

EMBAJADORES CULTURALES

*TRANSFERENCIAS Y LEALTADES
DE LA DIPLOMACIA ESPAÑOLA
DE LA EDAD MODERNA*

■ Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (dir.)

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACIÓN A DISTANCIA

Main
01801320x

ARTE Y HUMANIDADES (0101050CT01A01)
EMBAJADORES CULTURALES. TRANSFERENCIAS Y LEALTADES
DE LA DIPLOMACIA ESPAÑOLA DE LA EDAD MODERNA

Quedan rigurosamente prohibidas, sin la autorización escrita de los titulares del Copyright, bajo las sanciones establecidas en las leyes, la reproducción total o parcial de esta obra por cualquier medio o procedimiento, comprendidos la reprografía y el tratamiento informático, y la distribución de ejemplares de ella mediante alquiler o préstamos públicos.

© Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
Madrid 2016

Librería UNED: c/ Bravo Murillo, 38 - 28015 Madrid
Tels.: 91 398 75 60 / 73 73
e-mail: libreria@adm.uned.es

© Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (dir.),
José Miguel Escribano Páez, Diego Sola, Dolores Perpiñan Silla, Pablo Hernández Sau,
Miles Pattenden, Ernesto Oyarbide, Conchi Gutiérrez, José Antonio Vígara Zafra,
David García Cueto, Ángel Rivas Albaladejo, Chiara Pelliccia,
Óscar Mazín, Ida Mauro y Laura Oliván Santaliestra.

Este libro se ha publicado con el apoyo del Proyecto I+D+I del Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad de España, HAR2012-39516-C02-02, de la UNED.

© Ilustración de cubierta: detalle del cuadro de Gerard Ter Borch, La ratificación de la Paz de Westfalia, 1648, Museo Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).

Esta publicación ha sido evaluada por expertos ajenos a esta universidad por el método doble ciego.

ISBN: 978-84-362-7006-8
Depósito legal: M-13213-2016

Primera edición: abril de 2016

Impreso en España - Printed in Spain
Preimpresión: UNED
Impresión y encuadernación: Imprenta Nacional de la AEOBE
Avda. de Manoteras, 54 - 28050 Madrid



AP
84
E43
2016
MAIN

ÍNDICE

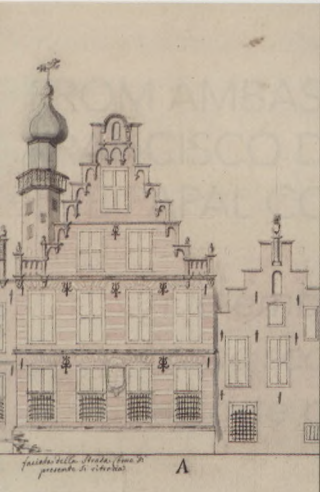
<i>Prólogo: Alain Hugon</i>	9
<i>Introducción: Diana Carrió-Invernizzi</i>	17
1. PLURALIDAD DE ACTORES EN LA EXPANSIÓN NEGOCIADA DE UN IMPERIO GLOBAL	35
Los actores de la diplomacia hispano-magrebí a comienzos de la Edad Moderna (1492-1516). <i>José Miguel Escribano Páez</i>	37
El “Rey Prudente” ante el “Hijo del Cielo”: una embajada agustina de Felipe II al emperador de la China (1575-1582). <i>Diego Sola</i>	59
Dos visiones de la diplomacia hispano-persa en el siglo XVII: Uruch Beg y Don García de Silva y Figueroa. <i>Dolores Perpiñán Silla</i>	81
Gifts across the Mediterranean sea. The 1784 Spanish Gift-embassy to Constantinople and its cross-cultural diplomatic practice. <i>Pablo Hernández Sau</i> .	107
2. EMBAJADORES OFICIALES Y SUS ESTRATEGIAS CULTURALES EN LAS CORTES EUROPEAS	137
From Ambassador to Cardinal? Francisco de Vargas at the papal court (1559-63). <i>Miles Pattenden</i>	139
Embodying the portrait of the perfect ambassador: The first Count of Gondomar and the role of print culture and cultural literacy in Anglo-Spanish relations during the Jacobean period. <i>Ernesto Oyarbide</i> ...	157
The diplomacy of letters of the Count of La Roca in Venice (1632-1642). <i>Conchi Gutiérrez</i>	187

