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Censorship and Circulation of Anti-Catholic Images in Jacobean England: a Case Study of *the Grindstone Satire*

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Abstract

This dissertation re-examines the 1614 ‘Grindstone’ engraving in which King James I grinds Pope Paul V’s nose to “lecture” him, placing it within the religious and diplomatic tensions of Jacobean England. Archival research in the AGS is blended with a detailed visual analysis and comparison of related cultural productions: a Ramsay clock base and contemporary stage satires to reconstruct the print’s fate (its attempted suppression by the Spanish ambassador Gondomar, and its clandestine resilience across Protestant networks across Europe). The study shows that censorship paradoxically magnified the image’s polemical force, turning it into a “martyr-relic” that determined anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish discourse, as evidenced Scott’s and Middleton’s later critiques and complains about Gondomar’s action, fedding so the Black Legend trend. By foregrounding visual evidence, the project re-positions graphic satire as a decisive agent in shaping early-modern public opinion and offers a nuanced reading of propaganda, diplomacy and confessional conflict.

Keywords: Jacobean England, Anti-Catholic Satire, Censorship, Grindstone Engraving, Visual Propaganda, Black Legend

Esta disertación reexamina el grabado de la “piedra de amolar” de 1614 en el que el rey Jacobo I “alecciona” al papa PauloV, situándolo en las tensiones religiosas y diplomáticas de la Inglaterra jacobea. La investigación en el Archivo General de Simancas se combina con un análisis visual detallado y la comparación de producciones culutrales afines: la base de un reloj de Ramsay y sátiras teatrales contemporáneas para reconstruir el destino de la estampa, (su intento de supresión por el embajador español Gondomar y su resiliencia clandestina a través de redes protestantes en Europa). El estudio demuestra que la censura amplificó paradójicamente su polemicidad, convirtiéndola en una “reliquia-mártir” que alimentó el discurso anticatólico y antiespañol, tal y como se evidencia en críticas y quejas posteriores de de Thomas Scott y Thomas Middleton sobre su supresión, reforzando así el discurso leteyendanegrista. Al priorizar la evidencia visual, el proyecto reposiciona la sátira gráfica como agente decisivo en la formación de la opinión pública en la temprana edad moderna y ofrece una lectura matizada de la propaganda, la diplomacia y el conflicto confesional.

Palabras clave: Inglaterra Jacobina, Sátira Anticatólica, Censura, Grabado Grindstone, Propaganda Visual, Leyenda Negra

Introduction

After the failed attempt of the “Invincible” Armada to conquest England in 1588, anti-papal sectors interpreted this event as divine action, fostering dissident readings of the Bible and ultimately relying on providentialism to guide their actions. Furthermore, according to intellectuals belonging to the pro-hispanist sector, such as Elvira Roca Barea, this militar fiasco highly contributed to establishing the foundational narrative of Anglo Countries (Imperiofobia y leyenda negra: Roma, Rusia, Estados Unidos y el Imperio español, 2016). However, after the reign of Queen Elisabeth I, the bellicism came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of London in Somerset House in 1604, just one year after a much more moderate king, James I, ascended to the throne. While the physical fight had come to an end, this conflict moved into the world of ideas.

The dissemination of the print, highly allowed the continuity of this battle between Reformists and Catholics, turning it into an ideological battle that would somehow be perpetuated throughout history. While written texts were key to spreading the new reformist sentiments, visual productions and representations would have reached even a higher audience considering that the number of illiterate people was much higher during that historical period, hence visual satire renders a pivotal object of study in this regard.
Interestingly, an enigmatic engraving found in Simancas by Prof. Cano Echevarría proposed to me for this project, which was believed to have had little impact in the configuration of the human thinking during the first half of the 17th century, seems to have had a much more fruitful impact to the setting of the protestant mindset than what it was first believed. The destiny of this engraving, an anti-papal satire, helps to reveal how censorship worked during the early 17th century, and how it also contributed to creating new conjunctions in which the censor of the image himself, Gondomar, was turned into satirical matter, which helped creating new propagandistic trends which allowed to establishing the idea of the Spanish politician as corrupt and Machiavellian, closer to the Devil than to God. Indeed, this archetype seems to have survived time and added to the imposed ideological movement of the Black Legend, conditioning human thinking and the imposition of the Anglo-sphere over the Hispano-sphere to our present time.

CHAPTER 1: A mysterious engraving

The embassy of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar, in London between 1613 and 1622 had a great mediatic impact on Jacobean England in the early 17th century. His figure emerged as a controversial symbol of Catholic and Spanish influence at the court of James I, provoking fierce criticism from the anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish sectors of English society. This will be presented in this dissertation through the evidence of the textual and visual sources that will be analysed in this research project.

Sarmiento de Acuña was in charge of two embassies in England from 1613 to 1618 and from 1620 to 1622. During both periods at the English king's court, Gondomar achieved considerable success by cultivating a close relationship with King James I. As acknowledged by the Encyclopædia Britannica, "his courtly manners and keen intellect, as well as his tantalizing offers of the Spanish infanta as James's daughter-in-law, gained him great influence with the English king; on occasion he could even dictate royal policy." (Diego Sarmiento de acuña, *Encyclopædia Britannica)*.

His influence was well documented by eyewitnesses. For instance, an observer noted in April 1614 that after having the king waiting for half an hour for an audience, all the people said, "Here comes the ambassador of Spain! now the King will come forth," (Domestic — Addenda, James I, Vol. XL, 540), associating his arrival with the King's own appearance before Parliament, thereby portraying the popular anxieties about Spanish influence at the heart of English governance. Such accounts of Gondomar's presence at James I's court reinforce his public image as a privileged and manipulative figure. The deliberate closeness to the King cultivated by Gondomar allowed him to accomplish core diplomatic objectives during his embassies, such as preserving peace between Spain and England within a tense geopolitical and religious climate and protecting Catholic interests in England.

However, his influence over the king (which was credited with provoking numerous royal bans and even executions, such as that of Walter Raleigh in 1618), also gained him scathing public enmity from emerging Protestant factions, who viewed him as an ideal figure to embody the perceived vices and ambitions of the Hispanic monarchy, and, by extension, Catholicism itself.

In the early period of his first embassy, specifically in 1614, the Spanish ambassador exchanged diplomatic correspondence with the Spanish King, Philip III, regarding various matters related to the geopolitical dynamics of the time. Among the various documents, these seemed to suggest at the then-potential 'Spanish Match,' and more directly to the situation of Catholic figures in England, and the spread of anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic pamphlets across the Enflifh country, documents which can be found at the AGS in file EST-08 LEG 2591 (Letters to England, 1614).

Among all the intercepted letters and pamphlets obtained by the Spanish agent, one engraving stands out from the rest of the documents because of its probable significant influence on later satirical works criticizing Catholicism and other historical characters who dared to confront “English exceptionalism”.

Figure 1. : King James I pushing Pope Paul V’s head to *the Grindstone*, AGS: Secretaría de Estado, Legajos, 02591, 60.

This engraving (Figure 1), preserved in of the Archivo General de Simancas is part of the correspondence between Gondomar's embassy and King Philip III, dated October 7th, 1614, which contained many other documents. It is notable for its rich visual content, rarity, and the historical context in which it was created and circulated. Indeed, according to Antony Griffiths and F. Senning "this engraving may be [one of] the earliest extant example of British political satire to appear in the print medium"[1].

The production and dissemination of the image occurred during a particularly tense socio-political moment in Jacobean England: Despite being a Protestant monarch, King James I maintained diplomatic ties with Catholic powers, especially Spain, through the controversial Spanish Match, consisting of the arrangement of a wedding between prince Charles, Prince of Wales and the Catholic Infanta Maria Anna of Spain. This negotiated marriage sparked intense resistance from anti-Catholic factions and fostered a climate of censorship on royal behalf against libels criticising this decision. However, as this study will explore, this censorship might not have been so thoroughly undertaken by the king, who seemed to be mediating between the two confronted religious extremes, and as this study reveals, he appears to me much more conditioned by the will of the different intellectual producers and diplomats than by his own royal will.

In this context, critical publications (pamphlets, libels, engravings) were frequently suppressed or destroyed, but still, many authors and artists withheld their names to avoid persecution, complicating efforts today to trace their origins or distribution networks, hence arousing questions about the authorship of this work.

1.1 Identification of Characters, Composition of the Engraving and interpretation.

The Simancas engraving is accompanied by Diego Sarmiento de Acuña's handwritting. These marginalia are not just key to identifying the several characters portrayed in the image,

[1] According to Antony Griffiths (The Print in Stuart Britain, 1603–1689 [London, 1998], 144–45), the first known instance of such a graphic work came seven years later in 1621, with Samuel Ward's famous "The Double Deliverence", as quoted in Senning, Calvin F. *Spain, Rumor, and Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Jacobean England: The Palatine Match, Cleves, and the Armada Scares of 1612–1613 and 1614* (pag 29) Routledge, 2021

but it also showcases, in a way, Gondomar's personal opinions to its content. Among his most remarkable comments is the wry observation: *"Los retratos de los herejes son muy al natural"* ("The portraits of the heretics are very true to life"), a comment that remarks on the fidelity of the caricatures while simultaneously revealing Gondomar's deep "disdain" for the Protestant individuals depicted.

