Collecting ‘*Toute l’Angleterre*’: English Books, Soft Power and Spanish Diplomacy at the *Casa del Sol* (1613–1622)

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During the summer of 1592, the Spanish-based English College of St. Alban was honoured by an important guest.¹ While conducting an official visit to Valladolid, King Phillip II called at the college in early August. He was received in great style by the rector and its students, who delivered welcome addresses in different languages as part of the entertainment.² A witness account of the day, published by the Jesuit Robert Parsons, related how the first student salutations were in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, all to the great enjoyment of the attendants.³ After these salutations, speeches followed in languages far less familiar to the Spanish court: English, Welsh and ‘Scotish’, a language that was ‘comonlie used in the courte and better parte of Stotland [sic]’ and was ‘not much different from the Inglis’.⁴ Perhaps overly conscious of how strange these languages might sound to Spanish listeners, Parsons added that the remarks were brief and accompanied by ample gesticulation. It suggests that this audience was more accustomed to Hebrew, Greek and Latin. One can find further confirmation in the Jesuit’s report, when he stated that just after the delivery of speeches in languages of the British Isles, deemed ‘barbarous and peregrine to spanish eates’, there followed ‘other three that were presupposed to be understood by all or the most parte of them that were present’.⁵ In this

1 This article was written with the support of the I + D + i Research Project “Poder y representaciones culturales en la época moderna: agentes diplomáticos como mediadores culturales de la Edad Moderna (siglos XVI–XVIII)” funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) (Reference: HAR2016-78304-C2-2-P).

2 For more information about this visit, see Michael Williams, *St. Alban’s College Valladolid: Four Centuries of English Catholic Presence in Spain* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986). Also see Ana Sáez Hidalgo and Berta Cano-Echeverría (eds.), *The Fruits of Exile: Emblems and Pamphlets from the English College at Valladolid* (2 vols., Valladolid: Trustees of the Royal English College, 2009).

3 Robert Parsons, *A Relation of the King of Spaines Receiving in Valliოდolid* ([Antwerp: Coninx], 1592), USTC 412829, pp. 32–36.

4 Parsons, *A Relation*, p. 40.

5 Parsons, *A Relation*, p. 41.

particular case, he was referring to French, Italian and Spanish. While reading the Spanish translation of Parsons's report, one can observe a stronger feeling of disdain. Indeed, whereas in the English version it was simply remarked that French, Italian and Spanish were languages understood by all, the Spanish translator added a very colourful note: 'After the delivery of speeches in these strange and vulgar tongues, there followed others more courtly and placid'.⁶

During the early modern period, it is difficult to find Spanish opinions about the 'tongues' spoken in the British Isles, or Spanish perceptions of English culture in particular.⁷ Parsons's account helps us to understand the cultural disconnect between Spain and England during the sixteenth century, after years of confrontations between Philip II and Elizabeth I.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, diplomatic ties gained renewed strength with the accession of James Stuart to the throne and the signing of the peace treaty of London in 1604. However, enmities ran deep, and Spain's cultural estrangement from England changed very little. Over the past decades, Anglo-Spanish scholars have taken great care to analyse the cultural side of the period's political events.⁸ They have emphasised the ambivalence that characterizes England's reception of Spanish culture.⁹ There is a reason for that ambivalence. During the period, the Hispanic Monarchy exercised great political power. As a result, it became a source of suspicion for other European polities.¹⁰ Yet while the Spanish Crown inspired feelings of distrust, it also elicited admiration, if not envy. Distrust of Spanish culture therefore often went hand in hand with imitation and cultural transfer. English statesmen had to

6 Robert Parsons, *Relacion de un Sacerdote Ingles*, trans. by Pedro Madrigal (Madrid: Madrigal, 1592), USTC 338849, f. 49v: '[D]espués destas tres lenguas vulgares y estrañas, se siguieron otras tres más apacibles y políticas'. All translations are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

7 For a brief summary of Anglo-Spanish cultural relations over the past centuries, see Fernando Bouza, *Anglo-Hispana: Cinco Siglos de Autores, Editores y Lectores entre España y el Reino Unido* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2007).

8 Among these studies, one can cite Jocelyn Hillgarth *The Mirror of Spain, 1500–1700: The Formation of a Myth* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Alexander Samson (ed.), *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); John Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Anne Cruz (ed.), *Material and Symbolic Circulations between Spain and England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) and Barbara Fuchs, *Poetics of Piracy: Emulating Spain in English Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

9 See Fuchs, *The Poetics of Piracy*.

10 See John Elliott, 'Learning from the Enemy', in *Spain, Europe and the Wider World, 1500–1800* (London: Yale University Press, 2009). p. 29.

set aside any misgivings they might have about Spain and accept that a good command of Spanish was essential for the surveillance of an ever-expanding power, and useful for emulating its strategies.¹¹ From the 1590s onwards, Spanish became a fashionable language in England, and more dictionaries began to be published.¹² Spanish tracts from the Iberian Peninsula were highly esteemed by Protestant divines for the purpose of controversy. Spanish works were in demand by literary authors seeking admirable stories to imitate and were acquired by sailors and natural philosophers for information about the “New World” overseas. From William Cecil and John Donne to Francis Drake and Richard Hakluyt, courtiers collected Spanish books.¹³

Despite extensive scholarly work to date, the evaluation of premodern Spanish views about England still requires further research. This might not be due to a lack of scholarly concern, but rather the result of having a smaller number of documented examples to work with. Indeed, fewer cases are known of Spaniards learning English or acquiring English books, and they seldom travelled to England except on official business or as prisoners of war. For essential information, the Spanish court relied heavily on the testimony of English exiles and their own envoys.¹⁴

It is within this context of asymmetrical cultural exchange that the library of Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, first count of Gondomar, gains great relevance.¹⁵

11 See John Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad, 1604–1667* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 233–259.

12 Good examples are John Minsheu's *A Dictionarie in Spanish and English* (1599) and his *A Spanish Grammar, and Pleasant and Delightful Dialogues in Spanish and English* (1599). Nonetheless, as John Stoye remarks, most of the ‘Hispaniolised’ English courtiers never came to assume that Spanish, unlike French or Italian, was a language that gentlemen should learn to speak, despite a few colloquial phrases used every now and then in personal letters, plays or diplomatic reports. See Stoye, *English Travellers*, pp. 233–259.

13 Stoye, *English Travellers*, p. 235. Also see Gustav Ungerer, *Anglo-Spanish Relations in Tudor Literature* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1956).

