

“The intolerable business”: Religion and diplomacy under Elizabeth’s rule



“El negocio intolerable”: religión y diplomacia en el reinado de Isabel

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ABSTRACT

Within the scope of foreign affairs between Portugal and England during Elizabeth’s rule, numerous events indicate the challenges faced by the Portuguese ambassadors on their missions. Regrettably, little is known about these envoys and one rarely finds any reference to their names or their diplomatic accomplishments in Early Modern studies. This paper focuses on a diplomatic incident which involved Francisco Giraldes, a Portuguese resident ambassador in England, aiming to shed some light on “the intolerable business” that led to a confrontation with the Bishop of London, Edwin Sandys.

Attending a Catholic Mass in the context of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement involved certain challenges that should be considered. Diplomats, however, enjoyed certain immunities, including the *droit de chappelle*, and were allowed to hold Catholic services in their ambassadorial residences. But in March 1573, while Mass was being held, Francisco Giraldes’s residence was raided by the Sheriff of London’s men, working under the Bishop of London’s instructions. The ongoing tension between the religious and the political areas of power was, thus, exposed. Two letters, written by the Bishop of London, included in the *Lansdowne Manuscripts Collection* of the British Library, registered the event. As Sandy’s correspondence appears to be the single piece of surviving evidence regarding this diplomatic incident, it stands to reason that its analysis will provide significant insight into the coexistence, as well as the clash, of oppositional forces, while further contributing to an interpretation of Anglo-Portuguese affairs in Early Modern times.

KEYWORDS: Early Modern, diplomacy, religion, Anglo-Portuguese relations.

RESUMEN

En el marco de las relaciones exteriores entre Portugal e Inglaterra durante el reinado de Isabel I hay numerosos eventos que apuntan a los desafíos que soportaron los embajadores portugueses en sus misiones. Lamentablemente, se sabe poco de estos enviados y apenas se encuentran referencias a sus nombres o a sus logros diplomáticos en los estudios de la modernidad temprana. Este artículo se centra en un incidente diplomático que involucró a Francisco Giraldes, un embajador residente portugués en Inglaterra, e intenta arrojar luz sobre “el negocio intolerable” que enfrentó a este embajador y al obispo de Londres, Edwin Sandys.

Asistir a una misa católica en el contexto del Acuerdo Religioso Isabelino conllevaba ciertos desafíos que deberían tenerse en cuenta. Los diplomáticos, sin embargo, gozaban de ciertas inmunidades, incluido el *droit de chappelle*, y se les permitía celebrar misas católicas en sus residencias de embajadores. Pero en marzo de 1573, mientras se celebraba la misa, la residencia de Francisco Giraldes fue invadida por hombres del Sheriff de Londres, que estaban bajo las órdenes del obispo de Londres. De esa manera se expuso la tensión que existía entre las áreas de poder político y religioso. Dos cartas escritas por el obispo de Londres e incluidas en la *Lansdowne Manuscripts Collection* de la British Library registraron el evento. Teniendo en cuenta que la correspondencia escrita por Sandy parece ser la única evidencia de este incidente diplomático que se ha conservado, parece razonable que su análisis aportará una visión muy significativa de la coexistencia, y el choque, de fuerzas opuestas, y que además contribuirá a una interpretación de los asuntos anglo-portugueses a principios de la Edad Moderna.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Edad Moderna; diplomacia; religión; relaciones anglo-portuguesas.

In her speech to the 1585 Parliament, the Queen stated: “one matter toucheth me so near as I may not overskip: religion, the ground on which all other matters ought to take root” (1806 (1585), 833). Surely, one is able to trace the significance of a spiritual ground underlying the multifaceted aspects of Elizabethan life, or rather “a social-religious-artistic complex,” as T.S. Eliot observed (1975, 291). The profound and rapid changes of the sixteenth century, however, challenge our assumption of how exactly this “religious ground” could be clearly perceived as a common shared foundation “to all other matters,” as Elizabeth intended.