Regarding the organization of the image, it could be stated that it is quite symbolically charged. As for my perception, it is organized in this way: vertically (from taller figures to shorter ones) and horizontally (from left to right). This could suggest an ideological and moral hierarchy. At the top-left of the engraving appears a group of major Protestant leaders, positioned in a way that both elevates them above their Catholic adversaries (lower to the right) emphasizing their "unity" in opposition to Rome. In this way, since they are physically raised above the rest of the scene, it reinfores their sense of authority and dominance, adding so to the narrative of Protestant triumph.

At the very center of the satire, together with the Pope, one of the main protagonists of the satire is portrayed: James I of England (*Rey de Anglat*^{terra}, who is depicted standing with his head slightly looking downwards and his gaze contemplating his own action in a very reflexive way. This posture might suggest sovereign dignity and moral leadership over the Protestant cause, implying that the king is indeed a monarch but also and a spiritual figurehead of the Anglican reformist faith who micht be a bit "usure" of what he is "performing". Furthermore, as noted by John C. Taylor in his video-conference, James is portrayed as physically shorter than his counterpart, Christian IV of Denmark, a subtle yet "sharp" critique that might reflect contemporary perceptions of James's cautious or ambivalent will regarding the broader Protestant conflict in Europe. Despite his central position in the image, and being the one "in charge" of this sort of moral and theological "lecturing" to the Pope, this artistic choice calls into question his fervor and commitment compared to his more militarily active "allies" also portrayed in the satire. Still, he is represented as a pro-protestant leader who, as proposed by Taylor, is likely wearing the crown of Saint Edward (figure 2) above his hat, thus hinting at a higher closeness to the English court rather than to the Scottish one.

Figure 2: Crown of Saint Edward, Source: Royal Coat of Arms of the UK, symbol of reformed England.

To James's left stands Christian IV of Denmark (*Rey de Dinamarca*), shown turned slightly toward James with, to my impression, a commanding posture. Covered by other figures, his hand might be resting on the hilt of a sword too or gesturing toward the Pope below, both possible indicators of his role as a Protestant military leader and his open condemnation of Catholic power. His presence also reinforces the familial connection between the English and Danish royal houses: Christian was brother of Queen Anne, making him the brother-in-law of James I. According to several authors, Christian visited the English court in 1614, probably to debate about the protestant cause but equally probably to engage in a sort of familiar meeting, considering their familiar ties. Further research on this visit, can be found in Calvin F. Senning's work *"The Visit of Christian IV to England in 1614",* an article to which I found no access for this case study. In any case, this dynastic link lends additional weight to the Protestant alliance's political and familial coherence.

Near this central group, elevated to the right side of the monarch, a trio is represented.To the left of the illustration, Maurice of Nassau (*Conde Mauricio*) is shown, a celebrated general and figurehead of the Dutch Revolt against Spanish Catholic rule. He is rendered with a distinctly martial bearing — upright, adorned with a plume, emphasizing his reputation for military leadership and Protestant heroism. His inclusion situates the Dutch struggle firmly within the broader anti-Catholic, pan-European context of the image, reinforcing the engraving's representation of a united Protestant front.

To Maurice's left stands Frederick V, Elector Palatine (*Conde Palatino*), extending one arm outward in what appears to be a gesture of alliance or support. This detail not only references his dynastic marriage to Elizabeth Stuart, James' daughter, a decision that would play a crucial role in igniting the Thirty Years' War. Frederick's proximity to James and his assertive

stance reinforce the idea of a political and theological bond between the English and German Protestant nobility. It is important to note that while this figure is identified as "el Conde Palatino Maximiliano I" in the digitized version of the print of the CCBAE, chronological and contextual evidence prove otherwise. In fact, according to the online *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1614 the Electorate of the Palatinate was headed by Frederick V **(**Parker, N. Geoffrey,).

Together, these four figures dominate the upper third of the engraving. Their collective elevation above the Pope (both literally and symbolically) reverses the traditional hierarchies of Catholic iconography. Where Rome had once been the head of spiritual authority, it is here shown as defeated and its leaders physically and morally subordinated. This arrangement reinforces the ideological message of the engraving: the triumph of Protestant kingship and theology over the perceived decadence and tyranny of the Catholic Church at that time.

On the left-hand side of the image stands Charles, Prince of Wales (*Príncipe de Inglaterra*), depicted as a youthful figure, significantly smaller than the adult rulers beside him. His hand is close to his sheathed sword, suggesting his readiness and willingness to fight for that coalition, which alludes to his future role in sustaining and expanding the Protestant cause. His deferential posture marks him as a future participant rather than an active leader, but his presence nonetheless speaks to the dynastic ambitions of James I and the importance of succession in securing the religious direction of the English monarchy.

Charles is positioned between Maurice of Nassau and Frederick V, rather than beside his father. This compositional choice could be interpreted as a visual suggestion that his ideological education and political sympathies lie more with these militant Protestant leaders than with the more diplomatically cautious James I. Such an interpretation would have been especially pointed in the context of contemporary anxieties over the proposed Spanish Match — James's controversial negotiations to marry Charles to the Catholic Infanta Maria Anna of Spain. Although this negotiations did not have a significant importance until Gondomar's second embassy between 1620 and 1622, this union was considered since the 1604 anglo-spanish peace onwards. In this light, Charles's placement serves not only to condition the religious debates surrounding his future reign but also to contrast the competing influences shaping his development.

The lower half of the engraving is where the image's satirical edge becomes most explicit. Dominating this section is the figure of the Pope (labeled "su santidad" by Gondomar) shown in a grotesquely humiliating position. He is bent forward, his nose pressed painfully against a grindstone being turned by Protestant agents. His expression is one of exaggerated suffering or grotesque contortion. This act of violence is central to the visual metaphor of the piece: the proverbial "putting one's nose to the *grindstone*, typically signifying grueling labor or punishment (Cambridge Dictionary, Cambridge University Press), here becomes a biting commentary on Protestant efforts to reform (or subjugate) the Catholic Church. The Pope is both the object of punishment and the tool through which Protestant agents sharpen their weapons, symbolizing a process of theological correction or forced penance.

Turning the *grindstone* are two prominent Anglican clergymen: George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury (1562–1633), and John King, Bishop of London (c. 1559–1621). Their identities are confirmed through visual cues such as ecclesiastical vestments, (Tudor scholars' caps) and through Gondomar's marginal annotations. While Abbot played a central role in the production of the *1611 King James Bible*, a landmark project of James's reign that sought to unify and consolidate Protestant doctrine, King, for his part, was renowned for his anti-Catholic sermons and his administrative role in London, the heart of England's religious and political life. Their calm and composed demeanor as they operate *the grindstone* contrasts starkly with the Pope's exaggerated agony, reinforcing the image's portrayal of Protestant virtue as rational and serene in opposition to the grotesque corruption of Rome.

In the background, lower to the right-hand side of the image, appear a group of Catholic clerics, likely Jesuits, distinguishable by their robes, just as the Pope himself, grotesque expressive gestures. They seem to be weeping, praying, and mourning the fate of the Pope. These figures serve a dual purpose: on one hand, they amplify the drama of the central scene by reacting to the humiliation of the papacy; on the other, they are themselves caricatured as emotional and oversensitive, further underscoring the contrast between Protestant fortitude and Catholic despair.

In this way, the spatial organization of the image seems to be quite symbolical. The exalted protestant leaders are top to the left, while to the bottom right (and bottom center) Catholic characters are being "schooled". This hierarchical structure could communicate a more or less clear ideological narrative: Protestantism is morally and spiritually superior, cohesive, and ultimately divinely legitimized, while Catholicism is presented as morally bankrupt,

politically defeated, and the object of just ridicule. In this way the image is a remarkable example of grotesque humor and visual propaganda, deploying satire as a weapon in the broader confessional struggle.

Yet the portrayal of James I remains ambivalent. While he is centrally located and ostensibly honored as a leader of Protestant Europe, the compositional subtleties (his physical inferiority to Christian IV, the ideological overshadowing by Frederick and Maurice, the distancing from his son Charles) suggest a critique of his diplomatic pragmatism and his overtures toward Catholic Spain. Gondomar's own 7th October 1614 letter in which he warns James with these words: "those who printed it were more Your Majesty's enemies than the Pope's" reinforce this interpretation, revealing both his personal sense of affront and his opinion that James I was being also criticised. Further context regarding the content of this letter is given in the following chapter.