14 Whenever the Spanish needed to conduct any transaction in English or decipher an English message, they would resort to ‘Hispaniolised’ English men, normally Catholic clerics and lay people but also merchants who could translate for them. See Elliott, ‘Learning from the Enemy’, p. 45.

15 Although Sarmiento was given the title of first count of Gondomar by Philip III only in 1617, this article, for the sake of clarity, will refer to him as ‘Gondomar’ regardless of the year. Unless otherwise stated, I will use the Gregorian Calendar, or new style, for all documents. The books, prints and manuscripts held in Madrid's *Real Biblioteca* will be cited with the abbreviation ‘RB’. The dates and publishing places provided in parentheses for books discussed in this article correspond to the copy analysed at the Gondomar library (when available), and do not necessarily indicate the first time or place the book was published. For example, Gondomar had a copy of Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (Basel, 1570), even though the first edition was published in 1534 in that same city.

Gondomar is known for his notable role as the Spanish ambassador to London in the early seventeenth century (1613–1622).¹⁶ The library in his house in Valladolid, which came to be known as the *Casa del Sol*, has also been praised as one of the richest repositories of early modern books in Spain. However, these two accomplishments are rarely considered together. This chapter will offer new insights into Gondomar's library within the context of his embassy to England. It will argue that Gondomar and his household often acquired English documents as part of the embassy's intelligence strategies. By examining the English sources at the *Casa del Sol*, this chapter aims to illustrate the political values that early modern ambassadors could ascribe to the collecting of local documents, such as portraits, maps, intercepted letters, manuscript reports and books. When compared to other language groups in Gondomar's collection, the small assortment of English items might seem less important. However, close analysis will show that Gondomar's documentary practices went beyond a mere collector's whim.

In recent decades, scholars have shifted the history of the book from its early focus on printed objects towards an all-encompassing study of the history of information, communications and media in its multiple forms and its multiple uses. As Elizabeth Yale noted, the field has opened new ways of thinking about major historical trends: the rise of national identities, the development of public and private spheres, the global entanglement between actors and institutions and the ever-increasing emphasis on data in what some have come to deem the 'knowledge economy'.¹⁷ This chapter's analysis of the Gondomar library speaks to these interests.

'Une bibliotheque fort complete pour un gran seigneur'

Once deemed by John Elliott as the 'greatest specialist in English affairs' of the Hispanic Monarchy, Gondomar became one of the most important conduits of English news to Madrid during the Anglo-Spanish peace that lasted from 1604 to 1625.¹⁸ He was appointed Spanish ambassador to London in 1612 and arrived in Portsmouth on July 1613. For the following ten years, Gondomar played an

16 Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 222; Miguel Ochoa Brun, *Historia de la Diplomacia Española* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1990–2006), VII, p. 84.

17 Elizabeth Yale, 'The History of Archives: The State of the Discipline', *Book History*, 18:1 (2015), p. 333.

18 John Elliott and José Peña (eds.), *Memoriales y Cartas del Conde Duque de Olivares* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2013), pp. 103–105.

important part in the furthering of English Catholicism and the prevention of privateering in the Americas. He also worked to maintain England's neutrality during the first stages of the Thirty Years' War by negotiating the marriage between the Prince of Wales and the Spanish *Infanta*. The highly exceptional survival of his library has also contributed to his notoriety amongst historians.

Gondomar's library is now mostly housed in Madrid's Royal Library.¹⁹ Comprising around 6,500 items, it is one of the most important Spanish collections of early modern documents in different languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Italian, French and English. The collection also includes around 18,000 letters, which were bound into books and incorporated into the library by the count's secretaries. With more than 400 relevant items, it is probably the richest Spanish holding of early modern English documents in the form of books, manuscripts, maps and printed portraits.²⁰ As we shall see, many of these items can be better understood in the context of Gondomar's diplomatic activities.

In an article focused on Renaissance libraries, Jeremy Lawrance traces the development of the Gondomar library and explains how the count gradually changed his book-collecting hobby into a much more systematic enterprise after moving into his Valladolid house in 1598.²¹ That year marks the first time he issued a catalogue that comprised 677 titles in 720 volumes.²² Over the following decades the library project was augmented with dedication. In

19 In its final form, the Gondomar library held twice the number of items than the private library of the Count-Duke of Olivares and the library of Philip IV in the Alcázar, each holding around 3,000 items. Most of Gondomar's collection is now kept in the *Real Biblioteca* in Madrid. Still, a good number of documents are also held in the *Biblioteca Nacional*, the *Real Academia de la Historia* and the *Archivo General de Simancas*. Some items from the collection are now lost, but thanks to a library catalogue produced in 1623 we can still ascertain their past existence. For a more detailed understanding about the history of the Gondomar library, see Ian Michael and José Ahijado, 'La Casa del Sol: La Biblioteca del Conde de Gondomar en 1619–23 y su Dispersión en 1806', in María Luisa López-Vidriero and Pedro M. Cátedra (eds.), *El Libro Antiguo Español, III: El Libro en Palacio y otros Estudios Bibliográficos* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1996), pp. 185–200.

20 It is important to note that some titles were bound together into compendia, hence the difference between book titles and library items, especially in the case of manuscripts, portraits and maps. For a detailed list of Gondomar's English printed books in English and a cursory description of his English manuscripts, see 'Ex Bibliotheca Gondomariesi. Libros en Inglés', *Avisos de La Real Biblioteca* <<https://avisos.realbiblioteca.es/index.php/Avisos/article/view/746>> [accessed 17 March 2021].

21 Jeremy Lawrance, '"Une Bibliothèque fort complète pour un Grand Seigneur": Gondomar's Manuscripts and the Renaissance Idea of the Library', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 81:7–8 (2004), pp. 1071–1090.

22 RB 11/2222, f. 112–133v.

this respect, Gondomar's diplomatic mission proved important in the final organisation of his library. The examination of archival sources at the *Casa del Sol* shows that the Spaniard acquired a substantial collection of English documents during his embassy in London. Numerous dispatches confirm that, from 1619 to 1622, he sent many of these to Valladolid.

