Gondomar en Valladolid*, he provides a record of the many letters the Count had Diego de Santana, a friend of his that he selected as custodian of his library, send him while he was away to assure him of the well keeping of his book collection. From his preoccupation I presume that he would have much rather been in Valladolid taking care of the house and the library himself in the company of his loving wife and many children.

The Count of Gondomar's testament that he quickly composed during his stay in Brussels mere months before his passing clearly explained how and where he wanted his body to be treated and buried once he passed (see Appendix A) (RAH, n.d.). This way, he granted himself some sort of closure by taking it upon himself to leave no gaps of information, no questions and no doubts for his family about how to proceed when his body reached Spain. His testament served as a guarantee that, at least in death, he would finally be reunited with his family and his house in Valladolid. Dutifully, his corpse was buried under the vault of the chapel of the Church of Saint Benedict the Old in Valladolid on the 5th of October of 1626 (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004).

I believe there are two forms of closure related to the Count of Gondomar's figure at this point in time, that is, following his burial. First of all, going along with the chronology of the events, despite the fact that it occurred under more than undesirable circumstances, Sarmiento de Acuña's death produces closure in the sense that it is the end of his life and it is impossible for anything to follow. This sensation can be related to Barbara Smith's (1968) concept of closural allusions. Particularly relevant to my case is her example of final words that refer to real events that we associate with feelings of "repose, or stability", for instance, "sleep" or "death" (p.176).

The second form of closure I will be placing special focus on is his testament. I quote myself in saying that "Diego Sarmiento de Acuña's death produced closure in the sense that [...] it is impossible for anything to follow" and yet there is a way for this to be challenged, that is, through a message produced pre-mortem meant to be read post-mortem. If the Count had not written his testament before his passing, he still would have had a closed ending, but his family would have been completely devoid of any feeling of closure from its abruptness. If we think of his testament as a last message before leaving, we can associate it with Smith's (1968) contemplation of a coda as "a formula of conclusion to signal the approaching termination" (p.187), that is, a last message before a departure.

However, this last closed ending provided by the Count's testament was reopened by external parties and is yet to be permanently closed. By this I mean that the family could no longer be at peace by having fulfilled Sarmiento de Acuña's wishes because what he expressed in his testament that had originally been accomplished was, in multiple occasions, obstructed. The Church of Saint Benedict the Old lost its sacred nature that it once had when the Count was buried inside after it closed for worship from 1812 until 1921 (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). In between those years, the church and the adjacent house were rented and in state of neglect in various instances. Most notably, the Casa del Sol was transformed into military headquarters until the year 1912 when it was purchased by a community of nuns; and the church was adapted into a car repair shop in the year 1900 (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). However, none of these alterations or reconstructions were as menacing to Sarmiento de Acuña's testament and his family's peace of mind as the mistreatment and relocating of his corpse in the mid-18th century,

eventually being placed in the Church of San Martín. According to J. M. Castroviejo and F. de P Fernández de Córdoba (1967):

When the crypt was ruined his corpse, that was mummified and dressed with the garments of the time, lay abandoned, and as if he could not even rest after death, was relocated multiple times. In one of the locations, then adapted into a prison, the convicts of the last century desecrated it, using it as a form of macabre entertainment by sticking it through the bars of the prison to scare bystanders. Today his mummy rests well preserved in the church of San Martín of Valladolid. (p.213)

During the 20th century, the debate about whether the Count's body was being properly maintained in the church of San Martín was open until April of 1991, when the 17th Count of Gondomar, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, along with the authorities of Galicia and Castilla y León arranged the transfer of the remains of Sarmiento de Acuña back to his crypt in the Church of Saint Benedict the Old, which had recently been restored (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). Accordingly, the following month the last relocation to this day was carried out with the corresponding funeral ceremonies including a hearse, a chorus and a slow procession through the streets of Valladolid leading to his final location (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004).