Finally, the inclusion of a checkered floor in the engraving works as a symbolic allusion to a chessboard, reinforcing themes of political strategy and ideological conflict and linking the print to other 17th century productions. As in the game of chess, each figure in the image represents a carefully positioned player in the larger battle between Protestantism and Catholicism. The floor thus frames the scene not only as a visual satire but as a calculated confrontation, where religious leaders and monarchs act as pieces in an elevated geopolitical game. Furthermore, as will be discussed further in this study, this element, like *the grindstone*, is key in identifying related productions.

In this sense, the engraving functions not only as a virulent anti-Catholic satire but also as a complex reflection of the Protestant self-image in early Stuart England: triumphant, unified, yet still internally contested in its vision of leadership and religious identity.

As could be expected given the prominence and significance of the figures depicted, censorship was not long in coming, in fact, the ambassador's annotation in the lower margin seems to confirm this: *"El Rey de Inglaterra hizo recoger todos estos papeles y quemarlos y el inventor e impresor están en la cárcel a petición e instancia del Embajador de su Majestad Católica".* [2]

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[2] *"The King of England had all these papers gathered and burned, and the originator and the printer are in prison at the request and on the insistence of His Catholic Majesty's ambassador"*

Chapter 2: Reception, Censorship, and Offense: the context surrounding the AGS engraving.

The impact of the 1614 engraving discussed in the previous chapter cannot be fully understood without considering the powerful reactions it provoked on both sides of the confessional divide. The print was not merely an artistic expression; it was a provocation, a strategic weapon in a visual and rhetorical war between Protestant England and Catholic Spain. It incited censorship, imprisonment, and transnational scandal, becoming a symbolic flashpoint in the broader conflict surrounding the Spanish Match and the ideological fault lines of early Jacobean politics.

2.1 Reception Among English Protestants: Thomas Scott's Account in *Boanerges*

One of the earliest textual references to this rare engraving (aside from Gondomar's own marginal notes present in the AGS engraving itself and his letters, which are explored in the following chapter) appears a decade later in Thomas Scott'**s** fiery 1624 polemic *Boanerges. Or, The Humble Supplication of the Ministers of Scotland to the High Court of Parliament in England*. Identified by Calvin F. Senning in his study *Spain, Rumor, and Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Jacobean England*, this reference offers valuable insight into how Protestants perceived and remembered the image's suppression.

Scott, a staunch Puritan pamphleteer, laments the violent suppression of two anti-Catholic prints. One, he writes, depicted "the Kings holding the Pope's nose to a grindstone, with the two Archbishops turning the same." The other referred to events surrounding the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot[3]. Both images, Scott insists, were "for God's glory and England's honour," yet both were censored: He presents this act of destruction as symptomatic of England's political failure to resist Spanish and Catholic influence:

> "But such is your misfortune […] or the malignity of time, that having two facetious and befitting pictures, as your adversaries deserved, they were both suppressed, the plates cut in pieces, and the sellers imprisoned […] yet neither they nor anything else against the Pope or Spain would be tolerated." (Scott, *Boanerges*, 1624, 25)

Scott's frustration reveals how the engraving had become, in Protestant memory, a martyr of state censorship. By 1624, opposition to the Spanish Match had reached a boiling point, and Scott invoked the suppression of the 1614 engraving not simply as a historical grievance, but as a symbol of the government's dangerous accommodation of Catholic powers. His praise of George Abbot (who served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1611 until his death in 1633.) "whose statue deserves to be set up in gold"—further contrasts with his scorn for those who, he claims, dared to call the archbishop a "Puritan Bishop" and belched "contradiction in his face." (Scott, Boangers, 25)

Scott's work reveals how George Abbot, a flagrant Calvinist and defender of Protestant orthodoxy, was seen as a symbol of committed Reformation ideals and anti-Hispanic sentiment.

In Scott's narrative, censorship itself becomes a form of political betrayal, a sign that the English monarchy had silenced its own defenders in favor of foreign influence. The engraving's destruction, far from removing its power, transformed it into an icon of Protestant resistance, one that lived on in rhetoric, despite the destruction of all plates and reproductions, or allegedly so.

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[3] Thomas Scott alludes to *The Double Deliverance* 1588 1605, by Samuel Ward of Ipswich, a puritan clreic also involved in the production and dissemination of anti-Catholic libels during the Early Stuart period.

2.2 Gondomar’s Reaction

Gondomar’s letter (figure 5), dated October 7, 1614, (also within the EST-08 LEG. 2591 Letters to England, 1614.AGS file) recounts an earlier episode of acute political hysteria: the sudden outbreak of panic over a rumored Spanish invasion. False intelligence reports (suggesting that a massive Spanish armada was approaching English shores) sent the country into a frenzy. King James was roused at midnight, defenses were hastily fortified, and a wave of terror swept through both government and populace.

Gondomar recognized this panic as the product of calculated manipulation by Puritan factions, Scottish courtiers, and "malicious" advisors eager to inflame anti-Spanish sentiment and derail any diplomatic rapprochement. Apart from the grinsdtone engraving (fig 1) he reported the fabrication and circulation of a forged pamphlet announcing a grand "Catholic League"(fig 6)—allegedly uniting Spain, the Pope, the Emperor, the Archduke, and even the Turk (referring to Sultam Ahmed) against Protestant England. As already mentioned before, Gondomar moved swiftly: he formally petitioned for the suppression of these forgeries, succeeded in obtaining royal orders to destroy the offending pamphlets, and secured the imprisonment of the printers. However he recognized that the pamphlet (fig 6) wasn’t so easy to censor:

"Los papeles estaban tan esparcidos que no se pudo recuperar el crédito que ya habían ganado entre muchos ignorantes y maliciosos"[4]

In the letters, Gondomar also recounts his crucial private audience with King James I. Over a tense two-hour meeting, he worked skilfully to defuse the king's anger, convincing him that rumors of an armada were baseless and that England should not intervene militarily in the Julich-Cleves crisis. Gondomar's success was notable: James ultimately decided against sending troops to aid the Dutch or the Duke of Savoy, refused to escalate hostilities, and chose to preserve peace with Spain and the Spanish Netherlands—despite lingering resentment toward Spinola for the manner in which Wesel was taken. (Gondomar's letter, October 7, 1614)

Gondomar's writings reveal an international context defined by Protestant fears of Catholic aggression, domestic instability within England, and sophisticated diplomatic efforts by Spanish envoys to neutralize emerging threats.

Como esta sección está bien he cambiado el color de la fuente de rojo a negro.

2.2.2 European Geopolitical Context Surrounding the Appearance of the Engraving: Insights from Gondomar's correspondence to the King of Spain

The emergence of the 1614 engraving must be understood within the volatile European geopolitical background of that year, as vividly outlined in the diplomatic correspondence of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña. His letters to Philip III of Spain, dated October 7 and 8, 1614, shed crucial light on the tense international climate in which this image was created and immediately suppressed.

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[4] *"The papers were so spread abroad that the credit given to it by many ignorant and malicious people cannot be recovered."*

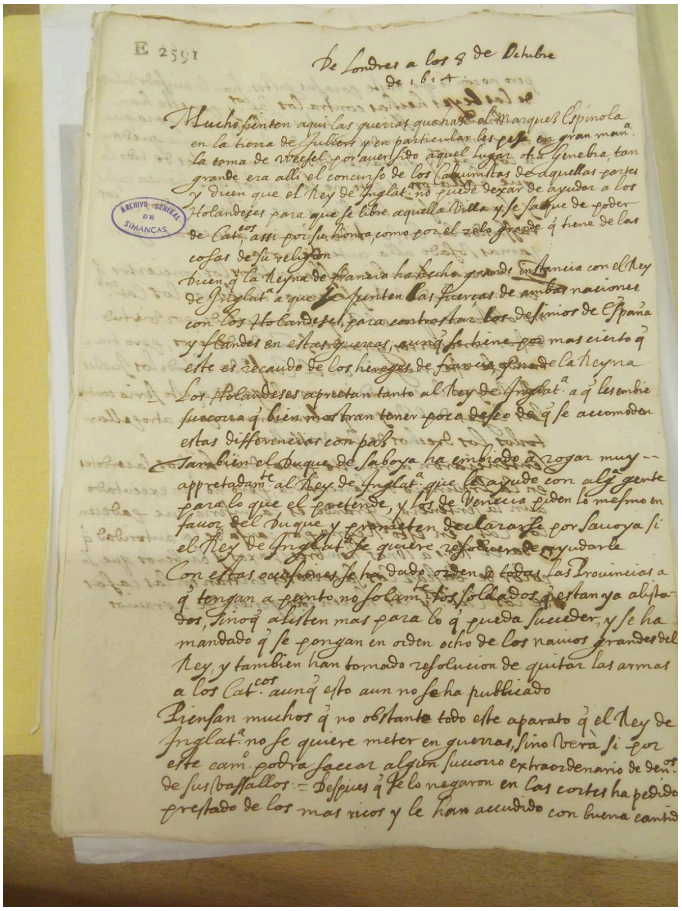

Figure 4. Gondomar Letter 8 October 1614. Same AGS file..

