God's Spies: The Spanish Elizabethans and Intelligence during the Anglo-Spanish War

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the political activities during the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) of a group of English Catholic exiles, who, on account of their political alignment with the Spanish monarchy, have been called the Spanish Elizabethans. It reveals how one of this group, Hugh Owen, a Brussels-based Welsh Catholic exile, developed a sophisticated espionage network, which gathered intelligence from England. This information this network obtained was integral in the Spanish Elizabethans' efforts to advance their political and religious ambitions: namely, the re-establishment of Catholicism in England, achieved either through a Spanish military invasion or by the accession of a Catholic candidate to the English throne upon Elizabeth's death.

The limited extent to which the Spanish Elizabethans have been studied has been a consequence of the overreliance on English-language sources, implying that the Spanish Elizabethans were only concerned with, and involved in, English politics. This thesis, though, adopts a broader analytical approach. Drawing on material from Spain and Italy in addition to English sources, it argues that the Spanish Elizabethans were active participants in political debates across Europe and shows how the English intelligence provided by the Spanish Elizabethans shaped these discussions. The Spanish authorities in Madrid and Brussels, as well as the Papacy in Rome, had to be persuaded that committing military and financial resources to the cause of English Catholicism was the best use of these limited resources. Intelligence, gathered from England by Owen's espionage network, was crucial in this endeavour, forming an integral part of a multi-faceted campaign which also included printed texts, military proposals, and persistent lobbying. Moreover, through an investigation of the intelligence reports sent by Hugh Owen to Spain – the *avisos de Inglaterra* – this thesis explores the direct impact of Spanish Elizabethan intelligence on the Anglo-Spanish War, revealing previously unknown details about the conflict which, in English-language historiography, is usually examined from an Elizabethan perspective alone.

By examining how the Spanish Elizabethans developed an extensive and sophisticated espionage apparatus to obtain intelligence from England, and exploring how this intelligence was used and the impact that it had on political and military discussions in Madrid, Brussels, and Rome, this thesis highlights the variety and vitality of Reformation politics at the end of the sixteenth century.

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Table of Abbreviations

AAW	Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster
ABSI	Archivum Britannicum Societatis Iesu
AGSE	Archivo General de Simancas, Estado Series
ARSI	Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu
BL	British Library
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España
Cauchie and van der Essen	A. Cauchie and L. van der Essen (eds.), *Inventaire des Archives Farnésiennes de Naples au Point de Vue de L'Histoire des Pays-Bas Catholiques* (Brussels, 1911).
CODOIN	*Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España* (112 vols. Madrid, 1842-95).
Correspondence	V. Houliston, G. Crosignani and T. McCoog (eds.), *The Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, SJ, Volume 1: 1574-1588* (Toronto, 2017).
CP	Cecil Papers, Hatfield House
CSPDom.Add.	M. Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth, Addenda* (2 vols., London, 1871-72).
CSPForeign	*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign: Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth I* (25 vols., London, 1861-1950).
CSPScotland	*Calendar of State Papers, Scotland* (13 vols. in 14 parts, London and Edinburgh, 1898-1969).
CSPSimancas	M. Hume (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas* (4 vols., London, 1896-9).
CSPVatican (1572-78)	J. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Vatican Archives, Volume 2, 1572-78* (London, 1926).
CSPVenetian	H. Brown (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* (Vols. 8-9, London, 1894-97).
Lonchay and Cuvelier	H. Lonchay and J. Cuvelier (eds.), *Correspondance de la cour d'Espagne sur les Affaires des Pays-Bas au XVII^e Siècle. Tome Premier. Précis de la Correspondance de Philippe III (1598-1621)* (Brussels, 1923).
n.f.	No folio

ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online version available at oxforddnb.com
Letters of Verstegan	Petti, A. (ed.), *The Letters and Despatches of Richard Verstegan (c.1550-1640)* (London, 1959
SE	A. Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (London, 1963).
SP	The National Archive, State Papers
Tierney/Dodd	M. Tierney (ed.), *Dodd's Church History of England* (5 vols., London, 1839-43).
Vat.Lat	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticanus Latinus

Technical Note

All quotations from contemporary manuscript and printed works retain their original punctuation and spelling. Only the use of 'i' and 'j', 'u' and 'v' has been modernised, and, in the interest of clarity, superscripts have been silently lowered, and standard contractions and abbreviations silently expanded. Names have been Anglicised — for example, 'Felipe II' is 'Philip II' — unless the original name has translated into common English usage, for example, Henri IV. Similarly, titles are also translated, where appropriate, into English. Likewise, the established English version of a foreign place name, such as Brussels or Flushing instead of Bruxelles or Vlissingen, has been used, unless the original language name is accepted in common usage. Translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

Regarding dating, on 24 February 1582, Pope Gregory XIII ordered all Christians to advance their calendar by ten days, but different countries adopted the 'New Style' at different times. In Spain, 15 October 1582 was the day immediately following 4 October; for the majority of the provinces of the Netherlands in rebellion against Spanish rule, 25 December 1582 followed 14 December; whilst in the 'loyal' provinces of the Netherlands, 22 February followed 11 February 1583.[1] England, however, did not adjust its calendar until 1752, and, instead, continued with the Julian calendar. All dates in this thesis after 4 October 1582 appear in New Style with the year starting on 1 January unless otherwise denoted.

Currencies[2]

Maravedí: the smallest unit of Spanish currency

1 Spanish *real*: 34 *maravedíes*

1 ducat: 11 *reales* or 375 *maravedíes*

1 *escudo* (or crown): 11.76 *reales* or 400 *maravedíes*

1 shilling: 2 *reales*

1 pound sterling: 40 Spanish reales, or 20 shillings

[1] G. Parker, *Imprudent King: a New Life of Philip II* (New Haven CT, 2014), p. xiii.
[2] Ó. Fernández, *England and Spain in the Early Modern Era: Royal Love, Diplomacy, Trade and Naval Relations 1604-25* (London, 2020).

Introduction

'The State of the World is Marveloosly changed,' or was it?

In a letter to his fellow privy councilor, the Earl of Shrewsbury, dated 27 May 1589, William Cecil, Lord Burghley famously summarised the state of late-sixteenth-century European politics: 'the state of the world is marveloosly changed'. He expanded his point: 'whan we trew Englishmen have cause for our own quietnes to wish good succes to a French Kyng, and a Kyng of Scotts; and yet they both differr one from the other in professio[n] of relligion; but seyng both ar enemyes to our enemyes, we have cause to joyen we them in ther actions ageyst our enemyes'.[3] Burghley's assessment emphasised how dramatically things had changed in just a short period. For centuries, the principal threat to England had come from the 'auld alliance' between France and Scotland. This anti-English arrangement had been renewed as recently as 1558 when the dauphin Francis, son to Henri II, had married Mary, Queen of Scots. In an effort to counter this Franco-Scottish alliance, England had, since the fourteenth century, maintained close ties with the Iberian kingdoms. In Tudor history, the Treaty of Medina del Campo (1489) had bound Henry VII to Isabella of Castile and her husband Ferdinand of Aragon. Anglo-Spanish ties had been strengthened through the marriage of Arthur to Katherine of Aragon, and then, after Arthur's death, of Henry VIII to Katherine. The climax of this Anglo-Spanish alliance had come in the 1550s with the marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary Tudor.[4] This marriage had led to the complete Habsburg encirclement of France with Philip ruling in Spain, the Netherlands, a number ofstates in Italy, and, with Mary, in England, whilst his uncle, Ferdinand I, was Holy Roman Emperor. Mary's untimely death in 1558 was a setback, but both Philip and the new queen of England, Elizabeth, found the Franco-Scottish link threatening and looked to maintain the Anglo-Spanish relationship. Cecil, for example, took 'comfort in the earnest and very brotherly friendship' of Philip.[5] Philip, meanwhile, despite

[3] Lord Burghley to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Theobalds, 27 May 1589, in E. Lodge (ed.) *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners in the Reign of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, and James I* (3 volumes, London, 1791), II, p. 400.
[4] On the negotiations before this marriage and the marriage contract itself, see A. Samson, *Mary and Philip: The Marriage of Tudor England and Habsburg Spain* (Manchester, 2020).
[5] BL, Cotton MS, Vespasian, C. VII, f.110 quoted in S. Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 72.

his fundamental opposition to Elizabeth's decision to return England to Protestantism, protected her from papal excommunication until 1570, and continued to make pacific statements about England both to his own ministers and to Elizabeth herself. Whilst the historiographical orthodoxy has been to emphasise a gradual drift towards Anglo-Spanish conflict in the first part of Elizabeth's reign, Maria Rodríguez-Salgado has shown that it was the collapse of Valois authority in France in the winter of 1584/85 that opened the door to Anglo-Spanish conflict.[6] The lack of central royal governance meant that France was no longer in a position to threaten Spain or Habsburg possessions in the Netherlands.[7] Soon after, Philip II ordered preparations to begin for the 'enterprise of England'.[8] Three years later the Spanish Armada sailed in an abortive invasion attempt on England.

Burghley may have felt that 'the state of the world is marveloosly changed', that England's previously natural ally was now its sworn enemy and its previously natural enemies were now its greatest allies, but this interpretation of events was not universal. A vocal minority of Englishmen and women believed that Spain was still their country's greatest ally. These men and women were Catholics, and their worldview was shaped by their faith. These English Catholics were unconvinced that a purely religious solution — namely, missionary activity — would result in the conversion of England from heresy, and instead argued for the necessity of political and military action against England to achieve the desired religious outcome.[9] Believing that Habsburg Spain was the best placed power to offer this political and military support for English Catholicism, they lobbied the government in Madrid to this end. For these individuals the world had not 'marveloosly changed'; the basic facts were still the same — England and Spain were still natural allies — and so it was Spain — not any other Catholic power — to whom these English Catholics turned to 'save' England from itself and its experiment with heresy. A Spanish invasion of England, from this perspective, was not motivated by ancient hatred or dynastic rivalry, but out of a sense of Christian duty and brotherly love.

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[6] Manuel Fernandez Alvarez described Anglo-Spanish relations as 'una paz imposible', whilst Garrett Mattingly described how 'Philip II and his militant advisers dreamed of a great crusade' against England, and portrayed the eventual conflict as inevitable: 'the clash of irreconcilables could not be postponed for ever'. M. Fernandez Alvarez, 'Felipe II e Isabel de Inglaterra (una paz imposible),' *Revista de Historia Naval*, 23 (1988), pp. 19-35; G. Mattingly, *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (1962), pp. 41, 426.

[7] M. Rodríguez-Salgado, 'Paz ruidosa, guerra sorda: las relaciones de Felipe II e Inglaterra', in L. Ribot García (ed.), *La monarquía de Felipe II a debate* (Madrid, 2000), pp. 63-119.

[8] Parker, *Imprudent King,* pp. 305-23.

[9] For a discussion of Robert Persons' disillusionment with a purely religious solution, see J. Bossy, 'The Heart of Robert Persons,' in T. McCoog (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits. Essays in Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall, Oxford (1896-1996)* (Rome, 2007, orig. 1996), pp. 187-207.

This thesis explores how these English Catholics attempted to persuade Spain to intervene in England and to re-establish the Catholic Church there. It traces the genesis of an English Catholic spy network, and reveals how the information it gathered from England was an integral part of a multifaceted Spanish Elizabethan campaign which took place in Spain, the Netherlands, and Rome in the 1590s to persuade Spain to intervene in England, and to support Spanish efforts when such action did take place, for instance, in the armadas of 1596 and 1597.

The English Reformation and English Catholic History

Scholars of English and British religious history have long emphasised a narrative of progress, recounting a tale which reveals how the advent of Protestantism freed the population of England, Scotland, and Wales from papist ignorance, superstition, and tyranny.[10] The fundamental problem is that the story of the Reformation in England is bound up with the birth of the British Empire, resulting in a long-lasting, powerful association between the patriotic and the anti-Catholic. As Alison Shell observes, these prejudices continue to cloud scholars' attitudes and condition in subtle ways how historians interpret sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious culture.[11]

Spain, under Philip II — the 'Catholic King' — was the country which most fully embodied this objectionable papistry.[12] Philip was the self-proclaimed defender of the Catholic Church; his subjects forcibly converted millions in the New World; and his understanding of the world and his place in it was fundamentally shaped by his relationship to the Catholic Church, leading him into long and costly wars against Protestants across Europe, including against England. The Black Legend of an intellectually enervated, repressive, and superstitious religion underlying the tyrannous and cruel oppression of indigenous peoples the world over first emerged in England towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, but was consolidated in the eighteenth century, when Britain justified its own imperial expansion through its contrast to Spain:

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[10] Perhaps the most influential text linking Catholicism and the unproductive versus Protestantism and progress is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, T. Parsons (trans.) (London, 1992).
[11] A. Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 103.
[12] The title 'Rex Catholicissimus' was first bestowed by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 to the sovereigns of Spain (then Ferdinand and Isabella) in the papal bull '*Inter caetera*'. In Spanish, this title was frequently given as 'rey católico'.

> English Protestants and nineteenth-century English liberals gladly accepted the 'Black Legend', depicting Philip as a 'monster iniquity', which had been created by William the Silent's *Apologia* (1580). This hostile presentation of Philip can be traced in all the Protestant historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and then in Robert Watson's *History of the Reign of Philip II* (1777) and through the influential works of the nineteenth century such as those of J.A. Froude, J.L. Motley and W.H. Prescott.[13]

This dichotomy of Spain versus England, of Catholicism versus Protestantism, of the old imperial power versus the new, was epitomised by the Spanish Armada of 1588. Philip II sent an almighty force against England, but was defeated by the Almighty. As was inscribed on a medal issued to commemorate the victory: *flavit* יהוה *et Dissipati Sunt* (Jehovah blew and they were scattered).[14] This victory over Spain was interpreted as Protestant England's coming of age, its arrival on the global stage as a significant power, and thus as a genesis point for its subsequent empire. That the Armada's defeat was not the end of the war, and that two more fleets were sent against England in the 1590s, is commonly disregarded as inconvenient and irrelevant to the story.[15] Indeed, even those few English-language histories of the Anglo-Spanish war told through the Spanish sources, such as Geoffrey Parker's *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, hold 1588 as the climax of the story, with the 1590s serving as a long tail.[16] Seen through this lens of patriotism, Habsburg Spain and Catholicism had little to contribute to the story of England and Britain, and was, therefore, relegated to the sidelines except as the 'enemy'.[17]

These same historiographical forces likewise relegated English Catholicism's history to what Christopher Haigh describes as an 'intellectual backwater', disengaged from wider debates about English and British history, and populated 'by the ancestors of those who had suffered for their faith in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.[18] This scholarship was, at times, little more than an extension of early modern martyrology.[19] Just as France has

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[13] E. Jones, *The English Nation: The Great Myth* (Thrupp, 1998), p. 190. For an account of the definition, birth, and development of the Black Legend in Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, see A. Sánchez Jiménez, *Legenda negra: la batalla sobre la imagen de España en tiempos de Lope de Vega* (Madrid, 2016).

[14] http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbdk&fileName=d056/rbdkd056.db&recNum=0 accessed 16.4.20.

[15] Richard Wernham's *After the Armada: Elizabethan England and the Struggle for Western Europe 1588-1595* (Oxford, 1984) and *The Return of the Armadas* (Oxford, 1994) are notable exceptions to this narrative.

[16] G. Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven, CT, 1998).

[17] See Samson, *Mary and Philip,* pp. 1-18 for an acute analysis of the impact this patriotic narrative has had on the popular – and, indeed, the scholarly – understanding of Queen Mary.

[18] C. Haigh, 'Catholicism in Early Modern England: Bossy and Beyond', *Historical Journal,* 45 (2002), p. 493; see also, A. Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 4-5.

[19] T. McCoog, 'Construing Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1582-1602', in E. Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2005), p. 95.

developed a myth of a mass resistance to Nazi rule, these Catholic scholars of early modern English Catholicism emphasised the lives of a narrow band of missionaries and laymen who risked their lives in their efforts to maintain the Faith in the face of merciless persecution, excluding those English Catholics who did not fit this mould.[20] Moreover, perhaps in an effort to detach their Faith from the negative association of Habsburg Spain, these scholars portrayed English Catholicism as institutionally isolated from the wider Catholic Church, and not subject to the wider developments of the Catholic or Counter Reformation, which sparked spiritual and institutional renewal.[21] For a long time, English Catholic history was excluded from the historiographical mainstream, and what scholarship there was on it engaged with only a narrow section of its number and their experiences.

Over the last forty-five years, historians' understandings of English Catholicism, its relationships with the rest of England, and, indeed, the rest of Europe has undergone a transformation. The work of Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy, in particular, went a long way to show that the supposed 'losers' of the English Reformation perhaps did not lose at all, or at least not as decisively as was previously supposed. For Haigh, religious change did not occur overnight: 'Tudor Reformations had not replaced a Catholic England by a Protestant England: the country was divided, and the Protestants were insecure; popery had not been crushed, the worldlings had not turned to the Gospel'.[22] He argued that Protestantism, particularly in its more puritan forms, was too intellectual and too demanding to embed itself in the national conscience. Consequently, England retained a mosaic of religious beliefs shaped by a multitude of differing shades of religious conservatism. In *The Stripping of the Altars,* Eamon Duffy portrayed the stubborn perseverance of traditional forms of worship.[23] Deep into the sixteenth century, England was a place where medieval 'superstition' (as viewed by the Protestant reformers) still had a place in the personal beliefs of the population, despite the best efforts of reformers. It was apparent that religious change followed a more complicated route in England than was originally presumed, and, consequently, Catholicism became relevant to the study of English history. Not only did a fear of Catholicism mark English political and religious events, but actual English Catholics did as well, through their religious practices, social

[20] I. Ousby, *Occupation: The Ordeal of France, 1940-1944* (London, 1999); H. Trevor-Roper, *Historical Essays* (London, 1957), pp. 113-18.
[21] Hugh Averling succinctly described English Catholicism as 'a particularly locked *hortus conclusus*' in 'Some Aspects of Yorkshire Catholic Recusant History, 1558-1791', in G. Cuming (ed.), *The Province of York* (Leiden, 1967), p. 100.
[22] C. Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 293.
[23] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven, CT., 1992).

interactions, and political manoeuvrings.[24] A renaissance in the study of English Catholicism had begun with historians seeking to integrate it into the historiographical mainstream.

Significant scholarly attention has been devoted to the question of conformity versus recusancy. Traditional Catholic historiography emphasised the recusants — those who refused to attend the Protestant services of the Church of England — as the only true Catholics in England. Haigh's research shifted attention to 'the church papist penumbra' — the amorphous mass of individuals who conformed fully, partially, or occasionally to the Established Church.[25] Haigh's interest in this religious position was as a recruiting ground for the recusant community – a stepping stone on the road to full recusancy – but, as Alexandra Walsham has shown, 'Church-Papism' was an enduring and viable strategy for surviving the state's persecution of Catholics, and for reconciling the contradictory allegiances owed to the Crown and to the Faith.[26] Catholics moved back and forth between conformity and recusancy with ease and frequency. These positions, Michael Questier argues, were not opposites, nor were they mutually exclusive; rather, they were a way of navigating the challenges and demands being thrust upon Catholics.[27] Conformity and recusancy were, then, not simply religious issues but also political questions, and, by the 1590s, those who refused to attend the Church of England's services faced economic sanctions, restrictions on mobility, and even extended prison sentences. Recusancy was a radical stance, a subversive challenge to the state and, with its high proportion of female adherents, to society's gender norms and patriarchal order.[28]

The rethinking of English Catholicism's relationship with the state has not been limited to the question of conformity. *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation'* (2005), edited by Ethan Shagan, sought to cement English Catholicism's place as part of the historiographical mainstream by asserting its place in the period's political events.[29] This volume emphasised the role of both the Catholic clergy *and* laity in English political culture and as political actors in their own right.[30]

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[24] P. Lake, 'Anti-Popery: the Structure of a Prejudice', in R. Cust and A. Hughes (eds.), *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (London, 1989), pp. 72-106; E. Shagan, 'Introduction: English Catholic History in Context', in E. Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 1-21.

[25] C. Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past and Present*, 93/1 (1981), pp. 37-69; 'Church of England, the Catholics and the People', in C. Haigh, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 1984), p. 205.

[26] A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 1993).

[27] M. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, 1996).

[28] See J. Binczewski, 'Power in Vulnerability: Widows and Priest Holes in the Early Modern English Catholic Community,' *British Catholic History*, 35/1 (2020), pp. 1-24. For a more thorough treatment, see her: 'Solitary Sparrows: Widowhood and the Catholic Community in Post-Reformation England, 1580-1630', (Unpublished PhD thesis, Washington State University, 2017).

[29] Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation'*.

[30] Similar observations stressing the agency of the Catholic laity in shaping the Catholic Reformation have been made for other early modern states. See, for example, E. Fulton, *Catholic Belief and Survival in Late Sixteenth-Century*

Previously, studies of the political engagement of Catholics had focused solely on the leading clergymen such as the Jesuit Robert Persons. Michael Carrafiello, for example, argued in the mid-1990s that the spiritual language of the Jesuit Mission in England was a cover for Persons' real ambition of the violent overthrow of the Protestant Elizabethan regime.[31] Moreover, recent scholarship — for instance, by Peter Lake and Michael Questier, Victor Houliston, Stefania Tutino, Paul Arblaster, and Freddy Domínguez — has investigated English Catholicism's published theological works, martyrologies, books of political theory, and slanderous pamphlets to understand how English Catholics engaged in the early modern 'public sphere' to promote their cause and attack their enemies.[32] This scholarship has shown that English Catholics were not bystanders in the events and debates which shaped early modern England; they were active participants.

In exploring the conditional quality of English Catholic compliance, it is important not to overlook those who elected — or were forced — to leave the country altogether. Exile was no sixteenth-century invention; as the Venetian political theorist, Paolo Paruta, wrote in the 1580s: 'infinite are the examples in every age of those… driven by exile from a city or a state'.[33] Randolph Starn notes that, prior to the sixteenth century, exiles were commonly members of defeated factions, driven from their homelands, and re-establishing themselves as a 'contrary commonwealth' elsewhere.[34] The coming of the Reformation did not end this form of political exile, but another push factor developed as an important, if not the primary, cause of the exodus of groups of individuals: religion. On the wrong side of the confessional divide, groups fled their homes seeking refuge from religious persecution, forced conversion, and execution. Religious exile has been explored particularly in Protestant historiography with revelations about the political and cultural impact of exile. Diego Pirillo, for example, argues that exiles — or 'refugees' he calls them — were intermediary figures who had a central role in early modern

Vienna: The Case of Georg Eder (1523-1587) (Abingdon, 2007).

[31] M. Carrafiello, 'English Catholicism and the Jesuit Mission of 1580-1581', *Historical Journal*, 37 (1994), pp. 761-74; M. Carrafiello, *Robert Persons and English Catholicism, 1580-1610* (London, 1998). See also, Bossy, 'The Heart of Robert Persons', pp. 141–58; and E. Duffy, 'William, Cardinal Allen, 1532–1594', *Recusant History*, 22 (1995), pp. 265–90.

[32] For example, P. Lake and M. Questier, 'Puritans, Papists, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Campion Affair in Context', *Journal of Modern History,* 72 (2000) pp. 587-627; P. Lake and M. Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest: Confessional Conflict, Toleration, and the Politics of Publicity in Post-Reformation England* (Oxford, 2019); V. Houliston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic, 1580-1610* (Aldershot, 2007); S. Tutino, *Law and Conscience: Catholicism in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007); P. Arblaster, *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (Leuven, 2004); F. Domínguez, *Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books during the Reign of Philip II* (University Park, PA, 2020).

[33] P. Paruta, *Opere politiche*, C. Monzani (ed.), (Florence, 1852), quoted in R. Starn, *Contrary Commonwealth: The Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley, CA, 1982), p. 1.

[34] Starn, *Contrary Commonwealth.*

cultural exchange.[35] Hugh Trevor-Roper, meanwhile, argues that 'the dispersal of European talent in the century after the Reformation is surely one of the greatest fertilizing displacements of European history'.[36] Trevor-Roper was referring here to the dispersal of Calvinists, but exile was experienced by other religious groups, too, including Catholics, and these exile groups played similar roles as intermediaries in cultural exchange.[37]

Research into English Catholic exile has been limited, however, by the stubborn dynamics which have long governed English and British national and religious historiography. Whilst, as has already been noted, it is now far harder to write English history without taking into account England's Catholic population, only recently has scholarly attention begun to address English Catholicism's international dimension. This is not to say that historians have not understood English Catholicism's international context — countless articles in *Recusant History* (today, *British Catholic History*) show that they do — but the focus has remained fixed on *English* Catholicism. Recently, though, historians have tried to integrate early modern English Catholicism into broader frameworks. Early attempts to this end were made in the 1950s by Albert Loomie and John Bossy, but their most comprehensive works on the topic remained unpublished, and it is only in the last decade that their lead has been followed to reveal the significance of English Catholics in their host environments.[38] Katy Gibbons, for example, explores those who settled in late-sixteenth-century Paris and moved in the outer circles of the French Catholic League. Moreover, Anne Dillon's study of the Antwerp-based English Catholic exile Richard Verstegan illuminates how he promoted the Catholic Reformation for a broad, European audience through the production of graphically-illustrated French and Latin broadsheets about Calvinist atrocities against Catholics.[39]

This scholarship has highlighted English Catholics' participation in wider European religious and political debates. Much of it, though, focuses on English Catholic exiles in France,

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[35] D. Pirillo, *The Refugee-Diplomat: Venice, England, and the Reformation* (Ithaca, NY, 2018).
[36] H. Trevor-Roper, *Europe's Physician: The Various Lives of Sir Theodore de Mayerne,* Blair Worden, (ed.), (New Haven CT, 2006), p. 12.
[37] For example, R. Descimon and J. Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, *Les ligueurs de l'exil: le refuge Catholique Français après 1594* (Paris, 2005); G. Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, 2014).
[38] A. Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1957); J. Bossy, 'Elizabethan Catholicism: the Link with France', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1960).
[39] K. Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-century Paris* (Woodbridge, 2011); A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot, 2002), ch. 5. See also the work by Ana Sáez Hidalgo on English Catholic exiles as intermediaries with Spain: '"Extravagant" English Books at the Library of El Escorial and the Jesuit Agency', in J. Kelly and H. Thomas (eds.), *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580-1789: 'The World is Our House?'* (Leiden, 2019), pp. 155-85; 'English Recusant Controversy in Spanish Print Culture: Dissemination, Popularization, Fictionalization', in L. Chambers and T. O'Connor (eds.), *Forming Catholic Communities: Irish, Scots and English College Networks in Europe, 1568-1918* (Leiden, 2018), pp. 201-31; 'St Albans English College Valladolid: Enclave or Doorway to the Reception of English Books in Spain?', *South Atlantic Review*, 79/1-2 (2014), pp. 105-23.

the Low Countries, and Italy, despite the importance of Spain in the sixteenth century as the leading Catholic power. This relative neglect can, to some degree, be explained by the numbers of English Catholic exiles in each location: only a small minority went south of the Pyrenees. Recent scholarship by Freddy Domínguez, however, has sought to correct this omission, expanding on ideas first explored by Albert Loomie. Loomie argued that English Catholic exiles in Habsburg territories, such as Sir Francis Englefield, Robert Persons, and Joseph Creswell, actively looked to participate in Spanish political debate through their conversations with Spanish courtiers and the king, and their publications.[40] Domínguez examines, in detail, those texts published by the Spanish-based English Catholic exiles, arguing that through these, the exiles sought to incite war against England.[41] His work reaffirms Loomie's earlier claim that English Catholics were active participants in late-sixteenth-century Spanish political culture, although it only examines their publications and not their other activities.

Loomie dubbed these individuals 'Spanish Elizabethans'. Loomie's term reshaped language historically used by English Catholicism's enemies. These enemies believed, as Oliver Cromwell would put it in the mid-seventeenth century, that 'the Papists in England, they have been accounted, ever since I was born, Spaniolized'.[42] Whereas Elizabethan anti-Catholic literature, such as Lewis Lewknor's *The estate of English fugitives under the king of Spaine and his ministers* (1595), stressed the unnaturalness of English subjects treasonously devoted to a foreign regime, and emphasised the horrors of Spanish rule, Loomie looked to neutralise the term, using it simply as nomenclature to refer to the Elizabethan 'English expatriates in Spanish Hapsburg lands'.[43] Loomie was no apologist for the English Catholic exiles — he was more than willing to highlight their plots and scheming — but his definition of 'Spanish Elizabethans' sought to remove the prejudice and prejudgment that has accompanied understanding of English Catholic exile activities.

This thesis will use a more specific definition of 'Spanish Elizabethans'. Whereas Loomie used it to refer to English residents in Spanish Habsburg lands, it will be used here to refer to those English Catholics actively involved in Spanish political culture, who were apologists and advocates for the Habsburg regime, and who believed that English and Spanish futures should be entwined. This definition has much in common with the early modern Protestant critics of

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[40] See, in particular, 'Spain and the English Catholic Exiles'. See also, *SE* and the various essays republished in *Spain and the Early Stuarts, 1585-1655* (Aldershot, 1996).
[41] Domínguez, *Radicals in Exile.*
[42] Speech by Oliver Cromwell in Parliament, 17 September 1656, in S. Lomas (ed.), *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle* (London, 1904), p. 518.
[43] Lewis Lewknor, *The Estate of English Fugitives under the King of Spaine and his Ministers* (London, 1595); C. Higley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2008), ch. 6; *SE*, p. 13.

Hispaniolised English Catholics, although it is not intended to bear the same confessional negativity. The individuals who appear in this thesis sought to save England from the perceived heresies and evils of the Elizabethan regime, and they believed that their greatest chance of success lay with Spanish assistance.[44] Their ambitions were spiritual and their motives pious, but their actions were undoubtedly political. Geographically, they were not restricted to Spanish territories; whilst many did live in Flanders or Spain, many others remained in England, or lived elsewhere in Europe, particularly in Rome. Led by Robert Persons and, until his death in 1593, William, Cardinal Allen, these Spanish Elizabethans have occasionally been referred to as the 'Allen-Persons party'.[45] By exploring the Spanish Elizabethans' use of intelligence, this thesis will offer new insights into the ways in which English Catholics engaged with the wider European political landscape, and sought to shape their own destinies.

Early Modern Spanish Espionage

Espionage has existed since antiquity. As Martin van Crevald argues, 'from Plato to NATO, the history of command in war consists essentially of an endless search for certainty'.[46] Over the centuries, the nature of European intelligence services has evolved. Whereas in the medieval period, espionage was a rather *ad hoc* affair, the sixteenth century saw European intelligence services reach new heights in their levels of competence and professionalism, resulting in espionage cementing its place as an essential government tool.[47] England, France, Spain, the Ottomans, and various Italian city-states all developed extensive intelligence apparatus.[48] As Noel Malcolm writes, 'this was a news-hungry world in which information was power and where, precisely because much of the news was inaccurate or fragmentary, with irregular time-lapses in its transmission, it was vital to accumulate as many overlapping reports as possible in order to sift out the truth, or something close to it'.[49] As this thesis will show, the Spanish Elizabethan espionage network played a vital role in supplying intelligence to Spain at a time when Spain lacked its own intelligence apparatus in England.

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[44] Although they would most likely have accepted help from whomever offered it.
[45] T. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers: the Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of Counter-Reformation in England, 1572-1615* (Chicago, IL, 1964).
[46] M. Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge MA, 1985), p. 264.
[47] I. Arthurson, 'Espionage and Intelligence from the Wars of the Roses to the Reformation', *Nottingham Medieval Studies,* 35 (1991), pp. 134-54.
[48] For an overview, see I. Iordanou, *Venice's Secret Service: Organizing Intelligence in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 28-55.
[49] N. Malcolm, *Agents of Empire:ly-m, Knights, Cosairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Oxford, 2015), p. 37.

The number of studies that have engaged in both political history and in espionage in the past thirty years reflects a significant interest in the topic. Whilst Miguel Angel Echevarría Bacigalupe published his analysis on the Habsburg intelligence apparatus in Flanders in 1984, it was actually Lucien Bély's mammoth study on almost every aspect of diplomacy and espionage around the time of the Treaty of Utrecht which provoked an interest in the study of early modern espionage.[50] Previously, historians had dismissed the topic, following a circular logic summarised by Paolo Preto thus: 'there are few documents, therefore there is little history; there is little history, therefore espionage is of little importance in history, and therefore a light subject for novelists and journalists, thus not real history'.[51] Following Bély's lead, a number of other scholars examined early modern espionage, and, consequently, a large number of studies, in a variety of languages, soon appeared.[52] This scholarship has revealed that there are in fact many documents and much history concerning early modern espionage. Indeed, Carlos Carnicer and Javier Marcos argue that the sixteenth century was 'the first golden age of espionage', and that it saw an 'explosion' of spying and intelligence activity.[53]

Whilst Bacigalupe's study did not jumpstart wider interest in early modern espionage, it did pave the way for subsequent analyses of Spanish Habsburg intelligence. In the 1990s and, even more so, the 2000s, a number of studies of Spanish intelligence were published.[54] Some of this scholarship has focused on Spanish espionage in France and Flanders, but, far more has focused on Spanish intelligence in Italy and the Mediterranean.[55] This Mediterranean focus is

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[50] M. Echevarría Bacigalupe, *Diplomacia Secreta en Flandes 1598-1643* (Bilbao, 1984); L. Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1990).

[51] P. Preto, *I servizi segreti di Venezia. Spionaggio e controspionaggio ai tempi della Serenissima* (Milan, 1994), p. 13. Notable exceptions include: J. Thompson and S. Padover, *Secret Diplomacy and Cryptography, 1500-1815* (New York, NY, 1937); P. Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of the State and their Monopoly of Licensed News, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1956); C. Carter, *The Secret Diplomacy of the Habsburgs, 1598-1625* (New York, NY, 1964).

[52] For example, R. Canosa and I. Colonnello, *Spionaggio a Palermo: Aspetti della Guerra Secreta Turco-Spagnola in Mediterraneno nel Cinquecento* (Palermo, 1991); A. Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II, 1660-1685* (Cambridge, 1994); J. Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage: Les Ambassadeurs du roi de France auprès de Philippe II du traité du Cateau-Cambresis (1559) à la mort de Henri III (1589)* (Paris, 2007).

[53] C. Carnicer and J. Marcos, *Espias de Felipe II: Los servicios secretos del Imperio español* (Madrid, 2005), p. 14. They regard the twentieth century as period of the second 'explosion'.

[54] For a detailed bibliography of Spanish espionage from the medieval to the modern, see J. Goberna Falque, *Inteligencia, Espionaje y Servicios Secretos en España* (Madrid, 2007).

[55] On Spanish spying in France, see, for example: C. Carnicer García and J. Marcos Rivas, *Sebastián de Arbizu, Espía de Felipe II: La diplomacia secreta española y la intervención en Francia* (Madrid, 1998). On Spanish espionage in the Mediterranean: E. Sola and J. de la Peña, *Cervantes y la Berbería: Cervantes, mundo turco-berberisco y servicios secretos en la época de Felipe II* (Madrid, 1995); E. Sola, 'Moriscos, Renegados y Agentes Secretos Españoles en la Época de Cervantes,' *Osmanlı Tarihi Araşturma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, 4 (1993), pp. 331-362; C. Carnicer García and J. Marcos Rivas, *Espionaje y Traición en el Reinado de Felipe II: La historia de vallisoletano Martin de Acuña* (Valladolid, 2001); D. Bonilla, 'Espías Honorables, Espías Necesarios: De la Información a la Inteligencia en la Conducción de la Política y la Guerra de la Monarquía Hispánica,' in B. Perez (ed.) *Ambassadeurs, Apprentis Espions et Maîtres Comploteurs: Les systèmes de Renseignement en Espagne à l'époque Moderne* (Paris, 2010), pp. 31-47.

especially evident in the scholarship published in English.[56]

These studies have revealed the diverse and extensive nature of Spanish intelligence under Philip II. Much of the secret information which Philip II received ultimately came from *ad hoc* spies: individuals who happened to have information and have contact with a Spanish official.[57] They were often merchants who could travel far more freely without raising suspicion than other sections of society could. The main difference between correspondents and spies was that correspondents operated on a regular basis whilst spies provided one-time information. Agents, meanwhile, were a far more professional class, performing a role which today might be considered that of a career spy, and their tasks could involve secret missions on the Crown's behalf. Anyone could become a correspondent or spy, but agents were 'personas de calidad' — persons of quality — that is they had to be Spanish, Christian, and, where possible, from at least the upper-middle class.[58] Exceptions to this rule can be found, particularly amongst the Jewish population in Italy. Jütte notes that intelligence was a commodity to be traded like any other in early modern Europe, and some Jews successfully exploited this fact to become intelligence brokers.[59] Indeed, as Flora Cassen notes, 'some Jews were sought after for their access to information'. Nevertheless, as Cassen also observes, those Jews who rose to this station were the exception; far more, whilst recognising the value of intelligence, were unable to attract the attention of the relevant authorities.[60]

The integral role of Spanish ambassadors has also been foregrounded by the historiography. The history of diplomacy, which has long been shaped by the arguments advanced in Garrett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy*, has linked the development of a professional diplomatic corps and the advent of resident ambassadors to the installation of structure to early modern espionage.[61] As Michael Levin summarises: 'ever since the development of permanent embassies, states and statesmen have understood that ambassadors act as political analysts, as well as outright spies'.[62] Iordanou argues that Venetian ambassadors

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[56] This English-language scholarship includes: M. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca, NY, 2005), pp. 154-82; F. Cassen, 'Philip II of Spain and His Jewish Spy', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 21 (2007), pp. 318-42; E. Gürkan, 'Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean Go-Betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg Rivalry', (Unpublished PhD thesis, Georgetown University, 2012).

[57] Carnicer and Marcos, *Espias de Felipe*, p. 81.

[58] Carnicer and Marcos, *Espias de Felipe.* See also, Malcolm, *Agents of Empire,* pp. 223-231; M. García-Arenal and G. Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe,* M. Beagles (trans.) (Baltimore, MD, 1999), pp. 1-20.

[59] D. Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400-1800*, J. Reimer (trans.), (New Haven, CT, 2015).

[60] Cassen, 'Philip and his Jewish Spy', pp. 318-42, quote at 324.

[61] G. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston, MA, 1955).

[62] Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 154.

had three main functions: 'to represent their sovereign, to negotiate on their behalf, and to gather information by exploiting sources cultivated both at court and beyond'.[63] Denice Fett, in her analysis of sixteenth-century English, French, and Spanish diplomatic activity, observes that ambassadors' intelligence reports were relatively consistent in their subject matter. They regularly contained routine information which was easy enough to obtain concerning the health of the royal family and key members of the government, and the location and travel plans of the court. Ambassadors also tracked the meetings and audiences of the monarch and government bodies. At times this task could be readily available, or extremely difficult should the monarch or councillor choose to engage in secret meetings. Learning the contents of these meetings proved to be still more difficult, especially with a small number of individuals in attendance.[64] Spanish ambassadors were no different. Philip II payed particularly close attention to the selection of ambassadors. He expected them to serve as station chiefs, tasked with constructing their own local networks to provide them and, in turn, him, with the latest news and developments. Thus, when Philip appointed Guzman de Silva as his ambassador to Venice, he gave him the following instructions: 'to know and understand through all possible ways, means and forms the news available to you'.[65] Information the ambassadors forwarded to Philip was integral to Philip's decision-making process and in his construction of both foreign and domestic policy.[66] Ambassadors were the lynchpin around which the whole Spanish intelligence system was structured, acting as the intermediary between the sources and the Crown.

Those few studies examining the role of Philip II's representatives in England show that these ambassadors were expected to serve the same role as their counterparts in other parts of Europe.[67] As Retha Warnicke notes, Bernardino de Mendoza's dispatches during his embassy from 1578 to 1584 contain vast amounts of intelligence relating to English foreign relations, domestic policy, and military, as well as plenty of social commentary and rumours.[68] However,

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[63] Iordanou, *Venice's Secret Service*, p. 165.
[64] D. Fett, 'Information, Intelligence, and Negotiation in the West European Diplomatic World, 1558-1588', (Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Ohio State University, 2009), p. 19.
[65] Quoted in Carnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe,* p. 146.
[66] Parker, *Grand Strategy;* Carter, *Secret Diplomacy*, pp. 92-106; Gürkan, 'Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean', pp. 48-80.
[67] What little scholarship there has been on these ambassadors has generally dwelt on their involvement in plots against the Elizabethan government: for example, F. Edwards, *Plots and Plotters* (Dublin, 2002); J. Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven, CT, 1991) and *Under the Molehill: An Elizabethan Spy Story* (New Haven, CT, 2001); D. Fett, 'Spanish Diplomacy and English Recusancy in Early Elizabethan England', *Reformation*, 15/1 (2010), pp. 169-89.
[68] R. Warnicke, 'Diplomatic Rumor-Mongering: An Analysis of Mendoza's Report on Elizabeth I's Audience with Scottish Ambassadors in 1583', in R. Sturges (ed.), *Law and Sovereignty in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 115-31.

Mendoza was expelled from England in 1584 for his alleged role in the potentially regicidal Throckmorton Plot. Following this development, Mendoza was reassigned by Philip to serve as his ambassador to France.[69] Whilst Mendoza did try to continue to monitor English affairs from his new post, developing ties at the French court which granted him access to French intelligence about England, the escalation of the French Wars of Religion in 1588 deprived him of access to many of his best sources.[70] Consequently , throughout 1589, Philip kept pushing Mendoza for English news, but Mendoza was unable to meet his King's demands, much to Philip's frustration:

> I am glad to learn that you are arranging the new means of intelligence you mention to replace those that are failing you. More especially is this desirable in the case of England, about which we are so much in the dark, at the very juncture when it is necessary for us to know their inmost thoughts, let alone the ships they are arming in their ports, and the object for which they are intended. Now that so many Frenchmen are rallying to the Catholic cause, you could, perhaps, make use of some French agents in England. If so, this would be the best course — try it.[71]

Philip II, at war with England since 1585, needed English intelligence, but the usual apparatus for Spanish espionage was not an option until the Treaty of London was signed in 1604, ending the Anglo-Spanish War and restoring diplomatic ties. However, the numerous documents in the 'estado' collection at *El Archivo General de Simancas* marked 'avisos de Inglaterra' or 'avisos de Londres' from the 1590s and early 1600s reveal that Philip was still receiving English intelligence throughout this period. This thesis shows how an English Catholic spy network became Spain's principal source of English intelligence during these years, revealing new insights into Spanish espionage and the place of intelligence in Spanish policy-making during the Anglo-Spanish war.

Methodology and Sources

Historians are increasingly aware of how archives serve as sites of power and memory, and by extension, of oblivion. Alexandra Walsham explains how the work of Michel Foucault, Arlette

[69] On Mendoza in France, see D. Jenson, *Dogma and Diplomacy: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge, MA, 1964).
[70] Jenson, *Dogma and Diplomacy*, p. 161.
[71] Philip to Mendoza, Madrid, 17 March 1589, *CSP Simancas (1587-1603)*, p. 517.

Farge, Jacques Derrida, and others has 'fostered awareness of how the archive… operates as a distorting filter, lens and prism'.[72] In the early modern period, states and statesmen built archives to exert power and assist in governance. Moreover, archives were mechanisms related to the public sphere in which news, information, and intelligence were contained, and from which official histories were written.[73] This political motivation shaping their genesis meant that archives frequently present a path of least resistance to the historian, a path which encourages the historian to remain within close reach of the traditional, official version of the past. Far from being neutral spaces, archives are inherently biased, and the process of selection inevitably leads to the exclusion of documents generating 'gaps, omissions and silences in the record'.[74]

One solution to archives' inherent biases is to 'read against the grain'. Walsham observes that 'some of the richest and most imaginative medieval and early modern history, published in recent decades', has been produced using this method, citing as prime examples Carlo Ginzburg's excavation of the mental world of a Friulian miller, Menocchio, from the Inquisition's papers, and Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie's investigation of the Cathars living in the Pyrenean village of Montaillou using their enemies' papers.[75] Reading against the archival grain has been especially used by students of women, slaves, and other repressed groups to prise open administrative records 'to reveal the voices and actions of the lost peoples of Europe and the indigenous inhabitants of its empires'.[76] The lives of spies and intelligencers are often documented in material created by those chasing them. Similarly, their letters are frequently stored in the enemy's archive, whether the result of interception or a deliberate leak to the enemy as part of a disinformation campaign. Reading against the grain thus offers a methodology through which the 'authoritative other', as Nadine Akkerman puts it, can be traced and analysed.[77] Furthermore, the gaps and silences at one archive can be investigated using other archives, with its own formative biases and objectives, for a different perspective.

The Spanish Elizabethans and their spy network were never in a position of authority; nor did they create their own archives in the late sixteenth century.[78] They were neither Spanish

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[72] A. Walsham, 'The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present,* 230, Supplement 11 (2016), p. 11.
[73] See, for example, Iordanou, *Venice's Secret Service,* pp. 114-19.
[74] J. Daybell, 'Gender, Politics and the Archive', in J. Daybell and S. Norrhem (eds.), *Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400-1800* (London, 2017), pp. 25-45 at 27.
[75] Walsham, 'Social History of the Archive', p. 44.
[76] Walsham, 'Social History of the Archive', p. 44.
[77] N. Akkerman, *Invisible Agents: Women and Intelligence in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2018), p. 24.
[78] As Liesbeth Corens shows, English Catholics embarked on record-preservation projects in the late seventeenth century, shaping the collections which continue to dominate the study of English Catholicism. *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 164-90.

nor, from the Elizabethan regime's perspective, loyal Englishmen and women, and, consequently, they were an 'authoritative other' in the archives of both countries. Thus, this thesis reads sources 'against the grain' from the state archives of both countries, using one to shed light on the gaps in the other. For example, the *Archivo General de Simancas* has hundreds of intelligence reports supplied to the Spanish Crown by this English Catholic espionage network, but very little information about how this intelligence was actually gathered. For that information, it is necessary to consult English government documents, particularly those produced by the regime's various spies and spymasters trying to identify particularly dangerous English Catholics. Additionally, material held in Roman and Vatican archives is used to complement the Spanish and English material.

Another way through which this thesis seeks to rectify the archive's silence in certain areas is by using Social Network Analysis.[79] Social Network Analysis, as used in the field of sociology, explores the relationships between individuals within a group, and is seen by some sociologists as the response to the following question: 'How do we capture and analyse relational phenomena?'[80] By privileging what Barry Wellman calls 'linkages' over spatial or institutional definitions of a community, the concept of networks demands a more flexible approach to the study of relationships.[81] This is a useful abstract principle to think with, but network analysis also offers a concrete approach to the sources too. First, it offers the tools to visualise the pattern of relationships between individuals. These images can confirm hypotheses once left to intuition; they can yield results unachievable through source analysis alone; and they can highlight patterns, which can, in turn, generate new research questions.[82] Second, networks allow for what Martin Mueller terms 'scalable reading,' whereby social relations are considered at different levels — from the network as a whole, to clusters of small groups within it, through to the perspective of individuals — thus providing a framework for moving between the 'big picture' and the qualitative underlying evidence.[83] Third, network concepts, such as 'betweenness' and 'shortcuts', direct attention to the particular characteristics of communities,

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[79] For a general introduction to Social Network Analysis, see G. Caldarelli and M. Catanzaro, *Networks: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 1-6; A. Barabási, *Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means for Business, Science, and Everyday Life* (New York, 2014).

[80] N. Crossley, E. Bellotti, G. Edwards, M. Everett, J. Koskinen, and M. Tranmer, *Social Network Analysis for Ego-nets* (London, 2015), p. 3.

[81] B. Wellman, 'The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers,' *American Journal of Sociology* 84, no. 5 (1979): 1201-31, at 1203.

[82] D. Edelstein, P. Findlen, G. Ceserani, C. Winterer, and N. Coleman, 'Historical Research in a Digital Age: Reflections from the Mapping the Republic of Letters Project', *American Historical Review,* 122/2 (2017), pp. 400-22.

[83] Martin Mueller, http://scalablereading.northwestern.edu/ accessed 5.5.20

how they were sustained or why they fell apart.[84] Network analysis, therefore, offers new techniques for investigating communities long familiar to historians, and — by transcending spatial and institutional boundaries — it also opens up the discovery of new communities, or patterns of social relations, imperceptible through traditional methods.

A Social Network Analysis was conducted as part of the research for this thesis. Metadata was extracted from the English Catholic intelligence network's surviving letters and correspondence held at archives in England and mainland Europe in order to reconstruct the network's structure and identify key episodes in its history. However, whilst it was hoped that such an analysis would lead to new insights into the Spanish Elizabethans' intelligence apparatus, such results were not forthcoming. Instead, the analysis only served to confirm the conclusions set forth by Patrick Martin in *Elizabethan Espionage* and by Antony Petti in his introduction to the *Verstegan Papers.*[85] Given the confines of space and the limited contribution to historiography this analysis would serve, it has been decided not to include this Social Network Analysis in this thesis.

In addition to manuscript material drawn from archives in Spain, England, and, to a lesser degree, Rome, this thesis also uses contemporary printed materials. There has been, at times, a historiographical snobbery towards early modern printed sources. Historians such as Mark Kishlansky and J. H. Hexter insisted on the primacy of manuscript sources, arguing that only manuscripts gave access to information as to what 'really' happened, whereas printed sources grant access only to what contemporaries claimed to have happened.[86] But to make such distinctions between manuscript and print, between what happened and what was claimed to have happened, means to ignore the polemical struggle which existed in early modern Europe.

Peter Lake and Steven Pincus have argued that the late Elizabethan period saw the emergence of spaces 'in which appeals to a general audience were made through a variety of media, appealing to a notion of the public good'. These activities, justified by the message itself or the authority of the communicator, 'necessarily called into being an adjudicating public (or publics)'.[87] Catholics were active participants in this nascent sphere, regularly making appeals

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[84] See, for example, R. Ahnert and S. Ahnert, 'Protestant Letter Networks in the Reign of Mary I: A Quantitative Approach', *English Literary History*, 82/1 (2015), pp. 1-33.
[85] P. Martin, *Elizabethan Espionage: Plotters and Spies in the Struggle Between Catholicism and the Crown* (Jefferson, NC, 2016), esp. pp. 161-66, 197-98; *Letters of Verstegan*, esp. pp. xvi-xxvii.
[86] M. Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge, 1979), esp. pp. ix-x; J. Hexter, *On Historians: Reappraisals of Some of the Makers of Modern History* (Cambridge, MA, 1979), esp. pp. 227-51.
[87] P. Lake and S. Pincus, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies,* 45/2 (2006), p. 277.

to a general audience using printed texts.[88] Historians have long been aware that the Spanish Elizabethans conducted a concerted printed campaign to further their cause, particularly after 1593.[89] However, the overwhelming majority of this scholarship has only examined the English-language publications such as *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland*, thus suggesting that the Spanish Elizabethans were only engaged in the English public sphere.[90] However, public spheres existed across early modern Europe, and the Spanish Elizabethans were active participants in these public spheres, too.[91] Whereas manuscripts were produced for a narrow, private audience, printed texts were intended to be seen by as many people as possible. By engaging with the Spanish Elizabethans' printed sources, this thesis investigates how intelligence contributed to efforts to shape Spanish public opinion. Moreover, by examining these Spanish-language publications in tandem with manuscript sources, this thesis is able to show how there existed a coordinated and multifaceted campaign to convince Spain to provide greater aid for English Catholicism.

Chapter Summary

To reconstruct the role of intelligence in broader Spanish Elizabethan efforts to achieve their political and religious objectives, this thesis is structured chronologically. Chapter 1, 'Hugh Owen, a Welsh Catholic Intelligencer', examines Hugh Owen's early life and exile. Whilst Owen's role as an intelligencer has long been noted by historians — Antonia Fraser, for example, notes that his work made him the Elizabethan and Jacobean regimes' '*bête noire*' — scholarship about his life remains sparse, with what there is falling into two camps.[92] The first, predominantly written by Welsh historians during the interwar period, explores Owen's life

[88] Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*. See also, P. Lake, 'Publics and Participation: England, Britain and Europe in the "Post-Reformation",' *Journal of British Studies*, 56 (2017), pp. 836-54.
[89] For example, V. Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*.
[90] R. Doleman, *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland* (Antwerp, 1594 [*vere* 1595]). The appendix in Thomas Clancy's *Papist Pamphleteers* entitled 'Chronological list of political writings of the Allen-Persons party: 1572-1613' only includes English and Latin texts from this period. There are a couple of examples where it is recognised that these English- and Latin-language texts were translated into other languages — for example the *Philopater* is noted as having been translated into German and French — but there is no reference to books published originally in a language other than English or Latin. Similarly, Victor Houliston, *Catholic Resistance,* acknowledges the existence of books published in Spanish by Persons — for example, *Relacion de algunos martyrios* (Madrid, 1590) — but does not analyse these works.
[91] As J. Elliott has concluded, 'there can be no doubting at least the embryonic public opinion in the societies of early modern Europe', *History in the Making* (New Haven, CT, 2012), p. 160. F. Domínguez, '"We Must Fight with Paper and Pens": Spanish Elizabethan Polemics 1585-1598' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2012).
[92] A. Fraser, *The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605* (London, 1997), p. 190.

prior to his going into exile in 1571 and stresses his Welsh connections.[93] The second uses Spanish-language material to investigate his role in the post-Armada period. This second body of scholarship emphasises that Owen was an important intelligencer from 1590, but does not adequately explain how Owen came to be in this position. Loomie, for instance, in what remains the most detailed overview of Owen's career, skims over Owen's life to 1590 in just four pages.[94] But it was in these years that Owen developed the network upon which the entire Spanish Elizabethan intelligence operation was based. Chapter 1, therefore, investigates Owen's career prior to the Armada of 1588, tracing how he developed an extensive intelligence network in England during the 1570s and 1580s, and arguing that, because of his ability to provide accurate and up-to-date English intelligence, he rose to prominence both within the English Catholic exile population and at the Spanish courts in Brussels and Madrid.

Chapter 2, 'The Early 1590s: A Period of Consolidation', examines the years immediately following the Spanish Armada. Whilst the Spanish initially planned to send a second fleet as soon as possible, the death of Henri III of France had a profound impact on international politics. Faced with the possibility of Henri of Navarre, a Protestant, acceding to the French throne, Spanish military efforts were diverted away from England to support the Catholic League in France. Accepting this reality, the Spanish Elizabethans instead used this time to consolidate their ties to Spain and to lay the groundwork for a campaign to convince Spain to refocus its military attention back to England. The chapter analyses these efforts, arguing that Owen's intelligence gathering played a vital role in providing English information to Spain which was used to foster sympathy towards the English Catholic cause, and highlights that it was at this point that the Spanish Crown employed Owen to supply it with English intelligence. Moreover, intelligence was central in efforts to consolidate the Spanish Elizabethan position as the political position for English Catholicism. It was used, for example, to discredit the Spanish Elizabethans' opponents in the Low Countries, thereby diminishing their ability to provide meaningful opposition in Brussels to the Spanish Elizabethan campaign for the Infanta Isabella's candidacy. The chapter thus shows how intelligence was used in efforts to consolidate

[93] On Owen's pre-exile life, see A. Dodd, 'Hugh Owen: A Welsh Conspirator, 1538-1618', *History Today*, 12/5 (1962), pp. 329-31; T. Chotzen, 'Some Sidelights on Camaro-Dutch Relations, with Special Reference to Humphrey Lloyd and Abrahamus Ortelius', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmordorion*, 119 (1937), pp. 136-42. On works highlighting Owen's Welshness and Welsh ties in later years, see, for example, W. Llewelyn Williams, 'Welsh Catholics on the Continent', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmordorion*, (1901-02), pp. 97-124; A. Dodd, 'Two Welsh *Emigrés* Discuss the Accession of James I', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 8/4 (1937), pp. 344-58; A. Dodd, 'Wales and the Scottish Succession, 1570-1605', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmordorion*, 119, (1937), pp. 201-25; A. Dodd, 'Correspondence of the Owens of Plas Du', *Transactions of the Caenarfonshire Historical Society*, 1 (1939), pp. 47-54.
[94] *SE*, pp. 52-56.

the Spanish Elizabethans' position as leaders of the exile community and to lay the groundwork for their future campaigning.