Manuel de Lira, Spanish Ambassador to The Hague (1671–1678). The home of the ambassador and his role as agent of artists and art collectors. <i>Diana Carrió-Invernizzi</i>	205
La embajada del VI conde de Fernán Núñez en Lisboa (1778-1787): un ejemplo de promoción social a través de la diplomacia. <i>José Antonio Vigara Zafra</i>	237
3. AGENTES INFORMALES Y SU MEDIACIÓN CULTURAL EN ROMA Y NÁPOLES	261
La embajada extraordinaria del Condestable de Navarra ante Urbano VIII en 1627 y Guido Reni. <i>David García Cueto</i>	263
Leonor María de Guzmán (1590-1654), VI condesa de Monterrey, de “Embaxatriz” en Roma a “virreina” de Nápoles. <i>Ángel Rivas Albaladejo</i>	289
El regalo de cantatas para el marqués de Aytona y su valor diplomático en la corte de Nápoles (1688-1690). <i>Chiara Pelliccia</i>	321
4. EMBAJADORES EN LOS MÁRGENES DEL PODER EN MADRID Y SUS LEALTADES COMPARTIDAS	345
Gestores de la Real Justicia: recursos del arte de litigar a distancia en la Nueva España del siglo XVII. <i>Óscar Mazín</i>	347
“Cavaliero di belle lettere e di gentilissimi costumi ornato”. El perfil cultural de los embajadores napolitanos en Madrid (siglos XVI y XVII). <i>Ida Mauro</i>	367
¿Juana o Johanna?: cultura mixta, doble identidad y bilingüismo de las embajadoras imperiales en la corte de Madrid (1663-1676). <i>Laura Oliván Santaliestra</i>	397

2

Miles Pattenden

EMBAJADORES OFICIALES Y SUS ESTRATEGIAS CULTURALES EN LAS CORTES EUROPEAS



Miles Pattenden

FROM AMBASSADOR TO CARDINAL?
FRANCISCO DE VARGAS AT
THE PAPAL COURT (1559-63)

*¿De embajador a cardenal?
Francisco de Vargas en
la corte papal (1559-63)*

RESUMEN

Este ensayo aborda el comportamiento de Francisco de Vargas, embajador español en la corte papal, y sus intentos de convertirse en cardenal en los años 1559-1563. Vargas intentó obtener el capelo hasta en tres ocasiones durante este periodo, pero sin éxito alguno. En 1559 Pablo IV prometió concedérselo pero murió antes de hacerlo; en 1560 Pío IV rechazó cumplir con el compromiso del anterior papa. En 1562, Pío reiteró su objeción porque Vargas tenía una mujer, que había sido recluida en un monasterio de Toledo. El fracaso de Vargas contrastó con el éxito que obtuvieron varios de sus sucesores en la corte de Pío IV: el embajador Francisco de Rojas lo intentó en 1505, Jerónimo de Vich intentó promover a su hermano en 1513 y Francisco Quiñones lo logró, convirtiéndose en cardenal en 1528. Aparentemente no hubo razón alguna para que los esfuerzos de Vargas fueran infructuosos, lo que plantea algunas preguntas acerca de los motivos que llevaron a Pío IV a rechazarlo sobre cómo Vargas y otros resolvieron cuestiones como la doble lealtad. Sin embargo, una posible razón del fracaso de Vargas fue la carencia de apoyo por parte de la corona para su candidatura, algo que quizá revele mucho sobre el nuevo rumbo que estaba tomando la diplomacia en Roma en tiempos de Felipe II. Vargas estaba listo para impulsar su propia agenda y Felipe II para dejarle hacer, pero no para animarle. Esto revela algo importante sobre los parámetros con los que los agentes españoles operaron en Roma en este contexto delicado del siglo XVI. Sin embargo, quedan preguntas en el aire, como por ejemplo si el comportamiento de Vargas fue común entre los embajadores españoles al servicio de Felipe II. A partir de este estudio de caso es difícil llegar a amplias conclusiones, pero lo complejo del mismo quizá permita detectar un nuevo rumbo que empezó a cobrar la diplomacia de Felipe II en la corte papal.

PERFIL BIOGRÁFICO

Miles Pattenden es profesor del Wolfson College de la Universidad de Oxford. Se graduó en la Universidad de Cambridge y fue alumno de la Universidad de Toronto. Obtuvo su doctorado en St. Catherine College de la Universidad de Oxford en 2009. Ha publicado muchos trabajos sobre el papado y sobre la iglesia católica al final de la edad media y en la edad moderna. Es autor del libro Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rome publicado por Oxford University Press en 2013 y está terminando una segunda monografía sobre la elección del papa en la Italia moderna.