Until today, no substantial effort has been made to study Gondomar's collecting activities as part of his diplomatic strategy. A prominent example of this kind of tactic can be first found in one of the most notorious anti-Spanish pamphlets that circulated in London during the early 1620s. In the *Vox Populi* series, the Protestant preacher Thomas Scott takes issue with Gondomar's collecting practices, transforming this apparently private pastime into a matter of state when he makes a fictional Gondomar say that:

I have made it a principall part of my imployment, to buy all the manuscripts & other ancient and rare Authors out of the hands of the Heretiques, so that there is no great Scholler dies in the land, but my Agents are dealing with his bookes [...] for I would labour what I might this way or any other way to disarme them.²³

Scott's accusations were not groundless. While in London, Gondomar acquired books on English history, laws, customs, geography and travels, among other subjects. He also established a network of informants that kept him updated about events and helped him intercept letters from English officials. The *Casa del Sol* today still holds important documentary traces attesting to these activities.

An important detail for this chapter is that the assembling of the papers in Gondomar's library was influenced by various actors beyond the official owner. Within this perspective, a study of the Spanish embassy's household gains relevance. This is important, for instance, when it comes to Gondomar's knowledge of languages. Most scholars are of the opinion that he did not know English; and in the absence of any marginalia in his English books it is very difficult to claim otherwise. Hillgarth does claim that Gondomar learned to read and speak the language, but he does not provide substantial evidence for this statement.²⁴ This chapter contemplates the possibility, but also highlights

23 Thomas Scott, *Vox Populi, or Newes from Spayne* ([London: s.n.], 1620), USTC 3009305, f. Dr. Consulted via Early English Books Online <<https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2264192256>> [accessed 17 March 2021].

24 Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain*, p. 458. For a document showcasing the Spanish ambassador's use of French and Latin, along with a clumsy attempt at English, see Gondomar's letter to the duke of Buckingham in Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta*, pp. 171–173.

that, regardless of the case, Gondomar could have access to important English texts with the help of his language secretaries, who regularly dealt with many English peers and the Privy Council. Translation was a regular task at the Spanish embassy. Gondomar's library has mostly preserved Spanish versions of correspondence with English peers. Still, every now and then, one can find an English original with its Spanish copy preserved in the library's letterbooks, as is the case with an undated letter sent by Prince Charles to the count where he mentions his desire for a Spanish bride.²⁵

Moreover, while in London, Gondomar acquired a good number of English books written in Latin and English. When needed, he could have accessed these sources with the help of his language secretaries. As Kevin Sharpe and others have pointed out, during the early modern period, the act of "reading" was constituted by a variety of practices other than the silent and personal activity we take for granted.²⁶ For instance, having a servant read to auditors was common in aristocratic circles.

In addition to providing translations, servants also played an important part in the upkeep of their master's library. From very early on, Gondomar enlisted the aid of his loyal Spanish steward, Diego de Santana, to help him with the purchase, cataloguing, and arrangement of his library in Valladolid. He also assigned its care to the German bibliographer, Stephan Eussem, who met Gondomar in London and followed him back to Spain at the end of his first embassy in 1618. During 1619, Eussem stayed at the *Casa del Sol* and started organising Gondomar's documents, which arrived from London through Bayona in Galicia.²⁷ In a letter dated 16 January 1618, Eussem recommends Gondomar to obtain a series of books that had been published since the start of his London embassy. Among these, the Plantin Polyglot Bible and 'les historiens Latins & grecs qu'y manquent'. Eussem also recommends Gondomar to purchase many volumes of Theodor de Bry's *Historiae India Orientalis*. The bibliographer considered these acquisitions important given that Gondomar's collection already held all the volumes of De Bry's *India Occidentalis*, or 'toute l'amerique' in Eussem's words.²⁸ Moreover, the bibliographer mentions the absence of Diego de Yepes's *Historia Particular de la Persecucion de Inglaterra* in the library and proposes to buy a copy. According to Eussem, acquisitions like these would allow everyone to claim that the *Casa del Sol* had 'une

25 See Prince Charles' letter to Gondomar, undated in RB 11/2191, docs. 9 and 10.

26 For more information about early modern reading practices, see Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

27 Michael and Ahijado, 'La Casa del Sol: La Biblioteca del Conde de Gondomar', p. 188.

28 RB 11/2134, doc. 94.

bibliothèque fort complète pour un grand seigneur'.²⁹ The bibliographer's letter suggests that Gondomar's collection had a specific strategy when it came to the acquisition of classical histories, books on the Americas and, more importantly for this article, books on the history of England.

For most of 1619, Eussem lived in Valladolid. However, he could not finish the library's inventory, as he had to depart to London again with the count in November of that year. In 1622, just as he completed his embassy, Gondomar brought more books and papers. He also enlisted Henry Taylor, one of the Spanish embassy's language secretaries, to finish what Eussem had started. In a letter dated 17 December 1622, Taylor makes some remarks about the library's contents:

In truth, sir, there are too many books in Italian, and some of these are in duplicate 6 or 8 times. This is the case of Guicciardini's *History* and others. I have also found the Commynes here in Italian, Latin, French and English; and your excellency has also many English books, and these are some of the best I have seen in history and other disciplines.³⁰

Taylor would produce the final catalogue of the Gondomar library in 1623.³¹ This inventory divides the library into different categories according to the item's language, its subject and format (e.g. printed or manuscript). The distribution starts with a listing of printed books according to a language hierarchy, with a priority given to those languages in which God revealed himself to the world. First come the printed books in Hebrew, which do not contain enough items to have subsequent sections. Then come the books in Greek, with five sections (Church fathers, histories, philosophy, poetry and Greek vocabularies). Third on the list are the printed books in Latin, a category containing forty sections. These eminent languages of classical knowledge are then followed by Spanish (twenty four sections), Portuguese (seven sections), Catalan, Italian (eighteen sections), French (four sections) and finally English, with four sections: history books, books 'on divine things', books on 'poetry, statutes and

29 RB II/2134, doc. 94.

30 *Biblioteca Nacional* (henceforth BN), MSS 18430 (4), f. 30r-v: 'Cierta tiene vuestra señoría muchísimos italianos y ay alguno de ellos pienso 6 ó 8 vezes duplicados, como es la Historia de sus tiempos, de Guicciardino y otros. Al Comines hele hallado aquí en italiano, latín, francés y ynglés; y libros también yngleses tiene vuestra señoría muchos, y los mejores que he visto tanto de históricos como de otros'.