In the letter written from London on October 8, 1614 (Figure 4), Gondomar describes an England deeply alarmed by Spanish military successes in the Rhineland, particularly Spinola's capture of Wesel, a strategically vital Calvinist stronghold. The seizure of Wesel inflamed Protestant fears of Catholic expansion and triggered a broad call for English intervention. King James I found himself under intense pressure from the Dutch States-General, French protestants, the Duke of Savoy, and even the Republic of Venice, all urging him to militarily support Protestant forces against Spain and the Spanish Netherlands.

Domestically, the situation in England became increasingly "alermed". James had ordered the gathering of troops, the readiness of ships, and the harsh repression of English Catholics, including the confiscation of goods, violent raids on homes, and even symbolic acts of humiliation such as the ripping of Catholic clothing. Financially crippled after the dissolution of the 1614 "Addled Parliament," the Crown resorted to forced loans and coercive tactics, particularly targeting Catholics, to fund military preparations. This period witnessed the

intensification of religious persecution, with priests facing capital punishment and a climate of brutal repression spreading through Catholic communities.

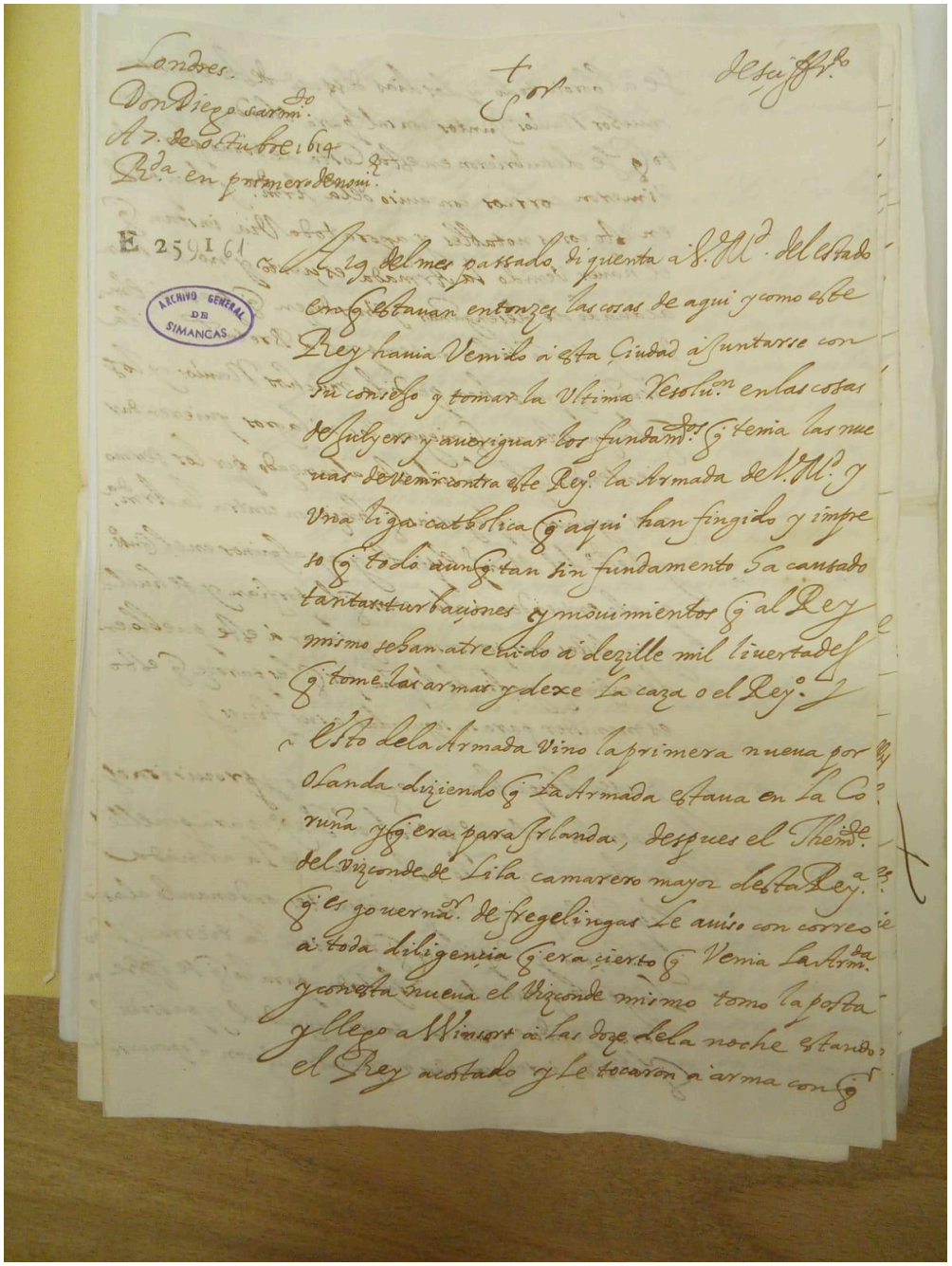

Figure 5. Gondomar, October 7 1614 same AGS file.

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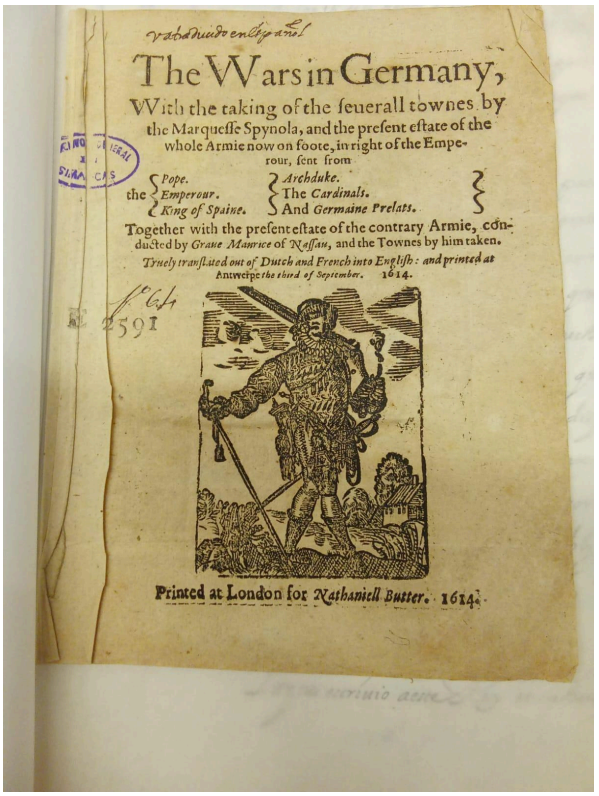
Gondomar’s writtings reveal an international context defined by Protestant fears of Catholic aggression, domestic instability within England, and sophisticated diplomatic efforts by Spanish envoys to neutralize emerging threats.

2.2.2.1- A related print:

Hence, Gondomar's dispatch to Philip III (7 Oct. 1614) sheds light on two different offensive prints then circulating in London. One is the "Grindstone engravind and the other is "The Wars in Germany, with the taking of several townes by Marquesse Spynola…" which we consider as related. Below is a comparative table of the relation between these two documents:

Print	Content	Outcome (per Gondomar)
Grindstone engraving	The Pope is forced to a grindstone by Archbishop **George Abbot**, Bishop **John King and James I**. A blatant piece of anti-Catholic satire.	James I, urged by Gondomar, **confiscated and burned every copy** and jailed the printer – "a severity never seen here till now**(Gondomar Letter 7 October 1614)"
The Wars in Germany … by the Marquesse Spinola **(Nathaniel Butter, 1614) (fig5)**	Frontispiece shows **Ambrosio Spinola** beneath papal-Habsburg banners "with chains to cast about the heretics." Though framed as Catholic triumphalism, it was	Too late to suppress: "so spread abroad that the credit given to it by many ignorant and malicious people cannot be recovered."(Gondomar's letter 7 October 1614)

	Protestant scare-propaganda, warning that a Catholic league and a new armada threatened England.	



The Wars in Germany,
With the taking of the ſeuerall townes by the Marqueſſe Spynola, and the preſent eſtate of the whole Armie now on foote, in right of the Emperour, ſent from
the { Pope. / Emperour. / King of Spaine. } { Archduke. / The Cardinals. / And Germaine Prelats. }
Together with the preſent eſtate of the contrary Armie, conducted by Graue Maurice of Naſſau, and the Townes by him taken.
Truely tranſlated out of Dutch and French into Engliſh: and printed at Antwerpe the third of September. 1614.
Printed at London for Nathaniell Butter. 1614.

Figure 6. The Wars in Germany

The title-page in figure 6 textually states, "Printed at London for **Nathaniel Butter**, 1614." Geographical, chronological, and contextual evidence converge to identify this "Butter" as Nathaniel Butter, a freeman of the Worshipful Company of Stationers from 1604. Butter, renowned for the 1607 first quarto of *King Lear* and an extensive corpus of news-pamphlets (Stephen 94–95), probably took advantage of London's cravings for "alleged" continental intelligence by ordering *The Wars in Germany* pamphlet to be printed, showcasing in doing so his own political tendencies.