CURRENT REMAINS OF DIEGO SARMIENTO DE ACUÑA

In recent years, the name of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña has mostly been forgotten and only resurfaced in small instances related to the location of his remains, the state of the buildings he possessed, and studies of the representation of his figure in literature produced in England. As for the first topic, currently, the body of the count still lays mummified in an underground vault in the Church of Saint Benedict the Old (San Benito el Viejo) in Valladolid. However, and despite this resolution satisfying the ambassador's successors at first, it raised concerns when both the house and the adjacent church were acquired by the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports for the purpose of expanding the National Museum of Sculpture in 1999 (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, n. d.). There had been a previous failed attempt in 1982 through a forced expropriation with the pretense that the buildings required a restoration that would be carried out through its adaptation into a museum (Fernández de Córdoba, 2004). In the end, the government executed their original plan, much to the displeasure of the Count's current descendants, the government of Galicia and some important figures in Valladolid who are knowledgeable about the Count's historical importance. Most of their complaints derived from the fact that visits to the ambassador's vault were disallowed in 2009, when the constructions for the expansion of the museum in the church began, and so neither the inhabitants of the city, family members or even possible visitors interested in the historical figure could access or even confirm whether the Count's body was still in its crypt (Faro de Vigo, April 06). For instance, Gonzalo Fernández, current mayor of Gondomar in Galicia, claimed that "given the way he has been forgotten in the city where he is chief magistrate [...] In Gondomar not only would he have a calm place to rest but he would also be received with the honors that he deserves" (Faro de Vigo, 2019, April 17). He believes that the place Diego Sarmiento de Acuña wanted to be buried in is no longer the Church of Saint Benedict the Old (Benito el Viejo) as it is now a museum where he went unrecognized for several years, buried and hidden under a carpet until they eventually placed a plaque next to it to recognize his burial space (Faro de Vigo, 2019, April 17).

The present-day Count of Gondomar, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba y Narváez, agrees with the mayor of the city and also believes that his antecessor should be moved to Galicia as the crypt in the church of Saint Benedict the Old is no longer the place that the Count once knew in life, now devoid of its original sanctity (Faro de Vigo, 2019, April 17). He adds that “the family had not been asked and so, if they had moved his crypt while conducting the constructions of the National Museum of Sculpture, they did so without their [the family’s] consent” (Faro de Vigo, 2019, April 17).

Furthermore, and as previously mentioned, general disregard and carelessness toward the state of the crypt also arose in the city of Valladolid. For instance, Teófanés Egido, a renowned university professor from Valladolid states “The Count of Gondomar is without a doubt a very relevant figure for the history of Spain and has been condemned to oblivion, he was relocated to his resting place [...] to dignify him, but now the opposite is happening” (Faro de Vigo, 2019, April 06).

No matter how many times the corpse is moved, there will always be someone whose expectations on this matter are not met and will be disappointed with the conclusion. Smith (1968) defined ‘stability’ as “the expectation of nothing” and “a state [...] desirable only at the end of a poem or piece of music” (p.35). But in the case of Gondomar, even at the end of his life, he is not granted stability or repose. All this seems to confirm the regretful reality that despite his great impact in Spain through his ambassadorship, his commendable book collection, his key role in maintaining peace between Spain and England beyond expectations, etc. he has been mostly forgotten, perhaps overshadowed by other noblemen and esteemed figures that passed through the city of Valladolid (Faro de Vigo, April 06), and infinitely cursed with lack of closure.

CONCLUSION

There are many documents and sources with different perspectives about Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, but most of them agree that he was a dedicated person in a multitude of areas. He was a bibliophile, he took pleasure in restoration of cities and buildings, he was particularly diligent in his diplomatic work both in Spain and England, yet despite his hard work he could never find success in his expectations and finds himself now in a limbo of misremembrance and lack of resolve.