31 The library is now studied through this catalogue, produced three years before Gondomar's death in 1626. See BN, MSS 13593 and MSS 13594. This article will use the '1623 Catalogue' abbreviation to cite items from the Gondomar library. An online version of the catalogue is also available: 'Inventario de La Biblioteca Gondomar (1623)', *Real Biblioteca* <<https://inventarios.realbiblioteca.es/inventario>> [accessed 17 March 2021].

other matters' and, finally, vocabulary books and dictionaries.³² After this listing, the 1623 catalogue continues with a detailed inventory of manuscripts acquired by the count and bound together in books, which are again sorted by language and enumerated according to their amount. First come those works in Spanish, which constitute the majority of the group and are the only ones divided in thirteen sections. Then come the manuscripts in Latin, Italian, English and finally those in French, which constitute the smallest group.³³

Collecting English Histories, Religious Tracts and Travelogues

The 1623 catalogue of the Gondomar library shows that Yepes's *Historia Particular de la Persecucion de Inglaterra* (1599) was eventually acquired and inventoried. The library also included Pedro de Ribadeneyra's *Historia Eclesiástica del Cisma del Reino de Inglaterra* (1588–1594) and Antonio de Herrera's *Historia de la Reina Maria de Escocia* (1589).³⁴ When it came to learning about the history of England, most Spaniards from the period would usually resort to these Spanish sources.³⁵ In this respect, Ribadeneyra's work had a prominent role. As Freddy Domínguez has remarked, the *Cisma* was first published in 1588 across the most important printing centres of the Iberian Peninsula: Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza and Lisbon. It was also published at the Plantin Press in Antwerp. Moreover, royal support for this book was signalled by the inclusion of the Habsburg crest on the first pages.³⁶ However, from a historical point of view, these three histories had their limitations. In the case of Ribadeneyra's book, when it came to Spanish views on England, there was a propensity to conflate civil and ecclesiastical matters: the *Cisma* commented on recent Tudor history by denouncing Henry VIII's break from Rome and Elizabeth I's actions against English Catholics. Catherine of Aragon, Mary Tudor and Mary Stuart, in contrast, figure as saintly queens who had to

32 See 'Ex Bibliotheca Gondomariensi. Libros en Inglés', *Avisos de La Real Biblioteca* <<https://avisos.realbiblioteca.es/index.php/Avisos/article/view/746>> [accessed 17 March 2021].

33 See Andrés Escapa and José Luis Rodríguez, 'Manuscritos y Saberes en la Librería del Conde de Gondomar', in María Luisa López-Vidriero (ed.), *El Libro Antiguo Español: Coleccionismo y Bibliotecas* (Salamanca: Cátedra, 1998), iv, pp. 13–81.

34 1623 Catalogue, f. 23v–24r.

35 See José Manuel Prieto Bernabé, "Recibida y Admitida de Todos ...": La Lectura de la Historia en la Sociedad Madrileña del Siglo de Oro', *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia*, 65:221 (2005), pp. 877–937.

36 Freddy Domínguez, 'History in Action: The Case of Pedro de Ribadeneyra's *Historia Ecclesiastica del Cisma de Inglaterra*', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 93.1 (2016), pp. 13–38, esp. p. 35.

face extreme hardship due to their loyalty to Catholicism. Both Yepes' history of the persecution of English Catholics and Herrera's account of Mary Stuart's life repeated many of the tropes established by Ribadeneyra's work. These books, then, were tailored to the religiously political rhetoric of Philip II's 'holy' enterprise against Elizabeth I, the 'English Jezebel', and became an essential part of the propaganda that inflamed Spanish subjects to support the 1588 campaign.³⁷ While such religious and historical framing was very common in early modern historical writing, these books were of limited use for those seeking information about the years following the Armada campaign, especially after the accession of James Stuart to the throne. As a result, a Spanish ambassador who wished to know more about the recent history of England had to look elsewhere.

Gondomar seems to have been aware of the need for an updated historical scope that went beyond Spanish sources. The library at the *Casa del Sol* contains a representative corpus of historical works about England written in Latin and English that included some of the most important medieval chronicles and early modern developments in historical writing and chorography. Among other works, it holds copies of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie* (Paris, 1517), William of Newburgh's *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (Paris, 1610) and Matthew Paris's *Flores Historiarum* (Frankfurt, 1600).³⁸ The library also had a copy of Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (Basel, 1570) and a copy of Paolo Giovio's *Descriptio Britanniae* (Venice, 1548). Even though these two latter authors were not English, they were of great importance for English historical writing. Gondomar also had works by the famous English antiquarian and historian William Camden, one of the most important scholars of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. One can still peruse the count's copies of Camden's *Britannia* (London, 1607), perhaps the most important English chorography of the times, and his *Annales*, the first official history of Elizabeth I (London, 1615).³⁹ The library also stored other histories of England that were only available in English. This is the case of Gondomar's copies of John Stowe's *Chronicles of England* (London, 1580) and his *Survey of London* (London, 1599). The collection also held John Speed's *The Historie of Great Britain* (London, 1611) and Francis Bacon's *History of Henry VII* (London, 1622).⁴⁰ While these are

37 See María Cristina Quintero, 'English Queens and the Body Politic in Calderón's "La Cisma de Inglaterra"', and Rivadeneira's "Historia Eclesiastica del Scisma Del Reino de Inglaterra", *Modern Language Notes*, 113:2 (1998), pp. 259–282.

38 1623 Catalogue, f. 95r–v.

39 1623 Catalogue, f. 95r–v. Copies available today under the references RB VI/20 and RB III/2548.

40 1623 Catalogue, f. 155r–156r.

just some examples among a longer list of English histories at the Gondomar library, they show that Gondomar acquired a collection of some of the most important specimens of early modern English historical writing during the early Stuart period.⁴¹ They also give some substance to Gondomar's boast, in 1615, of having 'gained familiarity with the English nation through conversations with Englishmen [...] I have devoted myself with interest to their histories and annals for many years'.⁴² Few diplomats could claim the same.