According to the “Catálogo Colectivo de la red de Bibliotecas de los Archivos Estatales” (CCBAE), the actual printers of *The Wars in Germany* were **Edward Allde and Thomas Snodham**, who also were freemen of the Worshipful Company of Stationers active in London in 1614.

These names automatically invoking the regulatory framework of the Stationers’ Company, the Crown-chartered guild (founded in 1557) that supervised press licensing in England at that time (The Stationers' Company website. “History and Heritage.”) further supports the image of James I’s as an ambivalent king, since this institutional connection with the Stationers’ Company renders Gondomar’s diplomatic complaint paradoxical: while the ambassador reports that James I adopted a draconian stance toward subversive prints in 1614, the *Wars in Germany* pamphlet appears to have passed the official censors almost unimpeded. The discrepancy suggests that the king’s intervention was either strategically selective or considerably less rigorous than the Spanish ambassador presumed or gave account of, a hypothesis reinforced by evidence explored in subsequent chapters. Moreover, the involvement of these three men (Nathaniel Butter, Edward Allde and Thomas Snodham) also points to a broader network of printers and booksellers collaborating to supply the politically charged “news” market

The Wars in Germany appears to be a military report on Spinola’s campaigns in the Rhineland, but beneath the surface, it carries strong religious and political messages. It presents the Catholic League’s actions as part of a larger effort to restore Catholic control over Protestant areas, using vivid imagery and symbolic details to reinforce this divide. The pamphlet contrasts Spinola’s conquests with the more favorable portrayal of Protestant leader Maurice of Nassau, blending reporting with propaganda to shape public opinion in early 17th-century England.

The two prints (figure 1 and figure 6) thus mapped out the twin fronts of the propaganda war during 1614 : *The Wars in Germany* projected an image of Catholic unity and militaryl triumph intended to provoke Protestant fear, while *the Grindstone* satire responded by celebrating Protestant unity and resistance and humiliating the Pope. Together, they illustrate

the dialogical nature of early modern propaganda, where engravings and pamphlets did not merely transmit ideas but actively contested and reframed them. Gondomar recognized both prints as threats, yet their divergent fates (one “allegedly” censored, the other proliferating) expose the highly politicized, variable, and nuanced mechanisms of censorship when pro- and anti-Spanish forces clashed within England during James I’s reign.

Chapter 3. Surviving Censorship: The Clock at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Despite Sarmiento de Acuña's and Thomas Scott's reports confirming a total suppression of the copies of the infamous 1614 anti-papal engraving (with its printing plates shattered and its printers imprisoned) a recently identified artefact has uncovered a remarkable survival.

Figure 7. David Ramsay's Clock, Victoria and Albert museum.

The extraordinary object represented in figure 7, today housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (accession number M.7-1931), is the baseplate of a clock attributed to David Ramsay, official clockmaker to James I and Charles I. According to the V&A website, it was created sometime between 1610 and 1615, which chronologically coincides with Gondomar's private reports from 1614. The baseplate engraving which contains the exact same scene as figure 1 in this dissertation, has also been recently identified by scholars Helen Pierce and F. Sennings.

While the scene and composition remain faithful to the Simancas version, it is important to acknowledge that this engraving is a copy, not a duplicate. Its technical quality seems to be lower than the original, with more disproportion regarding their clothes and bodies, and a rearrangement of space between the different characters, who are much closer to each other. Notably, the faces in this version do not seem to achieve the same level of thoroughness and realism as the original.

When researchers first analysed the clock (Ramsay, David *Explore the Collections*, Victoria and Albert Museum), they correctly recognized the scene as King James I humiliating the Pope with the aid of Protestant clergy. However, because they did not have access to the annotated Simancas version preserved in the Archivo General de Simancas (on which Gondomar himself had commented), their reading contained several misidentifications. Most notably, they mistook Frederick V for Prince Henry (who had died in 1612) overlooking the presence of Frederick V of the Palatinate, Count Maurice of Nassau, and Christian IV of Denmark, who are crucial characters to understand the Protestant alliances symbolized in the engraving.

Importantly, the clock's version is not simply a copy of the Simancas print: it incorporates an additional iconographic element that enriches and offers further context for the satire. In the background of the engraving, a fleet of ships appears through a window, an evocative detail that likely references the second Armada scare of 1614. Gondomar's letters from September of that year recount the widespread panic in England, driven by "false" intelligence reports of an impending Spanish invasion. Yet the presence of these ships may allude not only to the fear of a second Spanish Armada itself, but also to England's mobilized response. Gondomar notes in his correspondence that military preparations were underway across the country, with orders to arm troops and ready the navy. This naval motif therefore amplifies the print's polemical power, presenting it not merely as a theological satire of the papacy, but also as a pointed commentary on contemporary anxieties over Catholic aggression and England's reactive posture in the volatile geopolitical climate of the time.

This unique addition, absent in the Simancas version, suggests that the clock's engraving may represent either a later elaboration of the original print or a variant adapted for a different –perhaps more private or domestic– audience. However, it is also possible that Gondomar's copy, as preserved in Simancas, did not include all the plates or segments originally produced, whether due to loss, censorship, or deliberate omission. Transposed from ephemeral paper into the enduring medium of a timepiece, this iteration of the image gained a new layer of resilience: it allowed this polemically charged piece of anti-Catholic satire to survive the official efforts to suppress it. In this form, the polemic did not merely endure; it kept "haunting" the political dynamics of the Jacobean period. Considering that this engraving is not in a visible surface of the artefact, but in a hidden one, the clock at the

Victoria and Albert Museum stands as a rare and vivid witness to how dangerous ideas could outlive official suppression, not by vanishing, but by adapting, embedding themselves in new forms where they could continue to resonate, although in secrecy.

Finch et al, in the most recent technical study of David Ramsay (*Antiquarian Horology*, vol. 40, 2019), concludes that the piece was manufactured in Paris to fulfil a commission from England" and calls the client simply a "British royal" or "court patron". No direct documentary evidence identifying the individual who commissioned the clock made by David Ramsay featuring the anti-papal engraving has been found for this study. However, as Helen Pierce discusses in *The Pope and the Grindstone: A Jacobean Satirical Print* (2023), the baseplate engraving can be securely dated to the autumn of 1614 or shortly thereafter, given its direct replication of the suppressed satirical print of that year. Ramsay, as official clockmaker to James I and Charles I, was closely associated with the Jacobean court and typically produced luxury timepieces for elite Protestant patrons aligned with royal authority. Given the aggressive anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish message embedded in the engraving, it is plausible that the clock was intended for a high-status Protestant client sympathetic to the religious and political anxieties stirred by the 1614 Armada scare.

The possibility that the clock was created for James I himself, or at least commissioned with his tacit approval, cannot be dismissed. As already discussed, James had a vested interest in promoting his image as a Protestant defender during a period of heightened religious tension, particularly given his delicate balancing act between maintaining peace with Spain and reassuring his Protestant subjects of his theological loyalties. If the clock was produced for James or his immediate circle, it would suggest a more complex relationship between official censorship and private toleration of anti-Catholic imagery. It would also reveal how visual propaganda could circulate privately among the court elite, allowing politically sensitive messages to persist discreetly within spaces of royal or aristocratic intimacy. In this sense, the clock would not merely represent the survival of a suppressed satire, but its strategic adaptation for a carefully controlled audience within Jacobean culture.

As for the person who engraved this clock, Helen Pierce, in *The Pope and the Grindstone* (2023), tentatively attributes the engraved baseplate of the clock to Gérard de Heck, a Netherlandish engraver active in England during the early seventeenth century, believed to have collaborated with David Ramsay.

Although there is very little research and available bibliography concerning his figure, what is clear is that chronological evidence support Pierce's suggestion since as acknowledged by Fich et al. in Adrian Finch -Genealogy research website**,** we know that Gerard de Heck was in London between the period 1618 and 1622, due to the remaining records of the baptisms of his two daughters, "one of which was in 1619 in St Martins in the Fields and the second in 1622 was in St Bride's Fleet Street". Therefore, it is likely that he was already living in London by 1614, when the polemic started.

Still, even if Heck did engrave this baseplate, it does not mean he was the original creator of the satirical image; rather, he was likely a replicator, as his other works include confirmed reproductions of pieces by other artists such as Renold Elstrack. Furthermore, taking into account Gondomar's version of the events, the "inventor" of this satire should have been imprisoned, and no evidence of such a punishment has been identified in Heck's case so far.