It is in this disquieting context that one finds the Portuguese resident ambassador in England, Francisco Giraldes, an ambassador who threatened the Sheriff’s men to “smite with his dagger and to kill in his rage” (1573: *Lansdowne MS* 16.25).¹ This paper focuses on the diplomatic incident concerning the ambassador’s practice of his Catholic faith and on the Bishop of London’s correspondence about the event, which he describes as “the intolerable business.” Additionally, it is the purpose of this paper to shed light on a quite unfamiliar Early Modern ambassador, who served as Plenipotentiary of the Portuguese king in Elizabeth’s court.

Essential to the analysis of any given historical period is the notion of change and how it occurs in terms of time, scale and depth. Indisputably, one should take into consideration the rhythm of change in the context of the Elizabethan Religious Settlement. As Mortimer observes, if one visited England in the 1560s, one could tell how Protestant or Catholic a given parish was by the speed with which it removed its medieval art (2013, 80). In this light, it is also interesting to note Sir Nicholas Bacon’s criticism in Elizabeth’s first Parliament regarding those who were either “too slow” or “too swift” to follow the laws regarding the establishment of “a uniform order in religion” (1682, 34).

Within the scope of the sixteenth century schisms, one should also reflect upon the number of sects that proliferated all over England, as put by William Bullein’s 1564 fictional character: “I am

¹ Quotations regarding this 1573 diplomatic incident are taken from the 16th volume of the *Lansdowne Manuscripts*, at the British Library. Henceforth, the quotation will only include the reference to the *Lansdowne Manuscripts* (Lands. MS) followed by the *folio* numbers.

neither Catholic, Papist, Protestant or Anabaptist, I assure you. I am *nulla fidian* and there are many of our sect" (1888, 14).

Despite the rapid changes, matters of faith remained delicate and intricate, inscribed in the continuous construction of the self, the subject of one's most intimate and private spiritual beliefs, one's way of life and one's world view. The depth of change entailed by the Elizabethan Religious Settlement is, then, another perspective to consider in the light of this period.

Given such complexity, it would be challenging for an English Catholic to witness the persecution of formerly established religious practices. Moreover, the conflict with Catholicism —or "the old faith"— assumed immense proportions, especially after the 1569 Northern Rebellion. What had started with an open celebration of a Catholic Mass by the Earls of the North culminated with Pope Pius V's 1570 Bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, excommunicating and deposing Elizabeth, "the pretended queen of England and the servant of crime" (Aughterson 1998, 36). The Pope pressed the "religious-political matter" even further by demanding all English Catholics to turn against their monarch and to keep their allegiance to Rome on pain of excommunication.

Implicitly embedded in the Pope's enterprise was the replacement of the Protestant Elizabeth with the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, as clearly confirmed by the Ridolfi Plot, the following year. The foreign support for the Catholic cause gave a disturbing international dimension to spiritual affairs in England. Religion was playing an increasingly disquieting role, posing an ever-present threat to the Queen's life, as well as to the Elizabethan Settlement. Religious and political matters were, thus, inextricably intertwined. As a result, the political intolerance for Catholicism translated into severe regulation, especially after Saint Bartholomew's Massacre, on 24th August 1572. Ultimately, Catholic practices in England came to be considered as an act of treason. Those were not the times for ambiguous loyalties.

Therefore, when the Catholic Portuguese ambassador, Francisco Giraldes, arrived in London, in 1571, he stepped into a remarkably disquieting setting, the city being the "stronghold of Protestantism," as Birth observed (1907, 169). The Bishop of London was at the time Edwin Sandys, who had replaced Edmund Grindal in 1570, when

the latter was assigned the Archbishopric of York. In a letter to Archbishop Parker, Grindal recognises his successor's difficult task when he admits: "But surely he, the Bishop of London, is always to be pitied" (1843, 347). According to Birth, the bishopric of London was evidently a distinctive assignment:

London was, from its being the centre of government, the residence of the Court and of foreign ambassadors, in a unique and peculiar position as one of the most important dioceses of the realm [...] and the work of its Bishop was, therefore, especially difficult and exacting. (1907, 437)