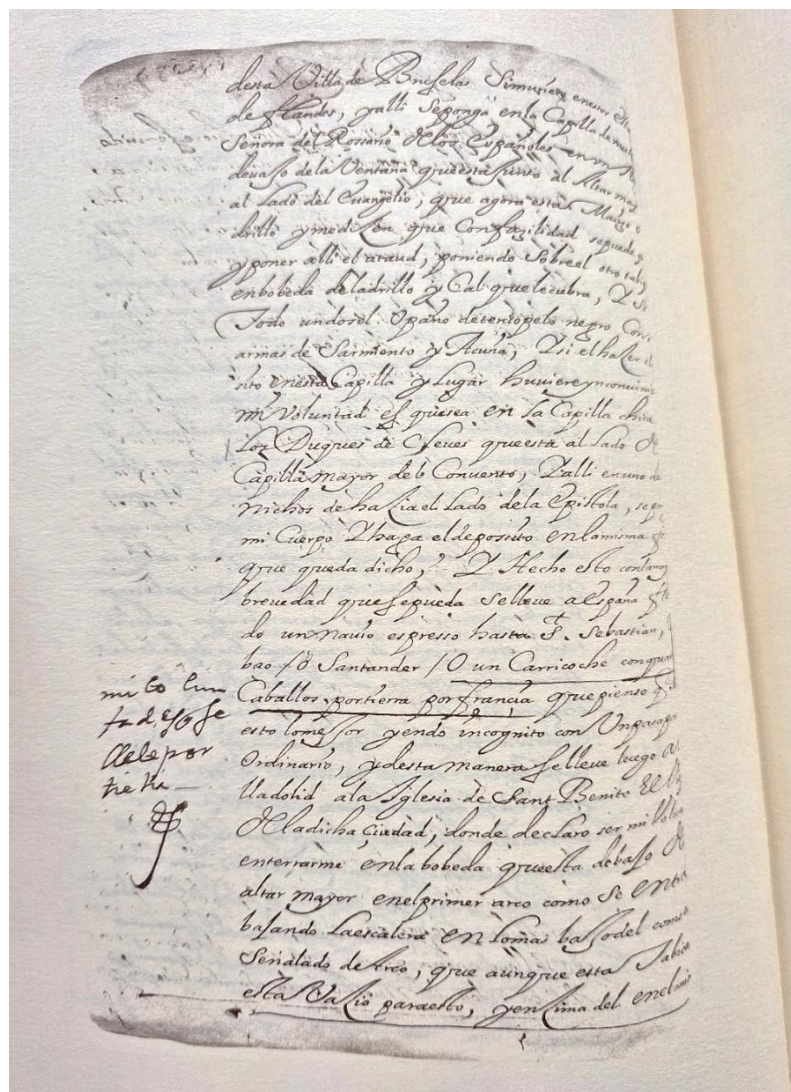
The expectations that he had set for himself clashed with the interests of others that were in a higher position of power, which resulted in the Count being forced to settle with open ends. This happened throughout his employment as Corregidor which, after years of climbing up the ladder, was taken from him and replaced with an ambassadorship. Then, after traveling back and forth between England and Spain, carrying out an admirable work of diplomacy in spite of his true ambitions, he was repeatedly met with failure, the ultimate one being the canceling of the Spanish Match, which led to an Anglo-Spanish war. During these embassies, his efforts were far from appreciated by English Protestants, particularly pamphleteers who depicted him as the source of adversities in their country and thus submitted him to unavoidable defeat in fiction, hoping for and retrospectively foreboding his losses. Ultimately, the embassies that he was unable to avoid fastened the worsening of his health and his passing too was devoid of closure.

Almost four centuries after the death of the Spanish ambassador and after multiple relocations of his body since his burial, even now in this last phase of his existence post mortem, closure is out of his grasp. It is the last open end that could be closed if all sides were to set aside clashing interests and finally grant a final repose to the Count's remains as he had originally stated. However, this issue is much more complex and, for now, at least there is a sense of closure provided by the recent resurgence and appreciation given to his figure and works that fill in the gaps of information in his memory.

APPENDIX A / RELATED DOCUMENTS

THE COUNT OF GONDOMAR'S TESTAMENT

The following is a scanned page from Diego Sarmiento de Acuña's original testament in which he clearly specifies the desired procedure that he expects his family to conduct with his body after he passes. I want to express my gratitude to the library of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras of the University of Valladolid, where I have studied my university degree, for facilitating the book *Testamento del Conde de Gondomar Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña* from which I obtained this excerpt. I will also include a translation of the transcription where it mentions the Church of Saint Benedict the Old, as it is the most pertinent for the purpose of my project. This transcription was graciously produced by the renowned Spanish historian Teófanés Eguido who is the author of the introduction of the book.



“Se lleve luego a Valladolid, a la iglesia de Sant Benito el Viejo de la dicha ciudad, donde declaro ser mi voluntad enterrarme en la bóveda que está debajo del altar mayor, en el primer arco como se entra bajando la escalera, en lo más bajo de él como está señalado de arco, que, aunque está fabricado, está vacío para esto” (Egido, 1991, 23) (Testamento, fol. 1.537v.)

“[his body] Be later moved to Valladolid, to the church of Saint Benedict the Old of said city where I declare it is my will to be buried in the vault that is under the main altar, in the first arch as one enters descending the stairs, at the very bottom of it how it is signaled with an arch, which, although it is constructed, is empty for this purpose”

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