Chapter 3, 'An Opportunity', shows that, following the conversion of Henri IV of France to Catholicism in June 1593, the Spanish Elizabethans sensed an opportunity to push for a pivot in Spanish foreign policy so that the focus was, once more, on England. As many historians have noted, after Henri's conversion, there was a shift in the content of the Spanish Elizabethans' publications. Whereas, in the aftermath of the Armada, they had had to retreat from pushing the Habsburg claim, and had avoided specifics concerning the succession, after 1593 their publications actively engaged with the issue.[95] The overwhelming majority of scholarship in this area has only examined the Spanish Elizabethans' English-language publications aimed at uniting the English Catholic population behind the candidacy of the Infanta Isabella, the Spanish candidate to the English throne. However, only engaging with English-language sources implies that it was only English-speakers that had to be convinced and that the Spanish Elizabethans took it for granted that, with the war in France faltering, the Spanish would abandon that campaign and switch focus towards England. This implication, though, is far from the reality. Chapter 3 shows how the Spanish Elizabethans also conducted a printed campaign aimed at convincing a Spanish audience of the merits of a Spanish candidate on the English throne, and argues that this campaign was complemented by intelligence efforts aimed to ensure that Spain renewed its war against England. These intelligence efforts included, most prominently, an intelligence report written in the hand of Joseph Creswell and given to Philip II and Archduke Ernest, the governor of the Spanish Netherlands, around August 1594. This chapter argues that through this intelligence report, which portrayed the Elizabethan regime as untrustworthy and determined to disrupt Spanish rule in the Netherlands through whatever means necessary, the Spanish Elizabethans disrupted an Elizabethan attempt in 1593-94 to explore the possibility of an Anglo-Spanish peace. It thus complemented efforts to secure a renewal of the Spanish military effort against England. The chapter finishes with an analysis of the armada campaigns of 1596 and 1597, drawing on the intelligence reports submitted by Owen to Spain to provide new insights into this period, revealing how these intelligence reports had a tangible impact on the construction of Spain's military strategy.

The fourth and final chapter, 'The Spanish Elizabethans, the European Powers, and the Succession, 1597-1604', examines Spanish Elizabethan attempts to build a coalition of support

[95] See, for example, Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*, pp. 47-92; Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', pp. 216-95

for a Catholic candidate in the lead up to the succession. This chapter is, by far, the longest in the thesis, but such length is necessary to depict the complexities of European politics surrounding the succession accurately. The chapter reveals how intelligence was used to reinforce publications, petitions, lobbying, and other activities aimed at convincing the Catholic powers that the only realistic future Catholicism had in England was if a Catholic candidate succeeded Elizabeth. Moreover, it shows how intelligence was essential in attempts to disrupt the coalition-building of James VI during episodes such as the Archpriest Controversy. Ultimately, however, these efforts floundered against the disparate geopolitical interests of the various European courts which prevented a Catholic candidate from being identified in time to prevent James' accession. The chapter finishes by examining the period immediately following the succession. It shows that the Spanish Elizabethans adjusted their expectations to reflect the new political landscape. Recognising that the Anglo-Spanish war would soon end, they pressed for Spain to secure religious concessions in any peace treaty, using intelligence to do so. However, once more, geopolitical interests triumphed over religious concerns, and the Anglo-Spanish war concluded with the Treaty of London which offered nothing to England's Catholics.

By examining how the Spanish Elizabethans developed an extensive and sophisticated espionage apparatus to obtain intelligence from England, and exploring how this intelligence was used and the impact that it had on political and military discussions in Madrid, Brussels, and Rome, this thesis highlights the variety and vitality of Reformation politics at the end of the sixteenth century, a moment ordinarily depicted as being of significant Catholic power in Europe.[96] Protestant hopes for the success of the reformist project – which had been extremely high in the mid-sixteenth century – had been dashed by the resurgent Catholicism following the Council of Trent and by the strength of the Catholic powers. Protestantism's retreat was epitomised by the 'loss' of France in 1594 when Henri IV converted to Catholicism in order to secure his position on the French throne. But despite this perceived power, a study of the Spanish Elizabethans reveals that Europe's Catholics were too fragmented to mount a coordinated and effective campaign to prevent a protestant from the Kingdom of Scotland – a negligible power on the European stage – from acceding to the English throne; Catholicism was fundamentally weakened by its divisions, and this prevented it from taking full advantage of its political and military strength to defeat Protestantism.

[96] On the powerful position of Catholicism at the end of the sixteenth century, see, for example, M. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*, (London, 1999), pp. 142-74; D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London, 2003), pp. 317-484; P. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), pp. 49-75, 116-67.

The Spanish Elizabethans were a vociferous minority of Elizabethan Catholics who used every means at their disposal in their attempt to realise their political and religious ambitions. As this thesis will demonstrate, the Spanish Elizabethans had a tangible impact on late-sixteenth-century European politics, and intelligence was a central means through which this was achieved.

1. Hugh Owen, a Welsh Catholic Intelligencer

Introduction

On the wall of the church which was once attached to the English College at Rome, there was a monumental inscription dedicated to Hugh Owen erected by his nephew and heir, Charles Guiney, which gave an overview of Owen's life:

> To the noble Hugh Owen of Carnarvon in Wales, who, whilst still young, fleeing his heretic-infested country, lived for fifty years in France, Spain, Belgium and Italy, growing old in exile; whose works and advice Philip King of Spain, Albert of Austria and Burgundy, and Alexander, Duke of Parma used in the most serious of matters. He promoted and supported the Catholic faith against the Sectarians to the best of his ability, that, aggravated by his zeal, the heretics, stirred up by his passionate enthusiasm, did not stop fashioning fresh torments for him every day.[1]

But who was Hugh Owen, and what had he actually done which was so noteworthy? Owen's life before exile and his early exile are hard to trace. Albert Loomie, for example, in the most extensive study of Owen's life to date, scarcely mentions these stages of Owen's life, noting only the fact that, 'around 1580', Owen secured 'Parma's full confidence', 'organis[ing] a correspondents' network [which] extend[ed] gradually into England and ha[d] many links with the Low Countries and France'.[2] This cursory glance does not do justice to these stages of Owen's life. It was in these years that Owen became part of the Spanish Elizabethan faction of English Catholics, forming relationships with many of those with whom he acted in the 1590s and 1600s, for instance with Robert Persons, Sir William Stanley, Sir Francis Englefield, and many more. It was in these years that he built the intelligence network which made him invaluable to the Spanish Crown in the 1590s; he became an important military advisor to the Duke of Parma, apprising him of English affairs and even assisting in the planning of the Armada. Understanding this period of Owen's life provides insight into why Owen was trusted by the Spanish Crown and by leading Spanish Elizabethans to supply English intelligence to them in the 1590s and 1600s.

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[1] 'Monumental Inscriptions at Rome', *Archaeologia Cambrensis,* New Series XIV (1853), pp. 130-31.

[2] *SE*, p. 54.

This chapter considers Owen's activities in the years prior to the Armada of 1588, exploring how he rose to become Spain's leading supplier of English intelligence, and looking at how he rose to become one of the leading Spanish Elizabethans. It first investigates Owen's life in Wales and England before he went into exile, highlighting his Catholic roots and his involvement in the Ridolfi Plot, a Catholic conspiracy to depose Elizabeth. It then examines Owen in the 1570s, showing how he became known as someone able to smuggle correspondence in and out of England undetected. This ability allowed him to integrate swiftly into the exile population, and made him a valuable asset to Englefield and Don Juan, Spanish governor of the Netherlands from 1577 to 1578. Moreover, the chapter reconstructs the routes through which Owen communicated with England, revealing that, by 1580, Owen coordinated a well-developed and extensive correspondence network. Next, the chapter looks at Owen's activities in the 1580s, emphasising his close relationship with Parma, and arguing that this connection led to Owen's involvement in schemes to liberate Mary, Queen of Scots from captivity in England, and the planning of the Spanish Armada. The surviving material relating to Owen in this period is, at times, sparse. Nevertheless, enough remains to build a relatively clear picture of his activities from which it becomes evident that Owen was an important and



Figure 1.1: Plas Du today as viewed from the south east; a Grade II listed building with nineteenth-century extensions and alterations to the north and west sides of the original sub-medieval gentry house.
https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/300004361 accessed 14.7.20

influential figure in the construction of Spanish policy towards England throughout the 1580s, and that this stemmed from the correspondence network he had constructed in the first years of his exile.

Life before Exile

Owen was born into a gentry family at Plas Du on the Llŷn Peninsula in Caernarfonshire, northwest Wales, in 1538. His parents were Owen ap Gruffyd and Margaret, daughter of Ffoulk Salisbury, another local gentry family. Owen ap Gruffyd had royal ancestry: through the paternal line, he could trace his family back to Collwyn ap Tango, a Welsh prince who ruled eleventh-century northwest Wales. Owen ap Gruffyd had taken advantage of the stability the Tudors had brought to advance the family position, building the family home at Plas Du in the Snowdonia sub-medieval architectural style (figure 1.1), establishing 'Owen' as the family surname, and positioning the family as leaders in the local community.[3]

Hugh Owen was the second son of at least eight children (figure 1.2). The family appears to have conformed to the Protestant Church of England, although, in this remote corner of Wales, with its conservative parish clergy and mountainous landscapes, it was difficult for the government and church hierarchy to impose religious change, and, to all intents and purposes, conformity may have appeared rather similar to traditional forms of worship. Traditional religion certainly survived deep into Elizabeth's reign in northwest Wales. In 1567, the local bishop, Nicholas Robinson, reported to William Cecil: 'I have found since I came into this cuntrey Images and aulters standing in churches undefaced, Lewd and indecent vigils and watches observed, much pilgrameage goyng, many candles sett up to the honour of sainctes, some reliquies yet caried about, and all the Cuntreis full of bedes and knottes'.[4] Three years later, he described how he had observed Catholic practices at a funeral in Beaumaris, Anglesey.[5] Robinson worked hard to convert his diocese — at the funeral, for example, he put those who had sung psalmes over the body 'to open penaunce' — but he faced an uphill struggle. The local population, he wrote, were guilty of 'closing up of gods words from them in an unknowen tounge'. Meanwhile, the local clergy were of little help: 'for the most part of the priestes are to olde (they saye) now to be put to schole' and there were 'not six that can preach

[3] For a discussion of the architectural changes occurring in this period in northern Wales, see M. Dunn and R. Suggett, *Darganfod Tai Hanesyddol Eryri / Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia* (Aberystwyth, 2015), pp. 121-82.
[4] Nicholas Robinson to William Cecil, Bangor, 7 October 1567, SP 12/44/27.
[5] Nicholas Robinson to the Council, Bangor, 24 May 1570, SP 12/69/14.

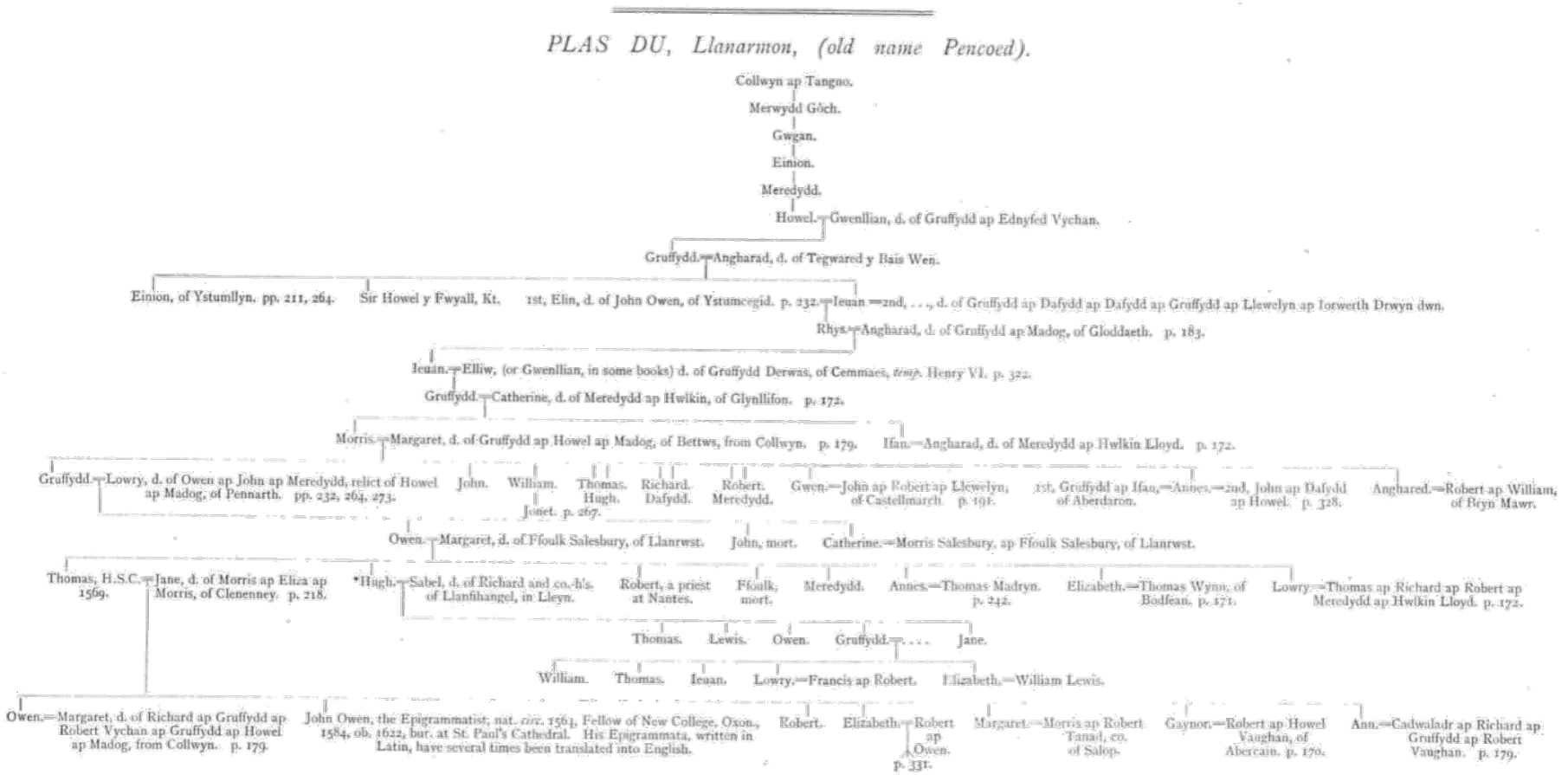


Figure 1.2: Owen family tree, from J. Griffith, Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families *(Horncastle, 1914), p. 205.*

in these three shyeres'.[11] Catholicism's influence can be seen in Plas Du more specifically. Two of Hugh's brothers — Robert and John — would become Catholic priests, and the eldest sibling, Thomas, was reported in the 1570s to have hosted many Catholic priests 'who haunted from beyond the seas'.[12] Whilst few details survive about Hugh Owen's childhood, it is probable that he was deeply influenced by Catholicism as he grew up.

Owen moved to London in 1556 at the age of eighteen to study at Lincoln's Inn.[13] Afterwards, he entered the service of Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel and Lord of Oswestry, becoming his secretary.[14] He was joined in Arundel's service by his younger brother, Robert. With his high standing at court and hereditary influence in the Welsh Marches, working for Arundel must have seemed a sure path to advancement for two ambitious young Welshmen. The Owen brothers were favoured by Arundel: in 1560, Robert was presented to the living of West Felton, near Oswestry, presumably through Arundel's influence, and, in 1566, both, along with Arundel's doctor, Humphrey Llwyd, accompanied Arundel on a trip around mainland Europe in which they visited Antwerp, the Rhineland, and Padua's baths. Whilst in Antwerp they became acquainted with Abraham Ortelius, a Brabantian cartographer who was preparing his atlas of the world. After they returned to England, they prepared a map of Wales for Ortelius (figure 1.3).[15] When the map was published in 1572 as part of Ortelius' world atlas, credit was given to Llwyd, but the exaggerated size of the Llŷn peninsula may well be a direct consequence of the Owens' influence in the mapmaking process. Without question both Owens were involved in communicating Llwyd's work to Ortelius — Hugh from London, Robert from Douai where he moved in 1569.[16] The whole episode certainly suggests that Hugh Owen was exposed to the latest cartographical techniques via one of Europe's most advanced luminaries.

Even as he was sending geographical information to Ortelius, Owen was being drawn into Arundel's intrigues to advance the Catholic cause. Arundel had been under pressure from

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[11] 'Interrogatories ministered on behalf of Richard Vaughan to witnesses against Thomas Owen', Star Chamber Proceedings, Elizabeth, O 7/22, transcribed in E. Jones, 'The Lleyn Recusancy Case, 1578-81', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1936), p. 120; M. Cleary, 'The Catholic Resistance in Wales, 1568-1678', *Blackfriars* (1956), pp. 112-13.

[12] 'Interrogatories ministered on behalf of Vaughan', Star Chamber Proceedings, Elizabeth, O 7/22, in Jones, 'LLeyn Recusancy Case', p. 120.

[13] W. Baildon (ed.), *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn… Admissions from A.D. 1420 to [A.D. 1893, and Chapel Registers]* (London, 1896), p. 62.

[14] On Arundel, see J. Lock, 'Fitzalan, Henry, Twelfth Earl of Arundel', *ODNB*.

[15] Chotzen, 'Some Sidelights on Cambro-Dutch Relations', pp. 136-42.

[16] For example, 'Robertus Owenus to Abrahamus Ortelius, Douai, 2 November 1570' and 'Hugo Owen to Abraham Hortelius, London, 2 January [1571]', in J. Hessels (ed.), *Abrahami Ortelii (geographi Antwerpiensis) et virorum eruditorum ad eundem et ad Jacobum Colium Ortelianum (Abrahami Ortelii sororis filium) epistulae… (1524-1628)* (Cambridge, 1887), pp. 71-72, 77-78.



Figure 1.3: Humphrey Llwyd's Map of Wales, http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4786126 accessed 14.7.20

Catholics to vote against the Elizabethan religious settlement in 1559, something which he had abstained from doing, hoping not to harm his position at court. By the late 1560s, however, Arundel's star at court was waning, falling so far that he was forced to resign the staff of Lord Steward.[12] Julian Lock suggests that Arundel went on his European tour because he was out of favour and influence, and that when he returned to England, he 'received the sop of reappointment to the joint lord lieutenancy of Sussex and Surrey'.[13] Arundel looked for alternative means to reassert himself as a leading English political figure; Mary Stuart's flight from Scotland into England on 16 May 1568 offered such an opportunity.

During the diplomatic crisis with Spain prompted by the Elizabethan regime's decision at the start of 1569 to seize Spanish treasure ships as they sheltered from a storm in English harbours, a group of leading noblemen gathered at Arundel's house at Nonsuch and condemned the regime's actions.[14] Arundel, with his two sons-in-law, the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Lumley, sent a message to the Spanish ambassador to England, Guerau de Espés del Valle, stating that they intended to overthrow Cecil and force Elizabeth to restore close links with Spain and Rome. The message was conveyed by Roberto Ridolfi, a Florentine banker who had delusions of being a great political negotiator and who also brought a cypher to Espés to use in his communication with the English nobles. Whilst the Ridolfi Plot has been studied by multiple historians, little attention has been given to Owen's part in it, reflecting the fact that his life, and in particular his pre-exile life, has been overlooked by scholars.[15] The full extent of Owen's involvement in the plot emerged when the regime arrested Mary's representative in London, John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, in autumn 1571. Leslie had been involved in the plot from the start, and the regime had been monitoring his activities and communications since at least April 1570, when they had arrested his servant, Charles Bailly, at Dover as he carried illegal books and cyphered letters for Leslie.[16] During his interrogation in October 1571, Leslie confessed that he had first become acquainted with Owen when he had visited 'Arondell-Hows' in 1569, and, during this visit, Owen had 'offered him all his Service'. Soon after, during the

[12] J. Nichols, 'Life of the last Fitz-Alan, earl of Arundel', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1st series, 103/2 (1833), p. 210.

[13] Lock, 'Fitzalan, Henry'.

[14] Bertrand de Slaignac to Charles IX, London, 17 January 1569, in A. Teulet (ed.), *Correspondance diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon* (Paris and London, 1838), I, p. 115. On the seizure of the Spanish payships, see C. Read, 'Queen Elizabeth's Seizure of the Duke of Alva's Pay-Ships', *Journal of Modern History*, 5/4 (1933), pp. 443-64.

[15] On the Ridolfi Plot, see F. Edwards, *The Marvellous Chance: Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk, and the Ridolphi Plot, 1570-1572* (London, 1968); G. Parker, 'The Place of Tudor England in the Messianic Vision of Philip II of Spain: The Prothero Lecture', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), pp. 167-221.

[16] S. Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven, CT., 2008), pp. 169-72.

winter of 1569-70, Owen had visited Leslie and 'acid [asked] if there could be no Way found to get the Scots Quene away', and they had discussed ways of achieving this. Indeed, on one visit, Owen 'brought a great Map of Ingland with him' to facilitate discussion of the escape route. On several occasions, Owen brought with him other conspirators such as Edmund Powell and 'Row'.[17] Albert Loomie dismisses this account by Leslie as a 'hearsay report from the suspect Bishop', and argues that Owen had no involvement in the plot, but Francis Edwards, in the most extensive study of the Ridolfi Plot, does not share the same doubts about Leslie's testimony. Indeed, from his analysis of Leslie's interrogations, he concludes that Leslie was probably telling the truth, at least as far as he knew it.[18] Moreover, many aspects of the Bishop's confession relating to Owen are corroborated elsewhere in other interviews, further suggesting Owen's involvement. The Duke of Norfolk admitted that Owen had approached him with plans for the plot; Norfolk's servant, Lawrence Banister, admitted that Owen was one of those chosen to aid Mary's escape, a claim which another servant, William Barker, verified.[19]

It has been argued that Owen was forced to flee abroad in 1571 'owing to Arundel's involvement in the Ridolfi plot', but Owen was, in fact, actively involved in the conspiracy.[20] When, in September 1571, the government moved against the conspiracy, Owen realised the position he was in and chose to flee before he could be arrested.[21] Norfolk, in his interrogation on 13 October, admitted awareness that Owen had decided the previous month, following the arrest of other plotters, to 'make the more Hast to get away into Wales, till he might get him beyond the Seas'.[22] Owen headed west, heading to the family home of Plas Du.[23] Whilst there, Owen 'sound[ed] all the havens and landing places in Lleyn', drawing a map which he would take abroad with him.[24] The main source recording Owen's time in Plas Du is a Star Chamber case from 1578 against his brother Thomas, although some of the accusations are echoed in a

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[17] Edmund Powell's interrogation supports Leslie's claim that Owen introduced Powell and the Bishop. 'Examination of Edmund Powell', 19 October 1571, CP 6/77. See also, 'Interrogatories and examinations of Edmund Powell, 3 December 1571, CP 158/137.

[18] *SE*, p. 54 n.4; Edwards, *Marvellous Chance,* pp. 85-153, esp. 144.

[19] 'The Duke of Norfolk's Answers', 13 October 1571,'; 'The Examination of Lawrence Banister', 13 October 1571; 'William Barker's Answer to Articles', 14 October 1571, in W. Murdin (ed.), *A Collection of State Papers, Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth from 1571-1596* (London, 1759), pp. 159-62, 141, 118-20.

[20] A. Orofino, '"Coelum non Animus mutant qui trans mare currunt": David Stradling and his Circle of Welsh Catholic Exiles in Continental Europe', *Recusant History,* 32/2 (2014), p. 151; *SE*, p. 54.

[21] Bishop Nicholas Robinson and Dr Elis Price wrote that 'Upon suspicion of treason [Hugh Owen] fled this realm' in a letter to the Council, Pwllely, 24 March 1578, SP 12/123/11.

[22] 'The Duke of Norfolk's Answers', in Murdin (ed.), *Collection of State Papers*, p. 161.

[23] 'Interrogatories for the Examination of the Vicar of Oswestry', 17 October 1575, SP 12/105/56.

[24] 'Star Chamber Proceedings, Elizabeth O 7/22, Interrogatories administered by Richard Vaughan to witnesses against Thomas Owen', transcribed in Jones, 'Lleyn Recusancy Case', p. 122.

separate report by Bishop Robinson and Dr Price to the Council the same year.[25] Nevertheless, fleeing to Llŷn seems a logical choice for him to have made. As has been noted, the Llŷn peninsula was a very Catholic region of Wales, far from prying government and diocesan eyes, and he would have found shelter with his family. Additionally, the claim that he had made a map of the area does not seem far-fetched. His previous work assisting Humphrey Llwyd on the map of Wales for Ortelius would have given him many of the necessary skills for such a task. Moreover, Owen might have thought that northwest Wales, with its strong Catholic traditions and mountainous geography would have made a good landing site for an invasion, but also that for such an invasion to be effective, accurate maps with details of the depths of the various inlets and ports in the area, would have been essential.[26] Whilst it is impossible to know for certain how Owen spent his last months in Elizabethan England and Wales, the supposition that he spent it surveying Llŷn seems plausible.

Having spent time in Llŷn, Owen headed to Oswestry, Shropshire, a strong Catholic area where Arundel held great influence, and close to West Felton where his brother, Robert, possessed a living. Robert was not resident in this village — he had left England in 1569 to enter the newly-founded English seminary at Douai — but Owen was sheltered by the local vicar, who 'conveyed him by [… Richard] Kynneston to the sea syde'.[27] At the coast, Owen benefited again from Arundel's influence. John Lee, an Antwerp-based English spy, reported that 'the searcher, being their [Arundel and other Catholics'] friend, suffers them to pass and repass at pleasure. Owen passed by his sufferance', heading to Flanders.[28]

It is unclear exactly when in Autumn 1571 Owen left for Flanders never to return to his native country, but he did not give up on the dream of re-establishing the Catholic Church in Wales and England. Once in exile he swiftly entered into the confidence of the leading exiles, developed methods of covert communication with England, and was steadily drawn into the murky world of espionage. Already a veteran of one regicidal conspiracy, Owen would continue to involve himself in plots and intrigues to support the Catholic cause.

[25] Bishop Robinson and Dr Elis Price to the Council, Pwllely, 24 March 1578 [OS], SP 12/123/11.

[26] Certainly, other sixteenth-century Catholics plotting invasions of England came to this conclusion. For example, see J. Cleary, 'Dr Morys Clynnog's Invasion Projects of 1575-1576', *Recusant History*, 6 (1966), pp. 300-22.

[27] 'Information as to words spoken by Richard Morrice', 17 October 1575, SP 12/105/54.

[28] John Lee to Burghley, Antwerp, 15 January 1572, SP 15/21/4.

Early Exile in the 1570s

After his arrival in the Spanish Netherlands in late 1571, Owen swiftly integrated into the English Catholic exile population there, carving a niche for himself as a trustworthy courier and messenger, able to assist Catholics by smuggling correspondence into and out of England. This service rapidly became much more, morphing into an intelligence operation keeping Owen, and, in turn, other exiles and the Spanish authorities, abreast of the latest political and religious developments in England. Loomie recognises Owen's work building a correspondents' network in these years and suggests that this network led to his 'securing Parma's full confidence' around 1580. In this conclusion, Loomie is correct, but he offers no insight into what exactly Owen did in the 1570s to merit Parma's confidence.[29] The following section, therefore, recounts Owen's first years in exile, charting how he rose from a relative nobody on his arrival to a key advisor to Parma on English matters by 1580, and revealing details of the structure of Owen's early network previously overlooked by historians.

When Owen arrived in the Spanish Netherlands in autumn 1571, there was already a sizeable English and Welsh Catholic exile population, the consequence of over ten years of Elizabethan, Protestant rule, and Owen quickly secured their trust.[30] In January 1572, John Lee, an Antwerp-based informant for Elizabeth's principal secretary, Sir William Cecil (soon to become Baron Burghley), reported that Owen was 'very intimate with Lady Northumberland and the rest'.[31] Moreover, towards the end of 1572, he was entrusted with letters from exiles in Flanders to Spain. An English spy in Madrid wrote to the Elizabethan regime that Owen 'browhtt letters to [Elizabeth Dormer] the duchess of Ferya' (an Englishwoman married to the former Spanish ambassador to England), Sir Thomas Stukeley, and others.[32] The fact that Owen acted as courier reflects a confidence that he would not betray the correspondents by handing over the letters to the Elizabethan regime.

Whilst in Madrid, Owen visited the Spanish court, seeking a pension. These pensions were highly sought after by exiles, who having fled their homes, trades and estates, lacked their own sources of income. Owen arrived in Madrid on 26 November 1572, and, on 1 January he

[29] *SE*, p. 54.

[30] On the exile population in the Netherlands, see R. Lechat, *Les réfugiés anglais dans les Pays-Bas espagnols durant le régne d'Élisabeth 1558-1603* (Louvain, 1914).

[31] John Lee to Burghley, 15 January 1572, in *CSPDom. Add. (1566-1579),* p. 378.

[32] 'Occurrents out of Spain', 5 January 1573, SP 70/122/10; 'Note addressed to Sec. Walsingham', [August] 1574, SP 15/23/61.

was awarded a lump sum of 150 escudos with a monthly pension of twenty escudos to follow.[33] Owen returned to the Netherlands after his successful mission.

It was one thing to secure the promise of a Spanish pension, but it was quite another to receive it. Few pensioners received the promised sums promptly, and many pensioners struggled financially just as much as their non-pensioned counterparts.[34] Owen faced the same challenges. When he returned to the Netherlands, he approached Sir Francis Englefield, hoping for help in securing payment. Englefield was one of the leaders of the English exile community, who, having been a privy councillor under Queen Mary, had left England in spring 1559. In 1568, he had been awarded a pension of 1,000 florins a year by Philip II and made an advisor on English affairs to the Duke of Alba, the governor of the Low Countries.[35] His position close to Alba gave him the influence to assist exiles seeking their pensions, and he successfully intervened on Owen's behalf.[36] On 30 September, Alba signed the necessary order, and, on 19 February 1574, Owen received his first payment.[37] Having been in exile for just over two years, Owen was beginning to establish himself: he had successfully integrated into the exile population, gaining the trust and support of its leaders; he was beginning to work as a courier; and now he had a pension with which to support himself.

Meanwhile, the Spanish position in the Netherlands had deteriorated. Philip, overextended by the Ottoman resurgence in the Mediterranean and the Morisco Revolt in Granada, was unable to commit additional soldiers to northern Europe to counter the Dutch revolt, ongoing since 1566. The rebels exploited this weakness. On 1 April, the Sea-Beggars seized the city of Brielle, using it as a base to take other towns. Their success encouraged others to join the rebellion. In November 1573, Alba was replaced by Don Luis de Requesens, who advocated a policy of reconciliation, issuing a general pardon to the rebels on 5 June 1574. He also looked to improve relations with England, engaging in negotiations with the Elizabeth regime in 1574-75.[38]

During these negotiations both countries sought the extradition of their countrymen who had fled abroad. On 3 January 1575, England sent a list of thirty names they wished to be

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[33] 'Note addressed to Sec. Walsingham', [August] 1574, SP 15/23/61.

[34] Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles,* pp. 63-64.

[35] Philip II to Duke of Alba, Madrid, 1 September 1568, in *CODOIN*, XXXVII, p. 495.

[36] Sir Francis Englefield to Hugh Owen, Mechelen, 3 May 1573, SP 70/127 f. 80r. On Englefield, see *SE*, pp. 14-51.

[37] Lechat, *Les Réfugiés Anglais,* p. 62.

[38] Leopold Willaert explores these negotiations in his 'Negociations politico-religieuses entre l'Angleterre et les Pays-Bas catholiques (1598-1625),' *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique,* 6 (1905), pp. 47-54, 566-81 and 911-26; 7 (1906), pp. 585-607; 8 (1907), pp. 81-101, 305-11 and 514-32l; 9 (1908), pp. 52-61 and 736-45.

returned. This list featured many of the noble leaders of the Catholic exiles, including those who had led the Northern Rising in 1569.[39] Also on this list were the names of five exiles — Sir Francis Englefield, Hugh Owen, Ralph Liggons, Thomas Stuckley, and Francis Peyton — who were accused of, 'through letters and messages[,] trying to incite rebellion each day in this our kingdom'.[40] The Elizabethan regime's refusal to remove Flemish and Walloon Protestants from England stalled negotiations, but English Catholics were expelled from the Low Countries (although not sent back to England). The fact that the regime identified Owen and his communications with England as particularly noteworthy suggests that, by this point, Owen was in regular correspondence with Catholics in Elizabethan territories.

Despite their expulsion, the arrival in Flanders of Don Juan, Philip II's brother, gave English exiles cause for cautious optimism. Philip had been considering sending Don Juan since late 1575, but Requesens' death in March 1576 made Don Juan's leadership essential. A proven military leader, he had successfully commanded the Holy League's forces at the Battle of Lepanto. Don Juan, however, was reluctant to go, so Philip made him a proposition: if he ended the Dutch Revolt, Philip would do everything he could to place him on the English throne. It was an irresistible offer; Philip was offering him the thing he earnestly desired: his own kingdom. After months of negotiations with Philip, during which he secured the promise that the troops in the Netherlands could be used in any venture against England, Don Juan finally headed to the Netherlands, arriving in November 1576.[41]

English Catholics had an ally in Don Juan. It was clear that his aspiration was the English throne, and that he was prepared to commit resources to that end. Buoyed by his arrival, English exiles returned to the Netherlands. According to the English ambassador there, Thomas Wilson, they 'swarme[d] about don John', plotting and scheming as they attempted to secure the Spanish assault on England.[42] Owen was amongst those who 'intrigues a lot around Don Juan', engaging with Englefield in 'secret service' with Englefield for the Spanish.[43] Alarmed at their activities, Wilson closely monitored the exiles, reporting their locations and actions regularly back to Walsingham. On 14 January 1577, he wrote to Walsingham that Englefield and Owen had visited Don Juan, and that he had sent spies to establish what they

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[39] On the Northern Rising, see Kesselring, *Northern Rising of 1569: Faith, Politics, and Protest in Elizabethan England* (Basingstoke, 2007).

[40] 'Lettre de la reine d'Angleterre au grand commandeur de Castille, écrite de sa maison de Hamptoncourt, le 3 janvier 1574 (1575, n. St.)', in L. Gachard (ed.), *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des pays-bas* (Brussels, 1858), III, p. 232.

[41] 'Lettre de la reine d'Angleterre', in Gachard, *Correspondance de Philippe*, pp. 231-36.

[42] Wilson to Walsingham, Brussels, 19 February 1577, SP 70/143, f. 136r.

[43] Lechat, *Réfugiés Anglais,* 143.

were up to.[44] Later that year, the English ambassador to France observed that there was a great gathering of English Catholics, including Englefield and Owen, at the Spanish camp at Namurs, near the frontline of the fighting.[45] Wilson frequently complained to the Council of State in the Netherlands about the exiles' activities, but to little effect. Whilst his complaints might be received by seemingly sympathetic ears, no action was taken. Indeed, Wilson lamented to Burghley that Don Juan's 'deeds [are] contrary to his words' for he was having secret conferences 'especiallie with Stwekeley, Sir Francisce Englefylde … and others' to discuss English matters.[46] There was little Wilson could do to stop the exiles interacting with Don Juan; his only option was to use his spies and informers to monitor them so he might learn their intentions. Although these were generally only able to report glimpses of their targets and offered few details of their activities, they do suggest Owen's active involvement in some broader scheme.

From wider evidence it is possible to infer that Owen's contribution to this scheming came from his abilities as an intelligencer. Since his arrival in the Netherlands in 1572, Owen had been in regular correspondence with various figures who remained in England, developing multiple means of communication over these years, which had led to the Elizabethan regime's attempt to have him extradited back to England. A great number of individuals kept him informed of the latest developments in Elizabeth's realm. The information would have been invaluable to Don Juan, Sir Francis Englefield, and others planning an invasion of England. The fragmentary surviving evidence of Owen's intelligence network in the 1570s indicates a sophisticated system was emerging.

Owen's communication with England began almost as soon as he arrived in Flanders in autumn 1571. Early in 1572, one of the Elizabethan regimes' informers, John Lee, noticed Owen's activities, and sent details to Lord Burghley, commenting that 'Owen… has sent his man over with letters, and the searcher, being their friend, suffers them to pass and repass at pleasure', adding that it had been via this route that Owen had left England. He also noted that this same route was used to smuggle 'goods value 500l. or 600l. for Sir Fra[nci]s. Englefield', which implies that this was a common route for Catholics moving both into and out of England.[47] A different government informer warned the regime in January 1573 to 'be ware of men yn women's clothes', and suggested that this was a method employed by Owen to move

[44] Wilson to Burghley, Brussels, 14 January 1577, SP 70/142, f. 43r.
[45] Poulet to Walsingham, Paris, 19 November 1577, SP 78/1, f. 51r.
[46] Wilson to Burghley, Brussels, 10 March 1577, SP 70/144, f. 44r.
[47] John Lee to Burghley, 15 January 1572, *CSPDom. Add. (1566-1579)*, p. 378.

people undetected by the regime.[48] The fact that the informer thought Owen's activities worth sharing with the regime hints that Owen was already sending and receiving a great deal of correspondence.

Additional evidence that Owen was actively communicating with England was presented to the Elizabethan regime later in 1573 when Richard Morrice, a resident of Oswestry, admitted knowledge of Owen's letters to the Earl of Arundel and others.[49] In an interview, Morrice stated that Owen sent his servant 'Parry' to England with letters. Parry's job was immensely dangerous, and he took precautions, hiding letters 'in the solles of his shewes' or 'in a Ryddinge Rodd'.[50] Once, fearing that he was about to be arrested, Parry even resorted to eating the letter he carried, whilst, on another occasion, he was able to escape capture by hiding in Arundel House where the Earl of Arundel was able to 'kepe him tyll all [was] Styll'.[51] Morrice only identified Arundel and his son-in-law Lord Lumley as regular recipients of Owen's messages in London, but, curiously, he did claim that Hugh Owen himself visited Arundel and Lumley 'att Chrystmas last [i.e. 1574]' and had brought a letter from the exiled Earl of Westmorland to his wife who remained in England. This is the only extant source which suggests that Owen returned to England at any point after his departure in 1571, and the lack of corroborating evidence or evidence of similar trips means that the claim needs to be treated cautiously.

Morrice also confessed that Owen communicated regularly with various figures in Oswestry including the local vicar, who wrote to Owen about 'all secret matters'. If Morrice's statement was true, it would suggest that Owen was using a route via Oswestry to correspond with those in England. It certainly seems probable that he would have used this route if it were safe. He had fled England in this way, staying with the vicar in Oswestry, and, if John Lee is also to be believed, he was acquainted with the local searcher. Morrice's confession prompted a government inquiry from which only the interrogatories for Oswestry's vicar and not the answers survive.[52] Whilst Morrice is the only surviving source of Owen's communication with figures in London including Arundel, and with Oswestry, the claim does make sense. It seems highly likely that Owen used a route via Oswestry to communicate with those in England.

Beyond this route, Owen maintained other communication links, most notably with his

[48] 'Occurrents out of Spain', 5 January 1573, SP 70/122 f. 17r.
[49] 'Information as to words spoken by Richard Morrice', 17 October 1575, SP 12/105/54.
[50] 'Information as to words spoken by Richard Morrice', 17 October 1575, SP 12/105/54.
[51] 'Information as to words spoken by Richard Morrice', 17 October 1575, SP 12/105/54.
[52] 'Interrogatories for the examination of the Vicar of Oswestry', 17 October 1575, SP 12/105/56.

home region in northwest Wales, details of which can be gleaned from surviving evidence of a government crackdown in the area. In 1578, the Privy Council ordered the Bishop of Bangor, Nicholas Robinson, and Dr Elis Price to investigate families in Llŷn believed to be communicating with Owen. 'We do […] understand', the commission explained, 'that his [Owen's] chief reliefe and maintenance hath ever since ben and yet is… from the madrins, Thomas Owen, his brother, John Griffith of Lleyne, [Friffin ap John Gruff] his son, and Hugh Gwynne'.[53] The results of the search were limited: in some houses a few letters were found, bearing no signature and written in 'some strange and darke ffrace of writing' to hide their contents, and one letter was found at Plas Du from Robert Owen, written in Welsh and evasive in meaning. Robinson and Price concluded that, 'allthough the said Rob[er]t written of truffles[,] that he meant other thinges of more importance'.[54] The lack of incriminating evidence was attributed to the fact that suspects had been alerted to the impending raids some weeks previously, giving them time to destroy evidence and remove themselves from the area.[55] The case was not over, though, and it worked its way to the Star Chamber. Nothing appears to have directly come of it, but Emyr Jones argues that the episode 'shattered the morale' of Llŷn's Catholics, convincing them that 'between recusancy and conformity to the Queen's religion there could […] be no compromise'.[56] Certainly, after this point, Thomas Owen disappears from the story, and there is no evidence of further correspondence between Hugh Owen and Llŷn. Whilst the evidence here comes only from the government's perspective and from one particular moment, Owen's communication with home is extremely plausible. Llŷn was an area with which he was very familiar, populated with Catholics he personally knew and trusted, including his brother, Thomas. On balance, despite the lack of clear, definitive proof, the circumstantial evidence suggests that Owen maintained correspondence with figures on the peninsula.

Arthur Dodd suggests another means for Owen's communication with England.[57] He proposes that a new communication route was established in January 1576 when 'Robert Owen' was presented to the benefice of Penmorfa cum Dolbenmaen near Llŷn. At this time Robert Owen of Plas Du was in Rome, but Dodd argues that 'it is suggestive that the record of the presentation is repeated in the Bangor Diocesan Register under March 1577' by which

[53] Bishop Robinson and Dr Elis Price to the Council, Pwllely, 24 March 1578, SP 12/123/11.

[54] Bishop Robinson and Dr Elis Price to the Council, Pwllely, 24 March 1578, SP 12/123/11.

[55] Thomas Owen, for example, was in Shropshire at the time of the raids, Bishop Robinson and Dr. Elis Price to the Council, Pwllely, 24 March 1578, SP 12/123/11.

[56] Jones, 'Lleyn Recusancy Case', p. 108.

[57] Dodd, '*Émigrés*', pp. 348-49.

point Robert could have returned to Caernarfonshire.[58] 'Robert Owen' never took up residence in Penmorfa, and instead leased it to John Bishop of Wells, who was subsequently described as a 'notorious papist'.[59] Robert, meanwhile, became a deputy judge in the archdeacon's court at Wells. Dodd identifies this 'Owen' as Hugh Owen's brother, and suggests that Wells would have been an ideal location for communication with mainland Europe. Its proximity to the Bristol Channel allowed access to ships to carry messages, whilst its relative isolation from the metropolis minimised the risk of detection. Dodd's proposition is tempting, and there is some circumstantial evidence supporting his claim. Robert Owen is supposed to have visited Llŷn in the winter of 1576-77, which may have allowed him to attend the second presentation in March. In their report to the Council in 1578, Bishop Robinson and Dr Price noted that Robert 'hath bene within This half yere in the countrey wth divs of them whose houses wee s[ea]rched'.[60] On the other hand, there are weaknesses in Dodd's contention. Firstly, 'Robert Owen' was presented to the living of 'Penmorva cum cappella de Dolbenmen' on 28 January 1576.[61] This presentation comes the day after his ordination by Nicholas Robinson.[62] It seems unlikely that Robert would have missed his own ordination, making it doubtful that this Robert Owen is the Robert Owen of Plas Du. Moreover, if Robert Owen of Plas Du had been at this ordination, would Bishop Robinson not have recognised the link and included this detail in his report about illegal activities and communication with Hugh Owen? Thirdly, Robert Owen (Hugh's brother) is reported to have been in Rome throughout this period.[63] On the balance of probabilities it seems unlikely, although not impossible, that Robert Owen was able to open a channel of communication for his brother between England and mainland Europe, as Dodd suggests.

Regardless of whether or not this last route existed, several conclusions can be drawn here. There is significant evidence that Owen was in communication with various groups of Catholics in England and Wales in 1578, and that this correspondence had started almost as soon as he had gone into exile. Given the Elizabethan regime's identification of Owen as someone who 'through letters… incited rebellion', it seems probable that there was once much

[58] Dodd, '*Émigrés*', pp. 348-49.
[59] Dodd, '*Émigrés*', pp. 348-49.
[60] Bishop Robinson and Dr. Elis Price to the Council, Pwllely, 24 March 1578, SP 12/123/11.
[61] A. Pryce (ed.), *The Diocese of Bangor in the Sixteenth Century being a Digest of the Registers of Bishops A.D. 1512-1646* (Bangor, 1923), p. 23.
[62] Pryce, *Diocese of Bangor*, p. 59.
[63] Pope Gregory XIII to [Francis Richardot], Bishop of Arras, Rome 30 Rome 1573, *CSPVatican (1572-78),* p. 119; [Antonio Maria] Salviati, Papal Nuncio to France, to [Ptolemy Galli], Cardinal of Como, Paris, 6 August 1575, *CSPVatican (1572-78)*, p. 212; Como to [Salviati], Rome 10 May 1576, *CSPVatican (1572-78),* pp. 269-70.

more evidence of his activities of this kind. From the surviving fragments, it is clear that this was two-way communication: Owen sent letters into England with news from mainland Europe, whilst his contacts sent him the latest news from England. Moreover, the fact that he was trusted by high-profile exiles such as the Earl of Westmorland to handle their correspondence suggests that he held a trusted and respected position in the exile population. Finally, it seems reasonable to infer that the value that Owen would have offered to Don Juan, Sir Francis Englefield, and the other leaders plotting an invasion of England, would have derived from his communication network since he had no other obvious value. Owen held no ancestral lands and influence of his own in England, so, unlike figures like Westmorland, he would have struggled to generate a domestic rebellion, nor was he a soldier. Instead, it must have been his ability to provide the latest news from England, essential to the making of informed decisions, that cemented his importance.

But before Don Juan was able to secure the Netherlands and launch his invasion of England, he died of plague on 1 October 1578. He was replaced as leader of the Spanish forces in the Low Countries by his aide Alessandro Farnese, Prince — and later Duke — of Parma. Parma's primary focus was the reconquest of the Netherlands. In early 1578, Spanish forces went from victory to victory, defeating the Dutch army at Gembloux on 31 January, taking Louvain in February, and forcing the rebel leadership to flee to Antwerp in March. On the backfoot, the rebels appealed to the French Duke of Alençon and Queen Elizabeth for support. In July, Alençon, now Duke of Anjou, entered Mons with an army of 12,000 men. Elizabeth, meanwhile, was reluctant to enter the war, but did sponsor Johann Casimir, Count Palatine of the Rhine and brother of Ludwig VI, the Elector Palatine, to raise a Protestant mercenary army to aid the rebels.[64]

The risk of greater English involvement remained, though, so Parma needed reliable, up-to-date information from England. For this task he turned to Owen. Owen was given a cipher to communicate with Parma and his secretary, Cosmo Massi, and, in 1580, he was observed working for Parma by the English ambassador in Paris, Sir Amias Paulet.[65] Paulet wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham, stating that Owen had

> been waiting for an answer to some letters which he sent to England at his first arrival here[…] While he was here he was often with the Scottish Ambassador, through whose hands he received letters from England, which I am persuaded were in answer to those he sent; so hence it may be believed that the said Ambassador sent those brought by him from Spain.

[64] P. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 105.
[65] 'Clef de correspondance chiffre de Farnèse avec l'Anglais Hugues Owen', in Cauchie and Van der Essen, p. 61.

He proceeded to state that Owen had left Paris in a hurry to find Parma.[66] This observation by Paulet suggests that Owen communicated with those in England using Mary Stuart's ambassador to France, Archbishop James Beaton, as an intermediary.[67] Owen's new position working with Parma meant that his move into Spanish service, which had seen him obtain a Spanish pension at the start of the decade, and appear in the Spanish camp at Namurs whilst scheming with Don Juan and others, was complete.

The 1580s: In Spanish Service

Loomie's summary of Owen's activities in the 1580s suggests that Owen's talents as an intelligencer were underused by the Spanish authorities in these years. Despite securing Parma's patronage around 1580 and 'becom[ing] a reliable correspondent' in Parma's opinion, it was only in 1590 that 'convincing proof' appeared 'that Owen's role as intelligencer had been completely accepted' by the Spanish Crown.[68] In the intervening years, Loomie argues that Owen did what he could for the English and Welsh Catholic cause by working with other exiles to root out Elizabethan government agents masquerading as Catholic exiles, trying to secure Spanish support in 1584 for a plan to rescue Mary Stuart, and assisting Sir William Stanley to vet new recruits for his regiment fighting on the Spanish side during the Sluys campaign.[69]

For Loomie, these efforts to support British Catholicism were hamstrung by a lack of Spanish support. He contends that it was only after the Armada of 1588 that Owen's potential to assist in policy formulation, through the dispatch of regular intelligence reports about England to Spain, was recognised, and only then that he was given the support he needed to work effectively, for instance with a massive increase in his pension from twenty-five to sixty escudos per month.[70] Such a conclusion, though, significantly underestimates the influence Owen had in the 1580s. The following account illustrates Owen's status in the 1580s by focusing on two particular episodes. It first examines the effort to liberate Mary Stuart in 1584, contending that this scheme was brought down not by a lack of Spanish support, as Loomie suggests, but by Mary's own refusal to engage with the project and by events overtaking the plotters. It then investigates the planning of the Armada, highlighting Owen's prominent role

[66] Paulet to Walsingham, Paris, 26 October 1579, SP 78/3, f. 40r.

[67] Katy Gibbons notes that Beaton worked closely with many English Catholics in support of Mary. *English Catholic Exiles*, pp. 60-61.

[68] *SE*, p. 56.

[69] *SE*, p. 56.

[70] *SE*, pp. 55-57.

assisting Parma in drawing up a plan for the invasion of England. Whilst it is true that, in the 1590s, Owen's status reached new heights, in the years preceding the Armada, Owen held an extremely influential position in the Spanish system as a result of his intelligence work which must not be discounted.

In 1584-85, Owen, encouraged by Parma and Philip, collaborated with William Allen and the Jesuit Robert Persons, the two leading English clergymen, in an attempt to liberate Mary Stuart. This collaboration followed Persons' visit to the Low Countries in early 1584 at Parma's request to discuss the best way of incorporating English soldiers into the Spanish Army of Flanders.[71] Persons took this visit as an opportunity to discuss the broader English situation and, in particular, the plight of Mary Stuart, who had been under house arrest since her arrival in England in 1568 and whom many Catholics regarded as the rightful queen of England. It seems probable that Owen was privy to these discussions for, when Persons left Flanders on 2 May, Owen accompanied him. Having narrowly evaded English soldiers somewhere between Ghent and Oudenarde, the pair parted ways in northern France with Persons heading to Paris whilst Owen journeyed on to Spain where he sought Philip II's support for a scheme to liberate Mary.[72] Loomie describes this attempt as a 'fruitless effort', arguing that Owen was unsuccessful.[73] However, later correspondence suggests that this was not the case and that Philip had been willing to hear Owen's proposal, and was open to exploring it further. Owen visited Persons and Allen on his journey back to the Netherlands and gave an account of his reception, which Persons then conveyed to Mary. He wrote that Owen had

> browght us new order and commandmente from the King of Spayne to renew or rather continue owr sute to the Prince of Parma for that he had commission to deal with him therin yet in all secrecy so that he should treate onlye with Doctor Allen and my selfe. This message browght some hope that perhappes they may have some meaning to deale in the enterprise.[74]

Whilst Philip had not made any firm commitments, he had made enough positive noise to give Persons, Allen, and Owen grounds for hope. Encouraged, the trio proceeded with their plan to free Mary. Persons shared with Owen a cipher that would allow him to communicate secretly with Mary. A triumvirate had formed. Their mission: rescue their imprisoned queen.[75]

From Persons' letter to Mary it is possible to establish the broad outline of their plan —

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[71] T. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England: 'Our Way of Proceeding?'* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 202-03.

[72] R. Persons, 'Autobiography', J. Pollen (ed.), *Miscellanea II* (London, 1906), p. 33.

[73] *SE*, pp. 55-56.

[74] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, *Correspondence*, p. 521. Similarly, see William Allen to Mary Stuart, Rheims, 5 February, in T. Knox (ed.), *The Letters and Memorials of William, Cardinal Allen (1532-1594)* (London, 1882), p. 247.

[75] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence*, p. 523.

which centred around a proposed marriage between Mary and Parma — as well as Owen's proposed role. Persons explained that an escape was necessary before Philip II or the Pope would attempt any grander scheme as, whilst 'they give us fayre speech and some promises[,] yet I see that when it cometh to the conclusion they demand alwayes some assurance of yowr person which by open force cannot be given'.[76] Thus Persons supposed that if Mary 'were on this side the sea or otherwise in securitye', action would be taken against England.[77] Persons also concluded that 'the Prince of Parma is the only the man that now putteth thinges in execution'.[78] This conclusion stemmed not only from Parma's victories over the Dutch rebels which had shown his martial talent, but also from Persons' conversations with Parma himself. Parma had suggested to Persons that he would be very tempted to become Mary's husband and, by extension, King of England, and had had his secretary, Cosmo Massi, discuss the matter further with Persons.[79] It is probable that Owen became involved in the scheme because of Parma's desire to marry Mary and become King. In a letter to Mary, Persons described Owen as a 'very active diligent faythfull and secret Solicitor', who was 'experienced in matters zealous in good will' and 'in very good credit with the Prince of Parma'.[80] Persons contrasted Owen with Ralph Liggons, whom Mary had appointed to be her agent with Parma, since Liggons 'followeth not the Court, nor hath not that acquayntance and particular favor with the Prince of Parma and his Secretarye'.[81] Owen could, therefore, act as an intermediary between Parma and Mary in a way Liggons could not.

Events, however, swiftly overtook the triumvirate. In October 1584, Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, in the aftermath of the failed Throckmorton Plot, drafted the Bond of Association, whereby those who swore to it committed themselves to defend Elizabeth's life and to eliminate those who attacked her and those for whom the attack occurred.[82] As Stephen Alford summarises, 'it was a measure aimed squarely at the pernicious influence of Mary Queen of Scots and her supporters'.[83] Mary understood the political climate gripping England, and so tried to avoid controversy. Persons, Allen, and Owen all tried to engage her in correspondence but to no avail. Persons and Allen expressed their frustrations in their writings. In a letter dated

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[76] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence,* p. 521.
[77] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence,* p. 521.
[78] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence,* p. 523.
[79] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence,* p. 523.
[80] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence,* p. 523.
[81] Persons to Mary Stuart, Rouen, 10 October 1584, in *Correspondence*, p. 523.
[82] D. Cressy, 'Binding the Nation: The Bonds of Association, 1584 and 1696', in D. Guth and J. McKenna (eds.), *Tudor Rule and Revolution* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 217-34.
[83] S. Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012), p. 188.