Hence, the name of Renold Elstrack seems to be a central in this polemic. In fact, Helen Pierce and Calvin F. Senning observe in their respective already mentioned works significant stylistic similarities between the 1614 satirical engraving and the work of Renold Elstrack, a leading engraver active in early seventeenth-century England. In particular, they note that the tessellated floor and its perspective treatment in the satire are strikingly reminiscent of Elstrack's techniques, which are displayed in works such as Baziliologia: A Booke of Kings published by Compton Holland and Henry Holland, a series of formal, full-length portraits of the monarchs of England and Scotland, each accompanied by brief biographical texts and heraldic emblems. The portraits of Frederick V of the Palatinate, Charles I and, to a lesser extent, King James I in the Simancas print (fig1) bear a strong resemblance to Elstrack's signed engravings (figures 8, 9 and 10). These scholars suggests that, while it cannot be confirmed that Elstrack himself executed the 1614 satire, his works seem to have served as important visual models for the unknown artist (or artists) responsible for it.

Figure 8.The full-length portrait of Frederick V and Princess Elizabeth (c.1613) shows the characteristic tessellated floor and compositional structure found in the satire.

Figure 9. Portrait of Charles I, 1614-1615 (c.)(c.) depicted before his accession to the throne, presents a model for the portrayal of the prince in the satire, with similar pose and attributes such as the feathered badge and a hat placed to the side .© The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

Figure 10. James I and Anne od Denmark (1610-1615). It is curious how James I seems to have the same hat and clothing as in his Simancas representation**.** © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

Furthermore, other examples portraying characters who are not included in the the satire also share solid stylistic similarities (frigures 11, 13):

Figure 11. P**ortrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Prince Henry Lord Darnley** (c.1613).

Stylisctically related illustrations attributed to Renold Elstrack by the British musueum are also found in *Nobilitas Politica vel Civilis* authored by Rober Glover and published in London by William Jaggard in 1608. Interestingly, Jame I's image in parliament (fig 12) is a direct adaptation of an engraving depicting Queen Elisabeth (figure 13).

Figure 12. James I in parliament. In 'Nobilitas Politica vel Civilis' (London, William Jaggard, 1608).

Figure 13. Coloured engraving depicting Elisabeth I, also attributed to Elstrack by the British museum. In: 'Nobilitas Politica vel Civilis' (London, William Jaggard, 1608). © The Trustees of the British Museum Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

Elstrack's known work, characterized by solemn and formal depictions of royals and nobles, contrasts sharply with the grotesque imagery of figure 1. Nevertheless, as noted by Pierce in *The Pope and the Grindstone: A Jacobean Satire* and by the British Museum (in the section on related objects attributed to Renold Elstrack), there is one satirical print titled *While Maskinge in Their Follies All Doe Passe* that has been attributed to him. However, the lack of firm evidence confirming that this print was indeed created by Elstrack, combined with the absence of any records indicating royal punishment or censorship, makes it difficult to establish a definitive link between the artist and this type of satirical work. Therefore, what can be stated with greater certainty is that Elstrack most likely served as a model or inspiration for the satire discussed in this study.

Moreover, other images found during the research process for this case study also share stylistic features with Elstrack's works (and therefore with figure 1), which further broadens the field of speculation.

Chapter 4. Further Connections: Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* and Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess.*

Curiously, in terms of visual style, symbolism, and other contextual elements, additional links can be identified in works satirizing the very censor of the Simancas image.Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* and Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess* contain satitical images of the Count of Gondomar that are conceptually linked to the "Grindstone Satire".

As seen before, Thomas Scott complained about the destruction of the printing tools for the engraving corresponding to figure 1. In fact, Scott did not only address the matter of the Spanish influence over the English court in *Boanerges* (1624), but he openly targeted the Spanish ambassador who caused such censorship in his two pamphlets: *Vox Populi* (1620) and *The Second part of Vox populi* (1624), being the last one composed while in Utretch, where he fled to escape censorship and persecution in London.

While in *Vox populi* (1620) the author invents a 1618 meeting of the Spanish Council of State in which Gondomar boasts how bribery, flattery and the marriage plot will bring England and the Netherlands under Catholic control, in *The Second part of Vox populi (1624),* when the Spanish Match was collapsing, he turns Gondomar into a full-blown "Machiavell" who lays out fresh stratagems to ruin Protestant Europe; Notably, some editions of this second part included satirical prints mocking Gondomar (figure 16).

Figure 16. Front page of Thomas Scott, The Second Part of Vox Populi, or Gondomar Appearing in the Likenes of Machiavelli (1624)

The pamphlet's frontispiece (figure 16) presents the Spanish ambassador dressed as a Machiavellian Renaissance villain. He stands full-length in slashed doublet and hose, enveloped in a fur-lined cloak, a broad-brimmed hat, a slim wand of office in his right hand and a sword at his side, a visual shorthand for power cloaked in guile. Behind him rumbles a carriage consisting of a litter containing Gondomar pulled by donkeys, labelled with the motto "Sinui complectear omnia" ("In my bosom I embrace all"), satirically suggesting

hidden bribes and secret information. To the left is a high-backed chair pierced by a commode-hole, a joke on the ambassador's supposed fistulas and an emblem of moral corruption. The ironic caption beneath, *"Gentis Hispanae decus"* ("the glory of the Spanish nation"), seals the mock-portrait: here is Spain's 'hero', revealed as a limping Machiavellian trickster rather than a dignified envoy.

This work is cast as a verbatim English "translation" of a secret Spanish Council held at Seville early in 1624, soon after Prince Charles had abandoned the proposed marriage with the Infanta. In the dialogue Gondomar reports on England, gloats over the ease with which he has bribed Catholics and misled King James, and then, alongside the grandees of Spain, discuss their strategy in England: keep the marriage rumour alive to paralyse English policy, fortify Dunkirk, bar all foreigners from the Indies, and launch a two-pronged assault (Spinola in Brabant, van den Bergh via the Rhine) that will crush the Dutch and overrun Protestant Germany. The author also addresses to Frederick and Elizabeth of Bohemia and to the English Parliament, urging them to recognise Spain's duplicity, break decisively with the Match, and join a militant Protestant league.

Since Thomas Scott had moved to Utretch when he wrote this pamphlet, he did not have to face English's crown censorship for this production. In fact, he found the way to disseminate it throughout England under a false imprint: Although the title-page of the 1624 quarto grandly proclaims that it was "Printed at Goricom by Ashuerus Janss," bibliographical sleuthing shows the imprint is a polite fiction. The Folger Shakespeare Library's STC catalogue notes that "Goricom" is merely a Dutch cloak for a London press and that "Ashuerus Ianss" masks the work of Nicholas Okes and John Dawson (Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 22103). The same judgement appears in the ESTC record (S116994), and the Grub Street Project further points out that the alias sometimes refers to William Jone**s**, another London job-printer ("Ashuerus Ianss," *Grub Street Project*). In short, *The Second Part of Vox Populi* was secretly produced in London and only dressed in a Dutch imprint to outwit the English licensing regime and to advertise its sympathy with the United Provinces.

In this way, although several different names have been attributed as the pamphlet's probable publishers, both William Jones and Nicholas Okes are proven freemen of the Worshipful Company of Stationers of London. Nicholas Okes was sworn on 5 December 1603 after completing his apprenticeship with Richard Field (Plomer 206), while William Jones is listed as a "printer and freeman of the Stationers' Company" on 5 July 1596 (Plomer 160)**okk .

Their careers demonstrate that membership in the Stationers' Company did not guarantee compliance: even sworn freemen could exploit false imprints, night-work, and trusted booksellers to keep anti-Spanish propaganda in print and out of the censor's reach.

While no publisher's colophon identifies the engraver of the plates in Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi*, museum catalogues routinely attribute them to Crispijn van de Passe the Elder (c. 1565 – 1637). The National Gallery of Art, for instance, lists him as the artist of the title-page in its Rosenwald impression, accession 1951.11.25 ("Title Page for Vox Populi Eoricum" National Gallery of Art).

Notably, the bust of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar, that punctuates the pamphlet highly remembers a 1622 portrait engraved by Willem van de Pasen (figure 17), now in the British Museum (inv. P,P.1.287, British Museum). Thus, what seems to be clear is that the van de Passe family was active in the anti-Spanish dissemination circles. Indeed, the van de Passe family workshop (Crispijn the Elder, his sons Simon and Willem, daughter Magdalena, and son Crispijn II) maintained studios in Cologne, Utrecht, Paris and, crucially, London, supplying the engraved portrait suites for Henry Holland's Baziliologia (1618) and Heroologia Anglica (1620) (Franken ix–xii). Furthermore, Renold Elstrack, often called England's first native copper-engraver, was "in all probability a pupil of Crispin van de Passe the elder at Cologne," and his royal portraits in *Baziliologia (1618.)* recycle van de Passe patterns while sharing the same London publisher (Cust, 336).