Perhaps due to the challenges of the task ahead, Sandys initially refused Cecil's proposal to replace Grindal as the Bishop of London. Sandys had invoked questions of health, but he soon realised Cecil's discontentment and he later accepted the assignment (Birth 1907, 459). Theodore Rabb observes that Sandys was a zealous reformer, a leader in the repression of dissidents and "the chief bulwark against both Catholics and Puritans" (1998, 5). As registered in his sermons, Sandys strongly believed that "the papal stragglers, the firebrands of sedition, and the pests of the Church" were the worst kind of men, "who by too great liberty became worse, and [...] fierce through impunity, [grew] boldly insolent" (1841, 441). In the Bishop's opinion, "these foxes must be removed, the further the better" and he humorously remarks "as far as Rome" (1841, 73; 55). Nonetheless, Sandys recognised that the power he could exercise as the Bishop of London relied on the secular support of the Court, as expressed in a letter to Cecil: "The world thinketh that you are my good friend [...] if the Papists may learn disliking [...] it will much weaken my work in God's Church" (Lansd. MS. 12. fol. 82).² Papists in London were inevitably associated with the Catholic resident ambassadors, as Birth observed: "Papists were numerous and [...] ambassador's houses were places of resort for them" (1907, 460). Therefore, it comes as no surprise to learn that within only two years of Giraldes's arrival in London, a distressing event took place at his residence in Tower Street. Revisiting it will provide an interesting glimpse into the past.

² "Edwyn, Bp. of Worcester, to Sir Wm Cecil; his grief that his refusing the Archbishopric of London has displeased him, &c. April 26, 1570" (Lands. MS).

In March 1573, Edwin Sandys, Bishop of London, wrote two letters regarding the Portuguese Ambassador's "undue encouragement of the Mass." The first letter, written on 2nd March 1573, was addressed to William Cecil, the Lord Treasurer. The second letter, written two days later, was sent to Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester. Excerpts of both Sandy's letters were published and commented in 1838, in Wright's *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times: a Series of Original Letters*, later in 1907, in Birth's *The Elizabethan Religious Settlement: A Study of Contemporary Documents*, and more recently, in 2010, in Wagner's *Voices of Shakespeare's England*. This paper, however, proposes to analyse these letters from a rather different standpoint, one that focuses on Francisco Giraldes, as well as on the clash between religious and political interests.

In the letter to Cecil, the Bishop of London presents his case:

I learnt that the Mayor of London has fully advertised your Lordship touching our dealings with *this* Portingale, [the medieval English spelling for Portugal] who of too much boldness and without any Color of authority, has suffered massmongers of long time in his house, to the great degradation of God's glory, the great offense of the godly and religious, and contrary to the laws of this realm. I, understanding of it [...] required the Sheriff of London, Mr. Pipe, to apprehend such as he found there committing idolatry. (fol. 25)³

The Portuguese Ambassador found himself, therefore, in a very delicate situation. He had been surprised by the Sheriff's men while attending and hosting an illegal Mass. As they were prohibited, the celebrations of Mass usually took place early in the morning or late at night, in absolute secret. However, the wide net of intelligence set by Elizabeth's ministers made it impossible to predict whether or not one would be caught. Informants were everywhere, after all. One might only imagine the Ambassador's state of mind when the Sheriff's men burst into his home, much like Mortimer's description of a similar situation: that "frightening moment when a stranger knocks insistently on the door and you look at the terrified faces of those around you, wondering whether you have been discovered" (2013, 85).

³ "Edwyn, Bp. of London, to the Lord Treasurer; concerning the Portuguese Ambassador's undue encouragement of the Mass. March 2, 1573" (Lands. MS).

But Giraldes had been discovered, and the Bishop's letter informs that the break-in was followed by a search. Signs of "idolatry" — "the worship of the calf" — were found, as he informs Cecil: "the altar prepared, the chalice, and their bread god" (fol. 25). Four students of law were detained, although the Bishop knew that "a great number of Englishmen [...] minded to hear mass [...] hid in the house" (fol. 25). Again, one might picture the Ambassador's guests hurriedly looking for a place to hide, while the authorities conducted their search.