5 February 1585, Allen expressed his anger about the lack of contact from Mary, whilst, on 15 February, Persons rebuked Mary for the lack of response to his letters dating back to October of the previous year.[84] Whether Mary did in fact receive all the letters sent to her by the trio is debateable, but if she did, she was right to be wary of responding: the only surviving letters are copies written in Thomas Phelippes' hand — Phelippes was Sir Francis Walsingham's expert decipherer — suggesting at least some of the correspondence was intercepted.[85] Rather than stemming from a lack of Spanish support for a liberation scheme, it was this lack of engagement from Mary that deterred Allen, Persons, and Owen from pursuing their plans for her escape any further at this time.[86] Meanwhile, events elsewhere in 1585 demanded their immediate attention. In September, Persons and Allen travelled to Rome to attempt to heal a rift that was growing at the English College there, whilst, in Flanders, attention shifted to the Armada.[87]

Whilst this conspiracy to liberate Mary and marry her to Parma never developed beyond the planning stage, Owen's participation is telling. It shows that he was an important Catholic exile, conspiring with the leading Catholic clergymen, and putting together a scheme that captured the imagination of Parma and, to a lesser degree, of Philip himself. Moreover, aspects of the scheme — in particular, that Parma marry Mary and that they might together rule England — would reappear in the planning of the Armada.

Philip II of Spain had long resisted calls for a Spanish invasion of England, but, following the Treaty of Nonsuch (1585) in which Elizabeth offered formal support for the Dutch rebels against Spanish authority, Philip's attitude shifted, and he resolved to deal with the problem that England posed.[88] He invited his celebrated admiral, the Marquess of Santa Cruz, and Parma, his leading general, to suggest how they would mount an attack on England.

In March 1586, Santa Cruz presented a detailed brief on the logistics required for an amphibious attack entitled 'the fleet and army that it seems would be necessary to assemble for the conquest of England'. Santa Cruz decided to omit both precise strategy and the exact target of the assault as 'the business is such that it is absolutely impossible to deal with or discuss it in writing', but he did quantify the amount and nature of the force required: 510 ships, carrying

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[84] Allen to Mary, Rheims, 5 February 1585, in Knox (ed.), *Letters of Allen,* p. 247; Persons to Mary, Rouen, 15 February 1585, in *Correspondence*, pp. 574-75. See also for an example of Owen's attempts to communicate with Mary: Owen to Queen of Scots, Camp at Bever, 13 January 1585, SP 53/15, ff. 21v-22r.

[85] S. Alford, 'Some Elizabethan Spies in the Office of Sir Francis Walsingham', in R. Adams and R. Cox (eds.), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 47-59.

[86] Arthur Dodd suggests that their scheming was directly linked to the subsequent Babington Plot, but no evidence can be found to support this claim, 'Two Welsh Catholic *Émigrés'*, p. 250.

[87] McCoog, *'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, pp. 224-25; Edwards, *Robert Persons*, pp. 117-21.

[88] Parker, *Imprudent King,* pp. 305-07.

55,000 infantry and 1,600 cavalry with all the equipment, munitions, and artillery required to support them. Santa Cruz purposed to conquer England through overwhelming strength.[89]

The plan that Parma submitted from Brussels was not his alone. Whilst cataloguing the documents relating to the Low Countries in the Farnese Archive in Naples, Alfred Cauchie and Léon van der Essen noticed several letters from Hugh Owen to Parma.[90] Undated, these letters contained, in Owen's hand, a 'very detailed plan' for the invasion of England, a plan that was 'effectively that which Farnése proposed to Philip', and which historians of Owen – for instance, Loomie – as well as historians of the Armada – such as Geoffrey Parker – have not taken into account.[91] Unfortunately, the Nazis destroyed much of the Farnese archives on 30 September 1943 as they retreated from Naples, and Owen's letters were lost.[92] Nevertheless, thanks to Cauchie and van Der Essen's description of the documents, certain tentative conclusions can be made. It would appear that Owen was closely involved in the planning of the Armada, and, therefore, by this stage in 1585-86, he must have been one of Parma's closest advisors, particularly on English matters.

Assuming the accuracy of Cauchie and van der Essen's summaries, it is possible to glean details of Owen's proposal by examining Parma's extremely thorough plan.[93] He opened by regretting the lack of secrecy surrounding Philip's intentions, lamenting the fact that even ordinary soldiers and citizens in the Netherlands were openly discussing the enterprise. Despite this openness, he believed that, with three basic precautions, success might be achieved. Firstly, Philip must have sole charge of the endeavour, 'without placing any reliance on either the English Catholics, or the assistance of other allies'. Secondly, steps must be taken to ensure that the French did not interfere, either by sending support to Elizabeth or by intervening in the Netherlands. Thirdly, sufficient resources must be left to defend the Netherlands in the event of an attack. Having established the necessary precautions, Parma set out his plan. He proposed to lead 30,000 infantry and 500 cavalry — all drawn from his army in Flanders — across the Channel in a fleet of barges. He was confident that success could be achieved if his precise intentions were kept secret, 'given the number of troops we have at hand here and the ease

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[89] Parker, *Imprudent King,* p. 308.

[90] 'Lettres de l'anglais Owen (Ugo Oeno) à Farnèse (s.d) — Original autographe', in Cauchie and van der Essen, p. 229.

[91] Lettres de l'anglais Owen (Ugo Oeno) à Farnèse (s.d) — Original autographe', in Cauchie and van der Essen, p. 229.

[92] Riccardo Filangieri, superintendent of the archives from 1934 to 1956, wrote a report on the destruction for the Americans: 'Report on the Destruction by the Germans, September 30, 1943, of the Depository of Priceless Historical Records of the Naples State Archives', *American Archivist*, 7/4 (1944), pp. 252-55.

[93] Parma to Philip, 20 April 1586, in J. Calvar Gross *et al.* (eds.), *La Batalla del Mar Oceano Volumen II (30 enero 1586-28 febrero 1587)* (Madrid, 1989), pp. 108-11.

with which we can concentrate and embark them in the barges, and considering that we can ascertain, at any moment, the forces which Elizabeth has and can be expected to have, and that the crossing only takes ten to twelve hours without a following wind'. The army would land at the coast between Dover and Margate, allowing for a rapid march on London. If adequate secrecy could not be maintained, Parma believed a distraction would be necessary, and he suggested that Santa Cruz could 'create a diversion which will draw the English fleet away from the Channel'. This decoy would allow the invading army to cross unmolested. In brief, then, Parma's plan — or, rather, Parma and Owen's plan — was for a sudden and swift attack to catch England unawares and unable to muster a force to counter the invasion.[94]

Parma's strategy arrived by special messenger at the Spanish court in late June 1586. It was given to Zúñiga who, after deliberating a while, advised Philip to combine the two plans. Zúñiga suggested that a fleet of 120 ships with an army of 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry should gather in Lisbon before attacking either Waterford in Ireland or Milford Haven in Wales to create a bridgehead. At the same time, reinforcements should be sent to Flanders in preparation for a surprise attack on London. This assault would happen whilst Elizabeth's forces were being drawn west by the first landing, leaving London undefended. Zúñiga did not anticipate any benefit to Spain from the annexation of due to 'the cost of defending it', so he recommended that England be ruled by a friendly Catholic. He suggested Mary Stuart, but only after she had married a reliable Spanish ally such as Parma.[95]

Whilst it is unlikely that Owen was the only individual that Parma consulted during the planning process, it is still indicative of the position to which Owen had risen that Parma sought his input at all. Further archival research is needed – perhaps at the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, which holds many of the surviving documents relating to late-sixteenth-century Spanish Habsburg rule in the Netherlands – to see if there is any surviving material that sheds more light on Owen's involvement in the Armada's planning.[96]

Zùñiga's amalgamation of Santa Cruz's and Parma's plans formed the basis of the comprehensive invasion strategy which would be known as 'the masterplan'. Whilst no single document has been found with all the details, Geoffrey Parker has pieced together the contents of the plan by analysing the subsequent correspondence. Santa Cruz would lead an Armada in summer 1587 carrying all the available troops to Ireland in order to secure a beachhead. Then,

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[94] Parma to Philip, 20 April 1586, in *La Batalla del Mar Oceano Volumen II,* pp. 108-11.

[95] 'Parecer' of Don Juan de Zúñiga, June/July 1586, *La Batalla del Mar Oceano*, II, pp. 305-07.

[96] R. Neck, 'The Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv: Its History, Holdings, and Use', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 6 (1970), p. 14.

after two months, he would suddenly leave Ireland and head to the Channel. At that point, Parma would embark the main invasion force of 30,000 soldiers, battle-hardened from years of fighting in the Netherlands, on a flotilla of small ships and sail across to Kent. Reinforced by soldiers on board Santa Cruz's vessels they would advance on London.[97] With a plan now in place, Spain began to make preparations for the upcoming invasion, gathering ships, raising money, and mobilising military resources.[98]

Whilst preparations for the Armada were made, the Dutch Revolt continued. Following the Treaty of Nonsuch, English involvement in the Low Countries steadily escalated. In December 1585, the Earl of Leicester travelled to the Netherlands, where he was joyously received. The following month he was offered the position of governor-general of the United Provinces, which he accepted on 25 January. By this time there were 8,000 English soldiers in the Netherlands. Whilst governor-general, Leicester sought to strengthen and centralise his authority, creating a Council of State to support him, but his efforts were stalled when Elizabeth recalled him to England in 1587 to advise her as she deliberated over the fate of Mary Stuart.[99] During Leicester's absence, two of his commanders betrayed him.

In October 1586, English forces under Sir William Pelham and Sir William Stanley had taken command of Deventer, a prosperous commercial centre in Overijssel. The garrison left controlling the city mostly comprised Irish soldiers under Stanley's command.[100] Stanley was an experienced English soldier who had served in the English army for many years in Ireland, but had also fought in the Army of Flanders under the Duke of Alba.[101] When Leicester left for England in November, he transferred his executive authority to the Council of State, and gave command of the English forces to Sir John Norris. Stanley, however, was left independent of both. His garrison, at this time, was on edge and, dissatisfied on account of a lack of food, clothing, and money. On 28 January 1587, Stanley yielded Deventer to the Spanish, and, with his 1,200 Irish soldiers, offered his services to Spain. The following day, Sir Rowland Yorke similarly surrendered the nearby Sconce of Zutphen to the Spanish.[102]

Contemporaries and modern historians alike have been divided over Stanley's defection. Some have argued that it was religiously driven. William Allen, for example, published a book

[97] Parker, *Imprudent King*, pp. 309-10.
[98] Parker, *Imprudent King*, pp. 311-15.
[99] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars,* pp. 121- 32. On the Earl of Leicester more generally, see S. Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester, 2002).
[100] *SE*, p. 134.
[101] *SE*, pp. 130-31.
[102] *SE*, pp. 135-38.

arguing that Stanley's decision had been a matter of conscience.[103] Leo Hicks also contends that Stanley was driven by conscience, arguing that Stanley and his garrison were Catholics and resented holding a city – most of whose inhabitants were Catholics – for the benefit of Calvinists.[104] Albert Loomie, however, has noted that Stanley remained silent on the matter of religion in 1587, and that the terms of his surrender made no mention of religion. Instead, Loomie suggests that Stanley was driven by desperation: he was facing the ruin of his career owing to Dutch animosity towards his garrison, and he was desperate for food and money for his men. In coming to this conclusion he also dismisses the argument set forth by Don Alonso Vasquez, a captain in Parma's army and subsequently a historian of the conflict, that Stanley was motivated by disagreements with Leicester.[105] Wherever the truth lies, the surrender of Deventer was a major symbolic and strategic victory for Spain.[106] Stanley was rewarded with a pension of 300 escudos a month, and Parma recommended to Philip that Stanley be awarded membership of the Order of Santiago.[107] The defection was also of immense symbolic value for English Catholics as can be seen in Allen's *Copie of a Letter* defending Stanley's actions.

Despite writing his *Copie of a Letter* in 1587, Allen did not actually meet Stanley until late 1589.[108] Stanley remained in place as governor of Deventer for a year after his defection, and continued to struggle with the same problems he had had whilst in English service: primarily, a discontented populace and a lack of funds. In this period, he made the acquaintance of the English Catholic population in Flanders, which included Hugh Owen. Owen and Stanley seem to have recognised something in each other, and began to work together. In 1588, as Stanley was preparing for an assault on Ostend, Owen vetted Welsh recruits to Stanley's regiment.[109] Owen reportedly offered the recruits great 'preferment' if they successfully took Ostend, but one can imagine that Owen was also drawing on his network to identify any known English agents who might be trying to infiltrate Stanley's unit. This moment is the first example of Owen and Stanley working together, but it would not be the last; they would collaborate repeatedly throughout the 1590s.

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[103] William Allen, *The Copie of a Letter Written by M. Doctor Allen: Concerning the yielding up, of the Citie of Daventrie* (Antwerp, 1587), p. 6.
[104] L. Hicks, 'Allen and Deventer (1587)', *The Month*, 163 (1934), pp. 505-17.
[105] *SE*, p. 141.
[106] S. Adams, 'Stanley, York, and Elizabeth's Catholics', *History Today*, 37/7 (1987), pp. 46-47; *SE*, p. 139.
[107] *SE*, p. 144.
[108] *SE*, p. 141; Hicks, 'Allen and Deventer', pp. 508-10.
[109] 'The Confession of Ithel Ap Parre', 1588, SP 84/23/154.

The story of the Armada's defeat is too well known to warrant repetition here. [110]What is clear, though, is that, by the time of the Armada, Hugh Owen was well-established in Flanders. He had an influential position at the Spanish court in Brussels and had the ear of the governor, Parma. Moreover, he had developed close working relationships with some of the most influential English Catholic exiles, and had been involved in conspiracies against the Elizabethan state.

Conclusions

Previous scholarship, led by Albert Loomie, has been drawn, understandably, to Hugh Owen's career in the 1590s and early 1600s, years when Owen was Spain's principal source for English intelligence. But it was in the years prior to the Armada that Owen laid the groundwork for his later activities. As this chapter has shown, even before going into exile in 1571, Owen was no stranger to Catholic conspiracy, and he grew even more heavily involved after his arrival in the Spanish Netherlands. Owen built an extensive network in the 1570s which supplied him with the latest news and intelligence from England, and it was on account of this network that he rose rapidly from a relative nobody upon his arrival in late 1571 to becoming an important advisor to the Spanish governor, the Duke of Parma. This chapter has also revealed details of Owen's work for Spain in these years, highlighting his collaboration with Robert Persons and William Allen, supported by both Parma and Philip II, in a plan to free Mary Stuart from her captivity in the Midlands. Similarly, this chapter has presented evidence suggesting that Owen contributed to the planning of the Spanish Armada. Whilst it is impossible to know definitively the extent of Owen's involvement in that process due to the Nazi destruction of the sources held in the Neapolitan State Archive, the very fact that he made a contribution and discussed the invasion with Parma himself is testament to the high position to which he had risen by 1586. Studying this period of Owen's life, therefore, provides vital context for the trust placed in Owen by the Spanish crown and by leading Spanish Elizabethans in the years that followed the Armada. Moreover, it shows that, in order to understand the English Catholicism, it is important to study non-noble and non-clerical figures as these 'ordinary' individuals had a profound impact on events. As will be seen in the following chapters, the intelligence supplied

[110] Mattingly's *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* remains definitive. See also the collection of essays gathered in celebration of the 400-year anniversary, F. Fernandez-Ernesto (ed.), *The Spanish Armada* (Oxford, 1988); and C. Martin and G. Parker, *The Spanish Armada* (Manchester, 1999, orig. 1988).

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2. The Early 1590s, a Period of Consolidation

Introduction

The Spanish Armada set sail in late May 1588 with great optimism. Astrologers insisted the end was near: Hans Khevenhüller, the imperial ambassador at the Spanish court, noted that many predicted 'the last judgment and destruction of the universe'.[1] Others were less dramatic in their predictions, merely forecasting Philip's imminent victory over England 'to glorify God and to advance His holy Church'.[2] It is understandable why the invasion attempt was spoken about with such surety; it was a navy of unprecedented size. Later, the English writer Richard Hakluyt recounted that the fleet was such 'as never the like had before that time sailed upon the ocean sea'.[3] However, despite the Armada's 'mighty' size, it soon 'vanished into smoke'.[4]

The significance of the Armada's defeat was immediately contested.[5] Whilst men such as Hakluyt — that is, Protestants — inevitably read England's victory as proof of divine approval, Catholics were less convinced, and were left pondering why God had abandoned their cause. The Spanish Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira reflected that the Armada was the 'greatest disaster to strike Spain in over six hundred years', arguing that God had allowed defeat so as to purify Philip 'in order to sanctify him and give him a chance to humble himself under God's powerful arm, and to make him acknowledge the very power that God has given him, and to realise how little value his own power has with God'. Once Philip accepted these truths, then God would grant him victory over the heretics.[6]

English Catholics were divided in their interpretations of the events. Some, such as Sir Thomas Tresham, a Catholic gentleman in England who craved the status in society his

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[1] F. Labrador Arroyo (ed.), *Diario de Hans Khevenhüller, embajador imperial en la corte de Felipe II* (Madrid, 2001), p. 349.
[2] Pedro de Ribadeneira quoted in C. Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, 'The New Crusade: Ideology and Religion in the Anglo-Spanish Conflict', in M. Rodriguez-Salgado and S. Adams (eds.), *England, Spain and the Gran Armada* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 276.
[3] R. Hakluyt, *Voyages and Discoveries,* J. Beeching (ed.), (London, 1972), p. 313.
[4] Hakluyt, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 326.
[5] See, for example, A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern Britain* (Oxford, 1999); P. Gallagher and D. Cruickshank, 'The Armada of 1588 Reflected in Serious and Popular Literature of the Period,' in P. Gallagher and D. Cruickshank (eds.), *God's Obvious Design Papers for the Spanish Armada Symposium, Sligo, 1988* (London, 1990), pp. 167-185.
[6] Quoted in R. Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1990), pp. 113-14.

birthright demanded but was denied on religious grounds, were convinced that God was the cause of the Armada's defeat and celebrated the English victory: 'the Spanish forces no sooner appeared on our coasts, but by the mighty hand of God were discomfited and marvellously dispersed to the unspeakable joy of the whole realm and principally to us'.[7] The Spanish Elizabethans were careful not to be too critical of Philip and Spain, and, instead, found more imaginative interpretations to explain what had happened. Robert Persons declared that God had intervened to protect English Catholics through the defeat since Spain's refusal to acknowledge that there were Catholics in England would have led to them punishing everyone in England, Catholic and Protestant alike.[8] Richard Verstegan, meanwhile, acknowledged the disaster as punishment for sin but was not discouraged: England's heresy demanded vengeance and Spain would swiftly recover. The Israelites, he argued, had failed to defeat the tribe of Benjamin at the first attempt, but, just like Julius Caesar in his conquest of Britain, they were eventually successful.[9] To the Catholic exiles who supported Spain — and, indeed, the Catholic states, particularly on the Italian peninsula, who continued to support Philip — the setback was viewed as only temporary.[10]

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in Summer 1588 was not as resounding as many have argued.[11] Whilst it is undoubtedly true that the Armada had been an expensive enterprise at 10,000,000 ducats and that around 15,000 men perished, it should also be noted that new taxes were raised to cover this deficit and that reinforcements were quickly sent from other parts of Philip's empire to replace the losses.[12] Moreover, many of the *tercios* — an infantry unit consisting of up to 3,000 soldiers — and hospital units of the Armada campaign remained in service until 1593.[13] Philip turned to his Council of State for advice on how best to proceed. They responded with a report that unanimously rejected a defensive posturing (on the grounds that this would cost as much as a fresh invasion attempt whilst doing nothing to bring the war to an end), and recommended that forces be concentrated for a new expedition. The Armada's defeat may have been a major blow, but the war with England was by no means over.[14]

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[7] R. Poole *et al.* (eds.), *Various Collections* (8 vols., London, 1901-14), III, pp. 52, 54; S. Kaushik, 'Resistance, Loyalty and Recusant Politics: Sir Thomas Tresham and the Elizabethan State', *Midland History*, 21 (1996), pp. 37-79.
[8] Robert Persons to Don Juan de Idiáquez, Seville, 4 April 1591, ABSI, Coll. P. f. 246.
[9] [Richard Verstegan], *The copy of a letter lately written by a Spanish gentleman* ([Antwerp], 1589).
[10] R. Scully, '"In the Confident Hope of a Miracle": The Spanish Armada and Religious Mentalities in the Late Sixteenth Century', *Catholic Historical Review*, 89, (2003), pp. 643-70.
[11] For example, Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 154.
[12] Parker, *Grand Strategy*, pp. 269-70.
[13] M. Rodriguez-Salgado, 'The Spanish Story of the 1588 Armada Reassessed', *Historical Journal*, 33/2 (1990), p. 477.
[14] The ongoing and unresolved nature of the Anglo-Spanish war in the 1590s contrasts with its depiction in the majority of scholarship which climaxes with the Armada of 1588. See for example, Parker, *Grand Strategy* and *Imprudent King*.

As well as rebuilding the lost resources, Philip and his regime looked for lessons to be learnt from the Armada. For example, in February 1589, the Duke of Parma sent a letter to Philip which contained a summary of his reflections about the best strategy for assaulting England. He evaluated the merit of joint naval and military attacks along the English Channel, and recommended that small landing parties should be sent to demolish England's system of warning beacons before they could be lit to warn of the incoming invasion force. His main recommendation, though, was that any Spanish fleet should go no further up the Channel than the Isle of Wight, and that it would be better to occupy the Scilly Isles or ports on the south coast of Ireland and from there launch the main attack against England.[15]

A new Spanish fleet, to replace the lost ships, was commissioned. Whereas the *Gran Armada* of 1588 had been pieced together from the available ships — Portuguese galleons, Mediterranean galleys, escort vessels from the transatlantic convoys — the new fleet was purpose built: Philip ordered the new ships be constructed with a more streamlined design and a twenty-two-gun broadside.[16] His captain-general of artillery, meanwhile, called for 'each ship to carry guns that are appropriate to its size and weight, and of a sort that can do damage from a distance because of their good range, and from close range wreak notable destruction on the enemy fleet'.[17] By 1598, Spain's Atlantic fleet consisted of fifty-three royal warships. Together, these ships constituted a battle-fleet far more capable than the *Gran Armada* and significantly larger than Elizabeth's fleet, both in numbers of ships and tonnage.[18] Indeed, as Glete observes, this new Atlantic fleet was the largest sailing fleet hitherto seen in Europe.[19]

Events in France disrupted the new invasion plan. It was recognised by the Spanish Council of State that the task of defending French Catholicism depended on Spanish support, and that 'the amount of money required will ruin the preparations we are making here to attack England'. The Council, therefore, recommended that aid to the Catholic League should remain clandestine for as long as possible because

> the temptation to declare war on France is great; nevertheless, when we consider the state of this Monarchy, the open war with England (so powerful at sea), and the

[15] AGSE 596/91, cited in W. Richardson, 'An Elizabethan Pilot's Charts (1594): Spanish Intelligence Regarding the Coasts of England and Wales at the End of the XVIth Century', *Journal of Navigation,* 53/2 (2000), p. 317. The Armadas of 1596 and 1597 set out with the intention of following this guidance, see pp. 97-107 below.
[16] J. Casado Soto, 'Atlantic Shipping in Sixteenth-Century Spain and the 1588 Armada', in Rodriguez-Salgado and Adams (eds.), *England, Spain and the Gran Armada* pp. 112-13. This includes a contemporary design for the new galleons showing clearly the broadside.
[17] Quoted in Parker, *Grand Strategy*, p. 271.
[18] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars,* pp. 161-62; D. Goodman, *Spanish Naval Power, 1589-1665: Reconstruction and Defeat* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 7-9.
[19] J. Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1500-1860* (2 vols., Stockholm, 1993), I, p. 149.

> pressure that our rebels and enemies [i.e. the Dutch rebels] will bring to bear on His Majesty, we must not declare war on France under any circumstances.[20]

Philip agreed, electing to restrict his contributions to the French Catholic cause to (substantial) financial support. Spain's military focus would remain on England.

In May 1589, as part of a new strategy to 'wage war in the enemy's own house', Philip sent money to Parma to allow him to prepare men and ships for a surprise attack on the Isle of Wight which would serve as a diversion as a separate fleet sailed from Spain to deliver the main invasion force.[21] Whilst this decision to involve the Army of Flanders in the invasion of England went in the face of the overwhelming majority of the advice given to Philip following the *Gran Armada*, it nevertheless shows that, in the aftermath of the Armada of 1588, Spain's military focus still rested on England.

This plan, however, never materialised. The English Armada sailed to Spain in summer 1589, twice landing an expeditionary force, and causing widespread panic in Spain.[22] Whilst the English Armada was, ultimately, a disaster, the lack of warning Spain had received about the English fleet's intention prior to its arrival in Spain highlighted to ministers the desperate need for reliable sources of intelligence from England. Meanwhile, in France, a Catholic monk assassinated Henri III, radically transforming the strategic and political situation. Upon Henri's death a great number of the French nobility and Protestant neighbouring states had recognised his nearest male relative, Henri of Navarre, the Huguenot leader, as the new King of France. Philip could not accept this — indeed, he did not even recognise Henri's claim to be King of Navarre, claiming that title for himself — and so was drawn more openly into the wars in France at the expense of his plans for England.[23] The prospect of Spanish military support for English Catholicism thus depended on either victory in Philip's French campaign, or, conversely, its complete failure.

Moreover, the collapse of the Catholic position in France in 1589 devastated Spain's capacity for gathering English intelligence. Prior to 1584, English intelligence had been obtained primarily through the Spanish ambassador in London, but the severing of Anglo-Spanish diplomatic ties with the expulsion of Bernardino de Mendoza meant that there was no Spanish representative in the country.[24] Following this development, Spain continued to

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[20] 'Lo que se platico en Consejo de Estado a 10 de enero de 1589, entendido el suceso del duque de Guisa', AGSE 2855, n.f.
[21] Philip II to Parma, 11 May 1589, AGSE 2219/176.
[22] Wernham, *After the Armada*, pp. 92-131; L. Gorrochategui Santos, *The English Armada: The Greatest Naval Disaster in English History*, P. Gold (trans.) (London, 2011).
[23] Parker, *Grand Strategy*, pp. 273-76.
[24] The importance of ambassadors in Spain's intelligence apparatus has been repeatedly stressed by historians; see pp. 10-14 above.

receive English intelligence from Mendoza, who was now ambassador to France. Mendoza fostered contacts at the French court, including many senior royal ministers who had access to French intelligence, and through these Mendoza was extremely well-informed regarding political developments in France and England.[25] Mendoza also developed his own network for securing English intelligence. He worked closely with the Duke of Guise, a French nobleman at the head of the Catholic League who also collaborated closely with English Catholics in plots to overthrow Elizabeth.[26] Mendoza also recruited the English ambassador to Paris, Sir Edward Stafford, as an informant.[27] Stafford proved to be an extremely rich source of information, providing intelligence, for example, about English naval strength and, in the lead up to the Armada, supplying false information to Elizabeth about Spanish intentions.[28] In addition to Guise and Stafford, Mendoza also exploited his connections with the English Catholic population to gather English intelligence, and had a network of his own in England. Some of these informants can be successfully identified. Pedro de Zubiaur was a Spaniard whom Mendoza had 'caused to be detained in England in order that he might send me news'.[29] André de Lou was a Flemish merchant based in London who was employed by Elizabeth as her emissary to the Duke of Parma.[30] Whilst the relationship between Mendoza and de Lou is unclear, it is apparent that more information passed between them than the official notices authorised by the Elizabethan regime.[31] Antonio de Escobar was a Portuguese subject living sometimes in Paris, sometimes in London. His proximity to Don Antonio, the London-based pretender to the Portuguese crown taken by Philip II in 1580, allowed him to provide frequent and intimate news about Antonio's activities and plans in England. Finally, there were the countless, unnamed informers located in various strategic locations in England and France (primarily the ports), whose existence is only visible in Mendoza's expense accounts under the heading 'Correspondents and persons who give me important reports for the service of your Majesty and intelligence that I have in this kingdom'.[32]

In the second half of the 1580s, from his new posting in France, Mendoza constructed an

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[25] M. Sutherland, *The French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine de Medici* (London, 1962), p. 229.
[26] Jenson, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism*, esp. pp. 73-92. For an example of Guise supplying English intelligence to Mendoza, see Guise to Mendoza, 16 July 1586, *CSPSimancas (1580-86),* pp. 589-90.
[27] M. Leimon and G. Parker, 'Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy: The "Fame of Sir Edward Stafford" Reconsidered', *English Historical Review*, 111/444 (1996), pp. 1148-49.
[28] For examples of Stafford feeding false information to the Elizabethan regime, see, Stafford to Walsingham, Paris, 23 April 1588 (O.S), and 24 April 1588 (O.S), *CSPForeign,* XXI, pt.1, pp. 596-97, 597.
[29] Mendoza to Philip, Paris, 5 April 1585, *CSPSimancas (1580-86),* p. 535.
[30] For example, in November 1586, 'Documented Headed, 'Copy of a letter translated from the English, written in London, 10th November 1586', *CSPSimancas (1580-86)*, pp. 651-56. See also, C. Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1960), pp. 333-39.
[31] J. Lefèvre, (ed.), *Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays-Bas* (3 vols., Brussels, 1940-56), III, p. 130.
[32] 'Cuenta de gastos extraordinarios', 31 December 1586, AGSE K 1564, f. 256.

intelligence network which could successfully provide him with English news and information, as well as feed false information to the Elizabethan crown. However, developments in France in 1588-89 dismantled this network. On 8 September 1588, Henri III performed an 'abrupt palace coup' in which he dismissed all of his chief ministers and replaced them with new men characterised by their loyalty to the Crown.[33] The contacts Mendoza had carefully cultivated over the previous four years, granting him access to French royal intelligence about domestic French issues and England, were no longer privy to this information, and their replacements, with their loyalty firmly with Henri, were unlikely to be as sharing. Three months later, Mendoza was dealt another blow. On 23 December, Henri invited Guise to his bedchamber in Blois, where he was murdered by the royal bodyguard. The following day, many of the Catholic League's leading members were arrested.[34] Mendoza had been deprived of another important source of English intelligence. Moreover, the civil war which ensued in France cut off Mendoza's access to his own contacts in England. On 27 December 1588, he wrote to Philip:

> I told your Majesty some months ago that I had sent a man to England, and since then I have sent another. I obtained them by means of two confidants in Paris, through whom they corresponded. As the confidants have had to fly from the town, I am cut off from communication with the men in England. I greatly regret this, as they supplied me with punctual advices about armaments, and as I am in this village, where no one has dared to come and see me, I am prevented from sending others.[35]

Over the following months, the situation did not improve; in fact, the flow of intelligence grew worse, and, on multiple occasions, Mendoza had to write to Philip, admitting that, due to the closure of ports or a lack of sources, he lacked English news.[36] To compound the issue, Mendoza's best source of English intelligence, Sir Edward Stafford, ceased communicating with Mendoza.[37] Mendoza's apparatus for gathering English intelligence was collapsing – he had lost contact with key sources and it was difficult to communicate with those sources he still had – and, with the onset of civil war in France demanding his full attention, he lacked the time and resources to rebuild his English intelligence network.

Following the failure of his Armada in 1588, Philip II did not abandon his ambition of

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[33] Jenson, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism*, p. 161.
[34] S. Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 290-92.
[35] Mendoza to Philip, St Dié, 27 December 1588, *CSPSimancas (1587-1603)*, p. 501.
[36] For example, Mendoza to Philip, Paris, 4 September 1589, 5 March 1590, *CSPSimancas (1587-1603),* pp. 556, 572.
[37] Mendoza to Philip, St. Dié, 2 November 1588, 27 December 1588, *CSPSimancas (1587-1603)*, pp. 477, 501. For a discussion of why Stafford ceased communicating with Mendoza, see Leimon and Parker, 'Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy', pp. 1155-56.

invading England and re-establishing Catholicism there. However, developments, especially in France, demanded Philip's immediate attention, and he was forced to divert Spanish military and financial resources away from the English campaign. Faced with this geopolitical reality, there was little the Spanish Elizabethans could do but wait for the situation to improve and, in the meantime, consolidate their positions as leaders within the English Catholic population. This chapter highlights three main areas through which the Spanish Elizabethans consolidated their positions. First, it highlights how Hugh Owen advanced his position as an intelligencer, becoming the Spanish Crown's principal source for English intelligence in the 1590s. Second, it reveals how the Spanish Elizabethans published multiple texts advocating their cause, and emphasises how the espionage network coordinated by Owen had an integral role in providing the information included in these printed works. Third, the chapter shows how the Spanish Elizabethans used intelligence to discredit their opponents within the English Catholic population, most notably at the trial of Thomas Morgan in 1590. Overall, the chapter argues that the Spanish Elizabethans, recognising that the geopolitical situation in the early 1590s was unfavourable to their cause, looked to use this time to consolidate their position as leaders within English Catholicism and strengthen their Spanish connections.

Supplying Intelligence to Spain

Owen and Stanley in Spain

Early in 1590, the Catholic exiles Sir William Stanley and Hugh Owen journeyed together to Spain from the Spanish Netherlands.[38] Each had their own intentions for the journey, but in common was a desire to integrate themselves further into the Spanish system and consolidate their positions as military leaders and advisors to the Spanish authorities.

Stanley's journey to Madrid was taken on the advice of the Duke of Parma, who had encouraged him to go to Philip II to explain the urgency of making better use of his English regiment. Parma even wrote to Philip on Stanley's behalf: 'Please God that your Majesty may realize that from these men there will be services that procure the advance of the Catholic religion'.[39] Stanley's journey, then, was taken in the hopes of receiving adulation for his defection from England to Spain, and being rewarded with greater military responsibilities. However, the reception he received was the complete opposite, and there is evidence to suggest

[38] *SE,* pp. 56-57, 145.
[39] Parma to Philip II, January 1590, AGSE 598/23, quoted in *SE*, p. 145.

that many Spaniards regarded Stanley's defection as dishonourable, despite the military advantage it brought Spain. In 1587, when Stanley had first visited Spain to see King Philip, William Lyon, Bishop of Cork, reported that as Stanley had passed through Seville, he had been disarmed and unhorsed by Spaniards who 'reviled him for his lewde doinge towarde his prince'.[40] Although on that earlier visit to Spain, Stanley had found himself in favour with Philip, who had punished those who had 'thus dealt with him', on this journey he found Philip unreceptive. When Stanley presented his case to Philip in February 1590, the King refused to place Stanley's regiment under the direct assistance of the Spanish treasury, but, instead, ordered that it be paid out of the revenues raised in Flanders.[41] This decision meant that it would be difficult for Stanley to recruit fresh soldiers for his regiment to replace those lost to illness, death, and desertion.[42] Faced with this bleak future, Stanley decided to remain in Spain and keep pressing for better arrangements for his regiment. He spent over a year in the attempt, trying to show his value by proposing schemes for invading or disrupting England. The English priest-turned-informer to the Elizabethan Privy Council, John Cecil, reported in 1591 that Stanley was hoping to be sent to Ireland with 1000 men and 30 ships. Albert Loomie has noted how the Spanish sources do not support this claim, but they do show that Stanley was working with the governor of Ferrol in Galicia in August 1590.[43]

Stanley's most developed plan, drawn up in spring 1591, was for an expedition to seize Alderney in the Channel Islands.[44] Capturing Alderney, Stanley argued, would aid Philip by giving Spain a safe haven for ships sailing from Spain to Flanders. It could also be used as a base of operations against England and France. Taking it would require 300 men from his regiment and 200 from the *tercios* of Parma's army. Sailing under an English flag, they would go right into the harbour before the alarm was raised. Moreover, by attacking Alderney in October or November, the invading force would avoid the Elizabethan fleet, which would already be in port for the winter, giving the successful invaders the winter to fortify their defences before any English counterattack could occur.

Alderney had not featured in the calculations of Spain's military leadership prior to Stanley's plan, but this did not stop Stanley's plan gaining traction. So confident was Stanley of the merits of his plan that he left Robert Persons to argue its case whilst he travelled back to

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[40] William Lyon, Bishop of Cork, to Geoffrey Fenton, Cork, 17 December 1587, SP 63/132/46I.
[41] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Estado lib. 251d n.f. cited in *SE*, p. 145.
[42] Indeed, some of the Irish soldiers who defected with him in 1587 received pardons from the Elizabethan regime in 1593 on the grounds that they had been 'forced' into disloyalty. J. Morrin (ed.), *Calendar of Patent Rolls in Ireland of the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth* (2 vols., London, 1861-62), II, pp. 255-56.
[43] *SE*, p. 147.
[44] *SE*, pp. 147-51.

Flanders to ready his troops for the invasion.[45] Stanley's confidence that he would secure Spanish backing for his plan was not unfounded: shortly after he had presented the plan, he had received a warm letter of praise from Philip II in support of the scheme.[46] However, the escalation of the war in France, discussed above, diverted Spanish military attention away from England, and there were fears that any Spanish action directly against England would only increase English involvement in France and the Netherlands against Spain. Stanley's plan, therefore, would have to wait. Although his efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, they do show how Stanley attempted to consolidate his position by securing more reliable funding for his regiment and by trying to secure Spanish backing for a scheme against England in which he and his men would be central.

Hugh Owen's time in Spain had a very different outcome. There is no surviving evidence which states Owen's intentions for his journey, but, from circumstantial material, it would appear that, during his brief time in Spain, Owen's expertise as an intelligencer specialising in English affairs was welcomed by the Spanish government. Shortly after this visit, Owen's pension more than doubled from twenty-five escudos a month to sixty. This newly enlarged pension meant that Owen had one of the largest pensions of all the non-noble British Catholic exiles, which suggests that the Spanish Crown believed he had something to offer. Moreover, Owen's name started appearing in lists, not of those containing the names of English Catholic exile pensioners, but those with the names of the military and civilian leadership running the Spanish regime in the Netherlands (Figure 2.1).[47]

Furthermore, following Owen's return to the Netherlands, the number of documents that survive amongst the files of the Spanish Council of State marked 'avisos de Inglattera' (news from England) dramatically increases. Many of these documents are located alongside letters from Owen to Juan de Idiáquez, one of Philip II's closest advisors in the last decade of his reign and a member of the powerful committee known as the *Junta Grande* or, more sinisterly, the *Junta de Noche.*[48] Idiáquez was Owen's primary contact within the Spanish regime, and the

[45] The surviving copy of the Alderney invasion plan is in Robert Persons' hand, but it is a document that only an experienced soldier could have prepared. *SE*, p. 147.
[46] *SE*, p. 147.
[47] Compare, for example, 'Relación de los entretenidos que ay en el Exto Irlandés y escosseses y Ingleses' [1593], AGSE 606/96, with 'Relacion de los entretenidos que ay anssi de menores del Pays como a cerca la persona y En el Exto y del Consejo', [1593], AGSE 606/97.
[48] Carnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe*, pp. 92-119. On the origins of the 'Junta de Noche', see J. Baltar Rodríguez, 'Las cortes de monzón de 1585 y el origen de la llamada junto de noche', *Ius Fugit,* 10-11 (2001-02), pp. 533-41.

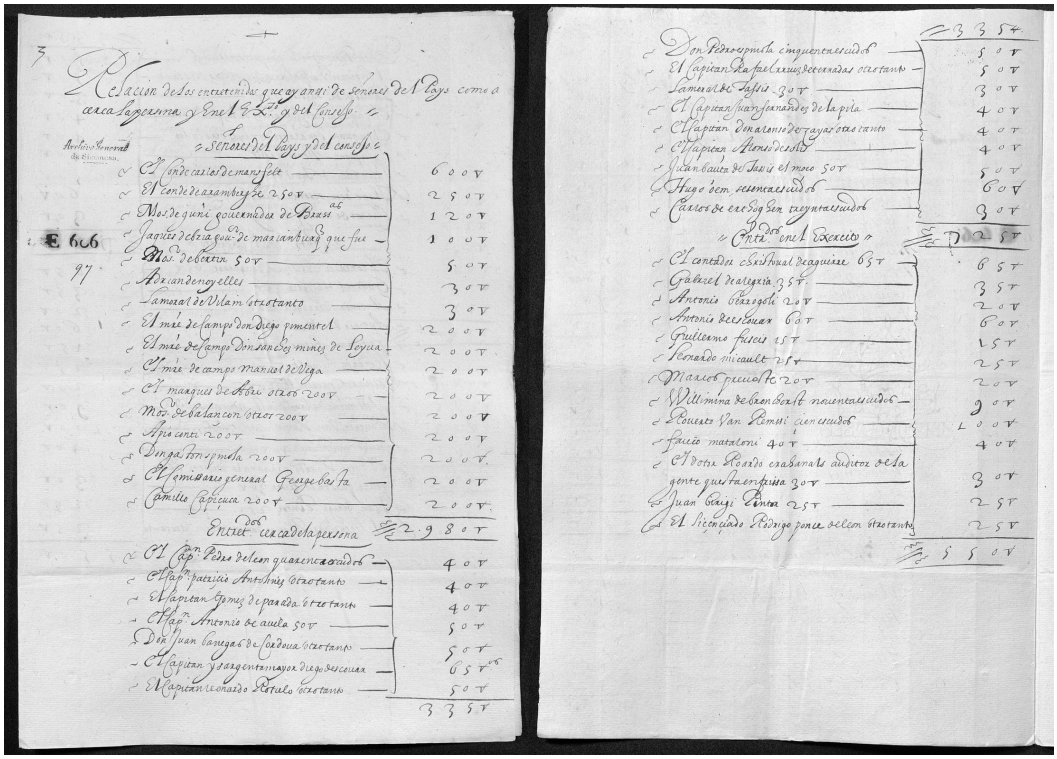


Figure 2.1: 'Relacion de los entretenidos que ay anssi de señores del Pays como a cerca la persona y En el Exto y del Consejo', [1593], AGSE 606/97. The name 'Hugo Oen' can be found on the right-hand page, eighth from the top.

letters offered a brief commentary on the accompanying *avisos*.[49] This increase in the number of 'avisos de inglaterra' reflects a Spanish demand for the intelligence which Owen had to offer.

Stanley and Owen travelled to Spain in 1590 with hopes of consolidating their positions in the Spanish military establishment. The outcomes of their trips were wildly contrasting. International developments, especially in France, meant that Philip II did not feel it prudent, despite his early enthusiasm for the scheme, to embark on Stanley's proposed expedition against Alderney; Spanish military resources were stretched too thin to risk an escalation of English involvement in the Dutch Revolt or the French Wars of Religion in retaliation. In contrast, international developments probably aided Owen's case. The onset of civil war in France meant that Mendoza was no longer able to provide English intelligence. Moreover, the English Armada of 1589 had showed the damage the English fleet could do to the Spanish war machine. Accurate intelligence was needed to help prevent the English causing such havoc again. Owen's previous experience as an intelligencer for Parma and others meant that he already had the network, and so he was entrusted with greater responsibilities. In the years that

[49] Many of these letters are no longer extant, although one suspects that some might be found in state archives in Spain other than the *Archivo General de Simancas*.

followed, he continued to strengthen this network, improving his access to English intelligence, and he supplied regular and up-to-date information to Spain in the 'avisos de Inglaterra'.

Improving the Quality of Intelligence

In *The Spanish Elizabethans*, Albert Loomie comments on the challenges which face historians trying to identify those involved in the supply of intelligence to Spain via Hugh Owen: 'his anonymous friends in England, who related to him countless small details and items of news, were successfully protected in turn by their leader in Brussels [Owen]'.[50] To Owen's discretion must be added the decision of a court official in Brussels to arrest Owen and confiscate his papers in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot.[51] Whilst Owen was swiftly released, his papers were never returned, and have subsequently been lost. In a personal letter to the Duke of Lerma, Philip III's favourite, Owen gave an overview of the documents which he had lost, stressing the immediate danger of his network being exposed: 'there are original *avisos* for many years past and the ciphers by which they can be read with the names of the correspondents as well as the manner used to forward their letters during the war and after'.[52] The loss of these files frustrates the historian trying to reconstruct Owen's network, but it does not prohibit the exercise. Details of the network can be gleaned from those of the network's documents which survive in archives in Spain and England, and these can be complemented by reports sent to Spain, now located in the *Archivo General de Simancas*, and by documents generated by the Elizabethan regime's counter-intelligence efforts. What follows is an overview of Owen's network in the early 1590s. It shows that Owen headed an extensive espionage network in 1590 – the 'correspondents' network' as Loomie terms it – and stresses how Owen did not rest on his laurels, but instead looked to recruit new informants who could supply information from within the Elizabethan regime, thereby improving the quality of accurate intelligence he could supply to Spain.[53]

Owen had two principal sources of English intelligence in the early 1590s: the correspondence network which he had established over the previous two decades, and the Jesuit missionaries in England who provided him with information via Richard Verstegan. As noted in Chapter 1, Owen was in correspondence with many English Catholic exiles. These exiles, living in a variety of cities in Spain, France, and the Netherlands, shared with one another

[50] *SE*, p. 92.
[51] F. Edwards, 'The First Earl of Salisbury's Pursuit of Hugh Owen', *Recusant History,* 26/1 (2002), pp. 2-38.
[52] 'Tocante la prision de Ugo Oen', AGSE 624 n.f. quoted in *SE*, p. 85.
[53] *SE*, p. 55.

information which they had received from their own contacts. This correspondence continued in the early 1590s, and details of its structure can be gleaned from a report written by Lewis Lewknor for Lord Burghley in August 1590.[54] Lewknor was an English Catholic who had spent ten years in the Spanish Netherlands, serving in the Army of Flanders before a severe arm wound had halted his military career and deprived him of his Spanish pension. Facing financial ruin, Lewknor returned home. In a bid to prove his loyalty to Elizabeth, Lewknor prepared a detailed report for Lord Burghley on Englishmen in Spanish service. He named sixty-three English lay exiles and eleven priests receiving Spanish pensions plus a number of Scots and Irish. Where possible, Lewknor included details about the size of pension each exile received, and he tried to group exiles together. One of the groups identified was a group of sixteen exiles who 'ar altogether for Owen & Holt and vowed enemyes to their country, employing thereunto the small might they have'. Lewknor named Richard Hopkins as 'theyr ligger in Paris for intelligence', Humphrey Shelton was 'theyr intelligencer from Roan,' Edward Barlow and Francis Ridgeley were living in Bruges and 'inform from thence,' and that Anthony Rolston was 'theyr intelligencer from Spain'.[55] Richard Verstegan, meanwhile, served as a distribution hub for the group's correspondence: 'he receive and convey such paquets as com from them to Rome, Paris Engl[and] or from thence to them', which suggests that this network communicated with figures across western Europe, but did not necessarily use conventional postal routes.[56] A number of others are listed in this group without any additional information, but their inclusion in this grouping suggests that Lewknor believed they participated in this correspondents' network.

Lewknor did not go into great detail about the roles played by each of these English Catholic exiles, but his belief that they were intelligencers appears to have been accurate. A later document, produced for the Spanish Crown by Hugh Owen, William Stanley, and William Holt, corroborates the intelligence credentials of some of those Lewknor identified.[57] This document was a complete survey of the English pensioners in Flanders, and explained their contribution (or lack thereof) to the Spanish cause. Richard Hopkins was mysteriously described as 'more than a soldier'; Shelton was noted to have gone to Rouen on the

[54] 'List of Such Persons English, Irish, and Scottish, as have Pensions of the King of Spain', 8 August 1590, SP 12/233/32.
[55] Anthony Rolston was, in fact, a double agent, and was also supplying information to the Elizabethan regime. See P. Hammer, 'An Elizabethan Spy who Came in from the Cold: The Return of Anthony Standen to England in 1593', *Historical Research,* 65 (1992), pp. 277-95.
[56] On early modern European postal networks, see B. Dooley (ed.), *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2010).
[57] 'Traslado de la relación q[ue] medio a su A, sobre los entretenidos Ingleses, a x de Marco 1596, en Bruselas', AGSE 612/125.

recommendation of Cardinal Allen and, from there, communicates with those in England; Edward Barlow was described as having been engaged 'in secret dealings'. Ingram Thwing, William Fyncham, William Middelton, and Gabriel Denis were all listed as having conducted intelligence work in the Owen-Stanley-Holt report; all four appear in Lewknor's lists in the Owen-Holt grouping although without additional information.

Verstegan's role, which Lewknor identified, as an intermediary for English Catholic communication is also confirmed in the Owen-Stanley-Holt report. The report describes Verstegan's work thus: 'from Antwerp he corresponds with the Jesuit priests in England and with Cardinal Allen, and with Father Persons in Spain concerning the English mission. He also serves in writing *avisos* in the service of His Majesty when he had orders for them'.[58] The confession of Henry Walpole, a Jesuit priest arrested in England in 1593, revealed more about Verstegan's work in this capacity. Walpole claimed that reports were sent from Verstegan's house in Antwerp to Cardinal Allen (in Rome), Robert Persons (in Spain), and William Holt (in Flanders).[59] Moreover, Walpole explained that, as far as he understood things, Verstegen received his news about England from Henry Garnet and 'Spillor'.[60] Garnet was the Jesuit leader in England, and, as such, was expected to provide updates to his superiors. However, he was constantly on the move and in hiding, and the contents of his letters were, according to Robert Persons, cautiously worded, almost to the point that they were meaningless.[61] 'Spillor', meanwhile, was Robert Spiller, steward to Anne Howard, Countess of Arundel, a powerful English Catholic widow, who used her position and widowed status to advance the Catholic cause.[62] Verstegan most likely had other sources in England too, or, at least those that he had contact with in England had access to more well-positioned sources. In a letter to Robert Persons dated April 1593, Verstegan revealed details of these sources' effectiveness:

> I have receyved from or friends in 25 (i.e. England) a discourse in writing conteyning 50 sheets of paper, being the confession of Mr. Anthony Tirrell written by himself, before his later fall. Wherein there is very notable matter discoursed too long here to be rehearsed; sundry copies of the treasurer's letters, and others in

[58] 'Traslado de la relación', AGSE 612/125.
[59] The newsletters published in *Letters of Verstegan* show this claim to be accurate.
[60] Confession of Hen. Walpole, on interrogatories not prefixed, [July? 1594], SP 12/249/44.
[61] Copy of a letter from Persons to Claudio Acquaviva, [after 15 March 1593], ARSI Hispania 139 f.126.
[62] Jennifer Binczewski has shown how English Catholic widows, including Anne Howard, were able to use their status with to their advantage, exploiting their economic independence, legal autonomy, and manipulating gendered stereotypes to avoid serious repercussions for aiding their co-religionists: 'Solitary Sparrows'. On Spiller's role in the intelligence network, see Martin, *Elizabethan Espionage*, pp. 197-98; A. Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics, 1603-1612* (London, 1973), pp. 1-2.

> authority unto him, besydes divers articles, interrogations, practices of Walsingham and others.[63]

Clearly, Verstegan had access to a source within the regime itself, although exactly who this was is unclear.

Whilst this network was extensive, it had major shortcomings as Archduke Ernest, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, expressed to Philip II on 20 December 1594. He wrote that the best English information came from the Jesuit missionaries, but their position on the fringe of society meant that they only had access to news that they 'hear on the street'.[64] Ernest explained that Spain urgently needed better sources in England. However, Hugh Owen and the other Spanish Elizabethans were aware of this problem, and were actively looking to address it. From at least 1592, Thomas Fitzherbert, an English Catholic intelligencer for Spain based in Rouen from 1591, and Richard Sherwood, a chaplain in Stanley's regiment, had been communicating with William Sterrell in England. Sterrell had been recruited into the fledgling intelligence operation run for the Earl of Essex by Thomas Phelippes.[65] However, Sterrell's sympathies lay with the Catholic cause. In the 1580s, under the alias 'Kirby', he had been 'one of the chefest famyliars with Monser Manshers [Mauvissière, the French ambassador in London]… for all actions of the Scotis Quene, and also in matters of weyght concerning the papists in Ingland'.[66] The Spanish Elizabethans swiftly realised that Sterrell's position in Essex's spy ring was an excellent opportunity. Sterrell could feed false information to the regime, thereby disrupting anti-Catholic efforts, and he could use his connections to secure the release of Catholic recusants from prison. Between 1592 and 1595, Sterrell was steadily drawn deeper into Owen's circle of informants, and great care was taken so that the Elizabethan regime continued to believe that he was their man.[67] Sterrell's exact allegiances have long deceived historians, but, as Martin has shown, he was a triple agent: a spy who pretended to be a double agent for one side, whilst being a double agent for the other.[68]

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[63] 30 April 1593, in *Letters of Verstegan,* p. 134.
[64] 'no pueden dezir sino lo que oyer [oír] por las calles', Archduke Ernest to Philip II, Brussels, 20 December 1594, CP 133/129.
[65] On Essex's spy ring, see P. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 152-98.
[66] Edward Stephens to Lord Cobham, Dover, 22 September 1585 [OS], SP 12/182/27. Patrick Martin quotes this source, but does not cite the location, *Elizabethan Espionage*, p. 47.
[67] Martin, *Elizabethan Espionage*, pp. 79-160.
[68] Stephen Alford and Paul Hammer, among others, argue that Sterrell was employed by Thomas Phelippes to spy on Catholic exiles. Gustav Ungerer, meanwhile, contends that whilst this was the case at first, he became a double agent when he was employed by English expatriates to spy on the English court. Alford, *The Watchers*, pp. 267-69, 285-97; Hammer, *Polarisation,* pp 153-95; Ungerer, *Correspondence of Antonio Pérez's Exile,* I, p. 247; Martin, *Elizabethan Espionage.*

Avisos de Inglaterra

The English intelligence supplied to the Spanish Crown by Owen arrived in documents entitled 'avisos de Inglaterra'. The *avisos de Inglaterra* fit into an old and widespread tradition of Spanish espionage. Although their origins can be traced back to the late-medieval period, *avisos* became commonplace in mid-sixteenth-century Spain as a means of communicating news and intelligence over great distances.[69] As Manuel Chaves explains, *avisos* were 'written compilations of news sent by soldiers, spies and political agents deployed in embassies, frontier posts and fortifications to the current political authority or to government members at the court'.[70] This section serves to introduce these documents and provide an overview of their contents. These *avisos de Inglaterra* are deserving of a full study.

The *avisos de Inglaterra* can be found in the Flandes volumes in the Estado collection at the Archivo General de Simancas. This archival location reflects their geographical origins and offers clues regarding their authorship. News and intelligence were smuggled out of England into the Low Countries, where it was translated into Spanish before being forwarded to Spain. The compiler also filtered the news to keep the document succinct and pertinent to the intended audience: the Spanish Council of State and King. Consequently, the majority of the documents endorsed 'avisos de Inglaterra' are only one or two sides long. Longer documents are generally *avisos* from multiple dates which have been consolidated. For example, AGSE 601/185 contains reports written in London on 10, 16, and 31 May 1591, 15, 16, 18, 26, and 27 June 1591, and 4 July 1591.[71] This consolidation probably occurred either to keep English intelligence together for easy referencing, or because the separate intelligence documents arrived in the Low Countries around the same time.

The *avisos* were handwritten and divided into brief paragraphs, each containing a new item of information (the singular *aviso*), and often a mark denoting the beginning of a new section (see Figure 2.2). In addition to raw news, *avisos* contained interpretations and analyses

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[69] J. Étienvre, 'Entre relacion y carta: los avisos' in H. Ettinghausen, V. Infantes de Miguel, A. Redondo, M. Cruz García de Enterría (eds.), *Las Relaciones de sucesos en España: 1500-1750* (Alcalá, 1996), pp. 111-121. NB do not confuse these *avisos* with the published newsletters of the same name. This latter group has been far more extensively studied. See, for example, M. Agulló y Cobo, *Relaciones de sucesos I: Años 1477-1619* (Madrid, 1966). See also the website for the SIERS project which contains an invaluable primary and secondary bibliography on *relaciones de sucesos*. http://www.siers.es/siers/principal.htm; R. Pieper, 'News from the New World: Spain's Monopoly in the European Network of Handwritten Newsletters during the Sixteenth Century', in J. Raymond and N. Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 495-511; H. Ettinghausen, 'Politics and the Press in Spain', in S. Baron and B. Dooley (eds.), *The Politics of Early Modern Europe* (London, 2001), pp. 199-215; Sáez-Hidalgo, 'English Recusant Controversy in Spanish Print Culture', pp. 210-31.