Gondomar's dispatches suggest that he endeavoured to immerse himself in what scholars like John-Paul Ghobrial have referred to as 'local knowledge'.⁴³ That is, insider and *in situ* information about the people, places and institutions of the country of diplomatic mission. In his *Whispers of Cities*, Ghobrial traces the efforts made by the English ambassador Sir William Trumbull in creating a diplomatic archive that would support his work as ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1687 and 1692. In this particular case, Ghobrial discusses the type of printed books that the Englishman took with him to Istanbul. One of these was Abraham de Wicquefort's *L'Ambassadeur et ses Fonctions* (1681). This work expressly advised diplomats that 'the chief study of those that design to be employed in embassies ought to be that of History', both ancient and modern. Accordingly, Trumbull also carried with him some editions of classical writers such as Pliny, Tacitus, and Seneca, along with histories of Turkey, like Paul Rycaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1679) and an updated version of Richard Knolles's *History of the Turks*, originally published in 1610. Trumbull also brought with him Turkish travelogues, like George Wheeler's *A Journey into Greece* (1682) and Guillaume-Joseph Grelot's *Relation Nouvelle d'un Voyage de Istanbul* (1681), among others.⁴⁴ According to Ghobrial, when Wicquefort advocated in *L'Ambassadeur* for the reading of history, what he meant was that ambassadors needed to be up-to-date on knowledge about past and recent events. On the same note, travelogues offered Trumbull valuable information about the geography and classical topography of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁵

41 For more information about the influence of these works, see Daniel Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

42 *Archivo General de Simancas* (henceforth AGS), Estado, 2594/80. Albert Loomie provides this English transcript of Gondomar's letter in his *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1973), II, p. xv.

43 See John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1–18.

44 Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, pp. 30–41.

45 Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*, pp. 37–38.

As pointed out by Noah Millstone, historical works and travel accounts had an analogous political value during the early seventeenth century.⁴⁶ It should come as no surprise to find that Gondomar not only had a repository of English historical works, but that he also endeavoured to acquire English books with geographical accounts, like Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1612), a topographical poem that describes England and Wales with a report of the history and traditions of its counties.⁴⁷ The *Casa del Sol* also held Robert Dallington's *A View from France* (1604), a survey that described the French political and social systems from an English point of view, and a copy of Fynes Moryson's *Itinerary* (London, 1617), an ethnographical account of the countries visited by this author: 'Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland and Ireland'.⁴⁸ However, the collection at the *Casa del Sol* preserved other type of English documents beyond historical books and travelogues.

With the help of his secretaries and his confessor, Gondomar regularly monitored English publications that touched on Protestant doctrines and confessional controversy. An early proof of this can be found in a letter sent to Francisco Ruiz de Castro, Spanish ambassador to Rome, on 20 December 1613. The document was sent with two works published in England that unfortunately are not mentioned:

I send to your Excellency two books that have been published in accordance with the doctrines of this country. Verily, sir, when I see myself in a place where such things are written and said, I feel disconsolate [...] It might well be that news of these books have already reached you, but I find it more convenient that the fruits from this land reach you in duplicate, even if it is just to burn them as they deserve, rather than risking that His Holiness and your Excellency remain unaware of the things happening here.⁴⁹

46 Noah Millstone, 'Seeing Like a Statesman in Early Stuart England', *Past & Present*, 223:1 (2014), pp. 77–127.

47 1623 Catalogue, f. 155r–156v. For Drayton's work, see RB VIII/1003. For Moryson's work, see RB V/1830.

48 1623 Catalogue, f. 155v. For more information about this work, see Andrew Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages, and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550–1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 46.

49 RB II/2168, f. 52v–53r: 'Dos libros que aquí se han impreso conforme a la doctrina del país embió a vuestra excelencia que, çierto señor quando me veo en tierra donde esto se escribe y donde esto se dize, me desconsuelo [...] Puede ser que estos libros ayan llegado ya allá, pero menos inconveniente tiene que llegue esta fruta desta tierra duplicada,

From early on, Gondomar endeavoured to keep a watch on English books that discussed religious matters. Notably among these books were those focused on King James's 1606 Oath of Allegiance, which led to a full-scale European debate on the nature of papal and secular power and the obedience of subjects. The establishment of this oath after the events of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 was of central importance in James's policy towards Catholicism throughout the rest of his reign. It required English Catholics to swear their loyalty to James and to deny the Pope's power to depose monarchs, causing an international controversy that lasted for years.⁵⁰ Gondomar secured permission from the Pope to read forbidden books and he kept on the lookout for English works produced on the oath, every now and then sending books to Madrid and Rome.⁵¹ The 1623 catalogue also shows that the library held the *Complete Works* of King James in English and Latin (London, 1616 and 1619 respectively), along with a Latin copy of the Monarch's *Apologie* for the oath (London, 1609).⁵² The library also preserved books written by the infamous apostate Archbishop, Marco Antonio de Dominis, who took refuge in London, and the Protestant divine Thomas Mocket, who was the author of the *Doctrina et Politica Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (London, 1617), a compendium of Anglican texts and doctrines.⁵³

The available evidence also shows that Gondomar implicitly supported the publication of English works that aimed to influence public opinion. For instance, under the auspices of the Spanish ambassador, the English Carmelite Simon Stock started publishing religious tracts in English that were written with the purpose of furthering the cause of Catholicism.⁵⁴ Notably among these was the book entitled *A Humble Appeale* (1620), where the author supplicates King James for more Catholic toleration. The count's library holds copies of the books written by the Carmelite and a manuscript tract 'on how to find ease, rest, repose and happiness' that is dedicated to Queen Anne,

aunque sea para quemarse, como ella mereze, que si no han llegado dexe de saver su Santidad y vuestra excelçencia lo que pasa aqui'.

50 For more information, see Johann P. Sommerville, 'Papalist Political thought and the controversy over the Jacobean oath of allegiance', in Ethan H. Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 162–184.

51 See Gondomar's letter to Paul V, 30 August 1613 in AGS, Estado, Libro 366, f. 1r–v.

52 1623 Catalogue, f. 157v and 178r.

53 1623 Catalogue, f. 178v–180r.

54 See Luca Codignola. *The Coldest Harbour of the Land: Simon Stock and Lord Baltimore's Colony in Newfoundland, 1621–1649* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), pp. 6–13.

though the final printed version of this work by Stock was later dedicated to Prince Charles.⁵⁵

Maps, Portraits and Intelligence Gathering

These are just some instances of Gondomar's book-collecting practices. However, the ambassador also had a great interest in collecting visual items. Previous scholars have remarked on the count's use of Spanish documents for his diplomatic duties. A famous example comes from his rivalry with Sir Walter Raleigh. In March 1616, the English privateer secured his release from the Tower of London by promising King James that he would lead an expedition down the Orinoco river in Guiana. Raleigh argued that he would claim a gold mine that was there for the taking, as it had not yet been claimed by the Spanish. Gondomar regarded Raleigh's campaign as a far-fetched project and as a threat to Spanish territorial integrity. Therefore, to convince King James about the futility of this quest, he referred him to a passage of Antonio de Herrera's third part of the *History of Philip II*. This work confirmed not only that Raleigh had already visited this region some twenty years earlier, but also that the area was claimed by Spain and that the evidence for a gold mine was ludicrous.⁵⁶ This episode is well-known by historians, but less known is that during the sending of dispatches about the Guiana crisis Gondomar also sent to Madrid an intercepted copy of Raleigh's own map of the region.⁵⁷ In this way, he used a Spanish historical reference to argue with King James and utilised a map produced by an English mariner to provide Madrid with a geographical understanding of Raleigh's threat. This was not the only cartographical material mentioned in the count's letters. On 12 August 1620, the Spanish sailor Bernardino de Castrillo, who was known for his role in the demise of Sir Francis Drake, wrote to the count thanking him for a book sent from London and asking him for English sea charts displaying the English coast and English trajectories to the