Figure 17. Portrait of the first count of Gondomar by Willem de Passe (1622), Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid. Biblioteca Digital Hispánica

Hence, the links of this family with the protestant propaganda machinery in England not only seem to confirm them as stylistic mentors for artists such as Renold Elstrack, but also such overlaps of patrons, copperplates and facial schemata attest to a single, mobile print network rather than to discrete national schools

Furthermore, other prints included in *The Second part of Vox Populi*, show interesting symbols that connect with *the grindstone* satire:

Figure 18. Crispijn van de Passe I, *The Spanish Parliament from Vox Populi Eoricum*, by Thomas Scott, 1624, engraving on laid paper, sheet 11.3 × 12.8 cm, Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, accession no. 1951.11.25, https://www.nga.gov/artworks/40307-spanish-parliament-vox-populi-eoricum-thomas-scott

Figure 18 visualizes the conspiracy Scott imagined between Spanish grandees and Satan to seize England. At the very center of the print lie two crowns whose forms would have been unmistakable to a seventeenth-century viewer but that, due to the several models of the different crowns, can be ambiguous to identify today. The crown on the left can be identified as an English royal crown (similar to the Saint'Edward's Crown shown in figure 2, which seems to be the one James I is wearing in *the grindstone satire*). The crown on the right, displays a low band topped by large, leaf-like acanthus or lily florons with little pearl points

between them, which is exactly the configuration of the traditional open crown of Castile (figure19) that timbred Spanish arms until Philip II adopted the closed model, which is also differentiable from the English one because it included acanthus leaves in the circlet instead of crosses. In this way, the engraver seems to suggest how “wicked” Catholic forces debate over the future of England.

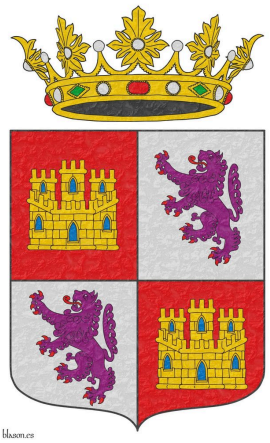


Figure 19. Open Crown of Castille

4.2 Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*

Finally, another publication criticising Gondomar and the Spanish Match that includes iconographic material is Thomas Middleton’s play *A Game at Chess* which was written. and first performed in 1624 (ten years after the first engraving). Unlike Thomas Scott’s work, this play was censored, due to the agency of Don Carlos Coloma, the Spanish ambassador to England at the time. Coloma lodged formal complaints with King James I, objecting to the play's overt political satire, which allegorically depicted figures such as his predecessor, Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar, as the villainous "Black Knight." Coloma's protests highlighted the play's negative portrayal of Spanish diplomacy and Catholicism, leading to its suppression by the Privy Council. but this happened when nine consecutive performances had already taken place.

Although the play had been licensed by Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels responsible for theatrical censorship, the Privy Council acted upon Coloma's complaints, initiating legal proceedings against the actors and Middleton, the playwright. The Globe Theatre was temporarily closed, and the play was banned from further performances. This incident underscores the complex interplay between art, politics, and diplomacy in early

17th-century England, illustrating how international relations could directly impact cultural productions. However, despite the censorship, printed versions of this play appeared months after its censorship.

It is important to acknowledge the two different engravings, (belonging to different editions), for the title page of this play:

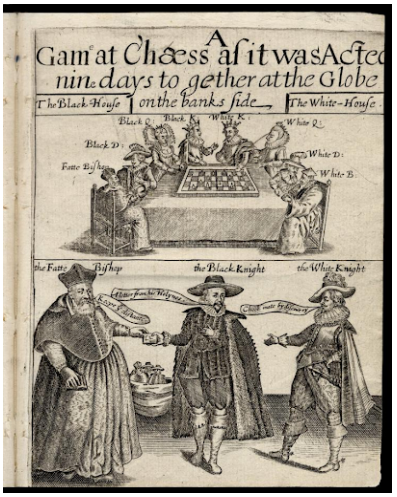


Figure 20, frontpiece of A Game at Chess.

The two surviving engraved title-pages for Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess c*orrespond to separate but near-contemporary quartos printed in 1625. The bibliography for the two quarto title‑pages of Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chesse* draws on both primary facsimiles and authoritative reference works. A facsimile of the first quarto (fig 20) (*"A Game at Chæss as it was Acted nine dayes together at the Globe on the Banks-side"* Q1), clandestinely printed by Nicholas Okes (Folger, *A Digital Anthology of Early Modern English Drama)*, shows an anonymous copperplate declaring the play was acted "nine dayes together," with no printer's imprint or engraver's signature. However, The Early Modern English Drama database confirms Okes as the printer and confirms that every surviving Q1 copy carries this plate ("A Game at Chess"). By contrast, the third quarto (fig 21) *"A Game at Chesse as it hath bine sundrey times Acted at the Globe on the Banck-side,"* (Q3), issued in mid-1625 by Augustine Mathewes and Edward Allde (also freemen), features a wholly new signed engraving stating performances "sundrey times" and, as it has been identified by Lindster in *Producing the History Play: The Agency of Repertory Companies, Stationers, and Patronage Networks in Early Modern England* (334).

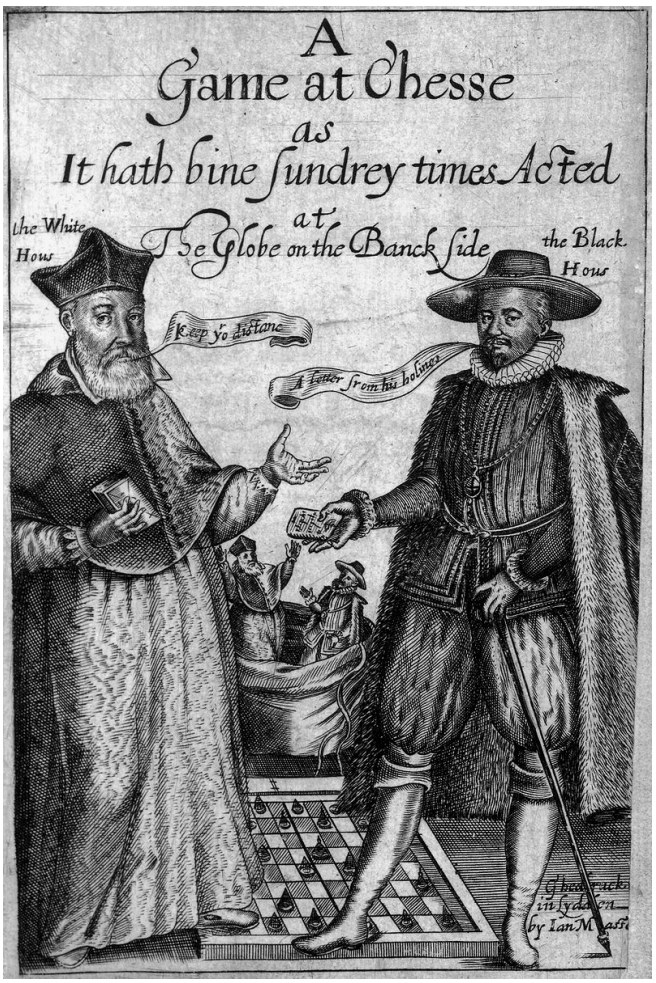


Figure 21. A later edition of A Game at Chess

Although, once again, no record has been found of the actual engraver of the image, in this engraving (fig. 21) it seems that the same model was used to depict Gondomar as the one that appears in Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* (fig. 16) and in William van de Passe's 1622 portrait of Gondomar (fig. 17). This, once more, points to the existence of a single, transnational network of engravers and print workshops (stretching from London and Utrecht to Cologne) who shared and recycled standardized anti-Spanish iconography as part of a coordinated Protestant propaganda machine, transforming "serious" models into satire.

6. Conclusion

This case sudy has approached the Simancas engraving and the impact it had though an interdisciplinary framework by combining historical research, political anlysis and visual interpretation. The value of this approach lies in the ability to connect different related historical conjunctions to reveal new layers of meaning, which would be inaccesible through purely textual, historical or artistic interpretation alone. By combining secondary sources, such as the scholarship of Helen Pierce and Calvin F.Senning with primary sources such as Gondomar's letters, this research states the importance of viewing visual satire not only as mere historical documents but as sophisticated documents whose impact conditioned the development of history and ideas.

An outstanding finding in this research is the religious and political complexity and ambiguity embedded in Jacobean diplomacy. King James I's cautious approach to these geoploticial conflicts seemed to be an attempt to pacifying Spanish interests while subtly allowing anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic propaganda and rethoric to flourish within England. Although no direct evidence clarifies direct participation by James in such proliferation, there are strong reasons hinting at a posible royal tolerance. This fact could be evidenced by the innefective implementation of censorship measures against such materials. In this sense, Gondomar himself also seemed to embody such contradictions: his effective diplomatic efforts coexisted with aggressive censorship initiatives which provoked even more anti-Spanish reaction on he protestant spheres: while this engraving's circulation attempted supression, it did not only survided via the Victoria and Albert Museum but also remained as a satirical symbol through centuries to come. This phenomenon exemplifies the intrincate relationship between censorship and cultural transmission. In this light,, censonship's unintended consequences are worth of consideration: rather than silencing opposition, the supression of prints, as illustrated vividly by Thomas Scott's writings, often served to elevate the supressed materials into Powerful symbols of resistance and resilience. Sott's words about the Grindstone engraving as a martyr to complain about censorship shows how suppression provoked the contrary desired effect, amplifying its symbolic power and influencing Protestant "collective memory" and political sentiment.