[70] M. Chaves, '*Relaciones de Sucesos:* "Accounts of Events"', in D. Thomas and J. Chesworth (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History. Volume 9: Western and Southern Europe (1600-1700)* (Leiden, 2017), p. 373.

[71] 'Noticias de Inglaterra y Francia de 10 de Mayo a 4 de Julio de 1591', AGSE 601/185.

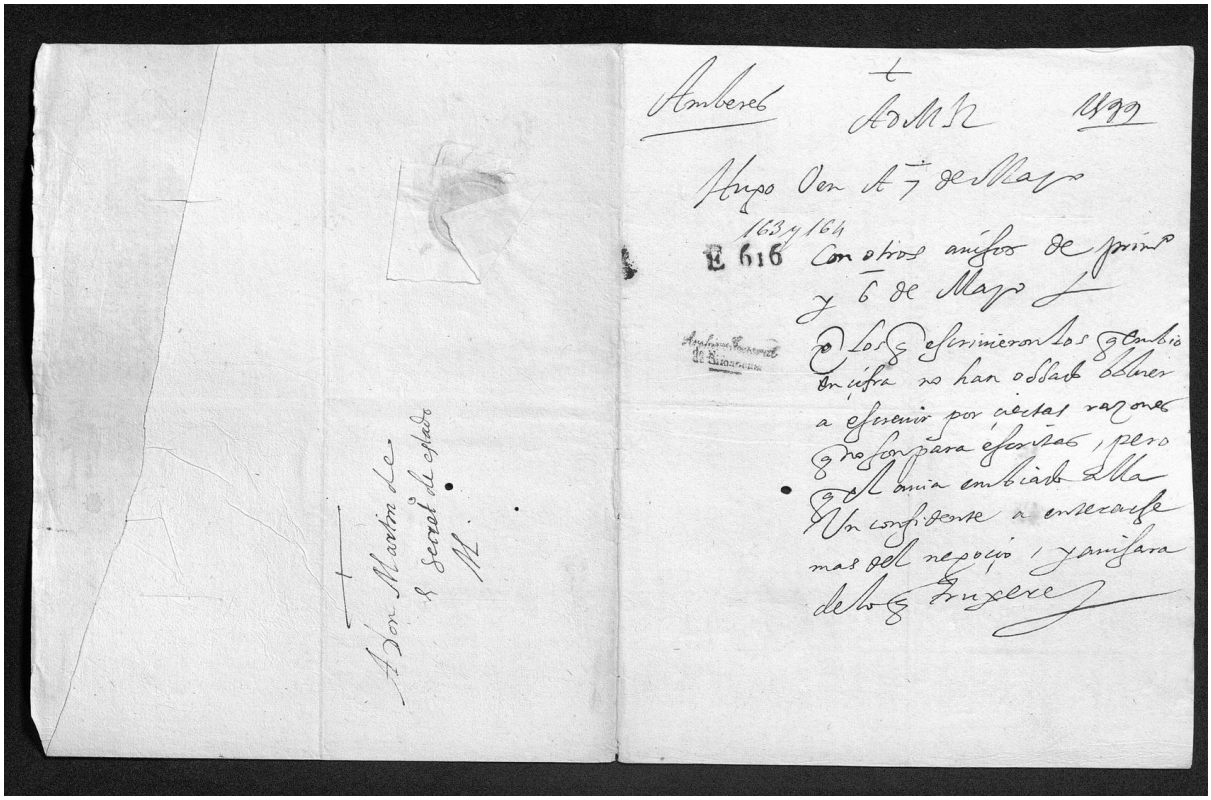


Figure 2.2: Letter from Hugh Owen to Don Martin de Idiaquez noting that it was sent with avisos dated 'prim[er]o y 6 de Mayo', Antwerp, 7 May 1599, AGSE 616/163.

from the intelligencer.[72] For example, from the *avisos de Inglaterra*, on 6 February 1599 an *aviso* was sent to Spain reporting that the Earl of Essex was preparing to depart for Ireland to lead his major campaign against the Earl of Tyrone. The author stressed that, once Essex has departed 'the Spanish will never find a better situation in order to make some effect in this kingdom' as an invading force would find the country 'neglected'.[73]

Authorship is near impossible to verify definitively. There are rarely identifying marks or signatures, and handwriting is not always useful. Indeed, Jaime Pereda Martín argues that this anonymity distinguishes *avisos* as a genre from letters containing news.[74] The difficulties in identifying the author can be seen by examining *avisos* dated 7 May 1599. Hugh Owen sent these *avisos* to Spain alongside a cover letter to Don Martin de Idiáquez, the Secretary of State responsible for northern Europe (Figure 2.2).[75] These *avisos* were dated 1 and 6 May and were written in a different hand to Owen's cover letter. Thus, it can be ascertained that Owen at the very least had access to the *avisos* and was involved in their production and dispatch, but that

[72] Carnicer and Marcos, *Sebastián de Arbizu*, p. 86.
[73] 'Avisos de Inglaterra de 6 de Hebrero 1599', AGSE 616/41.
[74] J. Pereda Martín, 'Noticia atrasad, pan duro. Avisos manuscritos en tiempos de Felipe II', in M. Fernández, C. González-Sánchez and N. Álvarez (eds.), *Testigo del Tiempo, memoria del universo. Cultura escrita y sociedad en el mundo ibérico (siglos XV-XVIII)* (Barcelona, 2009), pp. 603-21.
[75] On the secretary of State's role, see Carnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe*, pp. 101-19

someone else, who cannot at this time be identified, was involved as well.[76] Therefore, to determine the *avisos'* authorship, it is necessary to rely on circumstantial evidence.

One possible way to determine authorship is to examine the letters sent alongside the *avisos,* such as the example above. For the most part, however, these have been separated from the *avisos* unless they contain further analysis and commentary pertinent to the news the *avisos* contained. From those letters that do remain, Hugh Owen's role in producing the *avisos* can be seen.[77] An alternate way of identifying the *avisos'* authors is to look at other documents and see if anyone was identified as an author. This method can have some success. For example, in 1596, Colonel Stanley, Fr William Holt SJ, and Hugh Owen prepared a list of the English exiles in the Low Countries receiving a pension from the Spanish Crown. Alongside each name they put the size of the pension and a short biography. Next to Richard Verstegan it was noted that, alongside his work for the Jesuits and for Cardinal Allen, 'he serves also in preparing *avisos* for the service of His Majesty'.[78] The close working relationship Verstegan and Owen had has been noted above, and, given this relationship, it makes sense that they worked together supplying *avisos* to Spain. Similarly, Robert Persons' memorandum entitled 'principal points to facilitate the English enterprise', which he sent to Martin de Idiáquez, identified Hugh Owen and Richard Verstegan as 'very fitting persons' to coordinate intelligence gathering on England, reflecting their already-proven abilities in this capacity.[79] An alternative way to approach the question is to look at it from the English perspective and identify which individuals the Elizabethan regime believed to be integral to Spanish intelligence gathering in England. In late 1596, Verstegan and Owen were listed, alongside William Holt, as men to be abducted by English agents, such was their position in the Spanish service.[80] The scheme never got off the ground. These methods confirm Owen and Verstegan as authors of the *avisos,* but more extensive research is needed to see if anyone else also sent their own *avisos* concerning England and English affairs.

[76] It is possible that Owen had a secretary, but, at this time, no evidence has been found to confirm this.
[77] For example, Hugh Owen to Martin de Idiaquez, Antwerp, 7 May 1599, AGSE 616/163; [Hugh Owen] to Martin de Idiáquez, Brussels, 5 June 1599, AGSE 616/169; [Hugh Owen] to Martin de Idiáquez, Brussels, 14 June 1599, AGSE 616/172. Many other cover letters probably survive in other volumes both at Simancas and in other Spanish archives. Further research is needed to uncover them.
[78] 'Translado de la relación que medio a su A, sobre los Entretenidos Ingleses, a x de Marco 1596, en Bruselas', AGSE 612/125.
[79] 'Principal points to facilitate the English enterprise', [1595], *CSP Simancas (1587-1603),* p. 633.
[80] Wheeler to William Waad, Middelburg, 27 December 1596 [OS], SP 84/53 f.219.

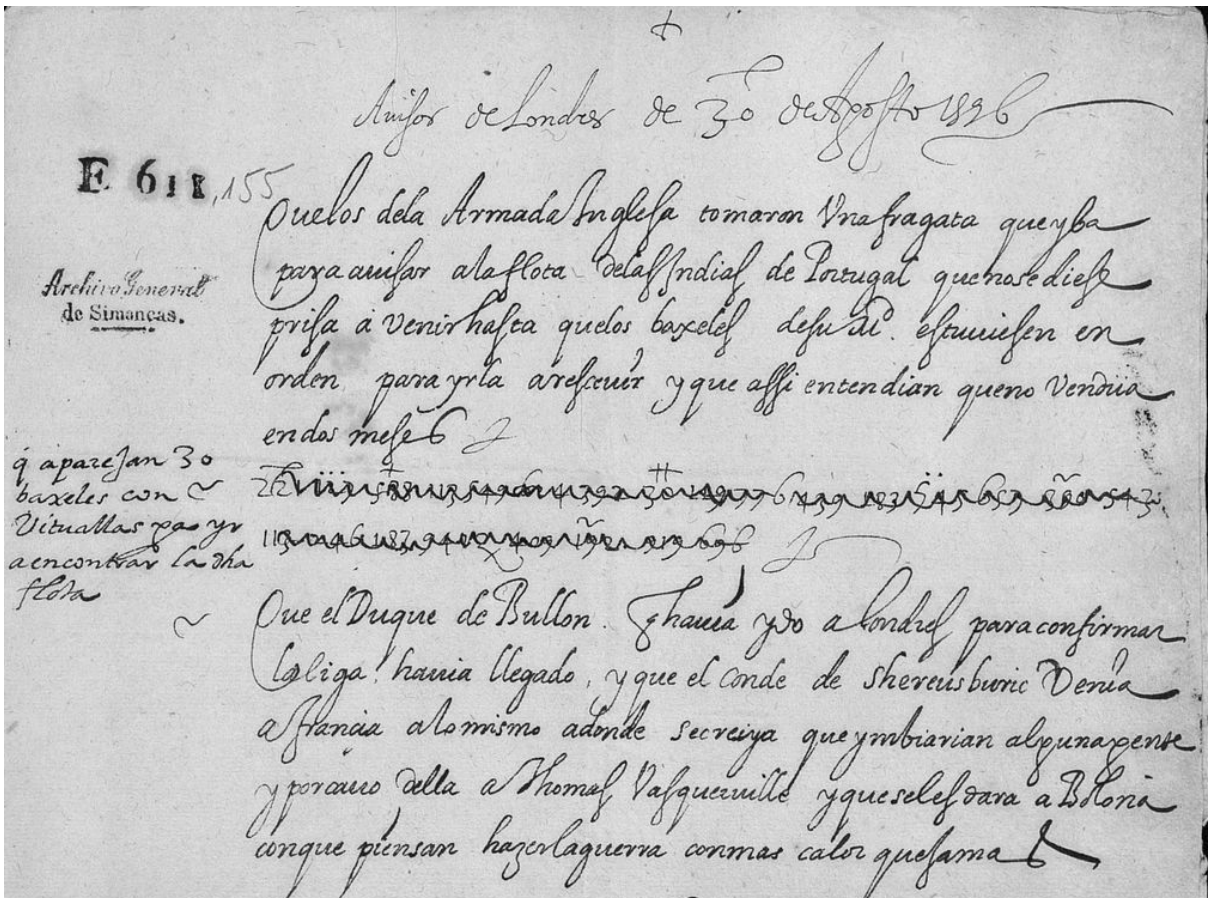


Figure 2.3: A coded aviso with decryption; 'Avisos de Londres de 30 de Agosto 1596', AGSE 611/155.

Like many dispatches in this period, the *avisos* employed cipher, although its use was sparing, being saved for occasions when secrecy was paramount. Sometimes, for instance in an *aviso* dated 5 January 1597, code was only used to protect the identity of the source. On this occasion, the coded passage read: 'Relation of one person who has come from England to relay and departed from London the 5 January 1597. He has gone and has charge at sea'.[81] At other times, it was the intelligence itself which was protected by the cypher. Figure 2.3 shows an example of a particular piece of intelligence being protected by cipher. As can be seen, a substitution cipher was used with each letter or word being replaced by a number. Once the *avisos* arrived in Spain, it was decoded with the deciphered contents written alongside the original code.[82] Here the *aviso* read, 'they prepare 30 vessels with supplies in order to go to find the said fleet'. When read alongside the rest of the report, it becomes apparent that the *aviso* was warning that the English had prepared a fleet to intercept the Portuguese fleet as it returned

[81] 'Los Avisos de Inglat[err]a de 5 de Enero 1597', AGSE 615/58.
[82] On the Spanish secretariat in which correspondence was deciphered, see Carnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe*, pp. 102-03.

from the East Indies. However, whilst key details and identities were protected by cipher, the vast majority of the *avisos de Inglaterra* were written in plain Spanish.

The *avisos de Inglaterra* contain a great amount of information on events in England or related to England in the late-Elizabethan period. This information should not be overlooked or quickly dismissed, as they were based, for the most part, on the reports of those who had access to extremely accurate intelligence from within the Elizabethan regime. The content of the *avisos* was very similar to Verstegan's newsletters primarily written to Robert Persons and Roger Baynes (William Allen's secretary).[83] This overlap makes sense. As has been noted in already, Hugh Owen and Richard Verstegan worked extremely closely, so it is reasonable to assume that they shared the intelligence they received before sending it to different audiences. These different audiences result in the two different source collections having slightly different emphases: Verstegan's newsletters are more heavily skewed towards religious events, to martyrdoms and the persecution of Catholics more generally, whilst Owen's *avisos* give more attention to political and military developments. This is not to say, though, that Verstegan's newsletters do not include political and military developments, nor that Owen's do not include religious affairs – just that there was a prioritisation of news content according to the target audience. Although, by their very nature, the *avisos* do not contain a full or perfectly balanced depiction of political and military events in the period, they contain many details which are a useful addition to historians' understanding of political and military developments in this period as well as English Catholic and Spanish interpretations of events.[84]

The *avisos* presented the political scene in England in the early 1590s as being dominated by Lord Burghley, and, to a lesser degree, his son Robert Cecil. Together they were able, the *avisos* suggested, to bend Elizabeth to their will and to control the government to the detriment of its people and general welfare. In the early 1590s, the *avisos* reported of little effective opposition to the Cecils, but, as the decade progressed, they charted the rise and fall of the Earl of Essex. Essex was presented as a soldier, keen to win prestige by leading men in battle, in contrast to the more bureaucratic Cecils. Equally, though, Essex was depicted as less extreme on the matter of religion, and the *avisos* cautiously suggested that he might be able to use his influence over Elizabeth to advocate a more moderate religious policy. This assessment of Essex probably stemmed from the fact that much of the *avisos*' intelligence about the court came through William Sterrell and Thomas Phelippes, both employed by Essex.[85]

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[83] For an overview of Verstegan's letters, see *Letters of Verstegan,* esp. pp. xxviii-xxxiv.

[84] These themes will be explored in greater depth in the second half of this chapter.

[85] Martin, *Elizabethan Espionage*, pp. 79-192.

The succession was a common topic in the *avisos,* and, whilst Spanish Elizabethan attempts to persuade the Spanish Crown to intervene in the matter are discussed at length in chapters 3 and 4, it is worth mentioning a few details about the succession's prominence in the intelligence here. The succession was a forbidden topic of conversation in England, and those who openly discussed it or published pamphlets about it risked imprisonment.[86] But the succession was very much disputed — James VI of Scotland, who would become King of England on Elizabeth's death, was just one of many possible claimants. For Spain, knowing which candidate was most likely to succeed and their political and religious inclinations was vital for shaping Spanish policies vis-à-vis England. If it seemed that a Catholic claimant would take the Crown, then the need for an invasion was less pressing. Thus, the *avisos* contained great swathes of information about the leading candidates and their politics. James VI, in particular, was of great focus. The rumours that he could be converted to Catholicism were frequently cited, as were his policies towards Scottish Catholics, but equally so were the rumours that he was playing both sides to his own advantage.[87] The image presented of James is as someone who could not be trusted in religious matters, and that an alternative candidate was needed to secure Catholicism's position in England.

The *avisos* contained large amounts of information about the ongoing religious situation in England. A number of martyrdoms were referenced in the reports, as was the persecution of Catholics more generally.[88] For the most part, though, the *avisos* did not focus on this kind of intelligence, but instead prioritised more practical information about England which would influence Spanish policy towards England.

Wider aspects of the English political scene which were presented in the *avisos* included the debates within the Elizabethan regime on foreign policy, on war and peace, as well as military preparations being made ahead of campaigns in the Low Countries, Ireland, France, at sea, or against mainland Spain itself. Thus, in the early 1590s, the *avisos* reported extensively on Colonel Norris's efforts to counter Spanish advances in Brittany, whilst, later in the decade,

[86] For example, the Puritan MP Peter Wentworth was committed to the Tower in 1593 for presenting a petition on the subject of the succession: 'Wentworth, Peter (1524-97), of Lillingstone Lovell, Oxon', http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/wentworth-peter-1524-97 (accessed 6.9.19).

[87] For example, 'Diversos Avisos de ingalas sera ademas de los quevan en trarelacion', *avisos* entitled 'de Inglaterra a 22 y 23 de Marco 1591', AGSE 600/42; 'Avisos de Inglaterra', 29 March 1597, AGSE 614/89.

[88] For example, 'Avisos de Inglaterra', 29 March 1597, 'AGSE 614/89; 'Avisos de Inglaterra de 3 de Mayo 1597', AGSE 613/70; Avisos de Inglat[err]a de 21 de 9bre 1598', AGSE 615/46.

R. 61.57

La muestra general tomada en Inglaterra ano de 1596

Provincias. y ciudades,	Hombres suficientes	Hombres armados	Gastadores. y officiales.	Caualllos lixeros armados con lancas como se vsa en estas partes	caualllos lixeros como sean de m. con sus plat. traen la lanca en el muslo y van armados muy ligte en la cabeca y vn lado de malla
La prouincia de cambridge	5000	2500	300	30	200
La ciudad de cambridge	300	200	100	2	25
Cornualia,	8300	3500	680	25	360
La Isla de Elie	600	200	36	—	20
La Prouincia de Darby	5600	2300	360	15	80.
La Prouincia de Deuonia	6500	2500	300	26	130
Exceter	750	500	146	—	12
Su Sex	6200	2500	150	16	180.
La Prouincia delicolnia	8000	4000	355	45	200.
Bofon,	226	120	48	—	10
La Prouincia de Somerset,	6000	2000	460	30	620
Brifco We,	5000	2500	400	12	28
La Prouincia de Hert ford	4500	2000	260	28	180
San Albinel	200	100	40	—	6
La Prouincia de Worceste	5000	2500	230	16	85
Non folke,	6800	3500	350	35	140
In Rept	260	85	30	—	3
Non Wiche	400	2900	300	3	22
Sex	5280	3500	365	28	200
Olchefter,	400	180	30	—	10.
La Prouincia de Shorpe	5600	3000	286	25	300.
Sudlae	2400	1000	100	10	30.
Thorensbery	800	300	45	2	4
La Prouincia de Wiltonia	5500	2500	140	20	200
Arrum	500	150	60	—	3
La Prouincia delecoyston	3600	2000	200	10	100
Midlesex	4000	3000	560	40	60
Andref	40000. 2	5000	3000	60	180
La Prouincia de oxonia	5600	1800	230	6	80
La ciudad de oxonia	500	260	100	—	260.
La Prouincia de Dorset	6000	2500	100	10	16
Rule	300	120	40	—	200
Surrey	6200	2500	280	8	10
La Prouincia de buchinghan	5300	2300	300	28	63
La Prouincia de Barke	6000	2800	280	16	9
La Prouincia de Borsford	6500	2200	230	10	120
La Prouincia deStafford	5300	2600	230	12	180
De felde	284	150	8	—	9
La Prouincia delancaster	3000	2800	300	25	150
La Prouincia de Hamtonia	6000	2500	6 350	22	180
Impton	750	300	50	—	8
In chester	200	120	25	—	3
La Prouincia de notinpham	4000	150	100	18	100
La Prouincia de Yorke	1 6000	1 0000	700	1 20	140.
La ciudad de Yorke	6000	2000	500	6	220
La Prouincia de Warwick.	5000	2500	170	15	150
Sent	7500	3000	250	20	200
La Prouincia de chessonia	5000	2300	180	18	150
Ster	350	200	36	—	4
La Prouincia de Hore ford	5500	2000	150	8	100
Hereford	540	245	40	—	4
La Prouinaa de norte hamton	4600	1800	150	8	120
La Prouincia de Hunpinpton	3500	1350	120	5	110
La Prouincia de Rueland	1800	800	65	3	25
Westmerland	2000	1200	100	4	80
Northumberland	2300	1800	100	8	100
Cumberland	2100	1300	86	5	100
El obispado de Duresme	1500	850	65	6	

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there was increasing focus on the military resources being dedicated to counter the Irish rebellion led by the Earl of Tyrone. There were frequent references to attacks on Spanish shipping by English 'adventurers', of the great plunder acquired by this means, and of the preparations being made for the next set of raids. The piratical expeditions included in the dispatches include those led by the Earl of Cumberland, Sir Francis Drake, and many others. At the same time, the *avisos* reported the ongoing debates in England on whether to engage in peace negotiations with Spain, or how best to wage war against Spain with the resources at Elizabeth's disposal.[89]

Given the state of war between England and Spain at this time, it makes sense that a large proportion of the *avisos* focused on England's defences, so that Spain might plan effectively for another invasion attempt. For the most part these details are relatively vague — for example, an *aviso* from 26 May 1599 states that the watchtowers have orders to light fire beacons if they spy an invading force — but sometimes Owen's sources were able to provide copies of extremely detailed government documents relating to national defence.[90] Figure 2.4 shows a breakdown by county and city of the general muster made in England in 1596. It shows the number of 'adequate men', 'armed men', 'officials', and light cavalry available in each county and city. It was not a perfect document, as the author acknowledges, stating 'there is a small error in this relation as they have left out some cities', including Canterbury, and some counties including 'the county where Hugh Owen is native [Caernarfonshire]', but it nevertheless represents a major intelligence coup. With this information it would have been far easier for the Spanish military authorities to plan an invasion, deciding where to land soldiers and establish a bridgehead where the local defences were weakest.

The *avisos* emphasised Elizabethan England's poor financial state. Years of heavy taxation to fund expensive military campaigns in France and the Low Countries had drained the country's resources, and, by the late 1590s, the depleted treasury was beginning to undermine Elizabeth's ability to wage war effectively. Efforts to raise money through loans for men and ships for overseas campaigns were met with resistance from merchants who feared they would not see their investment returned. Moreover, the frequent droughts that occurred during the 1590s made food expensive and scarce, and beggary was commonplace, particularly amongst the disabled soldiers returning from the wars. Adding to these difficulties were the outbreaks of plague which regularly occurred in London, as well as in other parts of England and Wales,

[89] These themes will be discussed in depth for the period 1595-97 below.
[90] 'Avisos de Londres de 26 de Mayo 1599', in dispatch entitled 'Otro correspondente scrive una carta de la misma fecha […]', AGSE 616/171.

and which annually claimed thousands of lives. The *avisos* regularly gave updates that 'the plague begins in London' as well as the latest death toll.[91]

Throughout the 1590s, Hugh Owen and the Spanish Elizabethans supplied English intelligence to the Spanish Crown in documents entitled 'avisos de Inglaterra'. The supply of this intelligence helped cement ties between Spanish Elizabethans such as Owen and the Spanish Crown, which they would later try to exploit when trying to discredit the faction of English Catholics sometimes referred to as the 'Scottish Party'. At the same time as supplying intelligence gathered from England by Owen's espionage network to the Spanish authorities, the same intelligence was also used by the Spanish Elizabethans themselves in their publications.

Intelligence and Spanish Elizabethan Publications

In the years immediately after the Armada, Robert Persons dedicated a great deal of time and effort to the support and training of English priests. On 6 February 1589, he secured the promise of a grant from Philip II for the college at Douai, and, later that year, in July, he obtained authorisation to found a seminary at Valladolid. Over the course of the next four years, he was also heavily involved in the founding of another English seminary at Seville, a hospice at San Lucar, and a college for boys at St Omer in the Spanish Netherlands (now Stonyhurst College, Lancashire). Persons' work as a founder of seminaries has been well documented, particularly by Leo Hicks, so this section will focus on Persons' effort (with Richard Verstegan) to defend the English seminaries and the King of Spain against the polemical attacks coming from England, highlighting the role of intelligence in this process, and to garner Spanish public support for the new institutions.[92]

In the aftermath of the English Armada, there was, understandably, a distrust of the English residing in Spain. According to Blackfan's history of St Alban's College (the English Seminary at Valladolid), rumours abounded that 'some of Drake's agents had arrived, who having donned the habit of ecclesiastics in order to conceal themselves, were feigning prayer

[91] For example, 'Avisos de Londres de 12 de Abril 1597', AGSE 613/112. For more on the poor harvests, plagues, and social unrest in England in the 1590s, see, for example, P. Clark, 'A Crisis Contained? The Condition of English Towns in the 1590s,' in P. Clark (ed.), *The European Crisis of the 1590s: Essays in Comparative History* (London, 1985), pp. 44-66.

[92] See L. Hicks, 'Father Robert Persons, S.J., and the Seminaries in Spain', *The Month* 157 (1931), pp. 193-204, 410-17, 497-506, and *The Month* 158 (1931), pp. 26-35, 143-52, 234-44; M. Williams, *St Alban's College Valladolid: Four Centuries of English Catholic Presence in Spain* (London, 1986). M. Murphy, *St Gregory's College, Seville, 1592-1767* (London, 1992); M. Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education: Expulsion, Suppression, Survival and Restoration, 1762-1803* (Burlington VT, 2013), chs.1-2.

and devotion'.[93] Similarly, Robert Persons lamented in a letter to Philip II's Secretary of State, Juan de Idiáquez, dated 3 March 1591, the distrust of Englishmen in reaction to recent events.[94] Fears that English agents were infiltrating Spain disguised as pilgrims, religious exiles, merchants, and so on would be a constant question throughout the remainder of the century. Naturally, these fears alarmed the Spanish Elizabethans, who suspected these doubts would place the rest of the Catholic exiles under increased suspicion and possibly lead to complete Spanish disengagement from the campaign to re-establish Catholicism in England. Garnering Spanish support was especially pressing as these years saw the foundation of several English seminaries and educational institutions on Spanish lands. Spanish Elizabethans sought to convince Spaniards that they could be trusted and their cause was worth supporting through martyrologies and through defences of Spanish policy. Martyrologies were, Leo Hicks argues, a means 'to stimulate the generosity of the faithful'.[95] In his *Breve Catalogo* (1590), the rector of the new English seminary at Valladolid, Juan Lopez Mançano, listed the ninety-three martyrs to have come out of the English seminaries at Rheims and Rome in order to emphasise English Catholics' commitment to the Faith.[96] Persons' *Relacion de algunos martyrios, que de nuevo han hecho los hereges de Inglaterra* (1590) had a similar ambition, as did his *A Relation of the King of Spaines Receiving in Valladolid* (1592), which was translated into Spanish by the seminarian Thomas James.[97]

Queen Elizabeth's proclamation 'Establishing Commissions against Seminary Priests and Jesuits' accused the Catholic clergy of acting as Philip II's agents tasked with fomenting discord and treason against the queen.[98] Most likely written by Lord Burghley, the most powerful figure at the centre of Elizabethan politics, the proclamation recycled many of the arguments of Burghley's earlier *Execution of Iustice in England.*[99] The proclamation was, Peter Lake argues, 'designed both to justify before domestic and European audiences the regime's current sanguinary reign of terror against the Catholics and to extend that regime into parts of the body

[93] John Blackfan, *Annales collegii anglorum vallesoletanum,* P. Harris (ed.), (Valladolid, 2008), p. 5.
[94] Persons to Idiáquez, 3 March 1591, ABSI, Coll. P I, f. 246.
[95] Hicks, 'Robert Persons and the Seminaries in Spain', p. 197.
[96] Juan López Manzano, *Breve Catalogo de los mártires que han sido de los dos collegios y seminarios ingleses, que residen en Roma, y en la ciudad de Rhemis de Francia* (Valladolid, 1590). A copy is located at ABSI, Anglia A I, f. 53, which has been transcribed in S. Weinreich, *Pedro de Ribadeneyra's Ecclesiastical History of the Schism of the Kingdom of England: A Spanish Jesuit's History of the English Reformation* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 763-66.
[97] Robert Persons, *Relacion de algunos martyrios, que de nuevo han hecho los hereges de Inglaterra* (Madrid, 1590); *A Relation of the King of Spaines Receiving in Valladolid* (Antwerp, 1592); Thomas James, *Relacion de un sacerdote Ingles* (Madrid, 1592).
[98] 'A Declaration of great troubles pretended against the realme by a number of seminarie priests and Jesuits (London, 18 October 1591[OS]', in P. Hughes and J. Lavin (eds.), *Tudor Royal Proclamations,* 3 vols. (New Haven, CT, 1969), III, pp. 86-95.
[99] Lord Burghley, *The Execution of Iustice in England* ([London], 1584)

politic that previous crackdowns had not reached'.[100]

News of this proclamation came to Spain by way of Richard Verstegan.[101] On 12 December, he wrote a letter to Robert Persons in which he summarised the proclamation into three main points. First, he noted how the edict contained 'a long complaint […] against the Pope and the King of Spain' in which Elizabeth accused them of, 'without any cause, hav[ing] conspired, for their part, to make an invasion against England at the prompting of that country's rebels'. As part of this effort, the edict argued that Philip used Catholic clergymen to 'incline the people towards rebellion' and had founded an English seminary in Spain to 'propagate the said evil intention'.[102] Second, Verstegan summarised that Elizabeth 'intends to raise greater force — for both land and sea' in response to the threat by Spain. The third point was that the proclamation called upon her subjects 'to seize these priests and Jesuits who enter from Spain' and for action 'to be taken immediately against all those who are found culpable with all the vigour used against traitors, rebels and disturbers of the public peace'.[103]

When Verstegan's summary reached Spain, Robert Persons realised its potential as a piece of propaganda, and had it translated into Spanish so that it might be circulated around the Spanish Court. This tactic was not uncommon. Three months later, another of Verstegan's letters to Persons, this time recounting the increased persecution Catholics were experiencing in the aftermath of the proclamation, was translated into Spanish. This translated copy ended with a plea not included in the original sent to Persons: 'I pray to God that He may swiftly supply a remedy, and that He strengthen the hearts of the Catholic Princes who have the resources to join together to this end, for I believe that His Divine Majesty will not permit a cruelty so contrary to all Christianity and reason to continue'.[104] Persons wanted to remind his Spanish audience that Catholicism in England needed their aid. If Persons' aim was to bring about a Spanish attack on England, he was unsuccessful, but it did have some effect: during a visit to the newly opened English College at Valladolid in August 1592, Philip II offered to pay for the publication of the *Philopater,* Robert Persons' response to the proclamation.[105]

The speed with which Verstegan sent the summary of the proclamation highlights the effectiveness of the apparatus he possessed to obtain information from England. Whilst the

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[100] P. Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 2016), p. 330.
[101] 'Spanish Version of a Letter sent by Verstegan? to Fr. Persons?', Antwerp, 12 December 1591, in *Letters of Verstegan*, pp. 34-38.
[102] 'Spanish Version', *Letters of Verstegan,* pp. 35-36.
[103] 'Spanish Version', *Letters of Verstegan,* p. 36.
[104] 'Avises de Anveres, 5 de Março de 1592, de las cosas de Ingalaterra', in *Letters of Verstegan*, p. 46.
[105] A. Loomie, 'Philip II and the Printing of "Andreas Philopater",' *The Library,* 5th series, 24 (1969), pp. 143-45.

proclamation was issued by Elizabeth on 18/28 October, it was not widely released for several weeks.[106] This delay, Verstegan explained, was because 'of the news having arrived of the death of Pope Gregory XIV, of whom there had been particular mention in the first impression' and so there had been need to edit the proclamation to reflect the new political landscape.[107] Verstegan reported that the proclamation was finally published on 29 November. In just under two weeks, Verstegan had received a copy of the proclamation from his sources in England and had summarised its contents to be sent on to Persons.[108]

Verstegan and Persons published five major works between 1592 and 1593 in response to the proclamation.[109] Whilst each of these had its own purpose and individual character, they constituted a co-ordinated polemical campaign in which there were three primary objectives. The first intention of these works was to defend Philip II and highlight his virtues as a ruler. Where the proclamation accused Philip of power-lust and corruption, the *Philopater* depicted him as a beneficent protector of Christendom; where the regime argued that they only used military force for self-defence, the *Philopater* contended that they were in fact promoters of violence and war in the pursuit of heresy and self-interest. Moreover, Philip's benevolence towards England and to Elizabeth was repeatedly stressed. Whilst Mary was alive, the *Philopater* noted, Philip had shown great care for his sister-in-law, sparing her from harsh punishments.[110] Following Queen Mary's death, he had attempted to develop a positive relationship with Elizabeth, offering the new queen jewels and wealth.[111] For more than three years he had endured repeated affronts even when people suggested that he was too patient in maintaining peace with a woman who had caused nothing but trouble and who was a heretic.[112] Indeed, he had not intervened in the Northern Rebellion — an intervention which, the *Philopater* argued,

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[106] In a letter to Thomas Barnes dated 31 October (OS), Thomas Phelippes wrote that the proclamation had been 'printed but not published': SP 12/240/53.

[107]' Spanish Version', *Letters of Verstegan*, p. 35.

[108] The printed copy he had received from England was sent to Cardinal Allen in Rome, 'Spanish Version', *Letters of Verstegan*, p. 36.

[109] These five texts were: R. Verstegan, *An advertisement written to a secretary of my Lord Treasurer of England by an English intelligencer as he passed through Germany towards Italy* (Antwerp, 1592); *A Declaration of the true causes of the great troubles presupposed to be intended against the realm of England* (Antwerp, 1592); Philopater, *Elizabethae Angliae Reginae haeresim Calvinianum propugnantis, saevissimum in Catholicos sui regni edictum* (Antwerp, 1592); *Newes from Spayne and Holland contayning An Information of Inglish affayres in Spayne with a conference made therupon in Amsterdame of Holland* (Antwerp, 1593); R. Persons (ed.), *Acta in comites parlamentaribus Londini* (Antwerp, 1593). They also republished earlier texts critical of the Elizabethan regime: for example, Richard Verstegan's *Theatrum Crudelitatum Haereticorum nostri temporis* (Antwerp, 1587) was reissued in 1592 in both Latin and French. These texts and the surrounding 'print war', as Houliston describes it, have been extensively examined. The best accounts are Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholic Exiles', pp. 339-397; Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers,* pp. 27-28; and Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*, pp. 47-70. See also, P. Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1978), pp. 113-14.

[110] *Philopater*, pp. 120-25.

[111] *Philopater*, pp. 126-29.

[112] *Philopater*, pp. 129-30.

would have led to its success — and when he had sent the Armada in 1588, this decision is presented as an understandable and rational response to countless Elizabethan attacks and assaults on both the Church and Philip.[113] Whilst it did not go so far as to present a case for Philip claiming the English throne — ideas which Persons had certainly considered in the lead-up to the Armada — the *Philopater* did seek to repair Philip's image by depicting him as a benevolent and patient ruler worthy of the great power he wielded.

The second ambition of these texts was to present the case that it was Lord Burghley's plots and machinations — rather than the seminary priests and Jesuits — that were the cause of England's ills. They can, therefore, be seen as the latest iteration of the far older tradition of blaming 'evil counsellors' and absolving Elizabeth of direct wrongdoing.[114] One of the publications supporting the *Philopater* was a carefully collected edition of Latin translations of official decrees and letters which illustrated the Privy Council's determination to root out opposition in all its forms thereby proving that the persecution of Catholics stemmed from politics not religion. It was published in Latin to reveal to a mainland European audience the Privy Council's behaviour. Houliston observes that central in this book was material concerned with the Privy Council's proceedings against the Puritans Henry Barrow and John Penry, who were condemned to hang on 6 April 1593. The *Acta in comites parliamentaribus Londini,* he argues, 'extended the range of the attack on Burghley by creating a fellowship in suffering with the Puritans'.[115] The information filling this edited collection came to Persons via Verstegan. Verstegan's letters to Persons frequently included details of the latest laws passed by parliament, about the persecution of Catholics in England, and about the sufferings of other groups. Indeed, the arrest, trial, and execution of Henry Barrow and John Penry is a topic which appeared in several of Verstegan's letters, with one letter in particular, probably written at the end of April 1593, going into great detail.[116] Verstegan's role as Persons' publisher and collaborator has been noted previously, but this little episode emphasises his role in supplying the intelligence itself which informed Persons' publications.

In the early 1590s, Spanish Elizabethan publications avoided the question of the succession, but this avoidance did not mean that they were apolitical. In fact, they actively engaged in contemporary politics, as revealed by their response to the Elizabethan

[113] *Philopater*, pp. 131, 134-35.
[114] Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?,* pp. 337-38.
[115] Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*, p. 55.
[116] Verstegan to Persons, Antwerp, c. 30 April, 1593, in *Letters of Verstegan,* pp. 144-49. See also Verstegan to Persons, Antwerp, mid-April 1593; and Verstegan to Persons, Antwerp 28 April 1593, in *Letters of Verstegan,* pp. 126, 130.

Proclamation 'Establishing Commissions against Seminary Priests and Jesuits'. The subsequent print campaign, led by Robert Persons and Richard Verstegan, has been well studied by historians, but highlighted here is the importance of information, gathered from England through the intelligence network coordinated by Hugh Owen with Verstegan's assistance, in proving the information used in these publications.

'Uniting' English Catholicism

Mary Stuart had been a unifying figure for English Catholics. To them she was the queen-in-waiting, by blood the next in line to the English throne by virtue of being a descendant of Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII. With no alternate successor ever endorsed by Elizabeth, the future of Protestant England was completely dependent on Elizabeth staying alive: one fatal illness, one successful assassination attempt, and Mary Stuart would be queen, allowing Catholicism to be re-established in England.[117] As long as Mary, Queen of Scots lived, the English Catholic exile population was relatively united by the singular ambition of placing her on the English throne.

However, after her execution in February 1587, jealousies already present within the population developed into open division with two factions emerging.[118] On the one side was the Scottish party, with Charles Paget and Thomas Morgan at its head. This group looked to James VI of Scotland, Mary's son, as the successor to his mother and the nearest legitimate heir to the English throne. In exchange for their recognition as England's future and rightful sovereign, the Scottish party hoped he would reward them with toleration for the Catholic Church. In the short term, though, whilst Elizabeth was still alive, they attempted to appease the reigning regime with declarations of allegiance, offers of personal service, and by communications which betrayed the plans and proceedings of their opponents.[119] On the other side were the Spanish Elizabethans, led by Robert Persons and, until his death in 1594, Cardinal William Allen. The Spanish party believed that England's Catholic future depended

[117] Aware of this reality, members of the Elizabethan regime devised a scheme to exclude Mary from the succession. See, P. Collinson, 'The Elizabethan Exclusion Crisis and the Elizabethan Polity', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 84 (1994), pp. 51-92 and the subsequent historiographical debate.

[118] Persons identified a meeting in 1584 as the start point of these tensions: 'The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons', J. Pollen (ed.), in *Miscellanea II* (London, 1906), p. 31 and 'Punti per la Mission d'Inghilterra', J. Pollen (ed.), in *Miscellanea IV* ([London, 1907]), pp. 64-65. For more on this meeting, see McCoog, *'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, pp. 178-90.

[119] See T. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1589-1597: Building the Faith of Saint Peter on the King of Spain's Monarchy* (Farnham, 2012), and T. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1598-1606: 'Lest Our Lamp be Entirely Extinguished'* (Leiden, 2017).

on Spanish intervention, either in the form of a successful invasion of England, or through a Spanish succession to the English throne, and they did everything they could to bring about one of these outcomes.

Persons and Allen were well aware of the dangers this division within the Catholic population might cause. In the run up to the Armada they recommended, in a memorandum on the succession to the English throne presented to the Spanish Crown, that Philip not advertise his intention to claim the throne for himself.[120] As Freddy Domínguez paraphrases, a 'public discussion of a Spanish succession would only inspire jealousies', and, since Philip's ascent to the throne 'could be achieved with nothing other than arms', it was deemed prudent to keep quiet on the topic.[121] Consequently, in public they actively avoided being drawn into debate with the Scottish faction.

This avoidance of public debate did not mean that they simply ignored the problem posed by the Scottish faction and by its leaders, Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget, in particular, in the period immediately following the Armada. On the contrary, the Spanish Elizabethans actively moved to discredit the Scottish faction, thereby leaving their Hispanophile stance as the only credible English Catholic position on the question of re-establishing Catholicism in England. In this endeavour, the intelligence work of Hugh Owen in the arrest, trial, and imprisonment of Thomas Morgan for treason in 1590 was essential.[122]

Morgan was arrested at the beginning of January 1590 on the orders of the Duke of Parma.[123] The official explanation for the arrest was that Morgan had been involved in a violent quarrel with a man named Gage leading to the apprehension of both men. This quarrel, however, appears to have simply been an excuse to arrest Morgan. Thomas McCoog has noted that, around the same time as the arrest on 30 January, Cardinal Allen wrote a letter to Thomas, Lord Paget (brother of Charles), lamenting a breach within the exile community without specifying the cause. Allen promised to endeavour to end the division and address all complaints without prejudice.[124] The existence of Allen's letter suggests that there was more going on than a simple argument between two gentlemen. It should also be remembered that, as was noted in the previous chapter, Owen was a close advisor to Parma, and could have used

[120] 'Memorandum by William Allen and Robert Persons on the succession and the *impresa*, Rome, after 24 March 1587', in *Correspondence*, pp. 667-76.
[121] Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', pp. 225-26
[122] The following account broadly follows L. Hicks, *Elizabethan Problem: Some Aspects of the Careers of Two Exile-Adventurers* (New York, 1964), pp. 77-90 and McCoog, *Building the Faith*, pp. 337-39.
[123] The exact date is not clear, but it is likely the beginning of the month as news of the arrest had reached Rome by at least 8 February: Hugh Griffin to Thomas Morgan, Rome 8 February 1590, SP 85/1 f.69.
[124] McCoog, *Building the Faith,* p. 337, citing Allen to Lord Paget, Rome 30 January 1590, in Knox, *Letters of Allen*, pp. 316-17.

this influence to arrange Morgan's arrest. The suspicion that Owen may have arranged for Morgan to be arrested following the quarrel is strengthened when one considers that at Morgan's trial, the two chief accusers were Colonel William Stanley and Hugh Owen.

Morgan was confined to the prison of the Provost-General of the Spanish army of Flanders, and, once imprisoned, his lodgings were searched and many ciphers found, as well as correspondence with the Bishop of Dunblane, William Chrishold. In one of these letters, Morgan had urged the bishop, who was close to the duke of Savoy, to persuade the duke to secure from Philip II the position of Governor of the Low Countries for himself, replacing Parma. Once in this position, Savoy should, upon Philip's death, seize it for himself and make himself the leader of a state independent from Spain.[125] It was for this reason that Parma ordered Morgan's trial for treason.

The trial itself, however, focused more on the accusation that Morgan was in fact an agent for the Elizabethan regime. The prosecution built a case, built primarily on evidence supplied by Owen and Stanley, that Morgan had, since 1569, worked with the Elizabethan regime to undermine Mary Stuart and her supporters, and that Morgan's actions had directly led to the arrest and execution of many Catholics. They argued that his Catholicism was dubious — Morgan had been brought up in the Protestant Church of England and there was no evidence that he had ever been reconciled to the Catholic Church — and revealed that Morgan had been observed in Paris in the 1570s in the company of Walsingham's servants.[126] Additionally, they argued that Morgan had, since going into exile, sought to divide the English Catholic population, sowing dissent between Mary Stuart and her supporters, the Duke of Guise, Cardinal Allen, and the Jesuits, in order to advance his own position. He had repeatedly worked with those English Catholics who believed that the liberation of Mary could be secured without the support of foreign forces. Morgan was thus depicted as someone who had always opposed the involvement of Spain in the re-establishment of Catholicism in England.[127]

The evidence against Morgan led to his conviction. Shortly after the trial, Parma wrote to Philip II stating that because of the number of ciphers in Morgan's possession, the content of the correspondence with Dunblane, and the schemes that Morgan had been involved in, those who had presided over the case had been led to the conclusion that Morgan was an

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[125] The Spanish translation of Morgan's letter, together with the original cipher is now at Simancas: AGSE 598/73. A copy of the letter in English is in the Scottish papers in the State Papers. SP 52/47 n.f. It has been transcribed in *CSPScotland*, X, pp. 229-37. The copy came to England via the priest John Cecil when he defected to England. See 'List [by John Snowden [*vere* John Cecil]] of the parcels left in the ship belonging to Gisbred (Gilbert) Jacob, of Amsterdam', [23 May] 1591, SP 12/238/169.

[126] Walsingham had been the Elizabethan ambassador to Paris in the early 1570s.

[127] Hicks, *Elizabethan Problem*, pp. 86-89.

Elizabethan spy. Moreover, Parma explained that there was evidence that Morgan was still endeavouring in his anti-Spanish, and anti-Catholic, activities to sow division, and counter the plans conceived by Cardinal Allen, Robert Persons, and others to re-establish the Catholic Church in England. Parma concluded that Morgan should be prevented from continuing this behaviour. Therefore, he imprisoned Morgan for the next two years, and, when he released him in 1592, he banished him from the Low Countries.[128] Verstegan later commented that Morgan was lucky in the leniency of the punishment.[129] Nevertheless, this expulsion weakened the Scottish party's ability to oppose the Spanish Elizabethans, as it removed one of its two leaders from the Netherlands, where he could do most harm. As will be seen, this expulsion did not mark the end of opposition to the Spanish Elizabethan position, but rather marked the opening skirmish in a long campaign for dominance within the English Catholic population. Nevertheless, this episode shows how Hugh Owen and William Stanley were willing to use their political influence at the Spanish court in Brussels, which, in Owen's case had been secured by being an effective intelligencer, to undermine their opponents, and thereby reinforce the dominance of the Spanish Elizabethan position within English Catholicism.

Conclusions

Following the failure of his Armada in 1588, Philip II did not abandon his ambition of invading England and re-establishing Catholicism there. However, developments elsewhere, especially in France, demanded Philip's immediate attention, and he was forced to divert Spanish military and financial resources away from the English campaign. Faced with this geopolitical reality, there was little the Spanish Elizabethans could do but wait for the situation to improve and, in the meantime, consolidate their connections with the Spanish court and their positions as leaders within the English Catholic population. Previous studies of English Catholics and Spain in the early 1590s have overwhelmingly focused on the establishment of English seminaries, highlighting Robert Persons' successful efforts to secure financial support from the Spanish Crown. This chapter, though, has revealed the Spanish Elizabethans' activities aimed at strengthening their Spanish ties were far more extensive and complicated than has previously been thought, and intelligence was central in these efforts.

William Stanley and Hugh Owen travelled from the Spanish Netherlands to Madrid in an attempt to deepen their ties to the Spanish state. Stanley unsuccessfully tried to persuade

[128] Hicks, *Elizabethan Problem*, p. 90 citing Parma to Philip II, 20 February 1590, AGSE 598/23.
[129] 'Verstegan to Persons and Englefield, Antwerp, 17 September 1596', in *Letters of Verstegan*, p. 177.

Philip II to make better use of his English regiment, whilst Owen established himself as Spain's prime source of English intelligence. Existing scholarship on late-sixteenth-century Spanish espionage has suggested that Spanish ambassadors and representatives were integral to its function beyond Philip's empire, serving as coordinators of local networks.[130] This chapter, though, has shown that Spanish espionage was not as rigidly structured as this previous historiography has implied, but rather, it was able to incorporate alternative structures of intelligence gathering when ambassadors were not an option. In the absence of a Spanish ambassador in England, the Spanish Crown turned to Owen because he already headed an extensive espionage network which he had developed over the previous decades, and because he had already proven himself in the Netherlands as a capable servant to the Spanish Crown through his work for various Spanish governors including Don Juan and the Duke of Parma.

The Spanish Elizabethans also sought to consolidate their positions and ties to the Spanish Crown through the publication of books defending the English seminaries in Spain and Spanish polices. English-language texts were produced in response to polemical attacks coming from England, and thus engaged with the Elizabethan 'public sphere'. Spanish-language publications were also produced, which sought to secure popular Spanish support for the English Catholic cause. Whilst Spanish Elizabethan engagement in the Elizabethan 'public sphere' has been noted extensively by historians, their involvement in the Spanish 'public sphere' has not received the same scrutiny.[131] This chapter, though, has noted that the Spanish Elizabethans and their supporters looked to convince the Spanish public that their cause was worth supporting through the publication of martyrologies and defences of Spanish policies. The fact that the they had to advocate for their cause shows that the Spanish Elizabethans could not count on Spain's unconditional support. This idea will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

Moreover, this chapter has shown how intelligence, gathered by the Spanish Elizabethan espionage network, was vital in the Spanish Elizabethans' engagement in the 'public spheres' in both England and Spain. Robert Persons used intelligence, sent to him by Richard Verstegan (Owen's close collaborator in organising espionage in England), in his efforts to convince the Spanish court to support the English Catholic cause. The same intelligence also informed his writings during the polemical campaign in response to Elizabeth's proclamation 'Establish Commissions against Seminary Priests and Jesuits', providing the case

[130] See, for example, Carnicer and Marcos, *Espías de Felipe*; Levin, *Agents of Empire,* pp. 154-82; Gürkan, 'Espionage in the 16th Century Mediterranean', pp. 97-344; Warnicke, 'Diplomatic Rumor-Mongering', pp. 115-31.
[131] For example, Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*; Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest.*

studies Persons used to show that it was William Cecil, not Catholic priests, who was to blame for England's ills. The texts produced during this campaign have been well studied by historians, but this chapter has highlighted how intelligence, gathered from England by Owen's espionage network, was vital in providing the information used in these publications. It shows that the process of responding to the proclamation was far more complicated and multifaceted than has previously been understood, and that the network was a central factor operating behind the scenes to facilitate the Spanish Elizabethans' more well-known activities.

It has frequently been argued – most recently by Peter Lake and Michael Questier – that Cardinal William Allen's death in October 1594 was the catalyst for the fragmentation of the English Catholic community which would characterise debates about the succession in the mid- to late- 1590s.[132] By showing how the Spanish Elizabethans sought to establish their political position as the dominant English Catholic stance, using intelligence to discredit their opponents within the English Catholic population, this chapter has shown that these divisions were well and truly established prior to Allen's death. The preliminary skirmishes of the succession debates were already being fought, even whilst the succession itself remained a taboo subject in Spanish Elizabethan polemics.

By consolidating themselves as leaders within English Catholicism, and bolstering their support and connections in Spain, the Spanish Elizabethans looked to ensure that, when the geopolitical situation changed, they would be ready to take advantage and press Philip to renew his campaign to defeat English Protestantism.

[132] Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 37-39.

3. An Opportunity

Introduction

The Spanish military campaign in France proved difficult, and Spain's position neared collapse when, on 25 July 1593, Henri of Navarre converted to Catholicism. Whilst the Spanish campaign had nominally been in support of the Infanta Isabella's claim, in reality Philip's intervention had been justified morally as a crusade against a would-be heretical king. It is true that many Catholics regarded Henri's conversion as a farce, but the conversion nevertheless allowed Henri to make plausible appeals to French Catholics. At his coronation in Chartres in early 1594, he promised to 'expel from all lands under my jurisdiction all heretics denounced by the Church'.[1] Henri's Catholic credentials were reinforced in September 1594 when Pope Clement VIII accepted him back into the Catholic fold, arguing, in a letter to Philip explaining his decision, that only God could know a man's heart and, since the decision affected not only 'the health of one person, but the entire kingdom, and consequently millions of souls', it was worth accepting Henri back into the Church regardless whether it were a true or feigned conversion.[2] The religious and moral justification for Spanish involvement was in tatters and the legal argument was severely undermined too in this same period: in 1593 an assembly of the Catholic League, Spain's ally in France, refused to 'elect' a Spanish candidate to the French throne.

Alongside these religious and legal developments, the military campaign itself had also begun to swing in Henri's favour. Mutinies within the Spanish army in France had forced local commanders to agree a temporary truce with Henri in 1593, whilst Spanish soldiers in Brittany wasted opportunities to press strategic advantages for want of sufficient support. Then, on 22 March 1594, Henri took Paris, graciously allowing Spanish soldiers to depart, and demonstrating his Catholicism by attending Mass at Notre Dame and participating in a religious procession the following week.[3] The situation in France was dire — it appeared that the war was unwinnable and pointless — and, in this moment, the Spanish Elizabethans recognised an opportunity. For several years they had been biding their time, doing everything

[1] Quoted in R. Knecht, *The French Civil Wars* (New York, NY, 2000), p. 269.
[2] Quoted in J. Iñurritegui Rodríguez, *La gracia y la republica: El lenguaje politico de la teología católica y el Principe Cristiano de Pedro de Ribadeneyra* (Madrid, 1998), p. 261.
[3] McCoog, *Building the Faith*, p. 205.

they could to keep England and the plight of English Catholics in Spanish minds whilst also accepting that a second Armada would not occur as long as Spain was involved so heavily in France, but now was an opportunity to encourage a refocusing of Spanish foreign policy away from France and toward England. As will be seen, the Spanish Elizabethans argued their case in two principal ways: through a print campaign in which they publicly aired the question of the succession for the first time, and by countering the Elizabethan regime's attempts to explore the possibility of a peace with Spain. Moreover, this chapter will show that, as the Anglo-Spanish war intensified in the years 1595-97, English Catholic intelligence, sent to Spain in the *avisos de Inglaterra*, had a tangible impact on Spanish military policy.