55 For Stock's printed books, written under different pseudonyms, see *Appeale to the Kings Maiestie* and the second part of *The Practise how to find, ease, rest repose and happines* in the 1623 Catalogue, f. 156v. For the material copies, see RB IX/3854 and RB IX/4576. For the manuscript version of the first part of *The Practise*, see 1623 Catalogue, f. 193v (material copy in RB II/3129).

56 Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart (ed.), *Correspondencia Oficial de Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Conde de Gondomar* (4 vols., Madrid: Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España, 1936), I, pp. 54–57.

57 Ciriaco Pérez Bustamante, *Espanoles e Ingleses en América durante el Siglo XVII* (Santiago de Compostela: Paredes, 1928), pp. xv–xv and 5–15.

Americas. According to Castrillo, the English charts were different from the Spanish ones.⁵⁸

Thus, in the right context, English sources could lead to tactical advantages. In this respect, Gondomar's library still preserves a good number of English maps, like Christopher Saxton's *Atlas* (London, 1579).⁵⁹ This was the first English-produced atlas of England and Wales, with thirty-five coloured maps. The Gondomar library also holds today two copies of John Speed's *Theatre of Empire of Great Britain*, each with sixty-six maps of the British Islands.⁶⁰ As mentioned above, early modern travelogues were highly esteemed by statesmen for the geographical and ethnographic information these provided. In a similar manner, even though maps were greatly prized for their decorative value, the strategic and military information these could provide also turned them into highly coveted items for princes, ministers and diplomats. For instance, it is well documented that Saxton's *Atlas* was amply used for its strategic information during the English Civil War.⁶¹ What is more, from a transnational context, maps depicting lands others than one's own also became an important target for agents involved in espionage. Indeed, as Peter Barber has previously remarked, nowadays the British Library ironically appears to be richer in manuscript maps of some of the border regions of France than French archives; and a similar case could be advanced about British geographical sources stored in French collections.⁶² Within this perspective, it follows that early modern printed maps of England could also have a strategic value for a Spanish diplomat, especially those that were not easily available in the Iberian Peninsula. In this respect, in Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, the playwright denounces Gondomar for having a 'draught and platform' of the British lands and warns about the dangers this could bring.⁶³ Gondomar had, in fact, many English maps; and most in duplicate. His collection still holds more than a hundred English maps.

Gondomar's English maps are only a part of a good group of visual items in his library. During the early modern period, diplomatic agents sometimes

58 BN, MSS 18422, doc. 140, f. 191r-v.

59 For the material copy, see RB IX/7223.

60 1623 Catalogue, f. 95v and 156r. For the material copies, see RB V/904 and RB MAP/375.

61 Peter Barber, "Procure as Many as You Can and Send Them over": Cartographic Espionage and Cartographic Gifts in International Relations, 1460–1760', in Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (eds.), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 13–29.

62 Barber, "Procure as Many as You Can and Send Them over", pp. 13–29.

63 See Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chess* (London: Benn, 1966), 4.2.58–64.

enclosed printed portraits with dispatches and reports.⁶⁴ Letters in the Gondomar library show that he regularly provided information about the Stuart court's happenings. In 1616 rumours about the Overbury's murder scandal, for example, spread all around Europe. The poet Sir Thomas Overbury died in September 1613 as a prisoner in the Tower of London. His death was widely noted, but attributed to natural causes. In the late months of 1615, however, King James received information suggesting that Overbury had been poisoned and authorised an investigation. Further examinations led to the main plotters: the royal favourite, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, and his wife Frances Howard. Both were put on trial during the first months of 1616. On 21 July of that year Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, the Duke of Infantado, wrote a letter to Gondomar thanking him for the portraits of the Somersets he had just received. Hurtado was an important administrator of foreign affairs at the Spanish court; and he took the opportunity to request more information about the case.⁶⁵ This was not the first time that Hurtado had received English portraits from Gondomar. On 16 April 1616, he wrote to the Spanish ambassador after receiving an image of Thomas More and stated: 'I thankfully kiss your Excellency's hands for the portraits of the holy martyr Thomas More. I will keep them as relics and as images of devotion.'⁶⁶ Before that date, we can also see Hurtado thanking the count for sending a portrait of George Villiers on 22 January 1616.⁶⁷ Through the sending of dispatches and the occasional handling of English printed portraits, Gondomar informed Madrid and Catholic Europe about the constant ups and downs of the Jacobean court.⁶⁸

Examples like these ones help to support the idea that Gondomar's diplomacy was influenced by his collecting of local English documents with information about English history, customs, institutions, religious debates, etc. The Gondomar library was conceived not only as a source of recreation but also as a practical resource, a tool to enable its owner to fulfil the role of the grandee

64 For more information, see Tracey A. Sowerby, 'A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith': Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture', *The English Historical Review*, 129, 537 (2014), pp. 296–331.

65 RB II/2170, doc. 10.

66 'Besso las manos a V.S, por la merced que me ha hecho con los retrattos del santo mártir Thomas Moro, que las tendré por reliquia y por imágenes de devoción'. RB II/2170, doc. 151.

67 RB II/2170, doc. 140.

68 For more information about Gondomar's collection of English portraits within the context of the Overbury affair, see Pablo Andrés Escapa, 'La Muerte de Sir Thomas Overbury y Doce Grabados Ingleses en la Librería del Conde de Gondomar', *Syntagma. Revista del Instituto de Historia del Libro y de la Lectura*, 2 (2008), pp. 17–58.

statesman.⁶⁹ In this respect, it shared a similar purpose with the library created by Sir Robert Cotton, which was accessible to scholars and statesmen alike.⁷⁰ As Noah Millstone has pointed out, the political reasoning of the period treated intercepted letters, secret documents and books or maps that were rare or curious as privileged forms of evidence. Unlike public actions or speeches, these more private documents helped bridge the difference between outward conduct and inward meaning. Dissimulation, deception, and fraud, after all, were pervasive features of life at court.⁷¹ A good statesmen had to be aware of the problematic and puzzling nature of events and deploy a strategy to interpret the hidden purposes of a fellow courtier. Unveiling and interpreting secret information from documents was therefore an integral part of a statesman's duties. This interpretative lens also helps to further contextualise the whole collection of English documents in Gondomar's library, as a good number of these items were important sources of English "local knowledge" that was usually not available at the Spanish court, and thus could prove valuable as part of the count's intelligence-gathering strategies.