As dor the actual encarcelated “inventor” of the satire, debate still persists. While Calvin F. Senning and Helen Pierce investigations also suggest a context of collective creation and dissemination within anti-Catholic circles; explicit cannot be made. In any case, it is worth acknowledging that Gondomar's correspondence indicates strong knowledge and reaction, suggesting he viewed the author as politically hostile, though without providing direct attribution. The absence of conclusive documentary evidence points to the probability of collaborative production, reflecting widespread anti-Catholic sentiment rather than an isolated act of artistic invention. In this way, this case study affirms how visual satires did not function in isolation but participated in active dialogue with other contemporary political propaganda.

Furthermore this analysis demonstrates how the Simancas engraving encapsulates the complexities and contradictions of Jacobean diplomacy, visual propaganda, and censorship. The engraving vividly portrays King James I’s diplomatic ambivalence, maintaining formal diplomatic relations with Catholic Spain while tacitly endorsing Protestant anti-Spanish sentiment through the tolerated dissemination of critical engravings and pamphlets.

The engraving’s intricate visual composition and the subsequent diplomatic responses highlight the pivotal role visual culture played in shaping political perceptions and international relations during the early seventeenth century. The complex interrelation of imagery, political strategy, and religious conflict underscores the potency of graphic satires as historical and cultural artefacts.

Moreover, broader research into the European circulation and impact of pro- and anti-Catholic prints could provide essential insights into how iconography functioned within transnational political and cultural networks. Such work would deepen our understanding of visual propaganda as both reflective and constitutive of early modern European politics.

This case study also contributes a sort of useful corpus of primary sources and scholarly interpretations that might be relevant for further investigations into visual propaganda, censorship, and diplomatic history regarding *The Grindstone Satire*. It also affirms the value of visual satire as a critical lens for exploring political culture, identity formation, and diplomatic strategies in early modern Europe.

Regarding the Black Legend topic, this dissertation reveals how the analysed images and documents might have contributed to “colonising” the minds of the subjects to

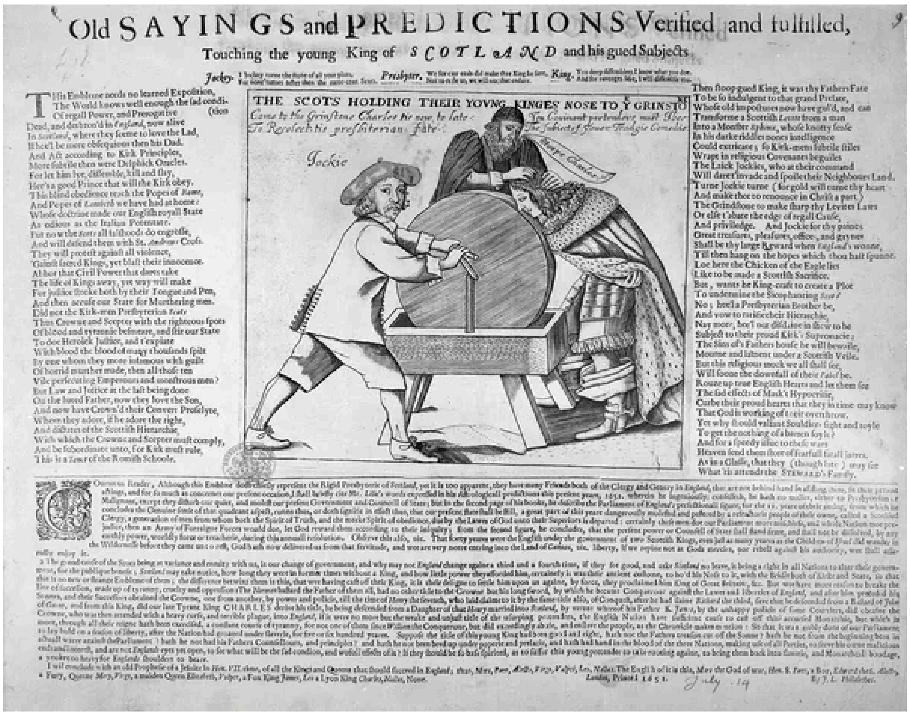
hence bring the Spanish Empire into collapse, possibly following the Christian precept that the verb becomes flesh, creating an ideological trend of auto suggestions that transformed through generations and materialized in present time to set certain power dynamics in our current historical period. In this way, it could also be stated that they were successful in disseminating destructive thinking into the power structures of the now fallen Spanish Empire to construct their geopolitical reality which has served to consolidate their power over the world and perpetuate certain precepts in the collective mind of Western Countries, such as Hispanic politicians being corrupt and innately evil or Catholics being innately conspiratorial .

Finally, it is worth acknowledging how *The Grindstone* image would continue being a symbol through centuries, as can be seen in the Appendix, and further research could expand onf the “transmutation” of this satirical device.

Appendix:

JOHN BULL BRINGING BONY'S NOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE

Ile make you free of the Grinde-stone, before you goe away.
He tyes his nose to the Grindle-stone
Cant, Oh man what doe you meane.
Carper, Hold downe your head, it will blood you bravely.



Old SAYINGS and PREDICTIONS Verified and fulfilled,
Touching the young King of SCOTLAND and his gued Subjects.
Jocky. Presbyter. King.
THE SCOTS HOLDING THEIR YOVNG KINGES NOSE TO Y GRINSTO
Come to the Grinstone Charles tis now to late
To Recolect tis presbiterian fate
Jockie
This Embleme needs no learned Exposition,
The World knows well enough the sad condi-
Of regall Power, and Prerogative (tion
Dead, and dethron'd in England, now alive
In Scotland, where they seeme to love the Lad,
If hee'l be more obsequious then his Dad.
And Act according to Kirk Principles,
More subtile then were Delphick Oracles.
For let him lye, dissemble, kill and slay,
Hee's a good Prince that will the Kirk obey.
This blind obedience teach the Popes of Rome,
And Popes of Lambeth we have had at home:
Whose doctrine made our English royall State
As odious as the Italian Potentate.
But now the Scots all falshoods do engrosse,
And will defend them with St. Andrews Crosse.
They will protest against all violence,
'Gainst sacred Kings, yet blast their innocence.
Albeit that Civil Power that dares take
The life of Kings away, yet way will make
For Justice stroke both by their Tongue and Pen,
And then accuse our State for Murthering men.
Did not the Kirk-men Presbyterian Scots
Thus Crowne and Scepter with the righteous spots
Of blood and tyrannie besmeare, and stir our State
To doe Heroick Justice, and t'expiate
With blood the blood of many thousands spilt
By one whom they more infamous with guilt
Of horrid murther made, then all those ten
Vile persecuting Emperours and monstrous men?
But Law and Justice at the last being done
On the hated Father, now they love the Son,
And now have Crown'd their Convert Proselyte,
Whom they adore, if he adore the right,
And dictates of the Scottish Hierarchie,
With which the Crowne and Scepter must comply,
And be subordinate unto, for Kirk must rule,
This is a Tenet of the Romish Schoole.
Then stoop gued King, it was thy Fathers Fate
To be so indulgent to that grand Prelate,
Whose old impostures now have gull'd, and can
Transforme a Scottish Lewis from a man
Into a Monster Sphinx, whose knotty sense
In his darke riddles nones intelligence
Could extricate; so Kirk-mens subtile stiles
Wrapt in religious Covenants beguiles
The Laick Jockies, who at their command
Will dare invade and spoile their Neighbours Land.
Turne Jockie turne (for gold will turne thy heart
And make thee to renounce in Christ a part.)
The Grindstone to make sharp thy Levites Laws
Or else t'abate the edge of regall Cause,
And priviledge. And Jockie for thy paines
Great treasures, pleasures, office, and gaynes
Shall be thy large Reward when England's wonne,
Till then hang on the hopes which thou hast spunne.
Loe here the Chicken of the Eagle lies
Like to be made a Scottish Sacrifice.
But, wants he King-craft to create a Plot
To undermine the Sycophanting Scot?
No; hee'l a Presbyterian Brother be,
And vow to raise their Hierarchie,
Nay more, hee'l out did Jane in shew to be
Subject to their proud Kirk's Supremacie;
The Sins of's Fathers house he will bewaile,
Mourne and lament under a Scottish Veile.
But this religious mock we all shall see,
Will soone the downfall of their Babel be.
Rouze up true English Hearts and let them see
The sad effects of Mask't Hypocrisie,
Curbe their proud hearts that they in time may know
That God is working of their overthrow.
Yet why should valiant Souldiers fight and toyle
To get the nothing of a barren soyle?
And for a speedy issue to these wars
Heaven send them store of fearfull fatall jarrs.
As in a Glasse, that they (though late) may see
What 'tis attends the STEWARD's Family.

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