Discussing the Succession

The *Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland* was published in 1595 under the pseudonym R. Doleman. Since its publication, its authorship has been a topic of debate: Persons was very cagey about his involvement, claiming that the main authors were actually Cardinal Allen and Sir Francis Englefield — a statement Leo Hicks supports — but Englefield, in a letter to Pope Clement VIII, attributed the text to Persons.[4] Freddy Domínguez has, more recently, argued that the work was the product of 'several regulars at the English College [at Valladolid] — Sir Francis Englefield and Joseph Creswell, for example — as well as occasional visitors like the Anglo-Irish scholar, Richard Stanyhurst', and that Robert Persons probably had a prominent role.[5] This authorial buck-passing reflects how controversial the text was at the time. As Victor Houliston notes, Persons' downplaying of his involvement was done at a time when Persons was attempting to counteract attempts to isolate him from the rest of the English Catholic population.[6] For the purposes here, however, the exact authorship is not essential, as the authors most certainly came from the 'Spanish Elizabethan' group of English Catholic exiles.[7]

The political climate in England was conducive to the publishing of the *Conference.* When work started on the project in 1593, the topic of the succession had been thrust into the spotlight by the prominent Puritan MP, Peter Wentworth, whose attempt to raise the issue in Parliament

[4] L. Hicks, 'Father Robert Persons S.J. and *The Book of the Succession*', *Recusant History*, 4 (1957), pp. 104-37; Sir Francis Englefield to Clement VIII, Valladolid, 2 September 1596, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Borghese II, 448A-B, f.392r.
[5] Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', p. 230.
[6] Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*, p. 72.
[7] It is worth noting, to further cement the Spanish Elizabethan genesis of the text, that Richard Verstegan was the book's printer; Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', p. 230, n. 628.

on 25 February had resulted in his imprisonment in the Tower of London.[8] The author(s) of the *Conference* cited Wentworth as an important impetus for their discussion: 'it was presumed a great while, that some thing would be determined thereof in that parlament [concerning the succession]… But when at lenght [sic] newes was brought, that nothing at al had bin done therin, but rather that one or two … had bin checked or committed for speaking in the same', a group of men in mainland Europe had decided to examine the issue for themselves.[9] The ideas in the *Conference* were not new — the authors drew on French Catholic League publications and Spanish political theory developed by the School of Salamanca — but its significance stemmed from the book's practical implementation of revolutionary ideas.[10] Through a discussion of Scripture, historical precedents, laws, coronation oaths, and much more, the authors argued that, whilst 'propinquity of bloode' was normally the means to determine the succession, it was frequently discarded, and that the most common reason for this disregard for normal procedure was religion.[11] Moreover, the *Conference* argued that anyone who assisted a heretical claimant to succeed to the throne was guilty of a 'damnable sinne'. The argument went still further: such claimants should not merely be deprived of support but actively resisted.[12] The aim, Houliston argues, was 'to bring politics out of the realm of the ineffable and into the domain of reason, to create subjects who make considered choices'.[13]

In order to ensure Catholics could make an informed choice and avoid unknowingly aiding the accession of a heretic, the second half of the *Conference* analysed the credentials of each claimant according to the criteria laid out in the first section, and, since religion was the most important criterion, candidates with a serious claim had to be Catholic. Whilst Persons repeatedly claimed that the book was an impartial and objective evaluation of all claimants — and this was, indeed, how it was structured — the *Conference* was effectively an endorsement of the Infanta Isabella of Spain, Philip II's daughter. Dwight Peck succinctly summarises the

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[8] T. Hartley (ed.), *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I* (3 vols. Leicester, 1981-95), III, pp. 68-69.

[9] *Conference*, pt. 1, sig. Br-v. Paulina Kewes argues that this moment in parliament was the reason for the shift in Catholic writings to start discussing the succession. However, her study does not look beyond the British Isles to the wider European context: 'The Puritan, the Jesuit and the Jacobean Succession', in S. Doran and P. Kewes (eds.), *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (Manchester, 2015), p. 59.

[10] On the influence of French Catholic League political thought on the *Conference* and other texts on the English succession, see Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers,* pp. 44-78; F. Baumgartner, *Radical Reactionaries: The Political Thought of the French Catholic League* (Geneva, 1975), pp. 241-42. On the political thinking regarding sovereignty and monarchy coming from the Salamanca school, see L. Valenzuela-Vermehren, 'Vitoria, Humanism, and the School of Salamanca in Early Sixteenth-Century Spain: A Heuristic Overview', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture,* 16/2 (2013), pp. 99-125. More research is needed into the influence of Spanish political theory in the debates about the Elizabethan succession.

[11] *Conference*, p. 212.

[12] *Conference*, p. 216.

[13] V. Houliston, 'The Hare and the Drum: Robert Persons's Writings on the English Succession', *Renaissance Studies,* 14/2 (2000), p. 243.

book's contents: it 'advanced the Spanish Infanta's claim through a very subtle process of elimination'.[14] Thus the authors went into great detail outlining the problems with James' claim, but noted only a couple of arguments against the Infanta, making it appear that she was the only candidate with a truly viable claim.

The *Conference* was published primarily for an English Catholic audience, aiming to promote unity within the group behind the candidature of the Infanta Isabella, and the historians looking at Catholics and the succession have almost exclusively looked only at the *Conference* and other English-language texts. This decision to look only at such sources implies that only the English-speaking world had to be convinced of the merits of a Spanish successor to Elizabeth. But English Catholics were not the only group who needed persuading of the merits of a Spanish succession in England: the Spanish themselves had to be convinced. Freddy Domínguez has recently argued that the first version of the *Conference* 'to be scrutinized by people other than the authors' was most likely a text entitled *Raçonamiento y parecer de los letrados ingleses sobre el caso de la sucesión del Reyno de Inglaterra* (Reasoning and opinion of the English lawyers about the case of the succession of the Kingdom of England).[15] This text, which only survives in seventeenth-century manuscript copies, was a partial translation of the *Conference*, and was given to the Spanish regime to convince them that the *Conference* was in line with Habsburg policy objectives and thus worthy of financial and military support. Central to the arguments presented in the *Raçonamiento* was the idea that any successor must be a Catholic and that Philip and Isabella had the strongest claims of the Catholic contenders. The *Raçonamiento* provided Philip and his advisors with an assessment of the genealogical claims with which he could launch a fresh campaign against England, outlining the arguments for the Spanish Habsburg claim, and with the means to counter any claims to the contrary.[16] Like the *Conference*, therefore, the *Raçonamiento* presented an 'argument in favour of broadly Catholic, specifically Spanish, claims to the throne', and its subtlety 'provided the Habsburg regime with a plausible piece of propaganda' for its 'lack of precision […] catered to the inclinations of a non-committal monarch whose hate for England had not yet excluded the possibility of anti-Elizabethan action, but whose prudence had up to then prevented a repeat of 1588'.[17]

[14] D. Peck (ed.), *Leicester's Commonwealth: The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge (1584) and Related Documents* (Athens, OH, 1985), pp. 263-64.
[15] This paragraph summarises Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', pp. 229-44.
[16] Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', p. 238.
[17] Domginuez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', p. 244.

The *Raçonamiento* was intended for a small audience within the Spanish regime, but the Spanish Elizabethans and their allies also published texts for the wider Spanish reading public advocating a Spanish succession in England, thus engaging with the Spanish 'public sphere'. One such text was the *Relación que Embiaron Las Religiosas del Monasterio de Sion de Inglaterra* (Account related by the nuns of the monastery of Sion of England) which recounted the persecution of the Bridgettine nuns who had once resided at Sion Abbey in England.[18]

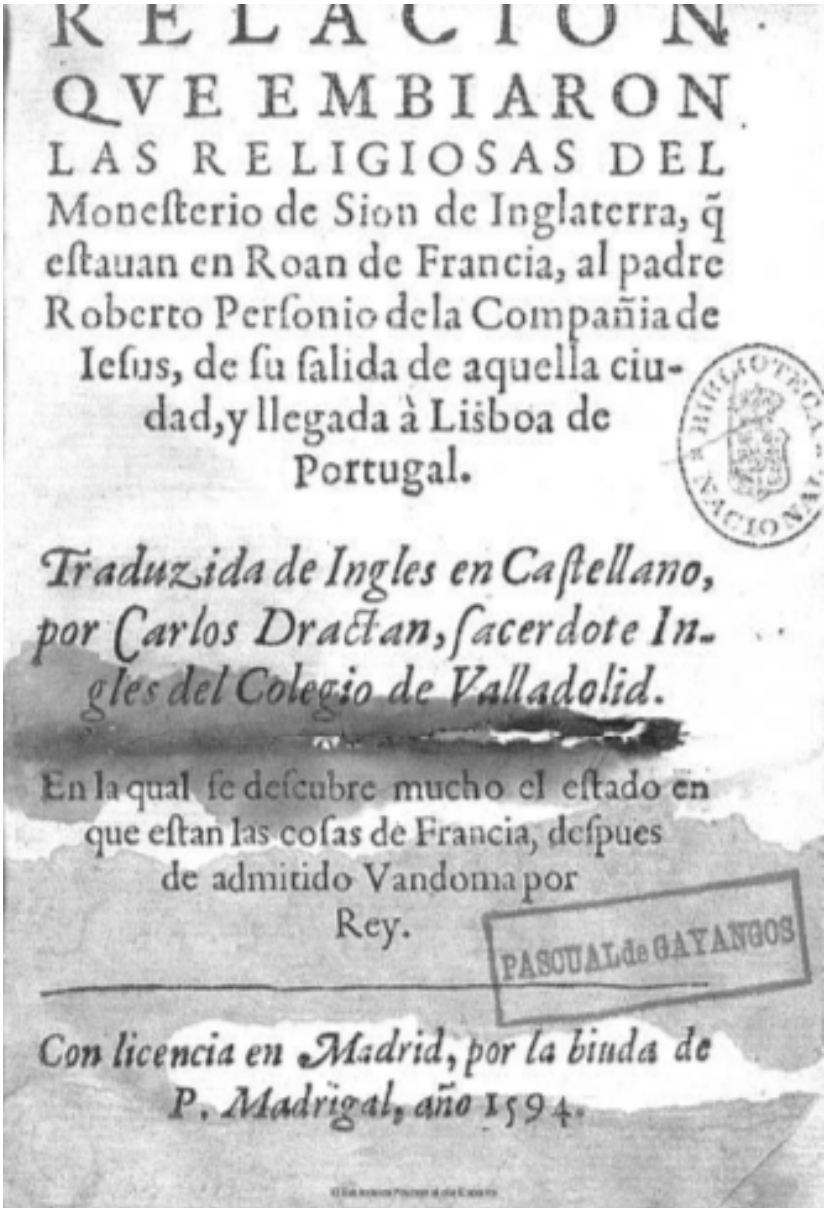

RELACION
QVE EMBIARON
LAS RELIGIOSAS DEL
Monesterio de Sion de Inglaterra, q̃
estauan en Roan de Francia, al padre
Roberto Personio dela Compañia de
Iesus, de su salida de aquella ciu-
dad, y llegada à Lisboa de
Portugal.
Traduzida de Ingles en Castellano,
por Carlos Dractan, sacerdote In-
gles del Colegio de Valladolid.
En la qual se descubre mucho el estado en
que estan las cosas de Francia, despues
de admitido Vandoma por
Rey.
PASCUAL de GAYANGOS
Con licencia en Madrid, por la biuda de
P. Madrigal, año 1594.

Figure 3.1: Title page of [Anonymous], Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas del Monasterio de Sion de Inglaterra, C. Dractan (trans.) (Madrid, 1594).

[18] [Anon.], *Relación que embiaron las religiosas del monasterio de Sion de Inglaterra* C. Dractan (trans.) (Madrid, 1594).

Soon after the nuns' arrival in Lisbon, they wrote a long description of their experiences, which, according to the title page, was sent to Robert Persons and translated into Spanish by Charles Dractan, a priest at St Albans College, the English seminary in Valladolid. It was published in autumn 1594 with the approval of Pedro de Ribadeneira. This narrative can be read as part of a broader effort to justify Spanish royal funding for English Catholics and encourage more local support for the cause, and should, therefore, be read alongside other Spanish publications about the persecution of English Catholics such as Persons' *Relacion de algunos martyrios.*[19] But also worthy of note is the historical narrative which Persons included in the text, which emphasised a new international status quo, and highlighted the long history of Anglo-Iberian relations.

On 29 May 1594, twenty-nine English Bridgettine nuns arrived in Lisbon.[20] They were the remnants of the community of nuns of Sion Abbey in London, a community which had been founded by Henry V. Following their suppression by Henry VIII, they had moved to Flanders before returning to England under Mary and Philip, and then heading into exile again upon the accession of Elizabeth. In exile, they had resided in various towns in the Low Countries and France, but the Wars of Religion had driven them from their last home in Rouen. Angry locals had ensured they felt unwelcome, mocking them as 'strangers and English', and then the Catholic League's surrender of the town to the Protestant Henri of Navarre in 1593 had rendered their position extremely insecure.[21] Their choice to move to Lisbon made practical sense — the port had strong mercantile links with England which allowed the community to have closer ties to England than other options available on the Iberian peninsula — but, interestingly, the migration was supported, not by local Portuguese, but by Robert Persons, who coordinated the logistics, and Philip II, who provided the necessary financial support.[22] At the core of the *Relacion que Embiaron las Religiosas* is a sense that France was lost. The title page itself reflects this acceptance reading at the bottom: 'En la qual se descubre mucho el estado en que estan las cosas de Francia, despues de admitido Vandoma por Rey' ('In which it describes much of the state in which the things of France are, since the Vendome [Henri IV] was accepted as King'). The sense of resignation was reinforced through the story of the nuns' departure. Fundamentally, the *Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas* argued,

[19] Sáez-Hidalgo, '"Extravagant" English Books', pp. 161-62.
[20] P. Guilday, *English Catholic Refugees on the Continent 1558-1795. Vol 1: th English Colleges ad Convents in the Catholic Low Countries, 1558-1795* (London, 1914), p. 59.
[21] The new Huguenot leaders attempted to send the nuns back to England, *Tierney/Dodd,* II, p. 158 note.
[22] C. de Hamel, 'Introduction', in C. de Hamel (ed.), *Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and their Peregrinations after the Reformation* (Otley, 1991), p. 20.

the nuns left France to avoid becoming entangled in succession politics. Whilst the King's governor in Rouen had tried to persuade the nuns to remain — in large part to shore up Catholic support in the city — the nuns, doubting their safety, had made up their minds. The nuns' distrust of the authorities' promises had stemmed from the prevailing threat from Elizabeth and the English Protestants.[23]

So why had they chosen to relocate to Lisbon? The *Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas* made it clear that it had been providence which had shaped this decision. God had ensured they found safety in Portugal:

> under the protection of the descendants of the house of Lancaster, and of the royal blood of its founder Henry V, who […] was second king of that house, for it is known that the kings of the house of Portugal […] descend from the direct line of the Royal House of Lancaster, coming from the Queen *doña* Filipa, daughter of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and sister of his son, Henry IV of England, who was the wife of John I of Portugal.[24]

The nuns had not chosen martyrdom, nor had they elected to advocate for Henri's removal; instead, they had chosen to disengage from the situation in France. Moreover, by stressing the Portuguese claim to the English throne, the author suggested that the Bridgettine nuns had, in effect, found a way to come home to the territories ruled by the legitimate king of England.

The story of the nuns' relocation from France to Portugal was not simply a story of homecoming; it also presented a strategy for Philip to follow. Just as the nuns had departed from France, so Philip should accept the reality of Henri IV's position on the French throne and withdraw from France. He should, then, look to his Portuguese kingdom and to the claim to the English throne that lay there.[25] The *Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas* was, therefore, a tentative first step into the question of the succession. It was soon followed by other publications, written in English, Latin, and Spanish, including, most (in)famously, *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland.*

Recognising that, in 1593, there was a possibility of a Spanish withdrawal from the wars in France and a refocus in Spanish foreign policy towards England, the Spanish Elizabethans started a public discussion of the English succession. This discussion involved texts published in both English and Spanish as audiences from both countries needed to be convinced of the merits of a Spanish succession. These texts explored the succession as a theoretical possibility and were not explicit calls for Spanish intervention in England. However, at the same time as

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[23] [Anon.], *Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas*, p. 34[v].
[24] [Anon.], *Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas*, p. 11[v].
[25] The stress placed on Philip's Lancastrian lineage has led Maria Rodriguez-Salgado to describe the Anglo-Spanish War as the last phase of the Wars of the Roses, 'The Anglo-Spanish War', in M. Rodriguez-Salgado and S. Adams (eds.), *England, Spain and the Gran Armada 1585-1604* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 1-44.

they were writing these publications, the Spanish Elizabethans took other, more secretive steps to ensure that Spain did take action against England.

Peace Feelers and Possible Toleration

If, in Henry IV's conversion and the deterioration of the Spanish position in France, the Spanish Elizabethans saw the possibility of an invasion of England, the Elizabethan regime also recognised this but without the same glee. Whilst Henri did sign a reciprocal 'Bond of Amity' promising never to make a separate peace with Spain, past experience warned the Elizabethan regime that Henri was willing to make promises and then later renege on them, and the secretive mission of La Verenne to Madrid in summer 1593 did little to inspire confidence in England that Henri would keep his word.[26] If the rumours proved true, and La Verenne's peace negotiations were successful, then England and the Dutch rebels would be left to face the Spanish military machine — sufficiently recovered from the Armada — without French support. Moreover, Elizabeth's own military resources were being drawn west to Ireland where they were required to tackle the escalating rebellion led by the Earl of Tyrone.[27] Moreover, Catholic propagandists were accusing Elizabeth of encouraging Turkish attacks on the Holy Roman Empire, and the Lutheran states of northern Germany were complaining about English piracy disrupting with their trade with the Iberian peninsula.[28] Wernham succinctly summarises the English position at this time: 'unless new policy initiatives were taken, England might find herself faced by the more or less open hostility of almost the whole of Europe'.[29] Backed into this corner, the Elizabethan regime extended peace feelers to Rome and Spain, using Catholic exiles as intermediaries. Facing the possibility of an Anglo-Spanish peace, the Spanish Elizabethans looked to undermine preliminary negotiations.

For an unknown length of time, John Arden, a Chichester Catholic whose brother, Robert, was a Jesuit in the confidence of both Cardinal William Allen and Pope Clement VIII, had been employed as a spy in Madrid and Rome by Lord Burghley and Sir Thomas

[26] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 7.
[27] On Tyrone's rebellion, see H. Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion: The Outbreak of the Nine Years War in Tudor Ireland* (Woodbridge, 1993); J. O'Neill, *The Nine Years War, 1593-1603: O'Neill, Mountjoy and the Military Revolution* (Dublin, 2017).
[28] William Camden, *Annals, or, The Historie of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse Elizabeth* (London, 1635), pp. 419-20; Wenham, *After the Armada*, pp. 256-61.
[29] R. Wernham, 'Queen Elizabeth I, the Emperor Rudolph II, and Archduke Ernest, 1593-94', in E. Kouri and T. Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe: Essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (New York, NY, 1987), p. 438.

Heneage.[30] Whilst conducting this work, Arden had, according to Edmund Palmer, the English intelligencer, become close to Sir William Stanley and Robert Persons.[31]

At the beginning of 1593, Burghley and Heneage sent Arden to Rome from Venice where he was staying. Since his brother was not in the city, he called upon Allen.[32] When Robert Arden returned to Rome in March, the two brothers, with Allen, had an audience with Clement VIII during which someone suggested that peace between Spain and England might be achieved if Elizabeth named her successor and arranged for his/her marriage to either Prince Philip (the future King Philip III of Spain) or the Infanta Isabella, and also granted liberty of conscience to her subjects. John Arden relayed this proposal to the Elizabethan regime, and, by 18 June, had returned to Venice.[33]

Soon after, an unknown Elizabethan privy councillor — although it is tempting to suspect it was Heneage — approached Allen via Richard Hopkins, Allen's agent in Antwerp, wanting to explore a peaceful resolution to the Anglo-Spanish war in a treaty that would include toleration for Catholics. Hopkins relayed this proposal to Allen on 10 July. When one reads Allen's reply to Hopkins, a clear sense of excitement at the prospect of toleration is evident. Allen contended that 'God himself hath stirred up in their hearts this motion', and so was eager to explore it fully, provided the agent who had approached Hopkins had authority to conduct such negotiations.[34] Hopkins received Allen's reply on 11 September, and forwarded it to the Privy Council. Whilst he waited a response from England, Allen and John Arden had another audience with Clement on 11 October. At this audience, Allen told the Pope that he had received a letter from England and hoped that 'in time there would be some good both with Her Majesty and Council touching their motion', provided those English exiles renounced their sinister dealings and writings, and that Philip II promised to cease meddling in English affairs. If these things were granted, Allen argued, Elizabeth could not refuse any proposal that was not prejudicial against her or England.[35] For Allen, this proposal, put to him by the Elizabethan regime through English Catholics intermediaries, was a fantastic opportunity. In his opinion, it was worth accepting the compromise of toleration rather than gamble on the full re-

[30] On Robert Arden, see T. McCoog (ed.), *Monumenta Angliae* (2 vols., Rome 1992), II, pp. 214-15; T. McCoog, *English and Welsh Jesuits 1555-1650 Part 1: A-F* (Southampton, 1994), p. 106. On Robert Arden's respected position in Rome, see R. Wernham (ed.), *List and Analysis of State Papers, Foreign Series, Elizabeth I, preserved in the Public Record Office* (7 vols., 1964-2000), III, para. 723 and IV, paras. 627, 638, 643. On Heneage, see M. Hicks, 'Heneage, Sir Thomas (*b*. in or before 1532, *d.* 1595),' *ODNB*.
[31] Wernham (ed.), *List and Analysis,* III, para. 723 and IV, paras. 627, 638, 643.
[32] Duffy, 'William, Cardinal Allen,', p. 287.
[33] Wernham, *List and Analysis*, IV, paras. 638-48, 650. John Arden to Sir Thomas Heneage, Venice, 18 June 1593, SP 99/1, f.215.
[34] Cardinal Allen to Richard Hopkins, Rome 14 August 1593, in Knox, *Letters and Memorials*, pp. 348-51.
[35] Wernham (ed.), *List and Analysis*, V, paras. 625-27.

establishment of Catholicism through a Catholic invasion.[36]

By 11 December, Allen had received no reply from the Elizabethan regime.[37] This silence was possibly because the regime was also exploring peace through more formal channels and this exploration seemed promising. In April 1593, with Henri IV's conversion clearly on the horizon, the regime sent the ex-Jesuit Dr Christopher Parkins on a mission to Prague to meet the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, Philip II's nephew.[38] Parkins' mission was to protest against the libels accusing Elizabeth of supporting the Turks, and to suggest that the English ambassador in Constantinople could mediate between the Emperor and the Turks. In return, Rudolph would 'admonish the Pope and advise the King of Spain to alter this their violent course' and make peace with England, France, and the Netherlands.[39] The imperial response was positive with both Rudolph and his brother Ernest expressing goodwill, and Rudolph promising to write to Philip urging peace. Despite these encouraging signs, no action was taken in Constantinople, and no message was sent to Philip.[40]

When Ernest was appointed governor of the Spanish Netherlands in January 1594, Lord Burghley and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, recommended that Elizabeth send an agent to remind Ernest of his brother's promises to intercede with Philip for an Anglo-Spanish peace.[41] But, before Elizabeth could make up her mind, the Earl of Essex announced that he had detected a Catholic regicidal scheme: the Lopez plot.[42] Essex claimed that the chief agent in this plot was Elizabeth's Portuguese physician, Dr Ruy Lopez, and that the plot's instigators were the Count of Fuentes and Esteban de Ibarra, leading Spanish ministers in Brussels, and Cristobal de Moura, one of Philip's secretaries of state. Many within the regime were sceptical of Essex's claims — it is not difficult to imagine, as both Wernham and Alford have done, that the hawkish Essex contrived the plot to undermine the Cecils' peace efforts in order to ensure continued

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[36] Wernham, citing Arnold Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*, J. McKee (trans.), (London, 1916), pp. 359-64, claims that Allen was 'considerably disillusioned by the disaster to the 1588 Armada about the chances of winning England back to the Roman fold by force, by Spanish force', *Return of the Armadas*, p. 9.

[37] Allen to the Duke of Sessa, 11 December 1593, in P. Renold (ed.), *Letters of William Allen and Richard Barret 1572-1598* (London, 1967), pp. 235-40.

[38] On Parkins see McCoog, *Monumenta Angliae* II, p. 431 and McCoog, *'Our Way of Proceeding?'*, pp. 159, 167 n.131.

[39] J. Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and other various occurrences in the Church of England* 4 vols. (London, 1725-31), IV, pp. 152-56, quote at 156.

[40] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 10-12; Wernham, 'Elizabeth, Rudolph and Ernest', pp. 438-40. Richard Verstegan reported about Parkins' mission in a letter to Persons from Antwerp in late June 1593, in Petti, *Letters and Dispatches*, p. 174.

[41] Two copies of this document exist. The first draft — 'Form of instruction for one to be sent to the Archduke Ernest', [February] 1594, SP 77/5 f.108 — has corrections in Burghley's hand, the second — 'Copy of Form of Instruction of one to be sent to the Archduke Ernest', [February] 1594, SP 77/5 f.117 — has made these corrections and is written by Sir Robert Cecil.

[42] On this plot see Edwards, *Plots and Plotters,* ch.9; McCoog, *Building the Faith*, pp. 148-49; Hammer, *Polarisation of Politics*, pp. 158-63; E. Samuel, 'Lopez [Lopes], Roderigo [Ruy, Roger] (c.1517–1594)', *ODNB*.

war against Spain and to announce his arrival as a major player within the Elizabethan regime — but, using the threat of torture, Essex extracted sufficiently damning confessions from Lopez and from two other Portuguese in England.[43] The three were executed at Tyburn on 17 June.

The Lopez plot may have stalled the exploration of peace, but it did not diminish the hope that peace with Spain might yet be obtained. However, when, in September 1594, the English governor at Ostend requested a passport for Sir Thomas Wilkes so that he might bring letters to Archduke Ernest, the reply was far more hostile than the Elizabethan regime had anticipated: Ernest placed tight restrictions on Wilkes' journey and the subjects which could be discussed.[44] Given these restrictions, the Elizabethan regime cancelled Wilkes' departure and wrote to Jean Richardot, the veteran diplomat at the Brussels court, to protest Ernest's response.[45] When Ernest reported this response to Philip, he added that, if Wilkes were to come, 'nothing can be expected from his words but treason and trouble', arguing that it was, therefore, better to avoid the meeting.[46]

So how had Archduke Ernest gone from expressing goodwill towards the English cause and openness to the possibility of a general European peace in the summer of 1593 to wariness and distrust of English intentions? Wernham does not explain this shift, only noting that it led to the complete abandonment of England's policy of peace.[47] There are a number of possible reasons for this shift: it might have been a consequence of seeing first-hand the political realities in the Netherlands, or it might have been that Dr Perkins exaggerated the goodwill Ernest had expressed the previous year. An alternative explanation is that Ernest's attitudes were influenced by a report on English matters written by English Catholic exiles.[48] It cannot be established exactly how far this report influenced Archduke Ernest's reluctance to receive Elizabeth's envoy; it will be shown, though, that the arguments made in the report were repeated in Ernest's letters justifying his decision, suggesting that it had at least some impact on Ernest's thinking. Moreover, the report's very existence highlights how not all English Catholic exiles were as receptive as Cardinal Allen to the prospect of an Anglo-Spanish peace with limited toleration for Catholics. Instead, it shows how these Catholics sought to disrupt the

[43] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 13; Alford, *The Watchers,* p. 304.
[44] Elizabeth to Ernest (copy), 21 September 1594, AGSE 607/82. Ernest to Elizabeth (copy), 14 October 1594, AGSE 607/81. A copy of both are in the State Papers: Elizabeth to Ernest, 11 September 1594 (OS), SP 77/5, f. 129; Ernest to Elizabeth, Brussels, 4/14 October 1594, SP 77/5, f. 152.
[45] Privy Council to Richardot, 20 October 1594, AGSE 607/118. A copy of Richardot's reply, dated 28 November 1594, can be found AGSE 607/119. Both can also be found in SP 77/5, ff. 429r-30r.
[46] Ernest to the King of Spain, Brussels, 20 December 1594, CP 133/129.
[47] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas,* pp. 17-18.
[48] This section expands upon the arguments made by Albert Loomie in his short introduction to his translation of the report: 'Fr Joseph Creswell's *Información* for Philip II and the Archduke Ernest, *ca.* August 1594', *Recusant History*, 22/4 (1995), pp. 465-81.

process and, in fact, used it as an opportunity to call for the escalation of the war effort.

In late summer 1594, Archduke Ernest received an *Información* — or intelligence report — written in the hand of Joseph Creswell, an English Jesuit, entitled 'Información de las cosas y personas de Inglaterra en quanta apertenece al gobierno de Flandes' ('Report of the things and people of England in which they affect the governance of Flanders'). An almost identical report was given to Philip II around the same time.[49] There were a few minor differences between the two reports: the version given to Philip included the names of Creswell's collaborators, Robert Persons, William Holt, and Hugh Owen; some of the paragraphs contain slightly different details; and the version given to Ernest included side headings for ease of reference. The arguments and evidence of the two documents is, however, the same: namely, that the Elizabethan regime could not be trusted when it came to peace negotiations.

The report opened by declaring that 'the English heretics are the greatest and most important enemies which the government of Flanders is facing today', and that 'all the resources' of England were deployed in placing the Low Countries in 'a state of unrest'. Moreover, 'to gain time they will always be talking about and looking into a peace treaty… but they do not intend to conclude a peace'.[50] To prevent Ernest from being misled, the report recommended that Cardinal William Allen be made his adviser, or, in Allen's absence, for Allen to recommend someone to act on his behalf. In order to emphasise Allen's status as the leader of the Catholics, his principal supporters were listed, including 'all the priests' and the seminaries, and high-profile Jesuits such as Robert Persons, William Holt, and Henry Garnet; and leading lay English Catholics such as the Earl of Westmorland, Sir Francis Englefield, Sir William Stanley, Hugh Owen, Richard Hopkins, Gabriel Dennis and Charles Brown.

The report acknowledged that there were English Catholic exiles who opposed Allen, and drew attention to how the Elizabethan regime sought to use the false promise of peace to foment this division. This opposing faction originally consisted of Charles Paget and Thomas Morgan, but they had convinced others to join their side. The report accused Paget and Morgan of being Hispanophobes: they 'could not endure patiently a dependence on Spain, and so they tried first

[49] The copy given to Philip II is in the personal papers of the Count of Fuentes in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (Manuscritos Tomo 8695 ff. 841-45v), and has been translated in Loomie, 'Creswell's *Información*', pp. 471-78. The version given to Archduke Ernest is: AAW Series A IV, document 831 ff. 231r-238v. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, I have been unable to visit the Archives of the Archdiocese of Westminster to check the original, so quotes come from the transcription in T. Knox (ed.), *The first and second diaries of the English College, Douay and an appendix of the unpublished documents* (London, 1878), pp. 401-08.

[50] This comment in many ways echoes Sir Francis Walsingham's analysis that England's 'quietness, proceeded of her neighbours unquietness'. Sir Francis Walsingham to Sir Thomas Smith, Paris, 8 October 1572 [OS], in Sir Dudley Digges (ed.), *The Compleat Ambassador: or Two Treaties of the Intended Marriage of Qu[een] Elizabeth of Glorious Memory* (London, 1655), p. 268.

to divert the said queen [Mary Stuart] from Spain, and to make her doubt and suspect everything that was treated by way of Spain'.[51] But it was not simply historic anti-Spanish activities to which the report drew attention; it also stressed more recent anti-Spanish behaviour, stating that 'they also have had a custom of protecting and encouraging those who have been tempted and dissatisfied, or who, unhappy in the service of the King, have shown aversion to the Spanish nation'.[52] This encouragement had included encouraging priests to write anti-Spanish and anti-Jesuit books.

Moreover, the report stressed Morgan and Paget's 'usual style of treating with double-agents'. It noted how such activity had led to Morgan's imprisonment and subsequent expulsion from Flanders and other Spanish territories, but emphasised that Paget was continuing this behaviour. It noted that Paget 'currently treated with two of them named Pooly and Moody'.[53] These two 'always bring hopes of peace and return with reports of things that occur in Flanders'.[54] These 'hopes' had convinced Paget of the possibility of peace, and so he continued to aid the double agents by securing for them passports to travel freely in Flanders. This granting of passports, the report argued, must be stopped: 'the eyes of the ministers of Flanders be opened, and that they might stop the entrance of these spies, and that they might punish those that enter without license, and that Charles Paget, and any other that treats with them and has intelligence with the enemy, be exiled from Flanders'.[55] By expelling Paget from Flanders, the Archduke would limit the Elizabethan regime's capacity to send agents into the territory, agents who 'have been involved in many crimes, such as the plan of killing Don Juan of Austria' and encouraging discontent amongst the population of British exiled Catholics present there.[56] The result of the expulsion would be to 'cut off a great matter of relief to the enemies from England and from the discord between the English Catholics in Flanders'.[57] In short, through this report, the Spanish Elizabethans sought to finish the job which had been started four years prior at the trial of Thomas Morgan: the defeat of the other faction of Elizabethan Catholics by completely discrediting its leaders, and the establishment of their their Hispanophile position as the only voice in English Catholic politics.

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[51] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, p. 403.
[52] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, p. 404; cf. Avisos de Londres, 23 May 1591, AGSE 600/76-77. R. Wernham, *List and Analysis,* II, paras. 12, 13, 29, 94, 360, 364,
[53] Pooly was probably Robert Poley, a spy formerly in the pay of Leicester and Sir Francis Walsingham, who had a role in the death of Christopher Marlow in May 1593. Se C. Nicholl, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (London, 1992). See also, Hicks, *Elizabethan Problem*, pp. 246-50. Moody was most likely Michael Moody, who had been a spy in the pay of Stafford in Paris: Peck (ed.), *Leicester's Commonwealth,* p. 294.
[54] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, pp. 404-05.
[55] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries,* p. 405.
[56] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, p. 406.
[57] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, p. 406.

As an alternative to Paget, the report advised that 'only very trustworthy people with knowledge of the governor and of Cardinal Allen' be allowed to deal with such Elizabethan agents. Later, the report identified that the ideal people who could be trusted in dealing with such matters were William Holt and Hugh Owen, two of the authors of the report, as both had been 'involved in discussions [about England] over many years'.[58]

Having discussed the threat posed by Paget at great length and having sought his deportation, the report then urged Ernest to 'always have in mind that which the Queen of England has done until now with the governors of Flanders'.[59] It proceeded to recount how at various times Elizabeth's ambassadors had come to Flanders bearing messages of friendship whilst, at the same time, using the journey to encourage political conspiracies. These false promises of friendship had occurred with every governor of the Netherlands. For example, in addition to the plan to kill Don Juan of Austria when he had been governor, the English had, 'in the time of Lady [Margaret of] Parma' (governor from 1559 to 1567), sent many letters, envoys, and presents to her 'as befits a princess of such noble blood', whilst, at the same time, had her agent, Thomas Gresham, recommend to the Counts of Collonberg and Bredrad 'so that they might present petitions against the edicts of Emperor Charles V and of the King [Philip], that were against heresy'.[60] Similarly, when the 'comendador mayor', Luis de Requesens, had been governor (1573-76), he had been 'wooed by the promises and amorous words of the Queen'.[61] Consequently, in order to keep on friendly terms with her, he had promised to expel all English Catholics from the province. However, soon afterwards, Elizabeth had betrayed this friendship by 'throwing the people of the Isle of Serezca and other parts of Zealand, sending there Omfredo Gilberto [Humphrey Gilbert], Morgan and others and creating turmoil in all the land'.[62] Examples were also given of Elizabeth double-crossing the Duke of Alba, and the Duke of Parma, the other governors of the Netherlands whose tenure had coincided with Elizabeth's rule in England.

To what extent did this *Información* influence events and dissuade Archduke Ernest from enthusiastically accepting Elizabeth's envoy? The report's influence can be observed in Ernest's reply to the Elizabethan request to send Sir Thomas Wilkes to negotiate in Flanders. Ernest warily stated that he would receive an English envoy provided he did not suggest anything that was 'a disservice to the king, my uncles, and his estates', and he insisted that Wilkes would be

[58] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries,* p. 406.
[59] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, p. 406.
[60] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries,* p. 407.
[61] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries*, p. 407.
[62] 'Memorial for Archduke Ernest', in Knox (ed.), *Douai Diaries,* pp. 407-08.

accompanied by an armed guard on his journey and speak to no-one.[63] At the same time, he wrote to Philip explaining that he had learnt, through the Brussels-based Jesuits' English correspondents — probably referring to Hugh Owen — that Wilkes carried a letter which accused the Count of Fuentes of sending Lopez to kill the Queen.[64] Ernest also stated fears that the real purpose of Wilkes' visit was to analyse the state of affairs in the Netherlands and to look for new ways to disrupt Spanish power there.[65] The Elizabethan regime protested Ernest's response in a letter to Jean Richardot, urging him speak to Ernest and persuade him to be more receptive to the Elizabethan envoy. When Ernest reported this second inquiry to Philip, he noted that 'nothing can be expected from his [Wilkes'] words but treason and troubles', and that it was, therefore, better to avoiding the meeting entirely.[66]

The similarities between Ernest's remarks and the report are noticeable. Several pages in the report, for example, detail how English envoys had repeatedly used the promise of peace as an excuse to enter the Netherlands and spy on the territory or foster plots and conspiracies. These may well have influenced Ernest's low estimation of the motivations behind this latest peace proposal. Whilst it is impossible to know for certain how far the *Información* influenced Ernest's decision to rebuff Elizabeth's offer of peace negotiations, the authors would have been pleased with the outcome as it meant that the Anglo-Spanish war was certain to continue. Moreover, regardless of the *Información's* influence, its very existence reveals that the Spanish Elizabethans used intelligence in an effort to try and persuade the Habsburg monarchy to continue its war against Elizabeth.

English Intelligence and Spanish Armadas

By the beginning of 1595, it was evident that there was little chance of an Anglo-Spanish peace, but, at the same time, the factors which had convinced the Elizabethan regime of the need to explore the possibility of peace had also abated. The Spanish position in France had completely collapsed with the last stronghold in Brittany – nicknamed 'El León' – falling in November 1594.[67] The Dutch, too, were in the ascendency, and had taken almost all of the lands north of the Rhine. It was hoped that, once the final territories in this region were taken, the Dutch

[63] Ernest to Elizabeth, Brussels, 14 October 1594, BL, Cotton MS Vespasian, C. VIII, f. 232.
[64] William Holt led the English Jesuits in Flanders, whilst Richard Verstegan, as noted in the previous chapter, coordinated their correspondence.
[65] Ernest to Philip, 28 October 1594, AGSE 607/78.
[66] 'No se podia prometer de su conversacion sino traiciones y inconvenientes [...]' Ernest to Philip, 20 December 1594, AGSE 607/105.
[67] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, pp. 181-82.

might then transfer their primary focus to the Namur-Luxembourg region and link up with the Duke of Bouillon and the French forces of Picardy and Champagne in order to defeat Spanish forces in the Netherlands definitively. The prospects for such an endeavour were enhanced by the death of Archduke Ernest in February 1595, which had the potential to throw the Spanish Netherlands into confusion whilst a replacement was selected.[68]

It appeared, therefore, that France and the Dutch would now be able to hold their own in the war against Spain, and so Elizabeth looked to reduce her military and financial involvement in mainland Europe. For example, following the taking of 'El León', Colonel Norris and his regiment were transferred to Ireland, meaning that there were no English soldiers (in Elizabeth's pay) on French soil.[69] Similarly, Elizabeth requested, unsuccessfully, for the Dutch to reimburse her expenses towards their cause.[70] From this point, England's war with Spain took on a new character. Whereas, since 1590, it had been primarily a continental, land-based war in which English forces had served as a reserve army able to be deployed at critical moments to bolster French or Dutch defences or to exploit favourable military opportunities, from 1595, the Anglo-Spanish war became a straight conflict between the two states, a conflict in which the principal actions took place at sea, or were attempted maritime invasions of each other's territory.[71]

The first scheme Elizabeth approved was a transatlantic raid led by Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins. This expedition had long been in the works, with the plan at one stage to capture Panama, thereby disrupting the Spanish supply of South American silver, but now Elizabeth ordered the expedition to go ahead with the target being Puerto Rico and a Spanish treasure ship supposedly stranded there.[72] Moreover, Elizabeth ordered them to return within six months.[73] She wanted to maximise the potential gains of the expedition whilst minimising the duration of the fleet's absence from England. On 28 August, Drake and Hawkins set sail,

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[68] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas,* p. 21.
[69] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars,* pp. 182-83.
[70] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 21-22.
[71] For an overview of the Anglo-Spanish War in the early 1590s, see Wernham, *After the Armada* and Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, pp. 154-89.
[72] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas,* pp. 25-26. Spain's sources, whilst able to offer information about the size of fleet, were vague about its intentions beyond going to the Caribbean. K. Andrews, *The Last Voyage of Drake and Hawkins* (London, 1972), pp. 12-13. Andrews' work suggests that the Archivo del Museo Naval in Madrid and the Archivo General de Indias in Seville might have further source material relating to Spanish intelligence concerning England. See also 'Avisos de Londres de 10 de Junio 1595', AGSE 610/84.
[73] Andrews, *Last Voyage*, p. 18.

taking with them twenty-seven ships — the six largest of which were provided by Elizabeth — and 2,500 men.[74]

Whilst Drake and Hawkins were on their expedition, another force was assembling which would make a direct strike against Spain. Lord Admiral Charles Howard originally planned this operation as a naval one, but, when Essex was appointed co-commander in 1596, it changed into something quite different.[75] The landing force grew in number with Essex personally paying for the wages of 1000 men and providing a company of 100 lancers; he also encouraged hundreds of gentlemen volunteers to serve without pay.[76] Moreover, the venture gained international support with the Dutch sending vessels to join the fleet.[77] The *avisos de Inglaterra* produced by Hugh Owen provided details to the Spanish Crown of the force's preparations, but not its target. Even in late spring 1596, as the fleet made its final preparations to depart, reports were being sent to Spain that the fleet would sail to either A Coruña, Lisbon, Cadiz, or Seville, but Richard Wernham notes that the precise objectives had not been finalised, which explains the *avisos*' ambiguity.[78] Wherever the attack might occur, the force assembling was large enough to cause significant damage to the Spanish mainland.

There have been few detailed studies of this period of the Anglo-Spanish war. Those which do exist investigate the conflict from an English perspective, relying on English-language sources and sources in English archives, and these accounts tend to relegate the Anglo-Spanish war to a secondary status behind the Elizabethan campaign in Ireland.[79] There has been little written seeking to analyse this conflict from a Spanish perspective or using Spanish sources. Geoffrey Parker's *Grand Strategy of Philip II*, for example, glosses over the Anglo-Spanish war in the 1590s, presenting this decade of conflict almost as a prolonged coda to a conflict which had already climaxed in 1588 with the Spanish Armada.[80] What follows is a short account of the Anglo-Spanish war between 1595 and 1597 in which the *avisos de Inglaterra* are integrated into existing narratives, highlighting previously unnoticed details about the conflict by revealing

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[74] W. Cooley (ed.), *Sir Francis Drake His Voyage, 1595 by Thomas Maynarde, Together with the Spanish Account of Drake's Attack on Puerto Rico* (London, 1849), p. 5. Paul Hammer estimates that this force took twenty-five percent of Elizabeth's front-line fleet away from England. *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 191.
[75] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 55.
[76] Hammer, *Polarisation*, pp. 227-28.
[77] 'Avisos de ynglaterra de 26 de marco 1696'. AGSE 611/65 incorrectly claimed that the King of Denmark had contributed twenty-five vessels to the fleet. In fact, Elizabeth had written to the King of Denmark asking him to loan vessels, but he refused claiming that they could not be spared and that lending them would be in breach of his treaties with Spain: Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 56.
[78] 'Avisos de ynglaterra de 26 de marco 1696', AGSE 611/65; 'Aviusos de Londres de 6 de Mayo 1596', AGSE 611/100; 'Avisos de Londres de 21 de Mayo 1596', AGSE 611/101; Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 56.
[79] See, for example, Wernham, *Return of the Armadas* and Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, pp. 190-235. For more on the Nine Years' War in Ireland, see O'Neill, *Nine Years War.*
[80] Parker, *Grand Strategy.*

how English Catholic intelligence had a tangible impact on the formation of Spanish military strategy against England. An exhaustive account on Spanish intelligence during these years of the conflict is not attempted – for that, a far more ambitious study would be required incorporating the equivalent *avisos* from Ireland and the Low Countries, as well as source material from the Spanish court in Brussels now held at the Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, material from the Archivo del Museo Naval in Madrid, and other archives. Nevertheless, this account emphasises the impact on Spanish strategy that these intelligence reports produced by the Spanish Elizabethans, and thus highlights the potential value integrating Spanish archival material into histories of England in the late-Elizabethan period.

Calais and Cadiz

As Essex and Howard made their final preparations for their offensive strike against Spain, events overtook them, and Elizabeth came close to abandoning the whole offensive strike.[81] In April and May 1596, the first survivors of Drake and Hawkins' expedition to Panama arrived in England, reporting a disaster which had claimed the lives of both commanders and a good proportion of its soldiers and sailors. It was an unmitigated disaster costing the crown something in the region of £35,000 to £40,000.[82] Meanwhile, in France, the Spanish army was marching on Calais, arriving on 10 April.[83] This development raised the terrifying prospect of Spanish control of a port which had, until 1558, been the forward operating base in England's national defence.[84] A swift response was essential. Essex and Howard were ordered to prepare a relief operation, and an emergency levy was conducted to raise men for the force, which in London was conducted by locking church doors after the start of the Easter Sunday service, when the whole population was legally required to attend church.[85]

However, having taken such drastic actions, Elizabeth then decided to pause rather than deploy this rapidly assembled force, making demands of Henri IV of France in exchange for her aid: her chief stipulation was that England would control Calais after the defeat of the

[81] Hammer, *Polarisation*, p. 228.
[82] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 45-54.
[83] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 62-63.
[84] Burghley summarised fears concisely in a letter to his son, Robert Cecil: 'England may not endure this town [Calais] to be Spanish'. Burghley to Sir Robert Cecil, 31 March 1596 [O.S.], in T. Wright (ed.), *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times, A Series of Original Letters, Selected from the Inedited Private Correspondence of the Lord Treasurer Burghley, the Earl of Leicester, the Secretaries Walsingham and Smith, Sir Christopher Hatton and Most of the Distinguished Persons of the Period* (2 vols., London, 1838), II, p. 460.
[85] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 65.

Spanish there.[86] This demand probably stemmed from a distrust of Henri: he had recently reconciled with the papacy, and Elizabeth feared that he would abandon his alliance with England to arrange a separate peace with Catholic Spain.[87] English control of Calais would offer a safeguard against this eventuality. Henri, though, refused to acquiesce, and Elizabeth was forced to act without this concession. On 23 April, she ordered Essex to go to Calais.[88] By this point, however, it was too late; the Spanish had already stormed Calais' citadel crushing French resistance. News soon arrived at Dover, and Essex abandoned his relief effort. As Hammer notes, the fall of Calais hit Essex hard, and 'he felt only fresh glory could redeem his honour'.[89] He wrote a letter to Elizabeth imploring her to allow him to restart the Cadiz expedition.[90] In it, he argued that this voyage should be of the utmost priority, more so than any new undertaking. In France, Elizabeth was 'but an auxiliarie or coadjutor after the proportion of Switserland or pettie commonweales, [but] in this, lyke a princesse of power, you make the warr your self'.[91] This expedition, Essex was arguing, was a chance for Elizabeth to assert herself militarily and to wage war against Spain proactively rather than reactively.

In planning a fresh expedition against Spain, Essex believed secrecy was key. There were two main reasons for this secrecy. The first was military, so as to keep the Spanish unaware of the fleet's plans and to keep the element of surprise. The second reason centred on Essex's distrust of Elizabeth. The Calais episode had convinced him that Elizabeth was a liability when it came to waging war; her indecisiveness undermined her commanders' chances of success and the result was that England suffered far more from the war than was necessary.[92] In Essex's opinion, 'princes that are once in warres, when they do little, must suffer much'.[93] It was, therefore, necessary to circumvent Elizabeth's 'do[ing] little'.

Elizabeth agreed to an aggressive operation against Spain. As Elizabeth intended it, the expedition would destroy the Spanish fleet in its harbours and seize as much plunder as was possible whilst, simultaneously, being careful to minimise the loss of men and vessels needed for England's defences. Attacks against towns able to defend themselves were forbidden, and the commanders were instructed not to make attacks which risked heavy casualties.[94] But Essex

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[86] One *aviso* suggested that Boulogne was the price demanded, but Elizabeth's instructions to Essex show that it was indeed Calais demanded. Avisos de Londres de 6 de mayo 1596, AGSE 611/100; Instructions from the Queen for the Earl of Essex, 13 April 1596, SP 12/257/24.
[87] McCoog, *Building the Faith of Saint Peter*, p. 207.
[88] 'Instructions from the Queen for the Earl of Essex', 13 April 1596, SP 12/257/24.
[89] Hammer, *Polarisation*, p. 249.
[90] BL, Cotton MS Titus, C. VI, f. 172r-v, cited in Hammer, *Polarisation*, p. 250.
[91] [Essex] to [Elizabeth], BL, Cotton MS Titus, C. VI, f. 172r, cited in Hammer, *Polarisation,* p. 250.
[92] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 194.
[93] [Essex] to [Elizabeth], BL, Cotton MS Titus, C. VI, f. 172r-v, cited in Hammer, *Polarisation*, p. 250.
[94] BL, Cotton MS Otho, E. IX, ff. 343r-348v.

had other ideas about what was best for the defence of the realm. In secret, he drew up plans for a far more ambitious scheme, details which he only revealed (after the fleet had set sail) in a letter to the Privy Council.[95] Essex revealed that the plan was to seize a port in Spain and to garrison it with 2,000-3,000 men as 'a continual diversion and to have left (as it were) a thorne sticking in his [Philip's] foote', preventing him from supporting rebels in Ireland or taking more towns on the French coast.[96]

The attempt to keep the fleet's destination a secret was a success. Whilst Spain's informers were able to keep the Spanish informed about the fleet's preparations, meaning that Owen could note in the *avisos* the great gathering of vessels and soldiers at Plymouth and even reveal the plan to carry the sons of Don Antonio, the pretender to the Portuguese throne, in the fleet, they failed to learn the fleet's true destination. Repeatedly, Owen's *avisos* suggested the likely target was Seville or Lisbon – the ports in which the Spanish fleet was based, and, therefore, prime targets for a strike aiming to disable Spain's ability to wage war against England.[97] This inability to identify the actual target meant that, when the English fleet arrived at Cadiz on 29 June, it took the Spanish by surprise, and the defending forces lacked effective artillery, were short of ammunition, and were generally ill-prepared. Whilst the defenders did succeed in repelling the initial landing attempt, Essex successfully captured Cadiz the following day.[98] By viewing this episode through the lens of the *avisos de Inglaterra,* new light can be shed on Essex's victory in Cadiz: his political games, aimed at masking his true intentions from Elizabeth and his rivals on the Privy Council, also successfully prevented the target of his expedition from being learnt by the Spanish, thereby preventing a more coordinated defence of Cadiz.

Essex's hopes of turning Cadiz into 'a thorne' in Philip's foot soon fell apart. In the aftermath of victory, he managed to persuade the other senior officers to support his plan, but soon the desire to return home became overwhelming; even the prospect of the home-bound Spanish treasure fleet did little to generate interest in a sustained campaign. By early August, the whole fleet was back in England.[99] English news coming to Spain via Hugh Owen reported that the English felt that the Cadiz expedition had been a great victory which had revealed that

[95] Earl of Essex to the Privy Council, 31 May 1596, SP 12/259/12; cf. Warwick Record Office, TD 69/6.2, item 80, Essex to Edward Reynolds, 31 May [1596] in which Essex instructs Reynolds to show the letter only to Essex's most trustworthy friends. Cited in Hammer, *Polarisation*, p. 250.
[96] Earl of Essex to the Privy Council, [31 May 1596], SP 12/2459/14, quote at f. 41v.
[97] For example, Avisos de ynglaterra de 26 de marco 1596, AGSE 611/65; Avisos de Londres de 6 de Mayo 1596, AGSE 611/100; Avisos de Londres de 21 de Mayo 1596', AGSE 611/101. For a detailed summary of the English plans, see Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 82-85.
[98] 'Documentos Relativos a la toma y saco de Cadiz por los ingleses en julio de 1596', *CODOIN,* XXXVI, pp. 205-435.
[99] 'Avisos de las Islas', AGSE 611/128; Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 102-13.

Spanish power 'consisted more in opinion than in reality'.[100] Elizabeth, however, was infuriated by Essex's attempt to highjack the expedition, and many of the court interpreted his actions as disrespectful. In Elizabeth's eyes, the expedition had failed in its two basic objectives. She had provided ships and money for an expedition to take or destroy Philip's fleet and provisions, and to intercept the homeward-bound East Indian carracks and/or the West Indian fleet. Moreover, Essex and Howard had failed to prevent the spoils of the expedition disappearing into private hands, thereby depriving the treasury of a spectacular windfall which would help finance the war.[101]

Philip's response to the humiliation at Cadiz was to focus his energies against England. Peace feelers were extended to the French in the hopes of breaking up the Triple Alliance between England, France, and the Dutch rebels signed in autumn 1596.[102] At the same time, Philip decided to send an armada to Ireland to support Hugh O'Neill in his rebellion against Elizabeth.[103] A fleet was hurriedly assembled in August and September, but the preparations required meant that it was not ready to sail until mid-October. The English, meanwhile, were unaware of Philip's intentions. Throughout September, reports arrived in England of Philip's determination to have his revenge for the sack of Cadiz — for example, a spy working for Essex in the Escorial noted that, having received the the news from Cadiz, Philip was furiously working, and had dispatched 'more in three days at this time than was done in three years before' — but no-one believed that he would send a fleet so late in the year.[104] Indeed, the Elizabethan regime only learnt of this Spanish threat after most of Elizabeth's warships had been docked at Chatham for winter.[105] The battle fleet was recommissioned, although unfavourable winds kept it pinned in the Medway and prevented even scout ships putting out to sea. Without its fleet, England's defences relied on the coastal fortifications and trained bands of the seaside towns and counties, a situation which the Elizabethan regime, with its emphasis

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[100] 'Avisos de Londres de 30 de Agosto 1596', AGSE 611/155.
[101] 'Avisos de Londres a 18 de 7bre 1596', AGSE 611/158; Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 197-98; Wenham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 115-29.
[102] States General to Queen Elizabeth, the Hague, 5 November 1596, BL, Cotton MS Galba, D. XII, ff. 76r-77v; Elizabeth's ratification of a treaty with the French King and the United Provinces, 13 January 1597 [OS], BL, Cotton MS Galba, D. XII, ff.80v-82r; Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 69-81. The negotiations for this alliance were frequently noted in the *avisos*. See, for example, Avisos de Londres de 21 de Mayo 1596, AGSE 611/101; Avisos de Londres de 30 de Agosto 1596, AGSE 611/155; Avisos de Londres de 16 de Septembre 1596, AGSE 611/156; Avisos de Londres a 18 de Septembre 1596, AGSE 611/158.
[103] The Irish rebels had been seeking Spanish assistance in their cause for some time and had even offered the Irish crown to Spain. O'Neill and O'Donnaill to King Philip II, Leffer, 16 May 1596, *CSP Simancas (1587-1603)*, p. 620; Morgan, *Tyrone's Rebellion*, pp. 207-13.
[104] T. Birch (ed.), *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth from the Year 1581 till her Death* (2 vols., London, 1754), II, p. 124.
[105] Avisos de Londres de 9 de Noviembre 1596, AGSE 611/208.

on maritime warfare, had long sought to avoid.[106] The *avisos de Inglaterra* arriving in Spain during the autumn recounted rumours abounding in England that Spanish forces had successfully landed in Ireland and had joined with the Irish rebels; that the Armada was going to invade the Isle of Wight or somewhere else on the south coast; or that it was in fact heading to France, to Brittany, or Calais to reinforce the Spanish armies there.[107] In fact, the panic at the coming of this Spanish invasion was for nought because the same seasonal storms which kept Elizabeth's fleet in port also damaged the Spanish armada within four days of its leaving port, the survivors limping to A Coruña, Ferrol, and other safe havens.[108] News of this weatherly intervention reached England by mid-November, and in mid-December reports arrived in Spain that the Elizabethan regime was standing down its defences.[109]

The Azores Expedition and the Armada of 1597

Storms may have crippled the Spanish fleet in October 1596, but they did not destroy it; instead, the fleet was harboured in Ferrol for repairs but remained a threat to England. This invasion scare confirmed to the Elizabethan regime that purely defensive measures were inadequate against the threat of seaborne invasion from Spain. It was, therefore, swiftly decided that attack was the best form of defence, and that the immediate priority must be to put Spain's Atlantic fleet out of action whilst it still remained a sitting target at or near its own ports.[110] By mid-December, Hugh Owen was sending reports to Spain, based on intelligence gathered by his well-established espionage network, that the Elizabethan fleet was already being assembled, and that the intention was for it to number over 300 vessels by Easter.[111] Requests were also made to private individuals and the City of London, to equip ships to join Elizabeth's navy. Similarly, an *aviso* sent from Middleburg, dated 10 January, reported that the Elizabethan

[106] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp 132-39.
[107] Avisos de Londres de 19 de Octubre, AGSE 611/185; Avisos de Londres de xx de Octubre, AGSE 611/183; Avisos de Londres de 9 de Noviembre 1596, AGSE 611/208; Avisos de Londres de 16 de Noviembre 1596, AGSE 611/202; Avisos de Londres de Noviembre 1596, AGSE 611/201. Compare with the English intelligence reports on the topic which show that the Elizabethan regime had no clear information as to the Armada's destination: for example, Sir William Russell to Elizabeth, Kilmainham, 28 August 1596 [OS], CP 44/22; News from Spain, 27 September [OS], CP 45/19; French advertisements, Rouen, 3 October 1596, CP 45/33; John Gyles to the Earl of Essex, Middleburg, 10 November 1596 [NS], CP 174/28; Sir Ferdinando Gorges to Sir Robert Cecil, Plymouth, 2 November 1596 [OS], CP 46/29.
[108] C. Fernández Duro (ed.), *Armada española desde la unión de los reinos de Castilla y de Aragón*, 9 vols. (Madrid, 1895-1903), III, pp. 129-31.
[109] Avisos de Londres de 8 y 14 de Diziembre 1596, AGSE 611/212; Avisos de Londres de 14 de Diziembre 1596', AGSE 611/213; Avisos de Londres de 28 de Diziembre 1596, AGSE 613/7.
[110] L. Henry, 'The Earl of Essex as Strategist and Military Organizer (1596-97)', *English Historical Review*, 68 (1953), pp. 364-70; Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 143-47; Hammer, *Polarisation*, pp. 264-65.
[111] Avisos de Londres de 8 y 14 de Diziembre 1596, AGSE 611/212.

regime had asked that the Dutch arm fifty ships and join the English fleet so that in the spring they could attack the Spanish coast.[112] The *avisos,* though, were able to report the unenthusiastic response Elizabeth had received to her calls for military funding. The City, for example, cited poverty, and claimed that they could only raise six ships, far fewer than had been requested.[113] The *avisos* accurately tracked Elizabethan efforts to build an offensive fleet for a campaign against mainland Spain, giving Spain time to prepare for its coming.