The Portuguese Ambassador, however, did not hide. The Bishop informs: "Francis Gerald, the Portingale, offered to shoot dogs, to smite with his dagger and to kill in his rage" (fol. 25). Despite the Bishop's orders, the Sheriff neither detained the Ambassador nor arrested the priest. Consequently, the Bishop reports that "this Portingale is at court to complain" (fol. 25), implicitly assuming that "*the dealings with this Portingale*" had suffered an unexpected complication. Therefore, he appeals to Cecil's influence:

[...] to see that idolatrer and godless man sincerely punished, if you will let him over to me, and give me authority, I will hand him *secundum virtutes*. Your order I look for, and that I will see executed, so far as my power will reach. (fol. 25)

Two days later, no legal action had yet been taken against the Portuguese Ambassador. As if writing to the Lord Treasurer could not get his plea close enough to Elizabeth's ears, the Bishop writes to Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester, the Queen's favourite and close friend at the time. The Bishop informs Dudley that "the Portingall has complained at court as if he should have been evil used" (fol. 26).⁴ In a clear behind the scenes operation, the Bishop's letter expresses how astonished he was that no consequences had come upon "this idolatrous proud Portingale" (fol. 26), who celebrated Mass in his house "daily, Sundays and Holidays" with at least "twenty of her Majesty's subjects." The Bishop further informs that "the Sheriff apprehended few of a simple sort, but he suffered the author of this evil to escape" (fol. 25). All in all, for the Bishop of London this episode had also become a power struggle between himself and the Portuguese Ambassador. He could simply not

⁴ "Edwyn, Bp. of London, to the Earl of Leicester; he warmly pleads against tolerating the Portuguese Ambassador to hear Mass, and calls him a calf-worshipper. March 4, 1573" (Lands. MS).

concede the juxtaposition of the political and the religious matters or how the former were taking priority over the absolute need to “purge the church of idolatry and superstitions” (fol. 25).

Moreover, in both of the letters, the Bishop reminds his addressees of the all-pervasive divine punishment awaiting those who “partake” in idolatry, even if covertly. The Bishop’s Latin quotation of Jeremiah in the letter to the Earl of Leicester, “*Maledictus qui facit opus Domini fraudulentem*” (fol. 26) —“cursed be he that does the work of the Lord deceitfully” (Jeremiah 48:10)— entails God’s idea of retribution upon those who perform His work deviously. Nonetheless, when quoting Jeremiah, the Bishop uses the noun “*negligenter*” instead of the original “*fraudentem*,” thus emphasising that “partaking” in episodes of idolatry could assume numerous forms, including that of neglecting, or overlooking, the justified and expected punishment upon those accountable for that godly sin. Assuming a more direct approach to this matter, the Bishop reminds the Lord Treasurer that “to wink at it [this episode of idolatry] is to be partaker of it” (fol. 25) and adds: “such an example is not to be suffered, God will be mightily angry with it, it is too offensive; if her Majesty should grant or tolerate it, she can never answer God for it” (fol. 25). Casting a veiled threat, the Bishop strongly warns about the risk the Queen’s soul is taking, by bringing her own salvation into consideration. The matter could not get more serious.

These missives also express, rather evidently, the Bishop’s loathing towards the Portuguese ambassador’s conduct, as well as his contempt for the Ambassador himself. Such a conclusion is suggested by the numerous times Sandys uses the expression “*this Portingale*” or “*this idolatrous and proud Portingall*” [my emphasis]. The use of the demonstrative adjective “*this*” to qualify the noun “*Portingale*” gives the expression a further negative connotation. Moreover, in these quite elaborate and extensive missives, the Bishop writes the Ambassador’s name only once in each of the letters: the letter to Cecil contains the anglicised forms of both the name and the surname “Francis Gerald” (fol. 25), but in the one to Dudley the surname “Gerald” sufficed (fol. 25). Thus, in his correspondence, the Bishop denies the Portuguese ambassador his primary and most significant designation of identity, his name. Additionally, in the Bishop’s letter to the Lord Treasurer, he never addresses the subject of his letters by his public office —the

Portuguese Ambassador— even though he mentions the Mayor of London and the Sheriff of London (fol. 25). In the Sheriff's case, the Bishop also mentions his surname, preceded by the honorific title "Mr.": "Mr. Pipe."