All in all, if Gondomar held *'toute l'amerique'* in his library, as the German bibliographer Eussem once claimed, it also appears that he wished to hold *toute l'Angleterre*, or at the very least a representative part of England's most important publications from the early Stuart Period. An analysis of the English collection at the *Casa del Sol* suggests that Gondomar assembled a series of local sources that were usually consulted by early modern English statesmen for their political wisdom. These works were valued during the period for their information about England, particularly during the last years of Elizabeth Tudor and what followed after the accession of James Stuart to the English throne. And yet, for this assessment of the books at the *Casa del Sol* to be complete, one issue must be noted: Gondomar seldom left marginalia in his collection of books, not even in works which we know for certain that he read, such as Herrera's *History of Philip II* and Botero's *Reason of State*.⁷² Also, he rarely

69 Lawrance, "Une Bibliothèque fort complète pour un Grand Seigneur", p. 1075.

70 See Kevin Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586–1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). Considering the many similarities between their libraries, it should come as no surprise that Gondomar and Cotton entered into a collaboration during the Spaniard's stay in London. However, most of their dealings had to do with manuscript documents, which falls beyond the scope of this collection of articles. My doctoral thesis offers further comment on this aspect. It will be available at the Oxford University Research Archive by the end of 2021: *The First Count of Gondomar's Library and Diplomatic Practice (1613–1622)*.

71 Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 145–146.

72 See María Luisa López-Vidriero, 'Asiento de Coronas y Distinción de Reinos: Librerías y Aprendizaje Nobiliario', in Oliver Noble-Wood and Jeremy Lawrance (eds.), *Podery y Saber*.

quoted sources in his correspondence. This offhanded treatment does not seem to have been uncommon amongst scholarly statesmen from the period, however.

Book Ownership and Power

In *Too Much to Know*, Ann Blair analyses the dynamics of early modern information management through a study of popular reference works in Latin. The introduction of the printing press brought a large-scale accumulation of texts and, as a result, early modern people had to develop new ways of storing, sorting, selecting and summarising information. In this endeavour, reference works played an important role.⁷³ Early modern reference works were very much used, but seldom annotated, a habit that aligns with Gondomar's documentary practices. The count's decision not to cite sources in his correspondence was also well within the scholarly tactics of the times. During the period, many individuals failed to quote their intellectual influences. Certainly, early modern authors did mention sources sometimes. But with varying levels of precision and usually when they expected that the citation would add to the strength of their argument, notably by adding the support of a recognised authority.⁷⁴ This might not have been the case for citing English authors to Spanish authorities, especially in a cultural environment that regarded English as a 'rare and vulgar tongue'. As a result, even while we know that the English collection at the *Casa del Sol* held items that were esteemed by English statesmen for their political wisdom during the period, it is much more difficult to ascertain which English books might have influenced Gondomar's diplomatic actions (and to what extent). In order to put this matter to rest, more research will have to be carried out with the thousands of letters holding relevant information about Gondomar's embassy that are still held in different Spanish archives.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, even if we cannot ascertain which of the English books in Gondomar's possession were actually read by him or his household, we can still complement the information we already have with the cultural and political expectations ascribed to book ownership during the period.

Bibliotecas y Bibliofilia en la Época del Conde-Duque de Olivares (Madrid: CEEH, 2011), pp. 223–248.

73 See the introduction to Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

74 Blair, *Too Much to Know*, pp. 242–244.

75 The thousands of letters with relevant information are scattered in Madrid's *Real Biblioteca*, the *Biblioteca Nacional*, the *Archivo General de Simancas*, the *Archivo Histórico Nacional* and the *Real Academia de la Historia*.

Indeed, as Hugh Amory once remarked, a modern bias that arose in the nineteenth century, and is still very much alive today, is that of seeing a book exclusively as a disembodied “text”, an incorporeal entity of information that is either used through its reading or not used at all. After years as Senior Rare Book Cataloguer at Harvard’s Houghton Library, Amory came to believe that most printed books have never been read. After all, printers throughout the ages have always speculated on the numbers of copies they would actually sell. Nonetheless, Amory is quick to add that unread books could still be powerful artefacts. Nowadays, there is a risk in taking printing and literacy too much for granted, and we sometimes forget that books are cultural artefacts in and of themselves. However, this was not the case during the seventeenth century, when there was more of a sense of wonder and ‘an almost totemic reverence’ for the book.⁷⁶

As pointed out by Jeremy Lawrance, the library at the *Casa del Sol* endeavoured to become a privileged study for the ‘gran seigneur’ or the grandee statesman. In this respect, Gondomar’s collection of English documents contributed to make of his library a remarkable source of ‘local knowledge’ about England that had no par in Spain. After the English courtier George Gage visited the *Casa del Sol* during a diplomatic mission to Spain in 1619, he decided to write to Gondomar and praise him for his collection as one ‘fit for a prince’.⁷⁷ At first glance, this comment might appear like hyperbolic flattery. However, by 1623 the Gondomar library already had twice the amount of volumes that were available at some point in the personal library of Philip IV in Madrid.⁷⁸ Moreover, Gondomar’s English collection amply surpassed the one in the Alcázar palace. In 1637, the royal library catalogue listed only fifteen items under the subject ‘Histories of England and Scotland’; and none of these were published in London.⁷⁹

According to the historian Fernando Bouza, Philip IV was similar to Gondomar in that he left almost no marginalia in his books. Yet, the Spanish king certainly engaged with his library for many years, as shown by his letters

76 Hugh Amory, ‘The Trout and the Milk: An Ethnobiographical Talk’, *Harvard University. Harvard Library Bulletin*, 71 (1996), pp. 56–71.