Essex was given command of the Elizabethan fleet to execute an ambitious plan which one *aviso* described as 'more significant than that of Cadiz'.[114] As L.W. Henry notes, Essex had been working on the plan even as he sailed home from Cadiz and had continued to develop it over the winter.[115] At first, his intention was to seize a major Iberian port, using it to neutralise Spanish seapower and maintain a blockade of the other Spanish ports, thereby starving Philip of silver from the New World, and grain and naval supplies from the Baltic. The regime, though, demanded that Essex give priority to destroying the Spanish ships at Ferrol before carrying out his plan.[116] Beyond a strong fleet, he had sought and obtained for this venture a small, high-quality army. His force consisted of 4,000 highly-trained militiamen supported by 1,000 veterans recalled from the Low Countries. Weeks before the fleet set sail, multiple reports had been sent to Spain with accurate details of the size of the force being deployed, even noting that 1,000 of the soldiers were 'the best they could chose', and what the expedition's principal objectives were.[117] But just as the Spanish Armada of 1596 had been thwarted by storms, so the English fleet was defeated by the weather. Storms damaged the ships, and then contrary winds pinned the fleet in harbour.[118] Faced with limited supplies, Essex was forced to dismiss the vast majority of his men, reducing his army to the 1,000 veterans, a force inadequate to capture a port but still one which might cause damage to Spain and could intercept a Spanish treasure fleet.[119] The fleet sailed on 26 August 1597.[120] This voyage, too, proved a disaster with

[112] Avisos de Midelborch, de X de Enero 1597', AGSE 611/211. See also, Avisos de Midelborch de x de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/5.
[113] De Londres a 25 de Enero 1597 escrito a G, AGSE 614/76; Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 147.
[114] Avisos de Inglaterra de 17 de Mayo, AGSE 613/69; De Londres a xxii de Junio 1597, AGSE 614/95. Before May Essex was a joint commander of the expedition. See Henry, 'Essex as Strategist', p. 374.
[115] Henry, 'Essex as Strategist', pp. 364-70.
[116] Henry, 'Essex as Strategist', pp. 378-79; Avisos de Midelborch de x de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/5; Avisos de Ingaterra de V de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/6.
[117] See, for example, Avisos de Inglaterra de 28 de Junio 1597, AGSE 614/7; Avisos de Ingaterra de V de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/6; Avisos de Midelborch de x de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/5.
[118] Avisos de Inglat[erra] de 26 de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/21; Avisos de Inglaterra de 12, 19 y 25 de Julio 1597, AGSE 614/23; Wernham, *Return of the Armadas,* pp. 159-69.
[119] Avisos de Inglaterra de 26 de Julio 1597', AGSE 614/21; Avisos de Inglaterra de 30 de Agusto y 6 de 7bre para embiar a Spania, AGSE 614/50. Henry, 'Essex as Strategist', pp. 381-85.
[120] Avisos de Inglaterra de 30 de Agusto y 6 de Septiembre para embiar a Spania', AGSE 614/50.

storms scattering the fleet. When the fleet regrouped near Cape Finisterre, easterly winds prevented it from heading to Ferrol. Instead, the fleet headed south to the Azores where they hoped to intercept Spanish treasure ships.[121]

When news reached Philip that Essex had sailed into the Atlantic, Philip immediately instructed the Martín de Padilla, the Adelantado, to set sail at once for England with the new armada.[122] Philip, through the *avisos de Inglaterra*, was aware that Essex had brought with him many of Elizabeth's front-line warships and that England was, therefore, particularly vulnerable. Thus the orders were to depart at once rather than wait for the thirty-two extra ships and 5,000 Italian soldiers that were en route to join the fleet from Lisbon.[123] The new armada that set sail from Ferrol on 15 October comprised 136 ships, 9,000 troops, and 4,000 sailors.[124] This expedition was smaller in scale than its predecessors, and its objectives were far less grand: Philip commanded the Adelantado to attack Falmouth, capturing it and leaving the army to hold it, before departing to winter in Ferrol. The plan was that the following spring, when weather permitted it, the Armada would return carrying reinforcements.[125]

As the Spanish fleet sailed across the Bay of Biscay, Essex's fleet began to return to England in ones and twos, the sailors onboard tired and sick.[126] Hammer notes that the Elizabethan regime was unaware of the Spanish fleet's departure, believing that Essex had 'bottled the enemy up in Spain'.[127] This ignorance explains the *avisos'* lack of detail about English preparations for the coming armada: there was simply nothing to report.[128] Indeed, it was only on the morning of 5 November – more than a week after the news was sent – that the Elizabethan regime heard news for the first time of the fleet's sailing, and that it was within thirty leagues of Scilly.[129] Although the trained bands near Falmouth had been exercised, and the English veterans in Picardy had been recently recalled to Portsmouth, it seems unlikely that

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[121] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 171-83.
[122] Hans Williamson to Jacques Hardright, 'Bayona in Portugal' [Baiona?], 16 September 1597 [OS], SP 94/5/274.
[123] Agostino Nani, Venetian Ambassador in Spain, to the Doge and Senate, *CSPVenetian (1592-1603)*, no. 634.
[124] Relacion del viaje del Adelantado, October 1597, SP 94/5/282. The fleet had intended to sail in mid-September, but unfavourable winds had prevented this: 'Letter from Father Sicilia, S. J. Confessor to the Adelantado, written to a friend while lying in sight of Corunna, on the 25th October 1597', *CSPVenetian (1592-1603)*, no. 629B.
[125] Agostino Nani, Venetian Ambassador in Spain, to the Doge and Senate, *CSPVenetian (1592-1603)*, no. 634.
[126] Avisos de Inglaterra de 18 y de 30 de Oct 1597, AGSE 614/100; Avisos de Inglaterra, 11 November, Middelburg, AGSE 614/99.
[127] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 203;
[128] On the lack of English preparations, see, for example, Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 171-85; Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, p. 203.
[129] Rowland White to Sir Robert Sidney, the Strand, 26 October 1597 [OS], in A. Collins (ed.), *Letters and memorials of state, in the reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, King Charles the First, part of the reign of King Charles the Second, and Oliver's usurpation* (2 vols., London, 1746), II, p. 71.

any military response would have occurred until after the Spanish attack on Falmouth, the news of the armada's sailing coming so late.[130] The urgency with which this armada was launched was a direct consequence of the intelligence from England provided by the *avisos* supplied by Hugh Owen and his espionage network, and had it not been for foul weather, a successful invasion of England might well have occurred.

Conclusions

Previous studies have noted how the tactics of the Spanish Elizabethans shifted around 1593. From this point they began a public debate concerning the Elizabethan succession, and started to promote the legitimacy of Spanish intervention in England. This shift was the result of events elsewhere, in particular the faltering of the Spanish position in France, which opened the possibility of a renewed Spanish campaign against England. The overwhelming majority of these studies have, however, only explored the English-language publications of this print campaign, arguing that these represented a concerted effort to unite the English Catholic population behind the candidacy of the Infanta Isabella so that they would welcome the invading Spanish army. This historiography has shown that the Spanish Elizabethans engaged in the English-speaking 'public sphere'.

To examine only these English-language publications is problematic. For a start, this decision implies that the Spanish Elizabethans took it for granted that, with the war in France faltering, the Spanish would abandon that campaign and instead switch focus towards England. This presumption was not the case, and the Spanish Elizabethans also published texts to sway Spanish public opinion behind such a policy shift. The *Relación que Embiaron las Religiosas*, for instance, through its examination of the Bridgettine nuns, emphasised the plight of English Catholics whilst also stressing the Spanish claim to the English throne. The *Relación* and other similar publications thus articulated the moral and legal justifications for war against England. Far from being guaranteed Spanish support for their cause, the Spanish Elizabethans felt compelled to engage with the Spanish 'public sphere' in order to secure the Spanish military and financial support they needed for the re-establishment of Catholicism in England to be achieved.

Printed texts may have helped the Spanish Elizabethans win popular Spanish support for their cause, but it was through their control of the Spanish Crown's supply of English

[130] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas,* p. 186.

intelligence that they were able to convince the Spanish authorities to refocus their military efforts on England. By examining Spanish-language sources produced by the Spanish Elizabethans for the Spanish authorities in both Brussels and Madrid, new perspectives of events during the Anglo-Spanish War emerge. These perspectives reveal the influence the Spanish Elizabethans had on Spanish military strategy through their control of Spain's intelligence apparatus in England: Spain was persuaded to continue its war with England in part because of the analysis of intelligence presented in Joseph Creswell's *informacíon* which portrayed Elizabethan England as completely untrustworthy; Essex's capture of Cadiz in 1596 can be linked to the failure of Owen's network to identify the target of his raid; and the armada of 1597 set sail ahead of schedule, unbeknownst to the Elizabethan regime, because of the accurate intelligence Owen had gathered showing that Essex had taken the majority of England's fleet into the Atlantic to intercept Spanish treasure ships. Intelligence gathered from England by Hugh Owen's espionage network thus played a vital role in reinvigorating the Anglo-Spanish war from 1595, and in shaping the conflict's subsequent developments.

4. The Spanish Elizabethans, the European Powers, and the Succession, 1597-1603

Introduction

The publication of *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Throne of England* reignited a topic many believed to be settled in James VI of Scotland's favour: the English royal succession. Certainly, this was how James himself viewed it. Prior to 1595, despite her refusal to name him as her heir, Elizabeth had provided him with sufficient verbal and written assurances that she would do nothing to prejudice his claim that James felt confident in his position.[1] Indeed, James was so certain that, on more than one occasion, he risked a diplomatic breach with England rather than defer to Elizabeth's demands.[2] The *Conference*, however, with its central thesis that, according to the Western legal tradition, the religion of the prospective ruler was of greater significance than blood ties in deciding a succession, changed James' opinion. It convinced him that there was a strong possibility that he would have to fight for the English throne. Over the following years, James made a concerted effort to build a wide-reaching coalition to support his candidacy when the time came, courting the support of Protestants and Catholics alike, both within the British Isles and across Western Europe. In building this coalition, James looked to exploit the widespread fears of Habsburg hegemony in order to overcome apprehensions about his religion.

Similarly, the Spanish Elizabethans looked to build a coalition of support for a Catholic candidate. The *Conference* had been published with the hopes of informing Christendom about the 'facts' of the succession, revealing the strengths and weaknesses of the various claimants, and showing that, in the final analysis, the Infanta Isabella of Spain was the only realistic Catholic candidate.[3] Their efforts to build such a coalition required diplomatic efforts in multiple European courts, each with its own nuanced agenda. The Spanish Elizabethans could

[1] S. Doran, 'James VI and the English Succession', in R. Houlbrooke (ed.), *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 27.
[2] Doran, 'James VI and the Succession', pp. 28-29.
[3] Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*, p. 76.

try to dictate events, but, ultimately, they were at the mercy of the broader political environment.

Despite this international dimension, the historiography of the succession has overwhelmingly portrayed it as a uniquely British affair, of little or no import to the mainland European powers. For a long time, historians assumed that, after Mary, Queen of Scots' execution in 1587, James VI's path to the English throne was untroubled and his accession inevitable. Thus, the collection edited by John Guy, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (1995), barely mentioned the succession question as it manifested in the 1590s.[4] In the past twenty years, though, methodological innovations have led to a revival of interest in the Elizabethan succession question. Whereas in the mid to late twentieth century, scholars eschewed high politics, avoiding what was regarded as narrow political narratives and instead focusing on broader social and cultural processes, from the 1990s on, New Political History has facilitated a resurrection of the Elizabethan succession question, and encouraged a new and more wide-ranging assessment.[5] In particular, there has been a number of studies examining the various strategies adopted by the government and its supporters, and also its critics and enemies, to win over public opinion, especially during periods of crisis.[6] Similarly, New Catholic historiography, championed by Peter Lake and Michael Questier, Alexandra Walsham, and others, has brought the writings of Catholic polemicists and the activities of the English Catholic community in England and in exile into mainstream historiography.[7] New British History, meanwhile, central to which is the recognition that England cannot be viewed in isolation but must be studied alongside events in the rest of the Atlantic Archipelago, has led to a wider acknowledgment of James' diplomatic endeavours to secure his claim to be Elizabeth's heir.[8]

Despite this rekindled interest in the topic, few scholars have engaged with the Elizabethan succession as it manifested itself beyond Britain. Thomas McCoog has attempted to rectify this omission. In his analysis of the Jesuits in Britain and Ireland, he shows how the Spanish Elizabethans lobbied unsuccessfully for the European Catholic monarchs to intervene

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[4] J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995).
[5] See, for example, P. Collinson, *De Republica Anglorum: Or, History with the Politics Put Back: Inaugural Lecture delivered 9 November 1989* (Cambridge, 1990); Hammer, *Polarisation*; P. Lake with M. Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven, CT, 2002); N. Mears, 'Court, Courtiers, and Culture in Tudor England', *Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), pp. 703-22.
[6] Alford, *Burghley*; Lake and Questier, 'Puritans, Papists and the "Public Sphere"', pp. 587-627.
[7] See pp. 5-9 above.
[8] See, for example, Doran, 'James VI and the Succession', pp. 25-42; D. Edwards, 'Securing the Jacobean Succcession: The Secret Career of James Fullerton of Trinity College, Dublin', in S. Duffy (ed.), *The World of the Gallowglass* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 188-219. See also, S. Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis* (Cambridge, 1998).

in the succession.[9] This chapter expands on McCoog's investigation, emphasising the central role of intelligence in the Spanish Elizabethan efforts. It traces Spanish Elizabethan efforts to build a coalition for a Catholic candidate at the various European courts, revealing how they used intelligence to complement their publications, petitions, lobbying, and other activities to this end, and revealing how intelligence was vital in efforts to disrupt the coalition building of James VI and his supporters during episodes such as the Archpriest Controversy. The chapter argues that, ultimately, Spanish Elizabethan efforts were futile when faced with such disparate but powerful geopolitical interests, the same interests that James was able to exploit to his own ends. It demonstrates that Philip III's refusal to make a decision about the succession infuriated the Spanish Elizabethans, and his insistence, when he finally did make a decision, that the Infanta Isabella, his sister, be the Catholic candidate (despite her repeated disinterest in the English throne) prevented a united Catholic front from forming. Meanwhile, James VI, supported by Henri IV, was able to consolidate support in a Rome keen to extract itself from Spanish hegemony. When Philip finally abandoned his sister's candidacy and proposed that a neutral candidate be found, it was too late: James' position was unassailable. The chapter finishes by looking at the period immediately following the succession culminating in the Treaty of London, which ended the Anglo-Spanish war. This post-succession period needs to be considered alongside the years preceding James' accession because, as Pauline Croft writes, 'the treaty of London is better seen as the last chapter of Elizabethan foreign policy rather than the first Jacobean peace initiative'.[10] This chapter shows how the Spanish Elizabethans adjusted their expectations to reflect the new political landscape, but stresses that the Spain's geopolitical interests meant that religious concessions were not secured at the Treaty of London, despite the best efforts of the Spanish Elizabethans.

English Catholic Divisions and Roman Negotiations

By the end of the sixteenth century, it was apparent that the English Catholic community was in desperate need of clear leadership. Relations between the Jesuits and the secular clergy had deteriorated following the death of Cardinal William Allen on 16 October 1594. Priests who had accepted Jesuit participation in the English mission because they trusted Allen became far more apprehensive about Jesuit involvement. Dissatisfaction with the Jesuits developed in

[9] See McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, esp. pp. 161-71, 206-26, 330-40, 378-91.
[10] P. Croft, '*Rex Pacificus*, Robert Cecil, and the 1604 Peace with Spain', in G. Burgess, R. Wymer and J. Lawrence (eds.), *The Accession of James I: Historical and Cultural Consequences* (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 140.

several interrelated contexts among both the clergy and laity, driven by a plethora of motivations, ranging from the personal to the religious to the political. Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget had originally cooperated with Allen and Persons in schemes to liberate Mary Queen of Scots in the 1580s. However, a rift had developed between them, with the two clergymen blaming Morgan and Paget for the failure of the Throckmorton and Babington plots. Following Allen's death, Morgan and Paget found allies amongst those English Catholics who feared the repercussions should Persons be made cardinal. Jesuits, they believed, already had *de facto* control of the English Church; Persons' promotion would make it official, and, having taken full command of the English Church, Persons would be free to pursue his pro-Spanish agenda.

Anti-Jesuit sentiment manifested itself in several locales. In Flanders, pre-existing tensions between the Spanish Elizabethans and the Scottish faction were ignited by an attempt by Hugh Owen, Sir William Stanley, and the English Jesuit William Holt to reform the Spanish pensions given to English exiles. They sought to exclude those deemed to be working contrary to Spanish interests.[11] Working with James VI's agents and Innocenzo Malvasia, the papal nuncio in Flanders, the Scottish faction worked to undermine the Spanish Elizabethans' activities. At Malvasia's request, Paget obtained a manuscript copy of the *Conference about the Next Succession* by bribing a boy who worked at Richard Verstegan's press. Malvasia denounced the text to Rome, where it was negatively received at the papal court and at the English College.[12]

Meanwhile, amongst the English clergy, dissatisfaction with the Jesuits came to a head at Wisbech Castle and the Venerable English College, the English seminary in Rome. The Jesuit William Weston entered the community of Catholic priests imprisoned at Wisbech in 1588, and, in December 1594, had withdrawn to his room in protest at what he saw as the lax behaviour of some of his fellow inmates, splitting the community. The conflict at the prison typified the division between the Jesuits and their supporters, who had an extremely clear sense of what their religion required of them, and those amongst the secular clergy who resented the Jesuits' status and were suspicious of their unaccommodating stance in the face of the realities of life in England.[13] At the English College, divisions followed similar lines. The students,

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[11] 'Traslado de la relacion q[ue] sedio a su A sobre los Entretenidos Ingleses, a x de Marco 1596, en Bruselas', AGSE 612/125; Loomie, *Spanish Elizabethans*, pp. 27-40; T. McCoog, 'Harmony Disrupted, Robert Persons S.J., William Crichton, S.J., and the Question of Queen Elizabeth's Successor, 1581-1603' in T. McCoog, *'And Touching Our Society': Fashioning Jesuit Identity in Elizabethan England* (Toronto, 2013), pp. 302-12; Edwards, *Robert Persons,* pp. 160, 198-99, 216-20.

[12] P. Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 194.

[13] On the 'Wisbech Stirs', see P. Renold (ed.), *The Wisbech Stirs (1595-98)* (London, 1958); A. Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1979), pp. 78-101; Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 37-57.

echoing a common cry that the Jesuits were no better than Puritans in their drive for ideological purity, objected to the college's strict discipline. There was also a political motivation to the unrest. The students in the college were extremely anti-Spanish, and considered their Jesuit rectors to be pursuing pro-Spanish policies. These attitudes were reinforced by the publication of the *Conference*. The students had received bad 'reports' 'from their partisans in Flanders', and believed that the book 'was greatly in favour of the claims of the king of Spain and the lady infanta […] and was the prelude to a conquest of England'.[14]

Anti-Jesuit and anti-Spanish sentiment fuelled the divisions so prevalent amidst the English Catholic population at the end of the sixteenth century. To the Spanish Elizabethans, this opposition was interconnected — a report sent to Roger Baynes, for example, identified the Scottish faction in Flanders as the epicentre of all the troubles — and was the consequence of the extraordinary efforts made by James VI's agents on his behalf.[15] These agents were making promises about the toleration that would follow James' accession, or even of his conversion upon becoming king.[16] The Spanish Elizabethans, though, believed (correctly, as it turned out) these promises were baseless. As an English Catholic exile in Spain argued to Philip II, there was no more hope for the eradication of heresy and the reformation of the evil English government under James than France was experiencing in reality under Henri.[17] Moreover, the divisions caused by these agents' promises undermined the English Catholic cause, deterring the Catholic powers from listening to them and from acting on their behalf.[18] Their opponents' growing momentum, therefore, needed to be stopped to maximise the chance of the Spanish Elizabethan vision for English Catholicism's future to be realised.

Since 1589, Robert Persons had worked in Spain, serving the English Catholic cause as best he could through his writings, interactions with the Spanish court, and through the founding of seminaries.[19] In autumn 1596, he was recalled to Rome, arriving in the city on 27 March 1597. The primary reason for his recall was the student rebellion at the English College. Multiple individuals had tried and failed to calm the situation, and it was hoped that Persons

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[14] Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest,* p. 67.
[15] 'Relacion del tratado de algunos ingleses provisionados de su Mag[esta]d en Flandes…', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff. 118r-120r.
[16] McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 209-13.
[17] McCoog, *Building the Faith*, pp. 382-84.
[18] Such sentiment had been expressed, for example, by Robert Persons and William Allen ahead of the Armada of 1588 (Allen and Persons to Philip II, Rome, after 24 March 1588, in *Correspondence*, pp. 667-76), and had been similarly reiterated in the 1590s. See Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', pp. 289-94.
[19] On Persons' career in Spain, see Edwards, *Persons,* pp. 136-197, and McCoog, *Building the Faith.* For an in-depth examination of his working founding seminaries in Spain in the 1590s, see Hicks, 'Persons and the Seminaries in Spain'; Williams, *St Alban's College;* Murphy, *St Gregory's College*; Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, chs. 1-2.

might have better luck.[20] Persons also took the opportunity to lobby the Papal Curia over the issue of the English royal succession. In a letter to William Holt written as he travelled towards Rome, Persons explained that he was determined to impress upon the pope the urgency of ensuring that 'after the queen's death, the government may not come into any worse hands', and educate the pope about 'the great injury… that will ensue if any heretical prince whatever should obtain it'.[21] In this endeavour, Persons was supported in Rome by three associates. One, Roger Baynes, was an English Catholic exile who had served as secretary to Cardinal William Allen. The other two were Spaniards: Dr Francisco Peña, an auditor in the Sacra Rota (the highest Catholic ecclesiastical court), and 'one of the most trusted defenders of the interest of the Spanish king'; and Antonio Fernández de Córdoba y Cardona, fifth Duke of Sessa, the Spanish ambassador.[22] Additionally, Persons was supported by the wider community of Spanish Elizabethans, who sent him memoranda, analyses, and intelligence reports. As will be seen, these documents provided evidence to support the claims Persons made about the succession, the attitudes of English Catholics, and the prospect of religious toleration.

The majority of scholarship examining this episode in Persons' career focuses on his endeavours at the English College and his role in the creation of the Archpriest, viewing it, correctly, as a precursor to the subsequent Archpriest controversy.[23] Limited attention has, as a result, been given to Persons' diplomatic efforts concerning the succession. However, as Lake and Questier have shown, the divisions within the English Catholic population at the turn of the seventeenth century have 'much to tell us about the political dynamics of the post-Reformation and the politics of incipient regime change (aka the succession)'.[24] Persons' activities to mend the divisions affecting English Catholicism must, therefore, be examined alongside his lobbying at the papal curia about the succession. In both endeavours, Persons would use intelligence to strengthen his arguments.

Restoring Order to English Catholicism's Institutions

On 2 April 1597, five days after his arrival in Rome, Persons visited the English College, and addressed the seminarians for the first time.[25] Drawing upon Scripture, historical precedent,

[20] For a summary of the troubles at the College to this point, see Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 58-65.
[21] Persons to Holt, 15 March 1597, ABSI 46/12/3-6, pp. 539-40.
[22] S. Tutino, 'A Spanish Canonist in Rome: Notes on the Career of Francisco Peña', *California Italian Studies*, 5/1 (2014), p. 414.
[23] See, for example, Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism*, pp. 102-130; Edwards, *Robert Persons*, pp. 198-215.
[24] Lake and Questier, 'Taking it to the Street?', p. 71.
[25] The full text of Persons' speech can be found in ABSI Coll N II, ff. 125-57.

and their common experiences, Persons explained to the students the reasons for his coming to Rome, his understanding of the College's problems, and his proposed remedies. He stressed the valuable contribution Spain and the Society of Jesus had made towards the maintenance of English Catholicism, noting, for example, how the newly-founded seminaries in Spain helped not only English Catholic students but also English Protestants who were handed over by the Inquisition to be converted. Moreover, the additional priests they produced increased the numbers serving the faithful in England. He also stressed that the Society had been a true friend to English Catholics: 'these men have been the most redieste and willinge in all contryes to help us: there howses have bene our howses, there frindes our frends, there credyt our credyt'.[26]

Persons identified two opposing groups within English Catholicism. The first group, 'the right hand', had worked for the benefit of England, produced martyrs, converted many, founded seminaries, and much more. Amongst its number were

> our late good Cardinal Doctor Sanders, Sir franncys Inglefield and the rest of that ranke now deade, and there frindes and comparteners yet alive of the learnedest and gravest of our nacion: And with them have jeoned ever all the fathers of the Societye, all the Seiminaryes, all the priests within and withowt Ingland.[27]

The 'left hand', meanwhile, had produced no positive impact on England; in fact, their actions had hindered the saving of England:

> the overthro of the poor quene of Scots, that otherwyse myght yett have lyved manye a fayre yeare, with the ruyne of those fourteene Inglische Gentilmen that dyed with hyr and for hyr, in trapped by the rashe and undiscrete treatie of [John] Ballarde, wherein I can assure yow, the right hand had nether part nor knowledge. The fall in like maner of Gilbert Gifford and hys treatye with the enime were by thys hand, as also the twoo bookes written by him and hys compagnion, The one againste our Cardinals epistle for the deliverye of Deventrye, and the other against the ffathers of the Societye, which were so fondlye and malitiously written as Walsingham hym self was asshaymed to lets them be printed.[28]

The 'left hand' undermined the cause of English Catholicism, spreading division within its ranks and leading to the downfall of many. But Persons did not view the situation as irreversible, calling on students to set aside their differences with the Jesuits and Spain 'for Gods sayke and for our countryes sake, and for our owne saykes'.[29] As an Englishman and a Jesuit, Persons informed the students that he wanted to help reconcile the English to the Society.

[26] ABSI Coll N II, f. 140r.
[27] ABSI Coll N II, f. 153r.
[28] ABSI Coll N II, f. 154r.
[29] ABSI Coll N II, f. 157r.

Persons' speech was a compelling appeal to the students, setting out a case that their rebellion was doing more harm than good.[30] However, it would take more than rhetoric to resolve the genuine underlying issues at the College. Nevertheless, Persons established something like control over the English college 'in a remarkably short time period'.[31] His critics argued that he imposed a tyranny on the College to achieve this peace. Robert Charnock, for instance, later wrote that the peace was a consequence of measures brought in by Persons' imposing of tight surveillance which prevented unmonitored communication between the students.[32] Others noted his expulsion of a number of students from the college following the infamous 'taverns incident' when authorities had arrested a group of English seminarians for drinking boisterously in public.[33] Another explanation for the restoration of peace at the College is the 'six or seven conferences' that Persons had 'with the corrupted section of the college' in which they discussed the discontent. By the end of these discussions, 'Parsons the ogre became Parsons the arbitrator'.[34] Indeed, on 17 May 1597, six of the disaffected students wrote to Claudio Acquaviva, the Jesuit Superior General, praising Persons' 'singular prudence'.[35]

So what did Persons do at these meetings which was so effective? Edwards explains that it was because 'Persons knew how to listen as well as talk', a conclusion McCoog echoes: Persons was willing to make concessions to the students in certain areas if they were prepared to do likewise.[36] Intelligence also played an important part. Henry Tichbourne, another of the Jesuit staff at the College, noted that 'the intelligences of all preparations & pretensions of our conseil at home [are] sent continuallie to ff [Father] P[ersons] by expresse messingers that all suche that seke to contradict or oppose against him are either discardid or discredided & all they can say or projecte to the contrarie hold as inventions'.[37] This intelligence corroborated Persons' claims that the Elizabethan regime looked to divide English Catholics with misleading reports

[30] Francis Edwards describes it as 'the sincere appeal of a man who had given up everything for a cause and was convinced that he was talking to men who had done likewise'. *Robert Persons*, p. 204.
[31] Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest,* p. 65.
[32] T. Law (ed.), *The Archpriest Controversy: Documents Relating to the Dissensions of the Roman Catholic Clergy, 1597-1602* (2 vols., London, 1896), I, p. 137.
[33] On this incident, see J. Pollen, *The Institution of the Archpriestof the Archpriest Blackwell: A Study of the Transition from Paternal to Constitutional and Local Church Government among the English Catholics, 1595 to 1602* (London, 1916), p. 24; McCoog, *Building the Faith*, pp. 396-97.
[34] McCoog, *Building the Faith*, p. 364.
[35] R. Persons, *A Brief Apologie, or Defence of the Catholike Ecclesiastical Hierarchie, & Subordination in England* (n.p. [Antwerp], n.d [late 1601]), sigs. H4v-5r. Edwards Bennett, one of the student rebel leaders, wrote to Hugh Griffin 'he whom we most feared and whom we account for our greatest enemy, hath been our greatest friend', Rome, 16 May 1597, in Dodd, *Church History*, III, pp. lxxx-lxxxi.
[36] Edwards, *Robert Persons*, p. 204; McCoog, *Building the Faith*, p. 364.
[37] Henry Twetchbourne, of the Society of Jesus, to Thomas. Derbeshire, 2 February 1598, SP 12/262/28.

of 'liberty of conscience at home'.[38] The intelligence thus aided Persons in his efforts to quash his opponents by showing that their vision for England was unattainable, built, as it was, on disinformation.[39] Through a combination of compelling rhetoric, strict rules, negotiation, and intelligence, Persons imposed order on the English College.

Having succeeded at the English College, Persons expanded his focus, and looked to the broader issue of the governance of the English clergy. Interpreting a proposal from the secular priest, John Mush, for the formation of an association of secular clergy to achieve internal cooperation and cohesion as a threat to the Society, Persons, in August 1597, presented a petition to Pope Clement VIII for the consecration of two bishops, one to reside in England, the other in Flanders.[40] These bishops would both have jurisdiction over all of England, and, with the assistance of six archpriests in England, would be able to provide the rigorous governance which had been missing from the English mission. As he confided to Francisco Peña (a Spanish priest with immense influence in Rome) and Pietro Aldobrandini (Pope Clement's nephew and the papal secretary of state) only bishops had the authority to exclude seditious students from the English College from working on the mission.[41]

The two-bishops proposal did not secure papal support; Pope Clement VIII feared that the appointment of bishops would intensify the persecution of Catholics in England.[42] Instead, on 7 March 1598, Enrico Caetani, Cardinal Protector of England, appointed George Blackwell as archpriest.[43] Blackwell was given authority to direct and govern English priests in England and Scotland. He could assign priests, transfer them from one residence to another, resolve disputes, and punish clergy through suspension or revocation of faculties. Although the purpose of the archpresbyterate was to restore 'peace and union of minds and concord between brethren and Priests, particularly also with the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, that have laboured together with you in one vineyard', this was not how many secular priests interpreted

[38] Henry Twetchbourne, of the Society of Jesus, to Thomas Derbeshire, 2 February 1598, SP 12/262/28.
[39] It is unclear exactly through what route Persons received the intelligence, although, given his known relationships with Owen and Verstegan, it seems probable that it was through one of these two. Certainly, in the subsequent Archpriest Controversy, Persons would receive intelligence about the Appellants' activities principally from one of Owen's English sources: William Sterrell. See pp. 145-48 below. More concrete evidence about the origins of the intelligence might be ascertained through a detailed study of Persons' papers from this period located in the English College at Rome, the ARSI, and the Vatican Apostolic Archives.
[40] Persons to Clement VIII, Rome, 13 August 1597, ABSI, Coll P II 355. See also, Relacion de la necesidad que ay de poner dos obispos Ingleses uno en flandes, i otro en Inglaterra i de los buenos effectos que de aqui se seguiram, Vat.Lat. 6227, ff. 26-27; Edwards, *Robert Persons,* pp. 208-10; McCoog, *Building the Faith,* pp, 318-21.
[41] Edwards, *Robert Persons*, p. 209.
[42] Pollen, *Institution of Archpriest,* p. 25.
[43] 'Literae Cardinalis Cajetani, quarum Vigore Georgius Blackwellus constituitur Archipresbyter in Anglia. Martii 7, 1598', in Tierney/Dodd, III, pp. cxix-cxxiii.

it.[44] A small but vocal minority of secular clergy protested against its imposition. They read the document appointing Blackwell, which had been delivered to Blackwell via Henry Garnet, the Jesuit superior in England, as little more than a vehicle for Jesuit control over the rest of the clergy. The document praised Jesuit contributions to the Mission, both on the ground in England and through the Jesuit-run seminaries and colleges, and cleared them of all charges and accusations of misconduct and ulterior motivations.[45] Moreover, an accompanying document laid out in greater detail the relationship between the archpriest and the Jesuit superior:

> there should be complete union of mind and agreement between the Fathers of the Society and the secular clergy; and as the said Superior, on account of his experience of English affairs and the authority he has amongst Catholics, may greatly assist all consultations of the Clergy, the Archpriest will be careful in matters of greater importance to ask his opinion and advice.[46]

Such an instruction was interpreted as a means to assert Jesuit control over the rest of the clergy in England. Additionally, the fact that Blackwell had not been appointed directly by the Pope but by Caetani, the Cardinal Protector, was also problematic. Caetani was known to be 'allied to the contrary part' – that is to say, the Jesuits – and was a Spanish sympathiser.[47] The appointment of Blackwell as Archpriest was thus seen as a Jesuit attempt to subordinate the rest of the English Catholic population, stamping out opposition to their vision for English Catholicism's future. Faced with this existential threat, the Jesuits' opponents, who became known as the appellants, felt obliged to react, sending two of their number — William Bishop and Robert Charnock — to Rome to contest the legitimacy of the archpresbyterate. They hoped to exploit the fact that whilst Cardinal Caetani was a Hispanophile, Pope Clement VIII was not. If they could convince Clement that Caetani had appointed Blackwell as part of a broader conspiracy towards a Spanish succession in England, then Clement might overturn his decision and abolish the archpresbyterate. The appeal, however, was a failure. From their departure they had been marked men: their progress towards Rome had been closely monitored, and Persons had used this intelligence to prepare for their arrival in Rome by warning of all of their seditious intentions.[48] When Bishop and Charnock arrived in Rome, they

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[44] Quoted in McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, p. 84.
[45] 'Literae Cardinalis Cajetani, quarum Vigore Georgius Blackwellus constituitur Archipresbyter in Anglia. Martii 7, 1598', in Tierney/Dodd, III, pp. cxix-cxxiii.
[46] McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, p. 84.
[47] William Bishop, *The copies of certaine discourses* (Rouen [vere London], 1602), p. 121.
[48] Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, acting probably on information provided by Persons, urged Mirto Frangipani to watch these priests and warned him of their ill intentions. Aldobrandini to Frangipani, Ferrara, 28 October 1598, in L. van der Essen and A. Louant (eds.), *Correspondance d'Ottavio Mirto Frangipani, premier nonce de Flandre (1596-1606): Lettres (1596-1598) et annexes* (3 vols., Brussels, 1924-42), I, pp. 159-60.

were poorly received, and, on 6 April 1599, a papal breve was issued confirming Blackwell's appointment as archpriest.[49]

When the papal breve confirming Blackwell's appointment arrived in England, many of Blackwell's opponents submitted.[50] There appeared to be a general desire to move on. For example, Henry Garnet and John Colleton met at Blackwell's London residence having agreed not to discuss the issues but to forget them, and at this meeting, they 'embraced each other very kindly'.[51] Meanwhile, at Wisbech, the general opinion was desirous 'that a general reconciliation might be made amongst them all'.[52] It was a moment of relative peace and quiet within English Catholicism, which had been won, in part, through the supply of intelligence to Persons in Rome. Such intelligence had allowed him to defeat his opponents at the English College and during the appellants' first appeal to Rome of the Appellants. This peace, however hard won, was not permanent, and English Catholic divisions would resurface in debates even more explicitly about the succession, which will be explored later.

Discussing the Succession at the Curia

At the same time as he worked to restore peace at the English College, and then to create an ecclesiastical hierarchy for the English mission, Persons also conducted diplomatic negotiations at the Papal Curia about the English royal succession. On 2 April 1597, a few days after his arrival in Rome, Persons visited Francisco Peña at his residence, seeking his guidance.[53] Persons had probably been advised before he left Spain by his friends in the Spanish government to consult with Peña about how to navigate his way through the politics of the Roman Curia. As Stefania Tutino notes, Peña was regularly trusted by the Spanish Crown with defending its interests in Rome.[54] Certainly, Peña gave Persons advice on how best to proceed, warning him that, since he was known to be the 'close confidant of his Catholic Majesty', every Italian prince, their ambassadors and agents in Rome would be watching him intently, and 'examine not merely his words, but also his thoughts'.[55] If these courtiers suspected that the primary purpose of Persons' coming to Rome was to advocate for a Spanish succession in England, they would

[49] For a fuller discussion of the First Appeal, see Pollen, *Institute of the Archpriest*, pp. 30-43; McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 184-201; Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 73-94.
[50] 'The Conditions of Yielding', in Law (ed.), *Archpriest Controversy*, I, pp. 98-100; McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 101-02.
[51] Garnet to Persons, [c. June 1599], ABSI, Coll P II, ff. 542-44.
[52] 'T.G to Garnet, 1 June 1599', in Tierney/Dodd, III, pp. cxxix-cxxx.
[53] Padre Personio con Peña cerca de la succesion de inglaterra, Rome, 2 April 1597, Vat.Lat. 6227, f. 161.
[54] Tutino, 'Notes on the Career of Peña,' pp. 414-30.
[55] 'Padre Personio con Peña cerca de la succesion de inglaterra', Rome, 2 April 1597, Vat.Lat. 6227, f. 161v.

look to thwart him, fearing, as they did, the expansion of Spanish hegemony. Peña, therefore, advised Persons to refrain from discussing the succession until these courtiers were satisfied, and their focus on him had lessened.[56] Clearly, raising the question of the succession and convincing the papacy to support the Infanta's claim was going to require immense diplomatic skill given the delicacy of the international situation.

A few days later, Persons had an audience with Pope Clement VIII and his two Cardinal- nephews, Pietro and Cinzio Aldobrandini. The conversation at this audience dwelt on two interrelated topics: the disturbances at the English College, and the *Conference about the Next Succession*. The pope was weary of the disputes at the College. According to Persons, he was 'never so vexed with any nacion in the world, ffor one the on syde they pretended zeale and piety and one thother shewed the very spirite of the divell in pryde[,] contumacy[, and] contradiccon'.[57] Clement did not know what to do since 'one [sic] the one side to punishe them openly wold be a scandall by reason of the hereticks, and yf he should cast them forth of Rome some had told hym that they wold have become hereticks'.[58] He therefore ordered Persons to move into the College, which he did on 9 or 10 April. The papacy was growing wary of English Catholic squabbles. It was urgent that Persons restore some semblance of order lest Clement give up on the community altogether. If he did this there would be no papal support for a Catholic succession, and no subsidies for an invasion of England.

Conversation also focused on the *Conference*. The Curia, including the papacy itself, was hostile to its contents, believing that it was not an objective assessment of the succession question, but rather an endorsement of the Spanish claim. It had come to this conclusion, though, without having first read the book: a Latin edition was yet to be published. Instead, this interpretation had been fed to Rome by the Spanish Elizabethans' opponents in Flanders, through the English College (contributing to the students' hispanophobia), and Monsignor Malvasia, the anti-Spanish papal nuncio in Flanders. As McCoog explains, 'the papal court found the stories credible' that Spain was manoeuvring for the English throne, having failed to secure the French crown for the Infanta.[59] Persons, then, looked to correct this misunderstanding. During the audience he argued that the *Conference*'s authors had not exaggerated the Infanta's claims, although he did cede that 'he felt that the person of the Infanta was more suitable than that of another pretender for the reform of that crown, and to establish

[56] On Spanish-Italian diplomacy , see Levin, *Agents of Empire*.
[57] Persons to Henry Garnet, Naples, 12/13 July 1598, in Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, I, p. 29.
[58] Persons to Henry Garnet, Naples, 12/13 July 1598, in Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, I, p. 29.
[59] McCoog, *Building the Faith*, p. 363; Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 67, 224-27.

[the Catholic] religion there and reduce it entirely to the obedience of the Holy See'.[60] To further illustrate his point, Persons presented a Latin translation of the *Conference* to the Pope, which contained an additional chapter to the English edition outlining the papacy's ultimate authority to decide the succession.[61]

When Persons debriefed with Peña about this audience on 17 April, he commented that Clement had not reacted negatively to his suggestion that the Infanta was the strongest candidate from a Catholic perspective. Peña, however, was not so optimistic. He noted that there had been no assurance about the attitudes of Pietro and Cinzio Aldobrandini, whom he believed to be politically anti-Spanish and would prefer any alternative to the Infanta. Moreover, he commented that as long as discussions of the succession continued to get bogged down in the details of the Infanta's claim, there was little hope of a successful conclusion being reached. The conversation needed to be moved forward to become a debate about how best to enforce the Infanta's claim. Peña recommended that the Duke of Sessa be brought in to advance the Infanta's cause at the Curia. Nevertheless, Peña warned Persons not to be optimistic about the chances of success: 'either nothing will be agreed upon, or, if there is an agreement, there will be nothing done about religion, for the outlook here is for the temporal state'.[62]

The question of the succession was now being discussed openly in Rome, and, over the following years, a great number of documents were sent to Persons by English Catholics to support his work to this end. These documents sought to present the Catholic population of England as united behind the Infanta's candidacy, and looked to dispel apprehensions that the Infanta's accession would lead to increased Spanish domination. Furthermore, intelligence reports were sent to Rome from Antwerp via Roger Baynes, depicting the situation in England. Copies of some of these documents found their way into Peña's papers, whilst many more were summarised in dispatches sent to Don Juan de Idiaquez in Madrid by Sessa.[63]

Persons received various advices and reports which sought to show English Catholic support for the Infanta's candidacy. One such report was a summary of various letters written by 'leading Catholics' in England whose opinion had been sought about the Infanta's

[60] Padre Personio con Peña cerca de la succesion de inglaterra, Rome, 17 April 1597, Vat.Lat. 6227, f. 162r.
[61] On this Latin edition, see S. Tutino, 'The Political Thought of Robert Persons' *Conference* in Continental Context', *Historical Journal*, 52/1 (2009), pp. 43-62; and Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', pp. 278-86.
[62] Padre Personio con Peña cerca de la succesion de inglaterra, Rome, 2 April 1597, Vat.Lat.6227, f. 163r.
[63] For example, there is a copy of Utilitates ac commoda maxima quad perventura sunt ad Regem Galliorum…, to be found amongst Peña's papers in Vat.Lat. 6227, ff. 177r-182v. Sessa sent a copy of this document to Madrid on 5 May 1597, AGSE 969, n.f.

succession.[64] Their replies had arrived in Rome in May and June 1597. The 'leading Catholics' felt that the Infanta was the best candidate 'since they saw there is no other effective means to accommodate all the differences that they have between them'.[65] Nevertheless, they did have certain conditions before they would accept her. First, the Infanta's marriage had to be announced; they had no objection if it were to Archduke Albert.[66] Second, all claims to the English throne should be renounced by Philip II and his heirs.[67] Third, any children from the Infanta's marriage would be the legitimate heirs of England, and under no obligation to Spain.[68] Finally, if an Armada were sent to enforce the Infanta's claim, it should be undertaken under a papal banner so that it was clear that the purpose of the fleet was the restoration of Catholicism; it was not to be a Spanish invasion.[69] Through these conditions, the 'leading Catholics' set out a case in Rome that the Infanta Isabella was the best candidate for England's religious future and whilst she might not be the ideal from a dynastic perspective, sufficient checks could be put in place to ensure England's continued independence. They thus argued that, for the sake of religion, Europe's other Catholic states, including the papacy, should bury their concerns and support her candidacy, putting aside their fears about the expansion of Habsburg power.

The urgency of the need to restore Catholicism through the installation of a Catholic monarch was reinforced through the intelligence reports submitted to Sessa by Roger Baynes. Baynes had been secretary to Cardinal Allen and, in this capacity, had been a recipient of Richard Verstegan's newsletters about English developments.[70] From the number of intelligence reports in the Vatican Library endorsed with the phrase 'dedit Rogerius' or some variation, combined with the fact that these reports are noted as coming 'd'Anvversa' — from Antwerp — it seems that he continued to receive English news after Allen's death either from Verstegan or Owen. This conclusion is further supported by a letter from Persons to Sessa in which Persons excused himself from writing to Sessa with English news since it was related to

[64] 'La respuesta venida de Inglaterra por diversas cartas de Mayo, i Junio, desde año 1597. Sobre la proposicion de la Senora Señora Infanta', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff.40r-41r.
[65] 'La respuesta venida de Inglaterra por diversas cartas de Mayo, i Junio, desde año 1597. Sobre la proposicion de la Senora Señora Infanta', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff.40r-41r.
[66] 'La respuesta venida de Inglaterra por diversas cartas de Mayo, i Junio, desde año 1597. Sobre la proposicion de la Senora Señora Infanta', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff.40r-41r.
[67] "La respuesta venida de Inglaterra por diversas cartas de Mayo, i Junio, desde año 1597. Sobre la proposicion de la Senora Señora Infanta', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff.40r-41r.
[68] 'La respuesta venida de Inglaterra por diversas cartas de Mayo, i Junio, desde año 1597. Sobre la proposicion de la Senora Señora Infanta', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff.40r-41r.
[69] 'La respuesta venida de Inglaterra por diversas cartas de Mayo, i Junio, desde año 1597. Sobre la proposicion de la Senora Señora Infanta', Vat.Lat. 6227, ff.40r-41r.
[70] See *Letters of Verstegan.*

Sessa by Baynes.[71] The content of these reports was extremely similar to the *avisos* sent to Madrid. Written in Italian, they highlighted the political, military, and religious threat posed by England, noting English military plans to send fleets into the Mediterranean, or English military and financial support for Protestant groups in Northern Europe.[72] Like the *avisos* sent to Spain, these reports suggested that English promises could not be trusted. For example, they contended that English overtures towards peace were without substance, and instead were simply a ploy to lure the Catholic war effort into a false sense of security.[73] The reports lamented the poor governance of England. One report, for example, commented that lower-ranked men had been promoted to positions of power simply because they were 'heretics', ahead of Catholics well-suited to ruling.[74] The argument prevalent throughout the reports was that the re-establishment of Catholicism in England would also restore law and order to the country, and, consequently, improve England's relations with the rest of Europe. Additionally, the reports emphasised the plight of Catholics, recounting, for example, stories of missionaries who had been imprisoned and martyred, and commenting about the government persecution of lay Catholics.[75] By highlighting the threat posed by Protestant England, and combining it with details about the plight of English Catholics, these reports submitted by Baynes showed that drastic action needed to be taken in order to re-establish Catholicism in England. Having this information at his disposal would have helped Sessa by giving him the evidence required to convince the curia of the need for the Infanta's succession in England.

Robert Persons travelled to Rome in 1597 with two main intentions: to resolve the issues at the English College, and to raise the issue of the succession at the Papal Curia. In both these endeavours, intelligence, sent through well-established channels dating back over a decade, played an important role, assisting Persons as he attempted to challenge anti-Spanish rumours circulating at the College and the Curia, and argue that the Infanta Isabella was the best candidate from a Catholic perspective. Further research is required into exactly how Sessa used the information he was provided with in his negotiations, but for now it is sufficient to note that the succession was now being discussed in Rome, and that intelligence gathered from England by the Spanish Elizabethan's espionage network was informing the debates.

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[71] Vatican Apostolic Archive, Nunziature Diverse 264, f. 244, quoted in Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', p. 458.

[72] See, for example, D'Anversa dells 3 di Gennaro si scrive cosi, Vat.Lat. 6227, ff. 57r-58v, and D'Anversa delli 12 de Lugio si scrive cosi, Vat.Lat.6227, ff. 80r-v.

[73] For example, Da Londres della 7 di Luglio [1598] si scrive cosi, Vat.Lat. 6227, f. 106r.

[74] Il stato d'inghiterra gnosto presento anno del 1597, Vat.Lat.6227, f. 54.

[75] For example, John Gerard's capture was noted in Da Londre del ultimo d'Aprilo si scrive cosi, Vat.Lat.6227, f. 70. In May, it was noted that the 'persecution of Catholics is increasing': Da Londre per lettere delli 28 Maggio et 6 di Giugno se scrivano le cose seguente, Vat.Lat.6227, f. 73r.

Diverging Habsburg Foreign Policies

The lobbying of English Catholics in Rome for the Infanta Isabella's candidacy, which was echoed in Spain, did not make life easier for Philip II, who was debating what decision to make for his daughter. How could he successfully claim the English throne for Isabella when every non-Habsburg state in Europe would view such a move as a dangerous augmentation of Habsburg dominion? Philip chose to delay making a decision regarding the succession, and instead focused on reducing the military commitments his empire faced, establishing peace with France, and installing Isabella and her new husband, Archduke Albert, as sovereigns of the newly independent Low Countries. When Philip III acceded to the Spanish throne, the Spanish Elizabethans hoped that he would be able to use the military resources made available by these reduced commitments to install a Catholic monarch in England. However, as Paul Allen argues, 'policy decisions were now made at two nodes in the Habsburg circuit: Madrid… and Brussels', and whilst Philip was keen to defeat England, the Archdukes Albert and Isabella in Brussels were equally eager to follow a different, more peaceful policy.[76] Their diverging foreign policy objectives presented a new problem for the Spanish Elizabethans.

New King, New Opportunity?

In November 1596, Philip II declared 'bankruptcy' for the fourth time in his reign.[77] This bankruptcy was the consequence of military overcommitment combined with reduced tax revenues. For years, Spain had been fighting on multiple fronts against France, England, and the Netherlands, a trio which had officially formed a 'Triple Alliance' against Spain in May 1596 with the Treaty of Greenwich. These wars were immensely expensive, costing twice Philip's annual revenues, which, to be fair to Philip, were decreased due to the 'exceptionally bad weather' Spain had experienced in the 1590s.[78] Bankruptcy forced Spain to the negotiating table. Philip's Council of State argued in a *consulta* in mid-November 1596 that peace might be more desirable than continuing war against so many enemies simultaneously.[79] Philip, knowing he was coming to the end of his life, recognised the poor state of affairs that he would be passing

[76] P. Allen, *Philip and the Pax Hispanica 1598-1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven, CT, 2000), p. 19.
[77] The royal bankruptcy decrees, or *decretos*, combined with the agreements with bankers (*remedios generales*) which followed them, were the means through which Philip II restructured his debt, converting short-term, high-interest loans into long-term, low-interest bonds. J. Conklin, 'The Theory of Sovereign Debt and Spain under Philip II', *Journal of Political Economy*, 106/3 (1998), p. 492.
[78] Parker, *Imprudent King*, pp. 347-48; J. Casey, 'Spain: a Failed Transition', in P. Clark (ed.), *The European Crisis: of the 1590s. Essays in Comparative History* (London, 1985), p. 214.
[79] *Consulta*, 13 November 1596, AGSE 2855 n.f.

on to his son, and so looked to salvage what he could from the wars in order to leave things in such a position that his son 'could give attention to the many necessities within the broken and spent kingdoms which he was leaving to him'.[80]

In May 1598, Philip signed the Treaty of Vervins, ending Spanish military opposition to Henri IV's rule in France. By signing this peace treaty, Philip had driven a wedge between his rivals, splintering the triple alliance they had formed against him. Days later, Philip ceded sovereignty over the Low Countries to his daughter, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, and her cousin and fiancé, Archduke Albert of Austria, who had served as governor of the territory since 1595. The hope was that, by transferring sovereignty to new rulers physically separated from the King of Spain and resident in the territory, some of the animosity of the rebels would be lessened, and the prospects of a permanent peace improved. Of course, there were some caveats to this transfer of sovereignty. For example, the Act of Cession included clauses allowing Spanish military forces to remain in the territory, and for the territory to revert to direct Spanish rule should the Infanta die childless. That being said, as Luc Duerloo explains, the new court of the Archdukes 'had all the trappings of an independent polity, though of middling rank'.[81] A new state had been created, one which would have its own objectives in its international relations.