A closer examination of the manuscripts reveals two different sets of singular hand-writings, which might be explained by the use of secretaries. Another explanation might be found in the final lines of both the letters, indicating that they were "scribbled [...] in haste" (fols. 25, 26). Whatever the reason, the designation "Portingale" appears with two different spellings in the same manuscript ("Portingale" and "Portingall") a detail that cannot be explained in view of the author's learning, confirmed by the several passages in Latin in both letters (fol. 25). Although one should take into account the evolution of the spellings of the word Portugal, one might also read between the lines and include this (mis)spelling detail as yet further evidence of the Bishop's disregard of Giraldes. According to Annabel Patterson, reading between the lines in the Early Modern period was also "*writing between the lines*" (2004, 7). Ultimately, although articulating the author's idiosyncrasies, the analysis of such correspondence allows the reader to perceive how the Portuguese ambassador's *persona* was construed within a circle of very eminent people.

Notwithstanding the Bishop's appeals, the records show that in this clash of religious and secular forces, diplomacy did win. As an experienced ambassador, Francisco Giraldes had already established his reputation in Elizabeth's court as a skilful and resourceful negotiator, qualities that De Callières would later consider fundamental requirements for an ambassador (1716, 19–48).

Precisely due to Giraldes's celebrated authority as an ambassador, King D. Sebastião of Portugal had sent Giraldes to London, from his assignment in Flanders, to solve the commercial breakdown between the two nations, which had started in 1569 (Santarém 1865, cxliii). In fact, for more than a decade several other Portuguese ambassadors and envoys had been sent to England to solve the commercial differences that opposed the two nations, particularly concerning what the Portuguese government considered the illegal English trade in Portuguese territories, such as in Mina. As the diplomatic negotiations failed, the Portuguese government ordered all English ships arriving in Portuguese ports to be seized,

their cargo apprehended, their crew imprisoned, and all English ships navigating without Portuguese permission in Portuguese waters to be sunk (Santarém cxxxv). The commercial affairs between the two nations ceased and their friendly Alliance, which had lasted for almost 200 years, was broken. Consequently, a great deal depended on Giraldes's diplomatic abilities for both the nations, economically and politically. As the King of Portugal's Plenipotentiary, Giraldes worked closely within the inner circle of the English administration and he also had private audiences with the Queen, who favoured him. Giraldes's conduct must have been the embodiment of the Renaissance diplomat, someone who "understood that his job was to win and hold the confidence and respect of the people among whom he worked" (Mattingly 1955, 109). Apparently, the Bishop of London failed to realise how significant the Portuguese ambassador's role had become. The English Queen was simply not willing to initiate an additional disturbance in foreign affairs with Portugal, confirming Mattingly's observation that in the end most of the conflicts between ambassadors and local authorities "were settled by the intervention of the prince, who took less account of the principles of [...] law than [...] of the importance of the power [the ambassador] represented" (1955, 265).

Furthermore, one should also consider that the modern form of diplomatic immunity was being shaped by the time of this diplomatic incident. According to McClanahan, "the privileges and immunities of resident ambassadors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were something of a new situation" (1989, 26), which meant that theorists were forced to adapt the familiar concept of the law of nations —*jus gentium*— into "a law among nations, a *jus inter gentes*," as Mattingly also noted (1955, 270). What had been accepted in the Middle Ages as "international law" was being questioned in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the creation and the later proliferation of resident embassies throughout a religiously divided Europe. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Commonwealth of Christendom shared a common body of law, which "feudal customs, Christian moral, and Roman juristic thinking had inextricably and almost imperceptively interwoven" (Mattingly 1955, 22). According to Watkins there are dialogues of continuity between the Medieval and the Renaissance periods that undermine Mattingly's "vision of a pre-eminently secular Renaissance

diplomacy carried out by increasingly professionalized residents that was later compromised by post-Reformation sectarianism” (2008, 3). Notwithstanding these different perspectives, Europe had, as Butler points out, changed irrevocably:

As Roman Catholicism, once the religion of the Western Europe, was replaced in certain countries by other forms of obedience — Lutherans, Calvinistic, Anglican and others— liberty in the choice of adequate representatives could only be secured to states by mutual exemption of the diplomatic corps from an obligation of conformity to the state religion. This practice grew slowly and was not established till men had begun to think as naturally in political as they did in religious terms. (2003, 89)

Consequently, in order to allow resident ambassadors to hold religious services in countries contrary to their faith, the *droit de chapelle* was progressively added to the immunities already granted to sixteenth century diplomatic envoys.⁵ A practical problem had emerged from the way host governments should act towards resident ambassadors, which meant that a compromise between medieval theory and “modern” diplomatic practice had to be found. By the end of the seventeenth century, De Callières would refer to what was then a universally accepted right of diplomatic agents:

Tous les Ambassadeurs, les Envoyez & les Residens ont droit de faire librement dans leurs maisons l'exercice de la Religion du Prince ou de l'Etat qu'ils servent, & d'y admettre tous les sujets du meme Prince qui se trouvent dans le pais ou ils resident. (1716, 101)

Therefore, regarding the Sheriff’s invasion of the Portuguese ambassador’s residence in Tower Street, one has to call to mind that the latter was under the recently and progressively attained *droit de chapelle*. According to McClanahan:

First to grant this privilege were France and England, reluctantly followed a great deal later by Catholic Spain and Italy and Protestant Scandinavia and The Netherlands. In the end, tolerance for “heretical” chapels was gradually conceded. Because of the

⁵ The others related to diplomatic immunity of ambassadors in transit, the immunity for debts contracted before the ambassador’s diplomatic mission and the immunity from civil and criminal jurisdiction (Mattingly 1955, 257–261). McClanahan identifies the three major theories of diplomatic immunity from the sixteenth century onwards as personal representation, extritoriality and functional necessity (1989, 27–34).

delicacy of the subject, the toleration was tacit rather than written.
(1989, 27)

Nevertheless, it is important to consider that this right involved the questions as to “what kind of services could be celebrated in an ambassador’s chapel and who might attend [them]” (Mattingly 1955, 266). As Mattingly points out, the answer to the first question is that ambassadors “as a mark of loyalty [...] insisted on worshipping according to the rights of their homeland” (1955, 267). The answer to the second question relates to the principle enshrined in the 1555 religious Peace of Ausburg, *cuius region, eius religio* (whose realm, his religion), a principle that, as Brady points out, “made rulers responsible for the religious welfare, and ultimately consciences, of their subjects” (1994, 352). In this light, Giraldes and his embassy staff were allowed to hear Mass in the chapel of the ambassadorial residence in Tower Street, but that right was denied to the English subjects found there, whose religious practices had to conform to the Queen’s. However, in Mattingly’s opinion, “every ambassador was obliged, as a point of honour and evidence of his faith, to try to secure for near-by compatriots, as well as co-religionists, the privilege of attending his chapel” (1955, 267). That is why so many raids conducted by local authorities on ambassadorial residences are recorded: the arrest of English subjects attending Mass in Catholic ambassadors’ chapels provided the “required” legal justification. That was the case with the invasion of the Spanish ambassador’s residence in 1562, when De La Quadra was living in Durham Palace.⁶ That was also the case with the Portuguese ambassador Manoel d’Alvares’s infringement of diplomatic rights when his London house at Hoxton was raided on 26th October 1568. In this distressing situation, Alvares was aided by the Spanish and French ambassadors, who helped solve the disagreement with the London constables (Hume 1982–89, 80; Birth 1907, 455). Instances abound regarding the violation of what was then the growing axiom of “extritoriality,” a doctrine of diplomatic immunity that raised additional problems, as Barker admits:

This theory [extritoriality] asserted that not only was an ambassador and his retinue considered to be outside the jurisdiction of the receiving state but also, by some fiction, they