77 RB 11/2159, doc. 76.

78 Michael and Ahijado, ‘La Casa del Sol: La Biblioteca del Conde de Gondomar’, pp. 197 and 200.

79 As is the case with the *Casa del Sol*, the royal library also held copies of Ribadeneyra’s *Cisma de Ingalaterra*, Yepes’s *Persecución de Ingalaterra*, Herrera’s *Historia de María Estuardo*. See Fernando Bouza, *El Libro y el Cetro: La Biblioteca de Felipe IV en la Torre Alta del Alcázar de Madrid* (Salamanca: Instituto de Historia del Libro y de la Lectura, 2005), p. 95.

and the personal translations of some Italian histories, like Guicciardini's *History of Italy*.⁸⁰ As it appears, some early modern readers often made ample use of their libraries without leaving significant traces in their books. Sometimes, this might be due to a lack of engagement, but one should never forget that this could also be the result of a careful and almost reverential use applied to the books. This might be frustrating for the contemporary historian, but it made sense to early modern bibliophiles. Moreover, in his study of the royal library, Bouza also points out another reason for an apparently unread work: a book was sometimes acquired for future use. Philip IV once claimed that the books in his library should not be understood as a sign that he knew all their contents, but rather that he planned to learn about them with the passing of time.⁸¹ The same can be said about the collecting practices of Luis Fernández de Córdoba, Duke of Sessa. Between 1619 and 1620 he endeavoured to acquire a bundle of documents that were previously owned by the influential protonotary of Aragon, Francisco Gassol, and also tried to obtain a set of manuscripts that belonged to the Jesuit historian, Juan de Mariana. In a letter to Father Hortensio Félix de Paravicino, Sessa further reflects on these 'papers' by explaining that these were 'dead, and nothing can revive them'. However, he also points out that these documents could prove useful in a future. Indeed, Sessa argued that 'their subject matter by chance applies to those of us not far from positions of responsibility in governments, and I am anxious to sift through them since this class of manuscripts does no harm to those of us who lead the active life'.⁸²

During the early modern period, many members of the Spanish nobility strove to enrich their libraries with books and manuscripts that could further their (present or future) political interests; and the most coveted sources were those that others did not have. Also, the documents that were most esteemed were those that were curious and rare due to their manuscript format, or because they were published in places that had little contact with Spain, like London. It is true that the ownership of books as objects of ostentation has been a topic of mockery throughout the centuries. Still, scholars and statesmen from the early modern period strove to create libraries that functioned not merely as archival muniments, but also as memorials that aimed to preserve the past for

80 Bouza, *El Libro y el Cetro*, p. 156.

81 Bouza, *El Libro y el Cetro*, pp. 149–150.

82 English translation provided by Fernando Bouza, *Communication, Knowledge, and Memory in Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 66–67.

the future and as monuments to a political prowess that was displayed through the ownership of information that others did not have.⁸³

Apart from being a source of knowledge, the Gondomar library should be also understood as a symbol of power that was deeply rooted in the logic of its material circumstances. In this sense, as Fabien Montcher has described, collection management earned an important social significance during the times; and talking about its design and spatial context was as fundamental as talking about the books themselves. After all, a library's layout was considered to be a direct representation of the political prudence and good taste of its owner. A failure in the management of the collection was considered the product of bad political counsel.⁸⁴ Montcher also remarks that libraries were not only a repository of knowledge ready for action, but also an invaluable tool for public diplomacy.⁸⁵ Certainly, if individual books were regarded as trophies and useful resources for the future, so were complete libraries. One of the most remarkable examples of this circumstance comes from the destiny of the Heidelberg Library, a repository originally owned by Protestant forces that was appropriated by the Catholic League during the Thirty Years War and transferred to the Vatican so that the 'very fabric of heretical impiety could now be transformed into a weapon of the Catholic faith'.⁸⁶

As previously discussed, the Protestant preacher Thomas Scott once denounced Gondomar for trying to acquire all the books being published in England. Scott's accusations show how early modern individuals often attributed great political importance to the ownership of individual books and to the creation of whole collections. Regardless of whether Gondomar accessed all the English documents he acquired, he still decided to assemble an assortment of works that were valued in early modern England for their political wisdom. This action can be regarded as a political act in itself, especially in the court culture of early modern Europe, a world deeply marked by the idea that dissimulation could be carried out through actions, speeches and even through the use of material artefacts like clothing (or books). Everything could become a tactic of political concealment.⁸⁷

83 Eric Ketelaar, 'Muniments and Monuments: The Dawn of Archives as Cultural Patrimony', *Archival Science*, 7 (2007), pp. 343–357, esp. p. 352.

84 Fabien Montcher, 'Early Modern Bibliopolitics: From a Seventeenth-Century Roman-Iberian Perspective', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 52:2 (2017), pp. 206–218.

85 See Helmer Helmers, 'Public Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe', *Media History*, 22:3–4 (2016), pp. 401–420.

86 See Jill Bepler, 'Vicissitudo Temporum: Some Sidelights on Book Collecting in the Thirty Years' War', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 32:4 (2001), pp. 955–957.

87 Diego Rubio, *The Ethics of Deception: Secrecy, Transparency and Deceit in the Origins of Modern Political Thought* (University of Oxford, DPhil Thesis, 2016), p. 135.

As this article has endeavoured to show, the collecting of English local sources was an important part of Gondomar's diplomatic strategy. An analysis of the Spaniard's documentary practices brings to light a disregarded narrative about the circulation of books, the flows of information and the display of erudition for political purposes. Over the past years, early modern diplomatic studies have gone through a substantial period of reassessment. However, there remains a need to undertake a comprehensive study of the pre-Westphalian Spanish ambassadorial system from transnational and cultural perspectives. It is in this particular context that the Gondomar library becomes a privileged source for a study in cultural and public diplomacy. This early modern repository can only be properly understood when one starts seeing it as part of an effort to procure information mastery through the creation of a repository with selected knowledge ready for action. The mastery of information is a powerful goal, one that is very much alive today as it was in seventeenth century Europe. Though we might never be able to reconstruct this process completely from a historical standpoint, we can still see how individuals organised their documentary practices towards this ideal, be that real or dissimulated, through the collecting of books and other type of documents.

The *Casa del Sol* is a privileged gateway into the cultural policies conducted by early modern statesmen and probably the richest source of Spanish diplomatic intelligence about premodern England outside the walls of the General Archives of Simancas. What is more, it might surpass Simancas from the perspective of early modern English culture. More to the point of this article's beginning, Gondomar and his library present one of the most remarkable instances of Spanish interest in English culture, English books and the English language.