The Anglo-Spanish war was the sole campaign that Philip was not prepared to relinquish. Since his primary objective from the campaign was religious, a simple peace would not suffice because it was unlikely to include sufficient religious concessions.[82] Thus, in September 1597, he launched his third Armada against England.[83] Whilst this attempted invasion was a failure, it did not deter English Catholics from pressing for a fresh attempt. In May 1598, Sir William Stanley, Richard Stanihurst and Hugh Owen, with the assistance of William Holt, presented a memorial to Archduke Albert, reviewing the situation in Flanders should Philip decide to proceed against England to enforce the Infanta's claims to the throne.[84] They argued that the Infanta must move to the Netherlands at once so that she could move quickly upon Elizabeth's death to stake her claim; failure to act with sufficient haste would result in another Protestant ruler. They also stressed that before the Infanta left Spain, Philip II and Prince Philip should

[80] L. Cabrera de Córdoba, *Felipe Segundo. Rey de España* (4 vols., Madrid, 1877), IV, p. 259.
[81] L. Duerloo, 'Marriage, Power and Politics: The Infanta and Archduke Albert', in C. van Wyhe (ed.), *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels* (London, 2012), p. 171.
[82] Philip to Sessa, 16 March 1597, AGSE 2224/1, f. 5r.
[83] See pp. 104-07 above.
[84] Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', pp. 510-12.

renounce their own hereditary claim to the English throne, and that, when the Infanta arrived in Flanders, her claim should be publicly justified with publications.[85]

A great number of proposals were submitted directly to the Spanish Court, and, rather than read all of them themselves, the Spanish Council of State left it to the English Jesuit, Joseph Creswell to review them. Few of the originals survive, so their contents can only be gleaned from Creswell's summaries. In a memorandum entitled 'that which has been represented in all the papers sent about this matter', he identified three courses of action from the proposals which could be taken depending on Spanish preferences and strategic requirements.[86] The first was a purely military strategy involving a 15,000-strong army invading from the Low Countries and joining with an unspecified Catholic force in England. Only after victory had been won would the matter of succession be addressed by a newly-formed parliament. The second plan was to send forces under the command of William Stanley to seize and fortify strategic locations in England 'to prevent the heretics from getting them first'.[87] This plan did not include details of the subsequent campaign which presumably would have involved a civil war, but it did suggest that Parliament should be called to decide upon the new monarch. The third proposal differed significantly from the first two. It was based on the presumption that Philip was unable to offer significant military support to the English Catholics, and instead centred on the public proclamation of the Infanta's claim, believing that the strength of her claim would win over many 'inside and outside of England'.[88] The number of military proposals and strategies to bring about a Catholic succession submitted to Spain after 1597 reflects a desire from the Spanish Elizabethans for Spain to keep trying, even after its failures in 1596 and 1597. Whilst these proposals were submitted to the Spanish court, it seems unlikely that they were thoroughly examined, if at all, by the Spanish government. Philip II insisted on making decisions himself, but, by this stage, Philip's failing health prevented him from conducting the work required to rule in this iodiosyncratic manner. According to the Marquis de Velada, 'the councillors feel they can no longer tell the king everything, so they try to prolong and postpone everything'.[89] The king's ill health thus led to an 'uncertainty about the future [which] paralysed the affairs

[85] The need for additional books justifying her claim would suggest that they regarded the *Conference* as being too impartial. See also, for a similar suggestion made by English Catholics in Spain, 'Address of the English Catholics in Spain to Philip II,' *CSP Simancas (1587-1603),* pp. 636-37.
[86] Creswell to Philip II, 'loque se ha representado en todos los papeles dados sobre esta materia', [no date], AGSE 2288 n.f.
[87] Creswell to Philip II, 'loque se ha representado en todos los papeles dados sobre esta materia', [no date], AGSE 2288 n.f.
[88] Creswell to Philip II, 'loque se ha representado en todos los papeles dados sobre esta materia', [no date], AGSE 2288 n.f.
[89] Quoted in Parker, *Imprudent King*, p. 353.

of the Monarchy'.[90] Philip's death on 13 September 1598 removed this uncertainty with power being passed to his son, Philip.

The Spanish Elizabethans hoped that Philip III would be sympathetic to their cause and use the military capacity freed up by the Treaty of Vervins against England. As Albert Loomie observes, the number of memoranda and proposals advocating military action against England was far greater in the period immediately following Philip III's accession compared to the last years of Philip II's reign.[91] Such optimism that Philip might seriously consider an invasion of England was not unfounded. It has often been noted that the accession of Philip III brought with it a profound ideological shift in Spain's foreign policy. Abandoning the expansionist policies of his father, Philip pursued a policy of *conservación* in which he was prepared to abandon territories previously considered an integral part of the Spanish monarchy, and looked to foster more amicable relations with Europe's other powers. Antonio Feros explains this policy shift as follows: 'for the new ruler the changing international circumstances in Europe meant that Spain could no longer afford to act as Europe's policeman and instead had to choose its interventions carefully and to focus on those that seemed most likely to advance the monarch's desires for territorial and political conservation'.[92] The basic idea of *conservación* was that, having disengaged from conflicts in Northern Europe, Philip would be better able to respond to the most serious threats to his empire's core: the power of the Turks in the Mediterranean, the concerns and disputes surrounding Spanish possessions in Italy, and the economic and domestic problems within Spain caused by years of war on multiple fronts.[93] Nevertheless, as Robert Cross argues, Philip III understood the importance of renewed military vigour in order to be able to negotiate from a position of strength.[94] Consequently, he placed new emphasis on his Council of War, appointing distinguished soldiers to this body which convened twice as often as under Philip II. This development was not unnoticed in England: early in 1599, Robert Cecil received a report which stated that the Council of War 'doth sitt five times a wik' and that 'since the 13 of Septembre that the kinge died their marsiallme[n] especially owld leaders are send ffor'. Moreover, soldiers were being mobilised across Spain.[95] The Council of War 'held

[90] Parker, *Imprudent King*, p. 353.
[91] Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', p. 515.
[92] A. Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598—1621* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 134.
[93] M. Sánchez, 'Dynasty, State, and Diplomacy in the Spain of Philip III,' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1988).
[94] R. Cross, 'To Counterbalance the World: England, Spain, and Peace in the Early 17th Century', (Unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2012).
[95] Patrick Strange to Robert Cecil, enclosed in James Bagg to Robert Cecil, Plymouth, 5 February 1599, SP 12/270/31.

meeting after meeting, hammering out an aggressive strategy' to quash the Dutch revolt.[96] Philip desired a major offensive to place Spain in a strong negotiating position ahead of peace talks.

Philip III envisaged this offensive taking place in both the Netherlands and against England. Within weeks of taking power, he imposed a comprehensive trade embargo against the United Provinces, and ordered all Dutch ships mooring in Spanish ports to be seized. This economic pressure was accompanied by a new military campaign.[97] Philip also explored his options concerning an invasion attempt of England and the possibility of placing a candidate friendly to Spain on the English throne. In November 1598, he asked Creswell to produce a review on the matter. Creswell responded with a report based on two letters which he had available, the authorship of which he left anonymous. The report recommended a two-stage military campaign. A force of seven to eight thousand men would be mustered in Spain and embark for 'the part of England that will be named', whilst another force of the same size would be readied in Flanders and would land 'where they will find an easy entrance and the land full of Catholics'. The report envisaged that the invaders would be welcomed by English Catholics.[98] Further recommendations were sent to Spain by Stanley early in 1599 for an invasion of England.[99] Philip's accession and his bellicose military policies inspired confidence amongst the Spanish Elizabethans that he would continue his father's aggressive campaign against English Protestantism.

The Boulogne Peace Conference

Whilst Philip III desired an aggressive campaign against both England and the Dutch rebels so that he could, according to his ideology of *conservación,* negotiate a conclusion to these conflicts from a position of strength, the Archdukes' primary ambition was to consolidate their control of the Netherlands. They argued that all military campaigns should be against the rebels, and they looked to forge new, amicable relations with the neighbours. Moreover, they showed no interest in claiming the English crown for themselves, viewing such a move as endangering their sovereignty over the far wealthier territories of the Netherlands. These differing objectives

[96] L. Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety: Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious War* (Abingdon, 2012), p. 114.
[97] 'Lettre de Philippe III à l'archiduc Albert, écrite de San Jeronimo (de Madrid) le 22 septembre 1597', and 'Lettre de Philippe III à l'archiduc Albert, écrite de l'Escorial le 24 octobre 1598', in Lonchay and Cuvelier, I, pp. 8-9, 14-15.
[98] Creswell to Philip III, 7 November 1598, AGSE 2851 n.f., cited in Loomie, *Spanish Elizabethans*, p. 162.
[99] Loomie, *Spanish Elizabethans*, p. 163.

meant that the two courts would frequently be working at cross-purposes, with each trying to force the other to follow a foreign policy developed from its own perspective. The Spanish Elizabethans were caught in the middle of this struggle, and intelligence formed a significant aspect of their strategy to keep their goal of a Catholic succession in England at the forefront of Spanish Habsburg political thinking.

Archduke Albert set out on his journey to Spain to meet his bride on 14 September 1598, travelling through the Holy Roman Empire, where he collected Margaret of Austria who was to marry Philip III, and Italy, before sailing from Genoa to Valencia where he was met by Philip III and the Infanta Isabella. In total, Albert would be away from the Netherlands for almost a year.[100] In his absence, Cardinal Andrew of Austria, Albert's cousin, was installed as interim governor, whilst the Admiral of Aragon assumed command of the army.

The military situation Albert left for his interim replacements was far from ideal. Whilst the Treaty of Vervins had removed France from the war, considerably reducing the strength of the military alliance facing the Army of Flanders, there was a significant financial shortfall which prevented the Army from pressing the advantage. This shortfall was partly the consequence of Albert's journey to Spain. Allen estimates that Albert spent 413,000 ducats — or thirteen per cent of the total subsidy sent to Flanders in 1599 — on his journey from Brussels to Milan, and this was just part of the total journey. Allen continues: 'it can be assumed that he spent as much, if not more, on the journey from Milan to Valencia, the wedding ceremony, and the journey back to Brussels again, this time accompanied by the Infanta'. In total, Allen approximates that more than a third of the money meant for the Army of Flanders was spent on Albert's progress.[101] This vast expenditure had a devastating effect on the army: soldiers were not paid and, consequently, units mutinied.[102]

Faced with this situation, Andrew decided in December 1598 to send an envoy to England to explore the possibility of peace. He instructed Jerome Coomans to go to England secretly to seek an audience with Elizabeth in which he would propose the possibility of a peace treaty that might also lead to the reconciliation of the northern provinces. Andrew ordered Coomans to make sure to give the impression that the Archdukes were acting with the backing of Spain.[103] It seems likely that Philip III was aware of Andrew's intentions: on 9 December, Francisco Soranzo, the Venetian ambassador to Spain, reported in a cyphered letter that 'the

[100] See L. Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety,* pp. 54-55.
[101] Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, pp. 30-31.
[102] See G. Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659* (Cambridge, 2004, orig. 1972), p. 257 for a list of the exact units which mutinied and where.
[103] Instructions from Andrew to Coomans, 31 December 1598, AGSE 616/16.

Cardinal of Austria is in a very secret treaty with the Queen of England […] They are desirous to avoid appearing more anxious for this peace than comports with the dignity of the Spanish Crown, and so the negotiations are carried on with the utmost secrecy, though I have had an opportunity to see an abstract of the Cardinal's letter'.[104] If Philip did have knowledge of Andrew's plans, he let them continue. Over the course of the next eighteen months, negotiations proceeded, culminating in a peace summit at Boulogne in May 1600. From the outset, these talks were closely monitored by Hugh Owen, informed from London by William Sterrell and Thomas Phelippes.

Coomans arrived in England in mid-January 1599, meeting first with Sir Robert Cecil and, two weeks later, with Elizabeth. The reception he received was sceptical; the English demanded he return to Andrew to secure clear credentials showing he represented both the Archdukes *and* Spain. Six weeks later Coomans returned to London, this time with greater assurances as had been requested. On this second visit, Coomans was accompanied by Carlos Lanfranchi, an Antwerp-based Italian merchant. Unbeknownst to Coomans, Lanfranchi carried letters to the English court from various Walloon and Flemish noblemen. These letters proposed an alliance between England, the Dutch rebels, and these noblemen aimed at uniting the provinces to the exclusion of Spain. Lanfranchi had barely delivered these letters by the time they had been copied and sent to Spain by Sterrell and Phelippes.[105] In his summary of this scheming sent to Spain on 27 March, Owen reported that Andrew was unaware of the development.[106]

Over the subsequent months, Owen provided regular updates about these secret discussions. On 2 April, for example, he revealed that the Walloon noblemen demanded that Elizabeth guarantee their security, but that they refused to give her sovereignty over them. In this report, Owen described this negotiation as a 'double treachery'. The first was against Andrew, 'under whose shadow they play this comedy'; the second was against Spanish power in the Netherlands. He concluded that any Anglo-Spanish peace conference should be approached with caution, since it may well be a 'trick' to lull Spain into a false sense of

[104] Francesco Soranzo, Venetian Ambassador in Spain, to the Doge and Senate, 9 December 1598, *CSPVenice (1592-1603),* p. 350.
[105] Martin correctly identifies Sterrell and Phelippes as the suppliers of this intelligence, identifying 'seepage' between pseudonyms used in their correspondence with Owen to make the positive identification: *Elizabethan Espionage*, p. 176,
[106] *Avisos*, 27 March 1599, AGSE 616/160.

security.[107] A week later, an *aviso* reported that Lanfranchi had revealed to the English that the Walloon nobles were also negotiating with German Protestant princes.[108]

In mid-April, Lanfranchi departed from England. However, in the Low Countries he struggled to have much success. At the beginning of May, he wrote to Cecil apologising that there had been no word from those he was trying to contact.[109] On 8 May, Lanfranchi wrote again to Cecil, and again apologised for his lack of progress explaining that 'the friends are where one cannot go and return as one would'.[110] To monitor the situation closely, Owen moved from Brussels to Antwerp, the city where Lanfranchi was based.[111] By 26 May, Owen was confident that there still had not been a reply from the Walloon nobles, and reported to Spain that there was a growing suspicion in London that the whole episode had been without substance.[112] With the assistance of Sterrell and Phelippes, Owen successfully detected this intrigue before it ever gained momentum. The fact that the intrigue was doomed to failure from the start for other reasons — the lack of engagement from Elizabeth, the lack of Walloon engagement after the initial enquiries — should not take away from this episode as an extremely successful espionage episode for Owen's network.

Peace negotiations continued even after this Lanfranchi plot. On 26 May, Philip III appointed Baltasar de Zúñiga as his representative to the Low Countries, the first Habsburg Spanish King to appoint such an ambassador.[113] Zúñiga was provided with a senior secretary to handle correspondence, a secretary of languages, and a yearly salary of 6,000 escudos.[114] The new ambassador departed for Brussels from Barcelona on 7 June 1599 as part of the Archdukes' travel party. Around this time, Coomans arrived in Barcelona from Brussels to give an account of his negotiations with Elizabeth. Coomans described the queen as very receptive to the possibility of peace, news which obviously pleased the Spanish, for whilst Zúñiga was still en route to Brussels, Philip granted him full powers to sue for peace with England.[115] At the

[107] *Avisos*, 2 April 1599, AGSE 616/160.
[108] *Avisos,* 8 April 1599, AGSE 616/160.
[109] Carlo Lanfranchi to Horatio Scali [*vere* Cecil] 2 May 1599, Antwerp, CP 69/93.
[110] Lanfranchi to Scali [*vere* Cecil], Antwerp, 8 May 1599, CP 69/93.
[111] Owen to Martin de Idíaquez, Antwerp, 7 May 1599, AGSE 616/163.
[112] 'Avisos de Londres de 26 de Mayo 1599', AGSE 616/171.
[113] Given the novelty of Zúñiga's role, it is surprising how little research has been undertaken on him at this stage of his career. For a brief synopsis of his career, see J. Lefevre, 'Les Ambassadeurs d'Espagne a Bruxelles', *Revue de Philologie et d'Historie* 2 (1923), pp. 63-71, and Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, pp. 24-25. On his later career in which he effectively served as prime minister during the transition from Philip III to Philip IV, see R. Gonzalez Cuerva, 'The Most Discreet Favourite: Baltasar de Zúñiga and Early Modern Spanish Statecraft', *Seventeenth Century,* 29/1 (2014), pp. 31-44.
[114] Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p. 25 citing AGS CMC-3ª 669 royal cedilla, 26 May 1599.
[115] N. Goodman, *Diplomatic Relations between England and Spain, with Special Reference to English Opinion, 1597-1603* (Philadelphia, PA, 1925), pp. 28-31; Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*, p. 116.

same time, he ordered Cardinal Andrew to pause negotiations until the Archdukes and Zúñiga arrived in Brussels.[116]

Neither England nor Spain were willing to stand down their naval forces until a peace was actually agreed. These tensions led to confrontation: on 26 August, an English fleet of eighty-four ships appeared off the island of Gran Canaria, taking the city of Las Palmas. This attack forced the Adelantado, Martín de Padilla, the commander of the Spanish naval forces, to take what ships he had available in pursuit of the English.[117] Meanwhile, in Ireland, Essex was appointed commander of a new royal army, some 17,300 strong, sent to quell the Tyrone Rebellion, which was supported by the Spanish.[118] Nevertheless, there was sufficient desire for peace, as evidenced by the fact that, on 20 September, Archduke Albert, having arrived in Brussels, sent word to Elizabeth that he was ready to appoint commissioners for the talks. Elizabeth's reply showed a similar willingness to negotiate peace, although she insisted that the United Provinces needed to be notified of her intentions.

Whilst the English waited for the reply from the Dutch, the Spanish continued their preparations for the peace talks. On 10 October, Philip sent Zúñiga more instructions and an amplification of his powers, telling him that 'as my minister you should negotiate with the most freedom and least considerations'.[119] However, the Spanish negotiating position, weakened already by the Adelantado's defeat, was further undermined by setbacks in its Army of Flanders which, in December 1599, erupted into its largest mutiny since 1594, the result of their arrears still having not been paid by the Archdukes since their arrival, and because of the deteriorating weather conditions causing the 'utmost misery and hunger'.[120] The mutiny risked 'undermining Spanish strategy in Western Europe'.[121] Zúñiga wrote to Sessa explaining that the mutiny had come 'in a very bad conjuncture', and suggested that it was probably the reason for the English delay in sending someone to start preliminary negotiations. Zúñiga felt that this delay did not bode well for eventual outcomes of the talks as it suggested that England was still open to the prospect of continuing the war.[122] In this conclusion, Zúñiga echoed the interpretation which

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[116] Philip III to Cardinal Andrea de Austria, Barcelona, 28 June 1599, SP 94/6 f. 236.
[117] L. de Cabrera de Córdoba, *Relaciones de las cosas sucedidas en la corte de España desde 1599 hasta 1614* (Madrid, 1857), pp. 35-36, 38.
[118] Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, pp. 211-16.
[119] Philip III to Baltasar de Zúñiga, 10 October 1599, AGSE 2224/1, f.300.
[120] Francisco de Mendoza to Albert of Austria, Lothen (field), 15 December 1599, in *CODOIN,* xlii, 61. On this mutiny, see L. Kattenberg, 'Military Rebellion and Reason of State Pacification of Mutinies in the Habsburg Army of Flanders, 1599-1601', *Low Countries Historical Review*, 131/2 (2016), pp. 3-21. Geoffrey Parker places it in its broader context in 'Mutiny and Discontent in the Spanish Army of Flanders, 1572-1607', *Past and Present*, 58 (1973), pp. 38-52.
[121] Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p. 31.
[122] Zúñiga to Sessa, 5 January 1600, quoted in Allen, *Pax Hispanica,* pp. 31-32.

Owen had been repeatedly making in his *avisos* – that Spain should be suspicious of English intentions. Moreover, Zúñiga recognised the damage the mutinies had done to the Spanish negotiating position, particularly concerning the matter of religious toleration which Philip insisted be included in the discussion. Zúñiga, though, believed that an unflinching ideological stance would not be compatible with the military and political reality. Zúñiga's assessment of the situation was not at all hopeful — a conclusion shared by many English Catholics who hoped to see religious concessions included in the treaty — and, whilst he received word from the English that negotiations were to proceed, he felt compelled to warn Sessa that the English would want to avoid a discussion of religion.[123]

External factors were compromising Spain's ability to advance the English Catholic cause. Owen and his intelligence network had worked hard to monitor the diplomacy and had, as a result, disrupted the Elizabethan regime's exploration of alternatives to peace with Spain. At the same time, through the endeavours of Joseph Creswell and others, Philip III had been persuaded that, at the very least, Spain needed to secure from England religious concessions as part of the peace treaty. However, the failure of the Spanish to pay the Army of Flanders had led to widespread mutiny, which had severely undermined the Spanish hand in the negotiations.

Nevertheless, diplomacy was still seen as a viable medium through which Spanish political aims might be realised. The Council and Philip thus continued to lay the groundwork for the negotiating position at the upcoming peace conference. In late February, Philip ordered Fernando Carrillo to join Zúñiga in Flanders as his representative at the conference.[124] Carrillo was a Councillor of Castille and a legal expert who had served between 1595 and 1599 as superintendent of military justice in the Army of Flanders.[125] Carrillo's instructions provide a valuable insight into Philip's aims from the peace negotiations.

First and foremost, Carrillo was to ensure that the peace conference did not take place in England. Instead, Carrillo should suggest a location in Flanders and, when the English refused, to find a compromise site such as Boulogne. Unbeknownst to Madrid, Boulogne was exactly where the Archdukes had already negotiated the conference to take place. A compromise had

[123] Zúñiga to Sessa, 5 January 1600, quoted in Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p. 32.
[124] Instrucciones a don Fernando Carrillo, febrero de 1600, BNE, Mss. 6170, ff.140-47, cited in Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p 32. It seems highly likely that these instructions were issued towards the end of the month since a Council of State document, dated 4 March, suggested that he had only arrived in Madrid a few days prior: 'de Madrid 4 de Marco,' in Cabrera de Córdoba (ed.), *Relación de las comas sucedidas*, pp. 61-62.
[125] A. Esteban Estríngana, 'La superpotencia de la justicia militar: establecimiento y evolución inicial en el ejército de Flandes (1594-1622),' in D. Maffi (ed.), *Tara Marte e Astrea: Giustizia e giurisdizione militare nell'Europa della prima età moderna (secc. XVI-XVIII)* (Milan, 2012), pp. 88-98.

been negotiated on the location, but, on other questions, such as religion, finding a settlement agreeable to both sides would be far more challenging. Carrillo's instructions explicitly outlined Philip's religious position:

> The point which I desire most in the event that the peace should come together, and which you should try by all means to get, is that they should tolerate Catholics who are in that realm, with the exercise of Catholicism free and undisturbed, both because it suits the service of our Lord and the profession I make of amplifying our sacred Catholic faith in all regions, and because I do not want to see the Catholics abandoned to the persecution which would occur to them if this clause were absent.[126]

Philip realised, though, that such religious concerns were unlikely to have much impact on the Elizabethan regime, so instructed Carrillo on the concessions to be made elsewhere to persuade the English to concede on the religious front. Philip would allow trade to resume between Spain and England — although he was adamant that the Spanish monopoly on trade with the New World remain intact — and he was willing to give up on the reparations he sought for damages inflicted by English pirates. He also sought that Elizabeth yield the cautionary towns, which were being held by English forces as security against the money Elizabeth had lent the United Provinces. If this demand were rejected, Philip authorised Carrillo to offer that Spain pay for the towns, although Carrillo was to endeavour to keep the cost of this payment intact. Carrillo's instructions, then, adhered to three principles which had dictated Spanish foreign policy for almost fifty years: the defence of Catholicism, the maintenance of Spain's monopoly with the Indies, and the preservation of the Habsburg inheritance.[127]

At the same time as Carrillo received his instructions from Philip, Albert sent Louis Verreycken to England. Verreycken's instructions reflect a different emphasis in Albert's agenda for the negotiations. Verreycken was to propose that Elizabeth break with the Dutch, hand the cautionary towns over to Albert, and restore the old alliance between England and Burgundy. The only concession to the matter of religion was that a solution should be found for the refugees living in England and Flanders.[128] The instructions Albert issued to his commissioners ahead to Boulogne in May had the same emphasis.[129]

When the English, Flemish, and Spanish commissioners finally met at Boulogne in May 1600, real debate over the particulars was never given a chance: disputes broke out over diplomatic precedence and the authority with which the Spanish had come to treat. By the end

[126] Instrucciones a don Fernando Carrillo, febrero de 1600, quoted in Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, pp. 36-37.
[127] Fernández Alvarez, 'Felipe II e Isabel de Inglaterra', pp. 19-35.
[128] Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety,* p. 116.
[129] Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', p. 471.

of July, the talks had dissolved with 'virtually no real discussion of actual terms and conditions'.[130] The Anglo-Spanish war was to continue.

The Boulogne Peace Conference reveals a great deal about international relations after the death of Philip II. Spain, under Philip III, was still motivated by the guiding principles which had governed Philip II's foreign policy, but whereas previously Spain had relied on military dominance to achieve the strategic ambitions of the defence of Catholicism, the preservation of Habsburg territories, and the maintenance on Spain's monopoly with the Indies, Philip III's government was far more willing to use negotiation and diplomacy. That being said, if he could not achieve these goals through negotiation, Philip III was prepared to use military force. Thus, in the years that followed Boulogne, the Spanish military threat against England continued, most notably in 1601, when Spanish troops landed at Kinsale in County Cork, Ireland.[131] Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella, meanwhile, desired peace with England so that they might enjoy their new sovereignty. In the pursuit of such a peace, they were prepared to sacrifice the Catholic cause in England. Subsequent to the peace conference, they attempted to maintain a diplomatic correspondence with the most powerful Elizabethan ministers.[132] This divergence of Habsburg policy between the courts in Madrid and Brussels represented, therefore, a new challenge for the Spanish Elizabethans to overcome if they were to see the re-establishment of Catholicism — or even just religious toleration — in England.

Spanish Indecisiveness and Secret Negotiations

Alarmed by the movements towards an Anglo-Spanish peace, and rumours that as part of this peace Archduke Albert's brother, Matthias, would marry James' English cousin, Arabella Stuart, James looked to consolidate his Scottish base and secure foreign support for his candidacy. In November 1598, he required his Scottish subjects to swear an oath that they would advance his claims to the English throne upon Elizabeth's death, and sent an embassy to his brother-in-law, Christian IV of Denmark, and a number of his wife's German Protestant cousins to persuade them to provide him with diplomatic and military support for his

[130] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, p. 325. On the peace conference at Boulonge, see, E. Hamy, 'Conférence pour la paix entre l'Angleterre et l'Espagne tenue à Boulogne en 1600', *Bulletin de la Societé Académique de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, 7 (1904-1907), pp. 434-60; N. Goodman, 'Diplomatic Relations', pp. 53-62; Allen, *Pax Hispanica,* pp. 42-54.
[131] E. García Hernán, M. Angel de Bunes, Ó. Recio Morales, and B. García García (eds.), *Irlanda y la monarquía Hispánica: Kinsale 1601-2001: Guerra, Política, Exilio y Religión* (Madrid, 2002); D. O'Grady, *The Battle of Kinsale 1601* (Kinsale, 2002).
[132] B. García García, *La Pax Hispánica: Política Exterior del Duque de Lerma* (Leuven, 1996), p. 45; P. Croft, 'Brussels and London: the Archdukes, Robert Cecil and James I', in W. Thomas and L. Duerloo, *Albert & Isabella 1598-1621* ([Turnhout], 1998), pp. 79-86.

candidacy.[133] He also authorised Sir Michael Balfour to import weapons into Scotland. James was making preparations to fight for the English throne if it proved necessary. The Scottish faction of English Catholics also mobilised. Charles Paget moved from Brussels to Paris to advance James' cause at the French court whilst Henry Constable published a defence of James's claims in *A Discoverye of a counterfecte conference* in which he urged the papacy to be as patient with James as it had been, with such success, with Henri.[134]

In France and Rome, too, James' supporters pleaded his case, their arguments no doubt strengthened by the well-known Catholicism of James' wife, Queen Anna which gave hope to Catholics that she might raise her children in the faith and persuade her husband to be tolerant to his Catholic subjects.[135] Sir Edmond Drummond reported to William Chrisholm, the Scottish Bishop of Vaison, that James intended to grant liberty of conscience to Catholics in both England and Scotland, that he would arrange public debates between Protestant and Catholic theologians, and that he would send his eldest son to a foreign court to be raised as a Catholic. Chrisholm, in turn, relayed this news to Pietro Aldobrandini, along with the argument that James would already be a Catholic if it were not for his fears that English Protestants would move to prevent him from claiming the English throne. He then added that the papacy had no alternative to James if it wished to avoid Spanish expansion.[136] Henri IV sent Philippe de Béthume to Scotland ostensibly to renew the 'Auld Alliance', but also to discuss James' prospects of acceding. Following this embassy, Béthume was stationed in Rome where he would repeatedly plead James' case.

James also initiated direct contact with Pope Clement VIII in September 1599 (although he later claimed to have signed the letters unknowingly). Addressing Clement as '*beatissime pater*' (most blessed father) and referring to himself as '*obsequentissimus filius*' (most obedient son), he requested that Chrisholm be made a cardinal and then be moved to Rome where he would serve as James' representative.[137] Clement replied on 13 August 1600. Ignoring the Chrisholm question, he set forth an argument about the necessity of Catholicsm. Two months later either Cardinal Aldobrandini or Cardinal Borghese provided another response, praising James and his many virtues, and rejoicing the news that James considered conversion. Even if there was

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[133] Doran, 'James VI and the English Succession', p. 32.
[134] [Henry Constable], *Discvoerye of a counterfect conference* (Collen [Cologne, *vere* Paris], 1600); McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 212-13.
[135] M. Meikle and H. Payne, 'From Lutheranism to Catholicism: The Faith of Anna of Denmark (1574-1619),' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 64/1 (2013), pp. 45-69. The Spanish Elizabethans had been aware of Anna's Catholic sympathies since the early 1590s; see, for example, Verstegan to Persons, 15 December 1593, in *Letters of Verstegan*, p. 196.
[136] McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 209-10.
[137] *CSP Scotland (1597-1603)*, pp. 1144-48.

no validity to James' promises, these overtures were sufficient to convince the papacy that he might yet convert, thus dissuading it from committing to another candidate or from excommunicating James, a move which would have forbidden Catholics from supporting his candidacy.

Across Europe, James and his agents were moving to build a coalition of support for his claim to the throne. In contrast, Philip III was slow to make a definitive decision about the succession, and, as will be seen below, such hesitancy undermined Spanish Elizabethan attempts to build a similar coalition of support for the Infanta's candidacy.

When the Spanish Council of State debated the question of the succession in November 1599, it concluded that it was best to wait on events and to see what following the other pretenders to the throne could muster. It advised that, if Philip did not advance himself as a claimant, he was nevertheless obliged to see that the crown pass to a Catholic, and it recommended that Baltazar de Zúñiga, recently dispatched to the Netherlands to serve as ambassador, should regularly be in close conversation with Archduke Albert about the matter.[138] This policy was not without its critics in Spain. The Duke of Feria, son of Jane Dormer, wrote to his close friend Thomas Fitzherbert, a Spanish Elizabethan, expressing strong reservations about it.[139] Commenting specifically on a document about the candidacy of the Infanta, written by Fitzherbert for the Duke of Lerma, the King's *valido* or favourite, Feria wrote:

> The principal means that has been considered: to use the Lady Infanta and her husband, I hold for my part, will never come to pass. Our forces are very weak and our future intentions are to engage in other more immediate affairs, and so all will fall to the King of Scotland, for his right is the more obvious […] and so I hold it for the best that our King […] should put the King of Scotland under an obligation. If Philip were capable of doing something, I would have another opinion in other circumstances. But the Council must take into consideration the disposition of affairs.[140]

Feria anticipated that Spain would be unable to act with enough power to enforce the Infanta's claim. Feria was not wrong that 'other more immediate affairs' would draw Spanish attention away from preparing to act to secure the English throne for the Infanta. By the beginning of September 1600, Spanish focus had shifted from Flanders and England to the war unfolding

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[138] *Consulta,* 12 November 1599, AGSE 1856 n.f.

[139] On Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria, see H. Clifford, *The Life of Jane Dormer Duchess of Feria,* J. Stevenson (ed.), (London, 1887); Loomie, *Spanish Elizabethans*, pp. 94-128; A. Vian, 'Dormer, Jane, Duchess of Feria (1538-1612),' *ODNB*; H. Crummé, 'Jane Dormer's Recipe for Politics: A Refuge Household in Spain for Mary Tudor's Ladies-in-Waiting', in N. Akkerman and B. Houben (eds.), *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 51-71.

[140] Feria to Fitzherbert, Barcelona, 4 February 1602, AAW Series E II, f. 132r.

between Henri IV and Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy.[141] Furthermore, over the following year, Philip and his councillors were 'planning an attack on Algiers, dealing with the situation in Savoy and Milan, planning the invasion of Ireland, assisting the Archduke Ferdinand in Hungary against the Turks, planning the acquisition (by force) of the Margraviate of Finale on the Mediterranean coast near Genoa, and entertaining the Persian ambassador'.[142] The result of all these competing interests was a lack of men and money sent to Flanders, prompting Zúñiga to argue to Sessa that 'until matters here are concluded, it is important to hold off on other voluntary enterprises'.[143] If there was a lack of Spanish resources in the Netherlands to contain the Dutch revolt, there was also a lack of resources in the area to move quickly upon Elizabeth's death to secure the English throne for the Infanta or for another Catholic candidate.

So what convinced the Council that Spain had the resources to influence the English succession directly through military activity? It seems probable that the Council's thinking was strongly influenced by Zúñiga's first diplomatic reports. Following his arrival in Brussels in September 1599, he had been making inquiries about the situation in England and concerning the Elizabethan succession. He claimed in a letter written on 26 October that he had been receiving reports from 'those of great quality from England and Scotland and others of acknowledged talent' who informed him that their first preference of the candidate to succeed Elizabeth was Lady Arabella Stuart, but since they believed that there was little chance of success for either Arabella or the earl of Derby's daughters, that it would be best to secure the loyalty of some leading English lords without Spain having first declared its preference'.[144] Zúñiga's initial analysis of the situation in England implied that Spain need not commit hastily to a fixed policy on the succession, a reading with which the Council agreed. Philip III accepted this advice, ordering Zúñiga to obtain more information about all the possible contenders to the English throne, yet stressing that he was not to commit himself to any project but only show 'good will'.[145]

This non-committal policy frustrated many English Catholics who looked to Spain for leadership. Joseph Creswell submitted a memorial to Philip entitled 'Reasons for the decision requested by the Catholics of England' in which he argued that English Catholics needed to know Philip's private intentions concerning the succession so that, when Elizabeth died, they

[141] As Allen stresses, 'the integrity of the Spanish monarchy depended upon the successful resolution of this issue'. *Pax Hispanica*, p. 62.
[142] Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p. 62.
[143] Zúñiga to Sessa, 2 June 1601, quoted in Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p. 62.
[144] Zúñiga to Philip, 26 October 1599, AGSE 616/182.
[145] Philip to Zúñiga, 18 January 1600 and 29 February 1600, AGSE 2224/2, ff. 1, 3.

would know whether they should accept or reject James.[146] He acknowledged the promises James had been making towards Catholics, and stated that there was potential to pursue this and secure an agreement in which religious toleration for Catholics in England was permitted. But Creswell also stressed that a better arrangement could yet be achieved, reminding Philip that, three years earlier, negotiations about the Infanta's claim had begun 'and so many have declared themselves, it is sufficient that it was a good plan'.[147] Creswell confidently predicted that a clear statement from Spain in favour of the Infanta's candidacy would offset the inroads James had achieved into the English Catholic population. The Council of State responded to Creswell's memorandum on 6 April 1600. In a document signed by six of its members, the Council concluded that it was 'of the same opinion as when it dealt with this matter on the other occasion'.[148] This reply angered Creswell, who responded with a short memorial contending that Spanish indecision made the English Catholic situation worse: 'they would be less offended by a clear negative, for in that case they would look elsewhere'. English Catholics, he argued, were being led along by the Spanish; a clear answer was vital.[149] Philip III was listening to his advisors who recommended he wait before making a decision about the English succession so as to keep his diplomatic options open; he was ignoring Spanish Elizabethan efforts to convince him of the urgency with which he should make a decision.

On 25 April 1600, as English, Spanish, and Flemish delegates prepared to meet at Boulogne, an anonymous informant wrote to Robert Persons to inform him that Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, Lord Buckhurst, and Sir Robert Cecil sought to identify a viable alternative to James.[150] The trio were wary that Elizabeth would not live much longer and 'fear[ed] the Scot'.[151] Consequently, they had examined the possible candidates, and had identified Lady Anne Stanley, the eldest daughter of the late Earl of Derby as their preferred alternative.[152] They wished to learn whether she 'will be satisfactory to the King of Spain'.[153] In a letter dated 3 May, the informer explained that if Anne were unacceptable, then 'these gentlemen' were 'very favourably disposed' towards the Infanta's candidacy given 'the facility

[146] AGSE 617/242.
[147] Creswell was referring to the correspondence with Catholics in England reported by Francisco Peña.
[148] [Council of State's response to Creswell's memorandum, 6 April 1600], AGSE 617/240.
[149] 12 April 1600, AGSE 617/241.
[150] Albert Loomie identifies the informant as Robert Sackville, 'Spain and the English Catholics', p. 473 n.44. Thomas McCoog suggests that the informant was Sterrell: 'View from Abroad', p. 264. The documents relating to this correspondence have been transcribed in L. Hicks, 'Sir Robert Cecil, Father Persons, and the Succession', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu,* 24 (1955), pp. 95-139.
[151] Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p.113.
[152] The Stanleys' claim stemmed from Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary, whose granddaughter, Margaret, had married the fourth Earl of Derby. Anne Stanley was their granddaughter.
[153] 'La sustancia de una carta escripta en cifra de Londres a 3 de Mayo 1600', AGSE 972, translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p. 113.

Flanders has of sending support'.[154] According to the informant, the trio were 'persons of very considerable power and as "politiques" not ill-affected to the Catholic religion'.[155] Many would, therefore, follow their lead, but they needed to know Philip III's position before they acted openly to advance another's candidacy. To some degree, it does not matter whether the offer of an alliance was genuine or not, since the Spanish Elizabethans believed it to be true or at least believed that the offer could be used to their advantage during negotiations at the Spanish court. They thus used the prospect of a pro-Spanish faction at the English court as a carrot to persuade Philip III to act.

Persons discussed the proposal with Sessa, who in turn sent a summary to Philip, highlighting the importance of this development: whereas previously, all proposals and suggestions regarding the succession had been developed by English Catholics, this one had originated from those at the very heart of the Elizabethan regime.[156] Sessa recommended that Zúñiga be entrusted with the negotiations, and that, in the discussions, some guarantees of religious tolerance for English Protestants under the future regime be made. Sessa also advised 'at this stage it did not appear necessary to inform the Pope of these secret reports', but rather to tell him after an agreement had been made with those in England. This exclusion of the pope implies a suspicion that he would oppose the developments, perhaps reflecting a fear that he secretly supported James' claim rather than see an expansion of Spanish power.

The Spanish Council of State was impressed by this development, but Philip was more apprehensive.[157] On 3 July, he replied to Sessa, stating that he would support the Catholics and make sure that Elizabeth's successor was a Catholic.[158] In short, he avoided any firm commitments. This response was unsatisfactory to Persons, who stressed to Sessa that a candidate must be named if negotiations with the English nobles were to proceed:

> The English have to keep two things in view as regards the person they are to recognise as King: in the first place the well-being of the kingdom or state, and in the second the particular interests and position of those concerned, especially those of great influence. Neither the one nor the other, they will say, can they consider without knowing who the person is.[159]

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[154] 'La sustancia de una carta escripta en cifra de Londres a 3 de Mayo 1600', AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', pp. 116-17.
[155] 'La sustancia de una carta escripta en cifra de Londres a 3 de Mayo 1600', AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', pp. 116-17.
[156] Sessa to Philip III, Rome, 12 June 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., transcribed in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', pp. 117-18.
[157] 'Report of the Council of State to Philip III on letters from the Duke of Sessa, in Rome, of 11th May and 12th June, containing information and advice from Father Persons,' *CSPSimancas (1587-1603)*, pp. 663-65.
[158] Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', pp. 118-19.
[159] Persons to Sessa, Rome, 30 June 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p. 119. The date is a mistake by Persons, and should read 30 July.

Moreover, the successor needed to be proclaimed publicly upon Elizabeth's death, 'since according to the laws of the realm all who after that would put forward another claimant are held to be guilty of high treason'.[160] Making such a proclamation would be impossible if their identity had not yet been agreed upon 'and there will be no time after the death of the Queen to send to know his Majesty's decision'.[161] Persons also contended that many 'English Catholics think that the game was lost in France in great part though the same fault of the king in not declaring his mind in time, as to who was to be King'. He urged that Philip III not make the same mistake, lest England suffer the same fate.[162] Clearly, Philip's dithering on the matter of the Elizabethan succession frustrated Persons, just as it frustrated Creswell and probably many other Spanish Elizabethans too.

Persons' comments, however, were to no avail, and focus dwelt over the summer on the conference at Boulogne. On 4 October, the informant in England wrote to Persons again, emphasising the urgency with which a decision needed to be made. This time, though, the informant indicated that the choice was between the Infanta and James VI; the English nobles had realised that there was no third party with enough power or support to resist the claims of either of these two successfully. If the Infanta were not named soon as Philip's candidate, the nobles would feel compelled to seek some kind of accommodation with James. To demonstrate their devotion to Spain, the nobles were willing to advocate for a negotiated peace between England and Spain at the Elizabethan court. Persons, summarising this letter to Sessa, reiterated that Philip had to express his explicit preference for the Infanta acceding to the English throne.[163]

When Sessa forwarded Persons' thoughts to Philip, he added that Zúñiga had made it clear that James' accession was certain if Philip did not promptly declare publicly for the Infanta. If Philip did not make this declaration, the only hope for English Catholics lay with the successful conversion of James.[164] Sessa's dispatch was debated by the Spanish Council of State on 1 February, which recommended that Philip promote the Infanta's claim. The Council's *consulta* set out a crude dilemma: James VI was making progress and the Infanta was

[160] Persons to Sessa, Rome, 30 June 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p. 119.
[161] Persons to Sessa, Rome, 30 June 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p. 119.
[162] Persons to Sessa, Rome, 30 June 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p. 121.
[163] Persons to Sessa, Rome, 13 November 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', pp. 124-26.
[164] Sessa to Philip, Rome 14 November 1600, AGSE 972 n.f., Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', pp. 126-28.

the only realistic alternative. Philip needed to make a choice between them.[165] By 12 February 1601, Philip had agreed to support the Infanta's claim, although, as Hicks notes, Philip informed Sessa, but delayed 'in sending the information to his ambassador in Flanders'.[166]

It had taken almost an entire year since the secret negotiations with the English nobles had begun, and now finally Philip was ready to proceed in earnest, having declared, secretly, his support for the Infanta. However, his insistence that the decision remain a secret meant that the Spanish Elizabethans could not use this development to their advantage. In the undated instructions informing Zúñiga of the decision, Philip proposed that the Archdukes restore Flanders to Spain lest it fall into the hands of strangers after their death. He also proposed that significant sums of money be spent to increase support for the Infanta in England, believing, as a result of the secret correspondence, that Robert Cecil, Lord Buckhurst, Charles Howard, and also Sir Thomas Egerton, the Chancellor, were already committed to her cause.[167] By late June, though, Zúñiga still had not raised the subject of the restoration of Flanders to Spain with the Archdukes.[168] Zúñiga's failure to do so may have stemmed from the reaction he anticipated from the Archdukes. As has already been noted, the Archdukes were keen to pursue an independent foreign policy and to establish friendly relations with their neighbours. Realising that Philip resented the loss of the Low Countries from his inheritance, they suspected that Philip's motivation for promoting the Infanta's candidacy was as a diversion to mask his real intentions of reclaiming Flanders.[169]

Meanwhile, in Rome, Sessa and Persons explored papal attitudes. In January, Clement had spoken with Sessa about the potential French reaction to a Spanish succession. He believed that Henri would do anything and everything to prevent a union of England and Flanders, and that Henri consequently preferred the union of England and Scotland since it would not result in the encirclement of his kingdom.[170] In March, Clement admitted to Sessa that his preference was for England and Flanders to be united as one strong Catholic power, but that he dare not proclaim his support publicly lest the activities of the Scottish and French factions intensify. He promised that, upon Elizabeth's death, he would proclaim his support for the Infanta.

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[165] 'Report of the Council of State to Philip III, on a letter from the Duke of Sessa in Rome, containing information given to him by Father Persons, respecting England and Ireland', *CSP Simancas (1587-1603)*, pp. 682-83.
[166] Philip to Sessa, 12 February 1601, AGSE 1856, translated in Hicks, 'Cecil, Persons, and the Succession', p. 129.
[167] 'Instructions données par Philippe III à Zuñiga et le retour éventuel de nos provinces á l'Espagne', in Lonchay and Cuvelier, I, p. 63.
[168] 'Lettre de Balthazar de Zuñiga à Phillippe III, écrite de Bruxelles le 22 juin 1601', in Lonchay and Cuvelier, I, p. 71.
[169] Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', pp. 494-97. See also, Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*, pp. 77-78.
[170] A. Loomie, 'Philip III and the Stuart Succession in England, 1600-1603,' *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 43 (1965), p. 503, (reprinted, in A. Loomie, *Spain and the Early Stuarts, 1585-1655* ([Aldershot, 1996]).

Clement's careful manoeuvring led Sessa to remark that no woman was more careful to avoid arousing the suspicions of her husband than Clement was with Henri.[171] Rome thus avoided any declaration on behalf of the Infanta, fearing the French reaction to the decision.

The situation in England had changed, though. Essex, who had been in Ireland fighting the Earl of Tyrone, had launched an abortive rebellion. Its defeat, and Essex's subsequent execution for treason on 25 February 1601, resulted in a diplomatic realignment detrimental to Spain's interests.[172] During the Earl's trial, Essex had taunted Cecil about the latter's support for the Infanta, supposedly stating that 'I can prove thus much from Sir Robert Cecil's own mouth that he, speaking to some of his own counsellors should say that none in the world but the Infanta of Spain had right to the crown of England'. The source of this rumour was Sir William Knollys, who responded when questioned: 'I never did hear Mr. Secretary use any such words or to that effect'.[173] The contention that Cecil favoured the Infanta's claim was dropped, but the damage was done. Within a month of Essex's execution, Cecil had opened a secret correspondence with James, and begun to take steps to ensure that his authority and influence would serve the transition to a new monarch.[174] There was no further correspondence allegedly on his behalf with Persons and Spain. There had been an opportunity for the Spanish Elizabethans to ally themselves with some of the most powerful members of the Elizabethan regime and, with their help, install a Catholic candidate on the throne upon Elizabeth's death. Philip III's refusal to make a decision about the succession and instead delay for as long as possible to assess his options meant that the window of opportunity had passed by the time he had committed to the Infanta's cause. The inability to build alliances in support of the Infanta's cause contrasted starkly with the progress James VI was having to advance his candidacy.

The Appellants' Final Appeal to Rome

The papal breve confirming George Blackwell's confirmation as archpriest could have led to a new era of peace between the English secular and Jesuit clergy. However, Blackwell insisted that his opponents had been schismatics, and demanded that they seek repentance for their

171 Hicks, 'Persons, Cecil, and the Succession', p. 132.
172 The best account of Essex's revolt remains M. James, 'At a Crossroads of the Political Culture: the Essex Revolt, 1601', in his *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 416-65. See also, P. Hammer, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59/1 (2008), pp. 1-35; A. Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 27-66.
173 Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, pp. 279-80.
174 On this correspondence, see A. Courtney, 'The Scottish King and the English Court: Secret Correspondence of James VI, 1601-3', in S. Doran and P. Kewes (eds.), *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 134-51.

sins. Pursing this policy, John Pollen argues, was a grave mistake, as in doing so, Blackwell provided his opponents with clear grounds for renewing the dispute by seeking exoneration of the charges.[175] Seeking support from sympathetic quarters, the Appellants secured a formal disputation at the Sorbonne on the topic of the archpriest's appointment. At this disputation, which occurred in May 1600, the Sorbonne exonerated the Appellants of all charges of schism.[176] Angered by this ruling, Blackwell threatened with censure and loss of faculties any priest who defended the decision.[177] In October, he suspended John Mush and John Colleton.[178] The following month, thirty-three priests imprisoned at Wisbech drafted a second appeal against Blackwell; more names were subsequently added.[179] It was soon followed by a third and final appeal involving Appellant agents being sent to Rome to plead their case. The Archpriest Controversy, with all its implications for the succession, was very much alive. Its new form was far more dangerous to the Spanish Elizabethans than the first appeal, with the Elizabethan regime and the French government both providing support and assistance to the Appellants. Robert Persons, leading the defence of the archpriest in Rome, though, had a valuable asset supporting his work: intelligence gathered from within the Elizabethan regime.

Richard Bancroft, the Protestant Bishop of London, observed these developments with interest. Bancroft had experience exploiting religious disputes to weaken the Church of England's opponents. In the 1580s and 1590s, he had conducted multiple operations against Puritan sects, serving as the 'virtually full-time policeman for the established Church'.[180] Now he turned his attention to Catholicism, 'employing some of the same methods he had deployed to document and expose the activities of [...] the Presbyterians involved in the Puritan conferences'.[181] Slowly and cautiously, Bancroft reached out to leading Appellants, compiling a dossier on English Catholicism based on the information they gave him, and provided the Appellants with access to government support, including royal printing facilities to publish their anti-Jesuit tracts.[182] Bancroft's actions were supported by Sir Robert Cecil; the Elizabethan

[175] Pollen, *Institution of Archpriest*, pp. 47-50. See also, Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism*, pp. 124-25, McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 126-28.
[176] 'Sententia Facultatis Theologiae Parisiensis de Causa Archipresbyteri, May 3 1600', in Tierney/Dodd, III, pp. cxxx-cxxxi. McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 128-29.
[177] Pollen, *Institution of the Archpriest*, pp 48-52. 'Blackwell's Decree against the above-recited determination, May 29, 1600', in Tierney/Dodd, III pp. cxxxi.
[178] 'Blackwell's sentence against Mush and Colleton, Octob. 17 1600', in Tierney/Dodd, III, pp. cxxxii-cxxxiii.
[179] 'Appeal of thirty-three Clergymen against Blackwell. Nov. 17 1600', in Tierney/Dodd, III pp. cxxxiii-cxlv.
[180] P. Collinson, 'Bishop Richard Bancroft and the Succession', in S. Doran and P. Kewes (eds.), *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England* (Manchester, 2015), p. 98.
[181] Collinson, 'Bancroft and the Succession', p. 99.
[182] For details about this dossier's archival history, see Collinson, 'Bancroft and the Succession', p. 109 n. 37.

regime was seeking to exploit the Archpriest Controversy to strengthen its position by pursuing a policy of divide and rule.[183]

The Appellants John Cecil, Thomas Bluet, John Mush, and Anthony Champney were 'banished' from England in autumn 1601. They travelled first to Paris, where, with the help of various Catholic exiles including Charles Paget and Thomas Morgan, they secured the backing of the French government.[184] Henri IV provided them with letters of support and sent instructions to Philippe de Béthune, his ambassador at Rome, stating that Béthune was to provide assistance to their cause. Henri recognised the potential of the Archpriest Controversy in undermining the English Jesuits and Spanish influence in Rome; he did not want their preferred candidate, the Infanta, to succeed to the English crown.[185] With support coming from both within the Elizabethan regime and from the French crown, the third appeal was a far different beast from its predecessors.

The involvement of the Elizabethan regime in the Archpriest Controversy brought Owen's intelligence network into play, in particular William Sterrell and Thomas Phelippes, Owen's informants within the Elizabethan regime, who supplied intelligence to Persons under the pseudonym 'Anthony Rivers'.[186] Patrick Martin and John Finnis reveal that Sterrell and Phelippes' role was threefold. First, they supplied intelligence from England about the Appellants and their activities, and about the efforts of the Elizabethan regime to support them. This supply included the prompt dispatch of multiple copies of Appellant publications so that Persons could distribute them in Rome and write rebuttals. Second, reports negatively depicting the Appellants' reception in Rome were sent by Persons to Sterrell and Phelippes to pass to Cecil. The aim here was to encourage Cecil to abandon his support for the Appellants, thus quelling their anti-Jesuit activities. Third, Sterrell and Phelippes assisted in the posting of Jesuit correspondence, using their contacts within the government as the couriers should they be captured.[187] The intelligence supplied by Sterrell and Phelippes played a major role in influencing attitudes towards the Appellants at the Papal Curia, but it was not sufficient to

[183] P. Collinson, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 173-92.
[184] An anonymous report from Ostend observes the collaboration between the Appellant representatives and 'the Scottish faction', 'Advices from camp, Ostend – signature erased', Ostend, 26 February 1602, SP 77/6, ff. 326r-27r.
[185] J. Bossy, 'Henri IV, the Appellants and the Jesuits', *Recusant History*, 8 (1965), pp. 80-112; Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 224-27.
[186] The identity of 'Anthony Rivers' as Sterrell is convincingly revealed in P. Martin and J. Finnis, 'The Identity of "Anthony Rivers",' *Recusant History*, 26 (2002), pp. 39-74.
[187] P. Martin and J. Finnis, 'The Secret Sharers: "Anthony Rivers" and the Appellant Controversy, 1601-2', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 69 (2006), pp. 195-237.

overcome the forces of national interest dominating papal politics at the turn of the seventeenth century.

The Appellants arrived in Rome on 14 February 1602, and immediately made contact with Béthume, who reassured the agents of his protection as ordered by Henri IV.[188] Arnaud, Cardinal d'Ossat, promised his assistance too. Over the following week, the agents visited Ordoardo Farnese, Cardinal Protector, and Camillo, Cardinal Borghese, Vice-Protector, but by this point the Spanish Elizabethans were aware of their arrival. As the Appellants approached Borghese's residence, they saw Persons, Baynes, and Richard Haycock departing – having made a preemptive strike. The Appellants went inside to meet Borghese, who welcomed them, exonerating them of the charge of schism, but condemning their disobedience to the Archpriest. Next they visited the Holy Office where they were questioned about 'certain Ingishe bookes printed in England which had bene delivered him conteynyng much bad matter'. They 'disclaimed from them as in truthe we were not privie to the making or divulging of them, nor did knowe the author of what they conteyned'.[189] The Appellants' anti-Jesuit publications, which had been sent by Sterrell and Phelippes to Persons, who had then shared them around Rome, had disturbed many in Rome.

Pope Clement, too, had been briefed about the Appellant publications. Persons submitted petitions to Clement against the Appellants before their arrival in Rome, whilst Thomas Fitzherbert, who had moved to Rome from Spain to study for the priesthood, submitted a memorial arguing that Elizabeth could not grant liberty of conscience for reasons of state, and that a papal confirmation of the archpriest would lead to the majority of the appellants returning to obedience.[190] When Béthume met Clement towards the end of February, they discussed the Appellants. Clement emphasised his dislike for their texts and stated to Béthume that the agents were 'contentious and troublesome'. To this accusation, Béthume responded that the Appellants' complaints deserved closer scrutiny, and that doing so would reveal that the Appellants' opponents were the actual source of the troubles. Clement made similar comments during the Appellants' audience on 5 March. Mush reported that Clement believed:

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[188] 'Mush's Diary', in Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, II, p. 1. Sterrell told Persons that the Appellants in England bragged of their agents' reception by the French ambassador: Rivers to Signore Ridollfo [*vere* Persons], London, 30 March 1602 [OS], AAW, Series A VII, f. 33r. The following week, Rivers thanked Persons for his more accurate presentation of Appellant activity in Rome, which he intended to use to correct the reports which were circulated by the Appellants: Rivers to Signore Ridolfo, London, 7 April 1602 [OS], AAW, Series A VII, f. 33r.

[189] 'Mush's Diary', in Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, II, p. 2.

[190] Persons submitted petitions which are no longer extant on 20 January, 2 and 23 February. Reference is made to them in ABSI, Coll P II, f. 465r. Fitzherbert's memorial was entitled 'A discussion of the proposal which, as it is said, is to be made to your Holiness by some English priests in the name of the Queen of England in regard to granting liberty of conscience to the Catholics of that realm'. Two copies survive: ARSI, Anglia. 36/I, ff.101r-06v and AAW, Series f. A VII, f. 72r.