⁶ Nonetheless, this episode was also strongly political. See Birth (1907, 449–452).

were considered actually to be outside the territory of that state.
(2006, 43)

As previously stated, the Privy Council had already established a legal resolution to overrule the inviolability of these “little islands of alien sovereignty,” a designation coined by Mattingly (1955, 268). Consequently, these diplomatic incidents involved the opposition between the legal, political and religious local authorities, on the one hand, and, on the other, the international law that endowed the ambassadors with new immunities. But in the end, the outcome of the diplomatic incident opposing the Bishop of London and the Portuguese ambassador proves that the English government did not want to risk a diplomatic breach with Portugal (266).

Portuguese records do not offer any evidence as to whether Francisco Giraldes informed his sovereign about this incident, although we have to take into account that many invaluable documents—including much of the Portuguese diplomatic correspondence—were lost in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and fire. Likewise, the State Papers Foreign do not include any reference to the diplomatic incident under analysis. Another valuable source of information, the Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English Affairs kept mainly at the Archives of Simancas, does not provide any further detail as to what occurred in this particular diplomatic incident (Hume 1982–89). The Bishop of London’s letters seem to constitute, therefore, the single piece of evidence that allows this glimpse into the event. Nevertheless, if we consider Giraldes’s surviving correspondence on other matters, together with additional records that outline his personal character and professional profile, we can speculate about what followed the 1573 raid on the Portuguese embassy.

Sandys refers to the Portuguese ambassador’s vigorous protests, which included shouting at and threatening the trespassers. Ever adaptable, as diplomats need to be, Giraldes was well aware that in the sphere of politics, one acts on a stage of appearances. A public outburst of indignation limited the Sheriff’s actions—much to the Bishop’s disappointment—but it enabled Giraldes to present his case later in court, directly and in person. As Black observes, inscribed in the roles of diplomacy one also finds the art of “misleading opponents” (2010, 12). Once at court, in the presence of the Queen and the monarch’s display of power, Giraldes certainly

engaged in a different *modus operandi*, undoubtedly more discreet but equally assertive or, in Giraldes's own words, an audience with the Queen that was an "occasion of soliciting skilfully and warmly" (*SP* 12, 464–82).⁷ Such a performance was precisely in accordance with what Wicquefort would later recommend, bearing in mind that the court was, in fact, the most illustrious theatre stage:

Mais comme le plus habile acteur n'est pas toujours sur le theatre, & change the maniere d'agir après que le rideau est tiré, ainsi l'Ambassadeur qui a bien jouer son rolle dans les fonctions de son caractere, doit faire l'honneste homme lors qu'il ne joue pas la comedie. (1689, 3–4)

The Portuguese ambassador had managed to come out of an unfavourable situation without risking his most important diplomatic mission, which was, as Barber noted, "the peaceful management of international relations" (1979, 6). That Giraldes continued to enjoy the Queen's favour long after this diplomatic incident is clearly demonstrated in a letter that the Portuguese ambassador wrote, on 9th December 1575, to D. Duarte Castelo Branco, in which Giraldes refers to the ship that the English Queen had offered him, so that his wife could sail under Elizabeth's protection and join him from Flanders (*Embaixada* fol. 124).

The Bishop of London, on the other hand, was appointed Archbishop of York in 1576. Rabb notes that Sandy's zeal and radicalism significantly declined over the years (1998, 5). One may wonder how the Bishop's failures in power struggles like the "intolerable business" with Giraldes contributed to soften his attitude.

And yet, further evidence suggests that Catholic ceremonies went on continuously in the Portuguese Ambassador's residence in London, until in 1576, when Giraldes was living in Charter House another incident occurred. As Hampton observes, "late sixteenth century England was the site of several important developments in diplomatic history, both theoretical and practical" as a consequence of the religious conflict, which resulted in a reconsideration of diplomacy (2009, 138). In this light—and despite the veil of oblivion that rests upon the Portuguese Ambassadors and their missions—it is significant to consider how the 1573 diplomatic incident involving

⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth.*

Francisco Giraldes could somehow have contributed to the improvement and establishment of diplomatic privileges.

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