> we had sett out bookes contenying heresies, that we came to defend heretikes against his authoritie, [specifically] in that [the pope] might not depose heretical princes &c.[, and] that we came sent by Heretickes upon their cost[, and] that we were not obedient to the Sea Apostolike & the Arche priest constituted by hum, for toleration or liberty of conscience in England, it would do harme and make Catholikes become hereticks.[191]

According to Mush, nothing the Appellants said could convince Clement that he had been misinformed; instead, Clement ordered them to present their case to Cardinal Borghese and Cardinal Pompey Arrigoni and no-one else. The letters and books Persons had received from Sterrell and Phelippes had had their intended effect, damning the Appellants through their own words which were hostile to decades-old Papal policy as well as to the Jesuits.

Throughout March, the Appellants ignored the Pope's orders, and went from cardinal to cardinal, trying to bolster support for their cause. They were assisted in this activity by Béthume.[192] This French involvement had a tremendous impact on the Controvery's momentum. On 11 April, Cardinal Borghese relayed a papal exoneration of all charges of schism and disobedience with which the Appellants had been charged.[193] This development disturbed Persons, who proclaimed that the Appellant agents had lied to obtain a favourable outcome.[194] Realising that the Appellants were suddenly in the ascendancy, Persons turned to the Spanish ambassador, Sessa. In a memorial presumably written for Sessa, Persons argued that the Appellants were nothing without French support, contending that none of the English in Rome supported them, and explaining that it had only been through the French ambassador that the agents had secured an audience with the pope.[195] By emphasising the importance of the French ambassador in providing life support to the Appellant cause, Persons was implying that an ultimate Appellant victory would signify the loss of Spanish influence in Rome. As Bossy argues, from this moment on, the factions resolved around the two embassies with both courts fighting a proxy war for influence at the papal court.[196]

Over the following months both sides lobbied persistently at the Curia with multiple petitions and memorials submitted, and audiences had with leading cardinals.[197] On 20 July 1602, the Holy Office made its decision, with the judgement being formally delivered on 9

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[191] 'Mush's Diary', in Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, II, p. 6.
[192] Bossy, 'Henri IV', p. 85.
[193] Law, *Archpriest Controversy,* 2, pp. 193-94.
[194] The outcome had surprised the Appellants, too. See 'Letter of the four Appellants communicating to their English brethren the Papal sentence on the question of schism', in Law, *Archpriest Controversy*, II, pp. 146-47.
[195] ABSI, Coll P II, f. 456r.
[196] Bossy, 'Henri IV', pp. 80-110
[197] For discussion about this lobbying and debates, see McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp 361-69; Lake and Questier, *All Hail to the Archpriest*, pp. 115-20.

August. Further negotiations in August and September followed, with the final papal breve 'Venerunt Nuper' being delivered on 11 October to the two parties.[198] Both sides had grounds on which to claim victory. Appellant efforts to remove the Jesuits from the administration of the seminaries and from the English mission had failed. Moreover, Persons secured a papal condemnation of Appellant treatises and of their collaboration with the Elizabethan government, two areas where the 'Rivers' correspondence had been of particular use. Clearly, these had been victories for the Jesuits and their supporters, but, at the same time, the Appellants had exonerated themselves of all charges of schism and disunion. Moreover, the ruling ordered Blackwell to name Appellants amongst his advisors, and prohibited his consultation with the Jesuits in matters of Church government. McCoog comments that, with this brief, the 'English mission became *de facto* two distinct missions under the separate jurisdictions of the archpriest and the Jesuit superior'.[199] The removal of the Jesuits from any administrative role in the English mission can be taken as a sign that, whilst neither side had dealt a knock-out blow, the Appellants had won on points.

The intelligence provided by 'Rivers' was vital in Persons' attempts to counter the Appellants' third appeal. Unlike the previous attempts, this appeal was far better organised and had powerful backers: in addition to the Elizabethan regime, the Appellants had the support of the French government and its representatives in Rome. Whilst ultimately Persons and the Spanish Elizabethans would prevail, as will be seen, their victory was not without cost to the Spanish Elizabethan cause. The debates divided Catholicism, and distracted attention away from discussion of how to put a Catholic candidate on the throne, discussions which Peña had viewed as urgently required when Persons had arrived in Rome over five years earlier. This stalling was, in many ways, what the Elizabethan regime had hoped to achieve. In 1603, as James VI headed to London to accede to the throne, Bishop Bancroft reflected that, had it not been for the bitter internal feud within the English Catholic community over the Archpriest, the Infanta Isabella might have become queen of England.[200] Certainly, the existence of such divisions had undermined Spanish Elizabethan claims that English Catholicism was united.

[198] Pollen, *Institution of the Archpriest*, pp. 90-94.
[199] McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, p. 375.
[200] 'Reasons of the proceedings held with the secular priests', May 1603, AAW, Series A VII, f. 87r.

And Then There Was One

Rumours in autumn 1602 that England and Spain might make peace alarmed James VI for three main reasons, which he outlined to Sir Robert Cecil: the first was the religious question; the second, the concerns of the state regarding religion and policy; and third, that such a peace would be 'most perrelouse for my just claims in particulaire'.[201] He believed that, after a peace had been agreed, the English would seriously consider Spanish claimants, especially with Spanish ambassadors and diplomats at the English court 'to corrupte the minds of all corruptible men for the advancement of his ambitiouse and iniuste pretencis'.[202] Moreover, Jesuits and seminary priests would swarm into England as 'the katerpillers or flyers did in aegipt', and their activities would lead to an increase in the number of English Catholics. James was aware of Catholic claims that no-one could accede to the English throne without their support, so felt compelled to warn Cecil of the threat.[203] In response, Cecil asserted his opposition to Catholicism, stating that 'I condemn their doctrine, I detest their conversation, and I foresee the period which the exercise of their function may bring to this island'.[204] Cecil nuanced his position by acknowledging the divisions within English Catholicism and how some 'come so neare loyalty'.[205] These loyal clergymen 'do declare their affection absolutely to your title, and some of them have learnedly written of the validity of the same'.[206] Nevertheless, Cecil proclaimed he would be surprised if James bestowed any favours on these Catholic loyalists despite their support for his claim given their religion.[207] James responded by declaring that 'I wil never allowe in my conscience that the bloode of any man shall be shedde for diversitie of opinions in religion, but I wolde be sorie that catholikes shoulde so multiplie as thay micht be able to practise thaire old principles upon us'.[208] He too acknowledged the difference between the Jesuits and the Appellants, but urged that the various English royal proclamations which had been issued by Elizabeth against all the Catholic clergy in England be enforced.[209] Clearly, James suspected that English Catholics might present concerted opposition to his acceding to the English throne. However, when Elizabeth died, there was no concerted Catholic challenge to his claim. This section traces the final negotiations by the Catholic powers and the Spanish

[201] [James] to [Cecil], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 31.
[202] [James] to [Cecil], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 31.
[203] [James] to [Cecil], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 31.
[204] [Cecil] to [James], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 33.
[205] [Cecil] to [James], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 33.
[206] [Cecil] to [James], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 35.
[207] [Cecil] to [James], n.d. [Autumn 1602], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* pp. 33-36.
[208] [James] to [Cecil], n.d. [late 1602/early 1603], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* p. 36.
[209] [James] to [Cecil], n.d. [late 1602/early 1603], in Bruce (ed.), *Correspondence of James VI,* pp. 36-38.

Elizabethans concerning the succession, and argues that by the time there was significant movement towards a Catholic candidate, it was too late to put into action.

As James communicated with Cecil, Spain still had not come out publicly in support of the Infanta's candidacy. Thomas James, having returned from a fact-finding mission to England on which he had been sent by Robert Persons to learn about English Catholic attitudes towards a Spanish succession, drafted a report about the succession for the Spanish Council of State in April 1602.[210] This report has been described by Albert Loomie as 'a dubious mix of distorted facts, strange assumptions and dangerous optimism' in the way it presented the strength of the Infanta's position, 'stress[ing] the occasions for discontent in England and imagin[ing] a militant reaction by many Englishmen'.[211] The Spanish Elizabethans were still trying to convince Spain to declare its intent to support the Infanta's cause. The Council of State, however, did not take James' report seriously. Its focus was fixed on France. The Spanish defeat at Kinsale had presented an opportunity for Henri who not only congratulated Elizabeth for this victory over their shared enemy, but also had his ambassador to Rome protest to Pope Clement about the papal authority which had been bestowed on this expedition. The papacy's response was cryptic, explaining that Clement had always favoured Irish Catholics as his 'afflicted children'. As Loomie explains, 'this ambiguous phrase conveyed a hint that Henry need not consider Spanish and Papal objectives to be identical'.[212]

In May, the Council of State, believing that the Infanta was still the best candidate from a Spanish perspective, recommended that money be spent cultivating supporters in England. Letters of credit were sent to Brussels, and Colonel William Semple, a Scottish Catholic, was commissioned to gather information in Flanders and, if necessary, Scotland.[213] Both Zúñiga and Archduke Albert argued to Philip against Semple's mission since, as Zúñiga put it, James' 'game for the crown of England is almost won'. James had too many allies, meaning Spain would face a formidable coalition if they attempted to prevent James' accession.[214] Better then, argued Albert, to follow a policy of dependency. He recommended that Spain should assist James' accession so that he would be in debt to Spain. In return for Spanish assistance, James could grant religious concessions to Catholics.[215] These letters confused the Council of State

[210] On James, see A. Loomie, 'Thomas James: the English Consul of Andalucia (1556-*ca.*1613),' *Recusant History*, 11 (1972), pp. 165-78.
[211] Loomie, 'Philip III and the Succession', p. 507.
[212] Loomie, 'Philip III and the Succession', p. 507.
[213] On Semple, see A. Loomie, 'Sir William Semple and Bristol's Andalucian Trade, 1597-1598', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 82 (1963), pp. 177-87.
[214] Zúñiga to Philip, 18 July 1602, AGSE, 620 n.f.
[215] Albert to Philip, Ghent, 19 July 1602, AGSE 2288, n.f.

which noted that 'there is a contradiction here'.[216] On the one hand, both Zúñiga and Albert were recommending that Philip pursue James' friendship, but neither had recommended that an ambassador be sent to Scotland. Moreover, the Council sarcastically asked why Spain should support a heretic having already decided to back a Catholic candidate, and implied that both the papacy and the archduke were naive for believing James' promises of eventual conversion.[217] The Council thus continued to advocate to Philip that the Infanta was both still the best candidate from a Spanish perspective, and had a realistic prospect of acceding to the English throne with Spanish support. However, it continued to ignore Spanish Elizabethan protests that it needed to do something tangible to advance the Infanta's candidacy.

In reality, though, the English rout of the Spanish fleet off Lisbon in June 1602 made a successful Spanish intervention in the succession unlikely.[218] Spain needed allies to match the coalition which James had built in support of his claim, but, for a long time, Philip had resisted papal attempts to start a Franco-Spanish dialogue to identify a mutually acceptable candidate, arguing that France had no right to interfere in the matter. Meanwhile, Henri had supported James' candidacy, viewing it as an opportunity to weaken Spanish influence in Rome and to prevent the Habsburg encirclement of his kingdom. However, by the summer of 1602, Henri's attitude towards the succession was shifting. Rumours reached Spain that Henri aspired to the English throne himself, prompting Philip to order Sessa to investigate them. Loomie argues that this shift was the result of Henri realising the potential implications for his relations with the papacy and his Huguenot subjects should James accede with his assistance. Throughout his campaign to undermine Spanish influence in Rome, Henri had stressed his personal orthodoxy, but James' promises of conversion or toleration were increasingly viewed in Rome with scepticism. Henri did not want to be tarnished with this brush. Equally, Henri realised that, should he assist James in becoming King of England and then James grant Catholics toleration, this might lead to the Huguenots increasing their demands for more rights and privileges in France. Consequently, Henri was increasingly open to the idea of discussing the succession with Spain and identifying a mutually acceptable candidate. Realising this shift was occurring, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini ordered the papal nuncio in Paris to explore this possibility further, whilst Robert Persons met with members of the French faction in Rome.[219]

[216] *Consulta*, 17 August 1602, AGSE 621, n.f.
[217] *Consulta*, 17 August 1602, AGSE 621, n.f.
[218] Wernham, *Return of the Armadas*, pp. 394-97.
[219] Loomie, 'Philip III and the Stuart Succession', p. 511.

Early in October, a letter was sent to Joseph Creswell stating that Henri had approached Robert Owen, a Welsh priest, canon of LeMans, and brother to Hugh Owen.[220] Creswell's report on this development stated that 'soon we will know what the King of France replies' about the succession, and that 'I am of the opinion that if the business is dealt with honestly, it could be of some good effect, for the King of France is no less afraid of the King of Scotland than we are'.[221] On 28 October, Zúñiga sent Philip a full report of Robert Owen's interview at the French court, alongside a hint reminding Philip that it had been more than a year since the Pope had urged Philip to come to an agreement with Henri about a Catholic candidate.[222] The report stated that Robert Owen had been interviewed by Henri's secretary Nicholas de Neufville, Marquis de Villeroy, who wanted Owen to go to Flanders to 'find out as much as you can touching the succession, and in particular you are to return with word as to whether the English Catholics will accept the Scot if they are assured of religion'. He was also informed that France would move to prevent a Spanish candidate from acceding to the throne. Villeroy was aware of Hugh Owen's relationship with the Spanish government so knew that it was extremely likely that he would report what Robert told him to Philip and the archdukes. This message, then, was an indirectly-made communication to the Spanish government, an opening statement to be delivered via English Catholic exiles in a negotiation to find an alternative candidate.

The Spanish Council of State debated Zúñiga's report on 26 November 1602. It doubted James' good intentions, and, therefore, ordered Sessa to warn Clement about letting James accede since there were no guarantees that he would keep his promises. This was an indirect reply to Henri, informing him that Spain would, under no circumstances, accept James.[223] Meanwhile, Robert Owen had returned to Paris with a proposal that Philip and Henri set aside their differences and promise military support for a candidate of Clement's choosing. The proposal was forwarded by Villeroy to d'Ossat and Béthume in Rome for papal approval, which Clement gave in December. Around the same time, Owen updated Persons of

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[220] This paragraph and the next draw heavily on Loomie, 'Philip and the Succession,' pp. 510-11 and 'Spain and the English Catholics', pp. 497-502. In these, Loomie examines the episode from the perspective given in the Spanish sources at Simancas. In an ideal world (i.e. one without Covid-19) this section would also incorporate: Dodd, 'Two Welsh Catholic *Émigres*', pp. 344-58, and Bossy, 'Elizabethan Catholicism: The Link with France', pp. 295-302. Dodd's article contains transcriptions of several relevant sources, whilst Bossy's thesis examines this episode from a French perspective.

[221] Report of Joseph Creswell, 4 October 1602, AGSE 2512/71-73, cited in Loomie, 'Philip and the Succession,' p. 510.

[222] Zúñiga to Philip, 28 October 1602 with enclosure entitled 'Relación que hizo un canigo de Mans en francia hermano de Hugo Owen […] de cierta platica que tuvo con el Secretario Villeroy', AGSE 620, n.f., cited in Loomie, 'Spain and the English Catholics', pp. 498-99.

[223] *Consulta*, 26 November 1602, AGSE 2023/34.

developments. Persons then stressed to d'Ossat and Béthume that Elizabeth's successor must be Catholic. Henri remained hopeful that James might yet convert, but his doubts were intensifying. He therefore suggested to James that he send his eldest son to Paris to be raised at the French court as a gesture of good faith. This ploy was unsuccessful, and, by spring 1603, Henri was ready to search for an alternative in earnest.[224]

Spain, though, still had not made a decision as to whether it was going to publicise its support for the Infanta or look for an alternative candidate, and the Spanish Elizabethans continued their campaign for greater Spanish activity concerning the succession. On 28 November, Joseph Creswell submitted a report to the Council. He was still hopeful of a Catholic rebellion supported by Spanish military aid which would prevent James from taking the throne, advising that Philip, under the pretext of preparing for a war against the Turks, muster a fleet to be sent to Flanders to transport troops to England upon Elizabeth's death. Creswell reiterated his oft-repeated plea for the Council to deliberate as to which candidate to support and, crucially, to inform the English Catholics so that they might know whom to support when the time came. The Council, however, felt that 'things here are in such a condition as to make this [the English enterprise] impossible', and that it had already 'given its opinion on the question of the succession'. One member of the Council, though, the Count of Olivares, spoke out, stating that since the Infanta's candidacy 'now offered so many difficulties', it would be prudent 'to support the Catholic English claimant most in favour with the party there, so as to oppose the King of Scots'.[225] In light of Olivares' evaluation, Philip III ordered the Council to reassess Spain's policy concerning the succession.[226] The political mood in the Spanish government was finally beginning to shift.

In February 1603, the Council submitted a long report on the English succession to Philip.[227] It restated that, in an ideal scenario, Spain would support the Infanta's candidacy, but, finally, admitted the shortcomings of her position. Archduke Albert had always been hesitant towards her candidacy, and had done nothing to advance her cause, and the opposition from France and the northern Protestant states was now too formidable. Moreover, Spain was in no position militarily to support the Infanta's cause.[228] An alternative needed to be found. The Council remained sceptical of the overtures James VI had made in Rome, wherein he had

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[224] McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 225-26, citing Bossy, 'Elizabethan Catholicism', pp. 217-25.
[225] 'Report of the Council of State to Philip III. on the letters from Father Creswell', 5 December 1602, *CSPSimancas (1587-1603)*, pp. 717-18.
[226] 'Report of the Council', *CSPSimancas (1587-1603),* pp. 719.
[227] 'Report of the Council', *CSPSimancas (1587-1603),* pp. 719-29.
[228] On the weak military and financial position Spain found itself in at this time, see Allen, *Pax Hispanica,* pp. 99-101.

promised, in return for money, to convert and send his son to a foreign court to be brought up as a Catholic. It viewed this promise with suspicion, stating that 'it is not natural that anyone should wish his son to be of a different religion to that which he himself professes, and the consequence would be that he would after all refuse to deliver his son, on the pretext that the country would not permit it'.[229] The Council consequently concluded that the only realistic solution was to back an English Catholic candidate who would, upon being crowned, grant toleration to protestants. This solution was seen as feasible since the 'Catholic party is understood to be very large, and would be larger but for fear of the Queen, and it may be supposed that most of the heretics are politicians who would soon be reconciled'. The Council was gambling that those politicians who had contacted Robert Persons in 1600 would realise the momentum behind this Catholic candidate and switch allegiances once more. The only task left was to identify the exact English candidate and secure papal backing.

On 22 March, the Council ordered Pedro de Franquesa, Philip's secretary, to instruct Sessa to identify the individual most preferred by the leaders of the English Catholics. Moreover, Sessa was to enquire as to the Pope's disposition towards having a king of England 'from that island,' and to inform the Pope that Spain would be willing to discuss the matter with France.[230] Spain, France, the papacy, and the English Catholics were finally in a position to have fruitful discussions about the succession. However, this promising detente came too late to produce results. Elizabeth's death came on 3 April 1603, and Catholics were not in a position to react. By the time news reached the Spanish Council from Juan Baptista de Tassis, the ambassador to France, James VI had already been proclaimed king, and, whilst the Council did debate what course of action to follow, 'Spain had neither a minimal military force, nor a specified commander of the expedition, nor a candidate for the English crown'.[231] Moreover, a worsening situation in Flanders meant 'there was really very little the king could do to intervene in the affairs of England'.[232] In the end it was a case of too little, too late; James was able to accede to the throne without opposition.

After the Accession

James left Edinburgh for London on 14 April 1603. Whereas it had been predicted that his accession would be met with resistance by Catholics, this was not manifested, and there was, in

[229] 'Report of the Council', *CSPSimancas*, (1587-1603), p. 725.
[230] Loomie, 'Philip and the Succession', p. 513.
[231] A. Loomie, *Guy Fawkes in Spain: the 'Spanish Treason' in Spanish Documents* (London, 1971), p. 16.
[232] Allen, *Pax Hispanica*, p. 107.

fact, widespread hope amongst the English Catholic population that James would grant religious freedoms.[191] James' unopposed accession to the English throne had a tremendous impact on international relations and the possibility of an Anglo-Spanish peace. For one, the accession created a situation where continuing the war was a less attractive option for the Habsburgs. As has been noted, since the death of Philip II in 1598, Spanish and Flemish foreign policy had shifted to *conservación.* Central to the realisation of this policy was a peace to be secured firstly with England and then potentially with the Dutch rebels. In the intervening years, however, peace negotiations had stalled, but the possibility for decisive military action had presented itself. Since Elizabeth refused to name an heir, it seemed likely that her death would be followed by a succession crisis, characterised by armed conflict or even civil war. In this chaos, a Spanish military intervention might enable a Catholic accede to the throne, and ensure that Spain wield considerable influence on the post-Elizabethan English political landscape. However, as has been seen, the failure of the Catholic powers to agree upon a Catholic candidate meant that, when Elizabeth died, the Stuart accession was able to occur without opposition. Moreover, when one considers the almost simultaneous defeat of Tyrone's rebellion in Ireland (for which Spain had been providing military and financial support) in April 1603, the Spanish strategic position was severely undermined.[192] Practically overnight, where once Spain had faced only a divided England, with an uncertain future and an Irish rebellion to contend with, it now saw the rebellion crushed, the period of uncertainty passed, and the three kingdoms of the British Isles united under a single monarch.

The accession of James was, therefore, an opportunity for a fresh start in Anglo-Spanish relations, and Elizabeth's death further facilitated this. Philip III's Councillors of State were quite explicit about the impact of Elizabeth's death, advising their king that the war had been a personal conflict between Philip II and Elizabeth. It had been Elizabeth who had been personally responsible for the attacks on Spanish shipping and for the English support given to the Dutch rebellion. James, meanwhile, had always been neutral, desirous of peace, and had not been involved in 'the particular offences that the Queen had committed against Your Majesty'.[193] James himself had strengthened this line of argument by declaring a ceasefire with Spain shortly after his accession. The Council thus argued that, whereas Elizabeth was a person with whom it would have been difficult to negotiate without losing a significant amount of the *reputación* which was such an integral part of the real and perceived power of the Habsburg

[191] McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 409-24.
[192] On this defeat in Ireland, see Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, pp. 233-34.
[193] *consulta*, 21 April 1603, AGSE 2557/1.

monarchy, with James, there were no such constraints.[236] Philip agreed with this assessment; as he wrote in the instructions for his first ambassador to England, Juan de Tassis, 'without the queen, against whom the war was fought, the cause ceases'.[237] Nevertheless, Philip stressed in the instructions that Tassis was to raise the question of James' conversion to Catholicism and the possibility of toleration for English and Irish Catholics.[238] James' accession meant that there was someone on the English throne with whom the Spanish felt they could negotiate without losing face. Securing religious concessions was very much on the agenda nonetheless.

Juan de Tassis arrived in Brussels on 1 July, and spent the summer in Flanders awaiting the go-ahead from Philip that he could cross over into England. Whilst in Brussels, he used the opportunity to get a better sense of English affairs. On the question of religious toleration in England, he was told that the prospects were non-existent. Jean Richardot, whom Tassis described as the 'oracle of the affairs of state here', argued that the 'matter of religion is completely un-negotiable, and without any hope of success.[239] But whilst the courtiers were completely sceptical of the prospect of religious toleration in England, the Spanish Elizabethans had not given up hope, and, at a meeting with Tassis on 3 July, they presented a report on the chances of winning over key English councillors.

From this report, it is clear that the Spanish Elizabethan position had shifted to reflect the new political situation in England. Whereas previously, they had advocated for a Spanish intervention to place a Catholic candidate on the throne, now they urged Spain to use its diplomatic clout to secure religious concessions.[240] Tassis described the meeting in a dispatch to Philip:

> There has reached here an English Catholic sent by the Catholics and theatines [Jesuits] of England to the Lord Archduke and the theatines here, who is said to be named Robert Spiller. They tell me he has been a correspondent of Federico Spinola, that he is a person in whom the Archduke places confidence. I have also been assured about him by the priests here and Colonel Stanley and Hugh Owen who are also reliable men. With all secrecy we have met together with Father William Baldwin in whose hands passes all the affairs of the Society here in Brussels, at a late hour of the night to protect ourselves from certain spies. From them I have drawn out everything that is placed in another paper in cipher, which I am sending

[236] On the importance of *reputación,* see J. Elliott, 'A Question of Reputation? Spanish Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth Century,' *Journal of Modern History,* 55/3 (1983), pp. 475-83.
[237] 'Instruccion que el Rey Phe 3 dio a Don Juan de Tassis su correo mayor quando le imbio por Embajador de Yngalaterra año 1603'. BNE, Mss 2347, f. 73r.
[238] 'Instruccion que el Rey Phe 3 dio a Don Juan de Tassis', BNE, MS 2347 f. 72r.
[239] Tassis to Philip, Brussels, 4 July 1603, AGSE 840/109.
[240] Similarly, Persons lobbied Pope Clement to send a nuncio to England to speak on the behalf of English Catholics, and for a united Catholic front to be created to pressure James to make such concessions. McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 436-37.

> to your Majesty with this letter. In it, with all detail, may be understood the personages and manner of governing that hold sway in that kingdom and what reliance the King places on them, and to whom they believe that I can go to receive pledges and in some measure place confidence.[241]

A list of names was drawn up, which Tassis sent to Spain at once in cipher.[242] This list – which Loomie describes as, despite having been deciphered in Spain, 'retain[ing] its cryptic style of being notes on the conversations of that evening' – contained information about the degree of sympathy at the English court towards the idea of toleration for Catholicism, but it also omitted key pieces of information which, it was noted, would be told to Tassis later 'by word of mouth and in more detail in England'.[243]

Nevertheless, the list contained vital information which would assist Tassis as he conducted his diplomatic mission. It warned him that there were a number of influential councillors — including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and others — that were unlikely to alter their anti-Catholic position, but, at the same time, it advised that there were, amongst James' Scottish favourites, those who, despite their strong Protestantism, were liable to change their opinions for the right price.[244] The list also identified those who might be of assistance to Tassis. Lord Buckhurst, for example — who had been one of the councillors who had secretly communicated with Persons prior to Essex's rebellion — was described as being inclined towards peace and even to liberty of conscience. The Earl of Cumberland, Sir Henry Wotton, and Lord Mountjoy were all said to be inclined to support Catholics. The Earl of Worcester, meanwhile, despite his Catholic inclinations, was believed to be of little potential help, since he was too anxious about his new political position to use it in any significant manner. Other courtiers such as Egerton, the Lord Chancellor, and the Earl of Northumberland were described as having a more neutral position. Despite their Protestantism, they were open to peace, but would likely follow James' lead. There was also a warning that Tassis would have to be alert at all times as he tried to approach the various councillors, for 'divers persons may attempt to insert themselves into your favour under pretence of being a Catholic or some other ruse'.[245] It was recommended that Tassis give notice

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[241] Tassis to Philip, Brussels, 4 July 1603, AGSE 840/109.
[242] 'Lista de los consjeros…', in Tassis to Philip, Brussels, 4 July 1603, AGSE 840/109.
[243] 'Lista de los consjeros…', in Tassis to Philip, Brussels, 4 July 1603, AGSE 840/109.
[244] The feasibility of obtaining religious toleration through well-placed bribes was being explored by the Spanish Elizabethans through Dr Robert Taylor, an English Catholic exile, often employed as a spy by Mirto Frangipani, the papal nuncio in Brussels. Taylor entered England in mid-June as part of the entourage of the Archduke's ambassador to England, the Count of Arenberg. Taylor then went about discussing peace and religious toleration with various influential Catholic nobles. McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 426-27, 447-48.
[245] 'Lista de los consjeros…', in Tassis to Philip, Brussels, 4 July 1603, AGSE 840/109.

of such an approach to Spiller, or another trusted English Catholic confidant, to avoid being misled. By providing this information, and offering to give Tassis ongoing support once he was in England, the Spanish Elizabethans were using English information to try to maximise Tassis' effectiveness during his diplomatic mission, thereby increasing the likelihood of its success and of religious concessions being secure, and to ensure their continued importance for Spain in the new geopolitical landscape.

The Debates of the Council of State

Philip III convened his Council of State three times in the last week of July 1603, and these meetings were dominated by the question of the possible terms for a peace with England and the English Catholic problem. Whilst there were fifteen members of the Council, it was rare for all to attend, and these meetings were no exception. Present, though, were some of the most influential of Philip's advisors: the Duke of Lerma, Philip III's *valido* (favourite) who rarely made appearances at the Council; Juan de Idiáquez, who had dominated the construction of Philip II's foreign policy during the last two decades of his reign; Juan Fernandez de Velasco, the Constable of Castile; the Count of Olivares, who had been the Spanish ambassador to Rome from 1582-92; and the Count of Miranda. The *consulta* produced by the Council on 26 July 1603 shows that they were inclined to negotiate a peace, but this does not mean that the Council was unanimous in how they thought Philip should proceed.[246]

Juan de Idiáquez advised negotiation, although he stressed that Spain should not appear to keen for 'too much eagerness either makes success impossible or makes the end result worse'. Idiáquez was keen that Spain should not lose prestige in seeking peace, but since 'disrepute comes from selling and not buying', bribery could be used. He advised that a sum of 200,000 escudos be authorised immediately. The Duke of Lerma was also inclined towards bribing English ministers. Others on the Council were less enthusiastic. The Count of Miranda was not against bribery, but he expressed doubts as to whether liberty of conscience could be secured through such payments. The Constable of Castile was sceptical that money would satisfy the English, a doubt shared by the Count of Olivares. The Constable and Olivares also anticipated that any Spanish request for religious toleration for English Catholics would be responded to with an equivalent English request for freedom for Protestants in Habsburg territories. The Council also expressed doubts about whether Tassis was experienced enough to conduct the

[246] *Consulta*, 26 July 1603, AGSE 2557/2.

negotiations. The Constable argued that 'the English being such astute negotiators, it is to be feared that Don Juan de Tassis will be thwarted [in his diplomacy] like a man who, despite his other good qualities, has never engaged in such matters. He recommended that the king should send Juan de Idiáquez, the Count of Olivares, or himself.

The Council was convinced that there was no course but negotiation, and Philip ruled similarly. In his annotations to the *consulta* of 26 July 1603, he set out the policy which Spain would pursue over the subsequent twelve months. After thanking the Council for their advice, he decreed that Tassis should be instructed:

> that he is to insist strongly on the liberty of conscience for the Catholics, which is what I most desire. Tell him there is to be no thought of the money so long as he succeeds in it, and has the assurances that he can get it. To all those who have a hand with that King, let a pension be offered each year, according to the quality of these people, and the part they have in the negotiations. This should be for the years that they give liberty of conscience to the Catholics […] as to the restitution of the places [the cautionary towns] the amount should be spent that seems best […] assure them with letters from merchants, when they are not satisfied with what my uncle [Archduke Albert] and ambassador may offer. Let Don Juan de Tassis be ordered to procure at once the suspension of war with the Islands [Zeeland and Holland] for this is even more necessary than a peace […] Let Don Juan be warned that on arrival in England matters are to be arranged there and let him have the role of mediator setting them right […] His powers are to be drawn up in great secrecy so that they can be sent when it is convenient, and, at the same time, I will decide on what other persons are to go.[247]

It was nearly a month before these instructions were sent to Tassis, and the wording of the instructions suggests a misreading of what was achievable given the English political landscape. Philip stated to Tassis that religious liberty for Catholics was the most important point for Spain.[248] Tassis was to insist on permission for Catholic priests to celebrate mass publicly and to preach Catholic doctrines publicly. Philip seemed to sense that these demands might seem too bold, for he ordered Tassis that under no circumstances should he break off negotiations concerning toleration, and insisted that religion be negotiated ahead of any other part of a peace treaty. Archduke Albert, and later the Constable of Castile, made great efforts to persuade Philip to abandon this condition when they learnt of it.[249] The divergence of Philip and Albert's policies towards England, and in particular the importance of religion in their policies, was becoming increasingly apparent.

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[247] *Consulta*, 26 July 1603, AGSE 2557/2
[248] Philip to Tassis, 23 August 1603, AGSE 2557/3-4.
[249] Albert to Philip, Antwerp, 8 September 1603, AGSE 622/143.

When Tassis received his updated instructions, he headed for England, arriving in Dover on 31 August to a salute of at least eighty guns by three English galleons, a responding salute from the batteries in Dover Castle.[250] Whilst he was officially there to congratulate James on his accession to the English throne, it was widely understood, even amongst the ordinary populace, that he was also there to begin the process of negotiating a peace treaty which would make permanent the ceasefire which had come into effect almost immediately after Elizabeth's death.[251] However, by this point, the Spanish diplomatic position in England had deteriorated. On 9 August, James had signed the Treaty of Hampton Court, entering into an alliance with France, in which both guaranteed the security of the Dutch, threatening the prospects for an Anglo-Spanish peace treaty.

Peace Negotiations

Whilst Tassis' instructions had been to engage in both peace negotiations and to explore the possibility of religious concessions, it was soon realised that these goals could not be negotiated in tandem. Albert, for one, realised that negotiations for religious toleration at this point generated too many difficulties, including the issue of the restitution of ecclesiastical property seized during Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries, and a possible English demand that the English Colleges and seminaries in Spanish territories be closed. He therefore advised Philip to postpone religious negotiations until peace had been secured.[252]

Tassis' initial reports show that he had quickly gained an understanding of the English political landscape, and also show that the Spanish Elizabethans were providing him with ongoing support, particularly through the supply of information. In a report dated 14 September, Tassis complained that the Archdukes' ambassador, the Count of Arenberg, was engaged in secret negotiations with the English regime which far exceeded his known instructions.[253] He also expressed doubts about whether religious concessions could be obtained:

> What is doubted universally here is that the King of England could come to allow the matter of the Catholic religion. He is making it a point of honour whether the world should see that your Majesty, by negotiations, should come to set up a law

[250] Cross, 'To Counterbalance the World', p. 202.
[251] Tassis' account of his arrival notes how his party was greeted with great pomp and ceremony by locals as they travelled inland. Tassis to Philip, Oxford, 14 September 1603, AGSE 840/179.
[252] A. Loomie, 'Toleration and Diplomacy: The Religious Issue in Anglo-Spanish Relations, 1603-1605', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society,* (53/6 (1963), p. 23.
[253] Tassis to Philip, Oxford, 14 September 1603, AGSE 841/141.

> and religion in this Kingdom. While some believe that to be assured of the Catholic faction, he would dissimulate to the point of not persecuting the Catholics, he will not allow them to practice it in their houses without external conformity. This I believe is contrary to the zealous intentions of your Majesty.[254]

On 12 October, Tassis went further, and echoed the same sentiments that Albert had made, advising, for peace to be achieved, religious toleration should be negotiated second.[255]

The Council of State also expressed doubts as to whether peace and religious toleration could be negotiated simultaneously. In a meeting of the Council on 27 September, the Cardinal of Toledo argued that peace must come first:

> There are two ways of protecting and assisting the Catholics, one of justice and one of charity. The first obtains with those who are subjects of your Majesty, and because of it there are different obligations […] The present case of the Catholics of England is one of charity and not of justice. If your Majesty possessed the force to assist them for his protection and defence, without damage to his own realm, it would be very proper to do so. But if this has to be the reason why your Majesty exhausts the resources that remain and those of his subjects, and everything is placed in the highest danger, […] your Majesty is not obliged to it, nor to break off, for the point of liberty of conscience.[256]

A few days later, on 1 October, Philip granted the Constable of Castile the powers to negotiate a peace treaty with England.[257] During the Council's debates about Anglo-Spanish peace negotiations, the Constable had made no secret of the fact that he believed that peace must come first, and that only after should religious concessions be sought. The Constable's appointment thus provides a great insight into Philip's thinking, showing how even Philip had accepted that if peace was to be achieved, it could not be tied up with the religious question.

The quest to secure religious freedom for Catholics in England was not completely abandoned, however. Instead, as Albert Loomie has extensively shown, Tassis and other Habsburg agents at James' court, working closely with the Spanish Elizabethans, pushed forward with a plan to purchase religious toleration. They established close relationships, and entered into detailed negotiations, with several influential figures at court – most notably the Countess of Suffolk (wife of the Lord Chamberlain) and Sir Thomas Lake (the King's Latin secretary and frequent confidant).[258] But as the year progressed, it brought with it an understanding of the nature of opposition at the English court to the idea of religious toleration

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[254] Tassis to Philip, Oxford, 14 September 1603, AGSE 841/141.
[255] Loomie, 'Toleration and Diplomacy', p. 25.
[256] 'Consulte du Conseil d'Etat Espagnol', in Lonchay and Cuvelier, I, p. 175.
[257] [Juan Fernández de Velasco], *Relación de la Yda del Contestable de Castilla* (Valladolid, 1604), p. 4.
[258] Loomie, 'Toleration and Diplomacy', pp. 22-37.



Figure 4.1: Treaty of Peace and Commerce between Phillip III, King of Spain, James I, King of England, and the Archdukes Albert and Isabel Clara Eugenia, Governors of the Low Countries, AGS Patronato Real 55/38.

— and of James's apparently difficult position in relation to this — and expectations were once more scaled back as a result. The Spanish hoped that, if formal relations returned, religious toleration could be secured during the ongoing diplomatic negotiations conducted by a permanent ambassador. Thus, the fate of English Catholics was not even raised during the formal peace negotiations at Somerset House, and post-treaty negotiations would prove unsuccessful too.[259] Practical considerations by Spain's leaders about temporal politics had, once more, trumped the sense of religious solidarity and obligation the Spanish Elizabethans had hoped to exploit to their advantage.[260]

Conclusions

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the Spanish Elizabethans engaged in negotiations in Rome and Spain about the possibility of the Infanta acceding to the English throne. Their aim in these negotiations was to persuade the King of Spain and the Pope to declare their support publicly for the Infanta's candidacy and to start preparations for the military venture which would be essential to enforce the Infanta's rights. In their attempts to persuade the Catholic powers to their perspective, the Spanish Elizabethans submitted countless reports, petitions, memoranda, and military proposals showing English Catholic support for the Infanta, and the practicality of an invasion. Complementing these documents were intelligence reports about the situation in England sent by Hugh Owen in Antwerp to Rome and Spain. These reports proved particularly vital in efforts to thwart peace negotiations in 1600 which would have ignored the religious question in England, and in combatting the Appellants during their third appeal, and preventing an anti-Jesuit/anti-Spanish ruling from the papacy. Intelligence, then, was essential in helping to keep the Spanish Elizabethan cause alive.

However, these efforts by the Spanish Elizabethans to convince the Catholic powers of the need to act to save English Catholicism were drowned out by geopolitical concerns. Whilst there were occasional whispers of a diplomatic marriage between Arabella Stuart or Anne Stanley and a European Catholic nobleman, only the Infanta Isabella and James VI were viewed as serious candidates. Throughout the 1590s, James looked to build an alliance supporting his claim. Through his marriage, he was related to many of the Scandinavian and German Protestant nobility, and James fostered ties with powerful individuals in England.

[259] See McCoog, *Lest Our Lamp*, pp. 485-519.
[260] Loomie, 'Toleration and Diplomacy', pp. 30-32; Cross, 'To Counterbalance the World', pp. 226-78.

Moreover, James could rely on anti-Habsburg sentiment. Henri IV may have not liked an Anglo-Scottish union, but he preferred it to the Habsburg encirclement of France that would follow an Anglo-Burgundian union. Similarly, an increase in Habsburg power troubled Pope Clement VIII, who, proud of his reconciliation of Henri to the Catholic Church, hoped to achieve something similar with James. In Rome, then, despite the best efforts of the Spanish Elizabethans to argue to the contrary, James exploited Roman anti-Spanish, pro-French sentiment with vague promises and assurances of his openness to Catholicism.

In contrast, there was no such grand coalition supporting the Infanta's cause. Indeed, apart from the Spanish Elizabethans, there were few openly advocating her candidacy. The Infanta herself never expressed any interest in acceding to the throne. Philip III, meanwhile, did not agree to her candidacy until 1601, and, even then, it was only a secret decision which was never made public. This hesitation and then silence prevented the Spanish from forming an alliance with others, including some within the Elizabethan regime, in support of the Infanta's candidacy, much to the frustration of the Spanish Elizabethans, who saw the opportunity to re-establish Catholicism in England through the Infanta's accession slipping away through their fingers.

When, finally, Spain and France accepted that they needed to identify a mutually acceptable English-born candidate, it was the consequence of a shift in the geopolitical landscape, and not Spanish Elizabethan diplomatic efforts. In France, Henri realised that he had extracted as much personal advantage from James' candidacy as he could, and that actually aiding James to accede might harm his relationship with the papacy and the balance of power in France. He was, consequently, willing to search for an alternative candidate to James as long as it was not the Infanta. The Spanish Council of State, meanwhile, came to the realisation that it was in no position to advance the Infanta's cause, and so recommended that Philip transfer his claim to the throne to an English candidate. By the time this shift had occurred though, it was too late to be explored properly, and so, when Elizabeth died, there was no Catholic candidate to oppose James' accession. New Catholic History and New British History have placed the succession in the contexts of the activities of the English Catholic community of events in the rest of the Atlantic Archipelago, but this chapter has shown that the mainland European politics cannot be ignored when considering James' smooth accession.

With Elizabeth gone and James securely on the throne, Philip III and his Council of State took the opportunity to end the Anglo-Spanish War. At the outset of negotiations, they had intended to seek religious concessions from James as part of the peace treaty. The Spanish Elizabethans realised that the opportunity had passed for a Spanish invasion to re-establish

Catholicism and so pushed for Spain to include religious concessions. In this effort, they used intelligence to support Spain's ambassador in his diplomatic negotiations. However, as peace talks progressed, the Spanish retreated from such goals. Whilst religious concessions were desirable, even more desirable was the termination of the conflict. In the end, as Francisco Peña had predicted to Persons back in 1597, nothing had been done about religion, 'for the outlook here is for the temporal state'.[261]

[261] 'Padre Personio con Peña cerca de la succesion de inglaterra', Rome, 17 April 1597, Vat.Lat.6227, f. 163r.

Conclusion

The Treaty of London (1604) was a disaster for the Spanish Elizabethans. For years, they had believed that Spain would save England from its experiment with heresy, provided the Spanish Habsburg authorities could be persuaded to focus Spanish military, financial, and political resources and attention on England for long enough. With an Anglo-Spanish peace now agreed, however, and with talks commencing to reinforce this treaty with a marriage alliance, this long-held position was no longer tenable.[1] To appropriate Lord Burghley's analysis of European politics which opened this thesis: the Treaty of London meant that the 'state of the world is marveloosly changed' for the Spanish Elizabethans.[2] Thus, in the years that followed the peace treaty, some former Spanish Elizabethans, such as Guy Fawkes, resorted to extreme measures – the Gunpowder Plot – aimed at demolishing England's Protestant ruling regime without need for Spanish assistance. Other Spanish Elizabethans withdrew from politics altogether. Hugh Owen, for example, following an attempt by the Jacobean regime to have him extradited back to England, retired to Rome.[3] English Catholicism more broadly also experienced a shift away from Spain in the aftermath of the Treaty of London. Whilst English Catholic institutions already in Spanish Habsburg territories continued to operate with Spanish support, new institutions founded in the early seventeenth century found their patrons in Maximilian I of Bavaria and Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor.[4] The Treaty of London, then, marked the end of an era for English Catholicism.

Although the Spanish Elizabethans were ultimately unsuccessful in their attempts to bring about the restoration of English Catholicism with Spanish support, this does not mean that they had no impact on the world around them. On the contrary, the Spanish Elizabethans actively influenced and shaped the political discussions which occurred at the courts in Madrid, Brussels, and Rome throughout the 15s90s and early 1600s about England and its religious and political future, and, as this thesis has shown, systematic and hard-won intelligence was central in these efforts.

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[1] On Anglo-Spanish marriage negotiations and its place in early-seventeenth-century Anglo-Spanish diplomacy, see Fernández, *Royal Love, Diplomacy, Trade and Naval Relations*.
[2] Burghley to Shrewsbury, Theobalds, 27 May 1589, in E. Lodge (ed.), *Illustrations of British History*, II, p. 400.
[3] See Edwards, 'Salisbury's Pursuit of Hugh Owen', pp. 2-38.
[4] T. McCoog, 'Spoils of War? The Edict of Restitution and Benefactions to the English Province of the Society of Jesus', in J. Kelly and H. Thomas (eds.), *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580-1789: "The World is Our House"?* (Leiden, 2018), pp. 186-209; T. Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe 1592-1648* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 229-30.

At the heart of the Spanish Elizabethans' intelligence network was a Brussels-based Welsh Catholic named Hugh Owen. Whilst Owen's role as an intelligencer has long been noted by historians, there has been little examination of what this role actually entailed, and the few studies which examine Owen and highlight his prominent role as a supplier of English intelligence to the Spanish Crown fail to investigate how he rose to such a prominent position.[5] Chapter 1 of this thesis investigated Owen's early life and exile, tracing how he developed an extensive intelligence network in England during the 1570s and 1580s, arguing that it was because of his ability to provide accurate and up-to-date English intelligence that he rose to prominence both within the English Catholic exile population and at the Spanish courts in Brussels and Madrid, and contributed to the planning of the Spanish Armada of 1588.

How the Spanish Elizabethans used intelligence about England varied throughout the 1590s and early 1600s depending on the wider geopolitical environment, as Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have shown. The defeat of the Spanish Armada was a serious blow, but it did not mark the end of Spanish hopes for an invasion of England in the name of Catholicism, and preparations were soon underway for a second attempt. Events in France, however, diverted Spanish military and financial resources away from the English theatre of Philip's war against heresy. Accepting the reality that any action against England would have to wait, the Spanish Elizabethans sought to consolidate their ties to Spain, and to lay the groundwork for a campaign to convince Spain to refocus its military attention back to England. Chapter 2 contended that English information was sent to Spain to foster sympathy towards the English Catholic cause. Moreover, intelligence was central in efforts to consolidate the Spanish Elizabethan position as *the* political position for English Catholicism. It was used, for example, to discredit the Spanish Elizabethans' opponents in the Low Countries, thereby diminishing their ability to provide meaningful opposition in Brussels to the Spanish Elizabethan campaign for the Infanta Isabella's candidacy. The chapter, therefore, revealed how intelligence was used in efforts to consolidate the Spanish Elizabethans' positions as leaders of the exile community, and to lay the groundwork for their future campaigning.

Chapter 3 argued that Henri IV of France's conversion to Catholicism in June 1593 had a tremendous impact on the Spanish Elizabethans' activities. After Henri's conversion, as many historians have noted, there was a shift in the content of the Spanish Elizabethans' publications. Whereas following the Armada they had 'to retreat from pushing the Habsburg claim' and instead avoided specifics concerning the succession, after 1593, their publications

[5] For example, *SE*, pp. 52-93.

actively engaged with the issue.[6] The overwhelming majority of scholarship in this area has, however, only examined the English-language publications such as *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland.* These English texts were produced with the intention of uniting the English Catholic population behind the candidacy of the Infanta Isabella, the Spanish candidate to the English throne. To examine these English-language publications alone is problematic, as it implies that the Spanish Elizabethans took it for granted that, with the war in France faltering, the Spanish would abandon that campaign and instead switch focus towards England. In reality, they also produced texts in Spanish which must be examined in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Spanish Elizabethan politics. These Spanish-language publications were aimed at convincing a Spanish audience of the merits of a Spanish candidate on the English throne, thereby creating the political support for such a policy and the cost to the Castilian Crown it would entail.

The Spanish Elizabethans used intelligence to support this Spanish-language polemical campaign. Chapter 3 examined an intelligence report written in the hand of Joseph Creswell, given to Philip II and Archduke Ernest around August 1594. Whilst this report has previously been subject to a brief examination by Albert Loomie, Loomie's analysis only places it in the context of an Elizabethan attempt in 1593-94 to explore the possibility of an Anglo-Spanish peace. Such a narrow context does not do justice to the broader implications of Creswell's *información.* Instead, it must be viewed through the broader lens of Spanish Elizabethan efforts to secure a pivot in Spanish foreign policy, to a renewal of its war effort against England. By taking a step back and examining Spanish Elizabethan activity in its wider context, it is possible to observe both how the wider geopolitical landscape shaped Spanish Elizabethan efforts to restore English Catholicism and how the Spanish Elizabethans attempted to shape the geopolitical landscape.

Spanish Elizabethan efforts to mould the geopolitical landscape of Europe are evident at the turn of the century too, a period in which Spanish Elizabethans attempted to build a coalition for a Catholic candidate at the various European courts. Chapter 4 investigated this activity, and highlighted how they used intelligence to complement their publications, petitions, lobbying, and other activities to this end. At times, this use of intelligence was successful: for example, information supplied by William Sterrell, under the pseudonym 'Anthony Rivers', to Robert Persons in Rome was essential in efforts to disrupt the coalition-building of James VI

[6] See, for example, Houliston, *Catholic Resistance,* pp. 71-72; Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics'. Paulina Kewes, meanwhile, attributes this shift to the 1593 Parliament: 'The Puritan, the Jesuit and the Jacobean Succession', pp. 59-60.

and his supporters during the Archpriest Controversy. However, in the broader scheme of things, these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful as the Spanish Elizabethans were unable to overcome the disparate geopolitical interests prevalent at the various European Catholic courts. Consequently, James VI of Scotland was able to accede to the English throne upon Elizabeth's death without opposition. By examining in detail the concerted efforts of the Spanish Elizabethans to unify Catholicism behind a single candidate, and analysing why these efforts failed, a more sophisticated understanding of the succession can be developed, one which recognises that the Catholic powers were too busy watching each other to present meaningful and unified opposition to James' accession.

Moreover, geopolitical interests trumped religion in the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of London, the peace treaty which concluded the Anglo-Spanish War. In the immediate aftermath of James' accession, there was great hope amongst English Catholics that, with Elizabeth no longer on the throne, religious concessions might be granted for Catholics, if not immediately, then in a treaty with Spain. Chapter 4 showed how the Spanish Elizabethans, recognising that the opportunity to secure a Catholic candidate on the English throne had passed, used intelligence to try to bolster the Spanish negotiating position, thereby maximising the chances of religious concessions being secured. However, the Spanish saw peace as a higher priority, so rather than risk the pursuit of religious concessions jeopardising the end of the war, they did not push the topic during negotiations. Consequently, the resulting Treaty of London made no mention of England's Catholic population. Practical considerations by Spain's leaders about temporal politics had, once more, trumped the sense of religious solidarity and obligation the Spanish Elizabethans had hoped to exploit to their advantage.

Accurate and up-to-date intelligence was, therefore, an integral part of Spanish Elizabethan efforts to secure international support for the full restoration of Catholicism in England. Whilst Bossy's contention that 'the history of Elizabethan Catholicism is a progress from inertia to inertia in three generations' has long been rebuked, with historians convincingly showing that English Catholics continued to engage in local and national politics, the study of early modern English Catholicism's international dimension remains in its infancy and highly dependent on printed sources to highlight English Catholics' polemical campaigning.[7] Anne Dillon, for example, shows how Richard Verstegan produced French and Latin broadsheets which documented Calvinist atrocities against Catholics in order to promote the Catholic

[7] J. Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *Past and Present,* 21 (1962), p. 57. For an overview of the historiographical developments which refute Bossy's thesis, see above, pp. 5-7.

Reformation.[8] But, as Freddy Domínguez argues, English Catholic texts had multiple aims: not only did they seek to support their co-religionists in the ongoing struggle against Protestantism, they also looked to manipulate the Spanish political system to ensure that it was English Protestants who were defeated first.[9] By exploring their use of intelligence, this thesis has shown that Spanish Elizabethans' attempts to manipulate the Spanish political system to their advantage were even more complicated and multifaceted than previously understood. Non-English-language printed texts were both written with the assistance of intelligencers – who provided the information on which the text was based – and were supported by the raw intelligence itself which was supplied to the central government in Spain and Rome. The same information was used in different mediums for different audiences, but ultimately with the same purpose: to garner sympathy and support for the English Catholic cause in the hope that this might lead to decisive action to restore the English Catholic Church. Intelligence, gathered from England through an elaborate and extensive intelligence network previously overlooked by historians, was central in this group of English Catholics' efforts to shape European politics.

The conclusion that the Spanish Elizabethans used intelligence to shape political discussions across Europe also stresses that English politics must not be studied through a narrow British lens. Willy Maley, reflecting on Francis Bacon's 'Certain Articles or Considerations Touching the Union of the Kingdoms of Scotland and England', argues that 'the British project is, on the one level, an alternative to the continent, an attempt to establish "another Europe". The fact that we can still speak of British *and* European history is one measure of the success of that project'.[10] The overwhelming weighting towards analyses of the succession from a 'British' perspective gives the impression that the reason why James VI of Scotland was able to accede to the throne without opposition was because the succession was of little relevance to the courts of mainland Europe.[11] However, as this thesis has shown, this was far from the case. Rather, the European Catholic powers were kept informed by the information provided by the Spanish Elizabethans, and were extremely interested in the succession, viewing it as a moment with potentially massive implications for the balance of power in Europe, both from a Catholic-Protestant perspective and from a Franco-Spanish perspective. However, the reluctance of Spain and France to put aside their own differences and unite behind a single Catholic candidate, and the refusal of the Pope to support a Spanish

[8] Dillon, *Construction of Martyrdom*, ch. 5.
[9] Domínguez, 'Spanish Elizabethan Polemics', pp. 303-04.
[10] W. Maley, '"Another Britain"?: Bacon's Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland (1609)', *Prose Studies*, 18 (1995), p. 10.
[11] See, for example, Doran and Kewes (eds.), *Doubtful and Dangerous.*

candidate, meant that, when Elizabeth died, they were not in a position to oppose James' accession. James was able to exploit this Franco-Spanish standoff to accede to the English throne. Future research examining the succession from the perspective of the European Catholic powers will undoubtedly produce additional subtlety to this point, and reveal the fundamental weaknesses within Catholicism which Protestants could exploit to their advantage. A major factor as to why 'British' history remains separate from 'European' history is the sources themselves. In this thesis' case, the sources were spread across multiple archives, countries and languages. Engaging with the full range of sources requires time, money, and language skills which not all have access to. This thesis' engagement with foreign archival material shows that significant historical discoveries are there to be made. For example, by incorporating the *avisos de Inglaterra* – the intelligence reports sent by Hugh Owen to the Spanish government – into existing narratives of the Anglo-Spanish war, a more rounded narrative of the conflict has been developed, one which fully appreciates just how close Spain came to invading England unopposed in 1597. The intelligence provided by Owen showed that, with Essex having sailed to the Azores with the vast majority of the English fleet, England was undefended, prompting Philip to launch his third armada against England ahead of schedule in order to take advantage of this temporary vulnerability. A wider study involving archives in France, Belgium, and Austria, in addition to Spanish archives other than the *Archivo General de Simancas*, and Vatican archives other than the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* would undoubtedly add further nuance.

Spain undoubtedly benefitted from the intelligence supplied by the Spanish Elizabethans, but it must be stressed that this does not mean that the Spanish Elizabethans were mere lackeys, subordinate to the Spanish monarchy's will. Rather, as this thesis has shown, the Spanish Elizabethans extensively used intelligence in their attempts to manipulate politics at the various European courts to their point of view, namely the re-establishment of Catholicism in England, achieved with Spanish political and military backing. This was an immensely challenging task, and one which the Spanish Elizabethans ultimately failed to accomplish. Nevertheless, by examining how the Spanish Elizabethans' espionage network in England operated, how they then used the information which this network gathered, and the impact this information had on events, a far more complex understanding of late-sixteenth-century English Catholic, Spanish, and, indeed, European politics, religion, and society is attained.

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