ABSTRACT

This essay addresses the behaviour of Francisco de Vargas, Spanish ambassador at the papal court, and in particular his attempts to become a cardinal in the years 1559-63. Vargas tried to obtain a red hat on at least three times during this period but was unsuccessful in each: in 1559, Paul IV promised to promote him but died, in 1560 Pius IV refused to honour Paul's commitment. In 1562 Pius reiterated his objection, because Vargas in fact had a living wife whom he had exiled to a monastery in Toledo. Vargas' failure contrasted with the success of several of his fellow ambassadors at Pius' court, but it also flew in the face of precedent within the Spanish delegation in Rome: Ferdinand's ambassador Francisco de Rojas had tried in 1505, Jerónimo de Vich had sought to promote his brother in 1513 and Francisco de Quinoñes had actually succeeded in becoming a cardinal in 1528. Superficially, there seems no good reason why Vargas' efforts should have been in vain, which begets questions about why Pius refused him and how Vargas and others reconciled these questions of double loyalty. But one possible reason for Vargas' failure was the lack of overt royal support for his candidacy, something which perhaps reveals much about the new approach to diplomacy in Rome that Philip II had begun to implement. Vargas was prepared to push his own agenda forcefully and Philip was prepared to let him – but not to encourage him. That reveals something important about the parameters within which Spanish agents operated there at this sensitive moment in sixteenth-century history. Questions nevertheless remain about how typical Vargas was of other Spanish diplomats working for Philip at this moment or of other early modern diplomats in general? Based on the limited evidence about him it is difficult to draw strong conclusions but the complexities of his case perhaps cast a new perspective on Philip's mixed diplomatic record at the papal court.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

*Miles Pattenden is Research Fellow in Early Modern History at Wolfson College, Oxford. He is a graduate of Cambridge University and a former Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Toronto who took his doctorate from St Catherine's College, Oxford in 2009. He has published widely on the history of the papacy and the Catholic Church in the late Middle Ages and early modern period and his book *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa: Nepotism and Papal Authority in Counter-Reformation Rome* was published by Oxford University Press in 2013. He is currently completing a second monograph on electing the pope in early modern Italy.*

Scholars of diplomacy have shown how the embassy in early modern Europe was a forum for exchanges: not just of gifts and communiqués, but of statuses, loyalties and of political ambition too¹. Diplomats and agents sought to win friends for their princes abroad, but could also find themselves as part of new networks, institutions and alliances. Nowhere was this more the case than at the papal court, where opportunities often opened up for ambassadors to enter papal service and advance their careers in ways that would not have been possible at home. Some states looked very suspiciously at those who tried to follow such a path: when the Venetian ambassador Marcantonio da Mula did so in 1561, the Senate declared it treason and took action against his family². He never returned to Venice; indeed, when his successor arrived in Rome that year, one of his first acts was to repudiate Mula³. But such cases raise interesting questions about agency in early modern diplomatic practice: how confident could princes be that their agents were acting in their best interests and not pursuing private agenda? To what extent and under what circumstances did princes of all hues try to monitor the activities of their agents (which we nowadays describe as compliance and control)? How we understand diplomatic networks as political institutions rather than merely cultural channels

¹ On this point, see the essays in a number of recent collections: Stefano Andretta (ed.), *Paroles de négociateurs: l'entretien dans la pratique diplomatique de la fin du Moyen Âge à la fin du XIXe siècle*, Rome: École française de Rome, 2010. Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler (eds), *Nähe in der Ferne. Personale Verflechtung in den Aussenbeziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 2005. Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler (eds), *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel*, Vienna: Böhlau, 2010. In the context of Rome, see also Christian Wieland, *Fürsten, Freunde, Diplomaten. Die römisch-florentinischen Beziehungen unter Paul V. (1605-1621)*, Vienna: Böhlau, 2004, and for Spain, Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun, *Embajadas y embajadores en la historia de España*, Madrid: Aguilar, 2002.

² Giuseppe Gullino, "Marcantonio Da Mula", Alberto Maria Ghisalberti and Massimiliano Pavan, eds, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 82 vols, Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1960–2015, vol. 32, pp. 383–386.

³ John Shers to Elizabeth I, 17th May 1561, Joseph Stevenson, ed., *Calendar of state papers, foreign series, of the reign of Elizabeth: preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty's Public Record Office*, 23 vols, London: Longman, Roberts & Green, 1863–1950, vol. 4, pp. 115–116 (n. 203).

depends rather a lot on the answer to such questions. They suggest we need to engage deeply with the mechanics of what agents were up to: in each case we might ask what really motivated ambassadors or other agents (if we can ever know that) and what balance did they strike between their own interests and those of their overlord (the republic or prince)?

This paper explores these questions through the activities of Francisco de Vargas y Mexia, Philip II's ambassador at the papal court from 1559-63. Vargas remains an enigmatic figure who spent much of his time complaining about his ailments and old age, but who also did everything he could to advance his political ambitions in the Roman curia to the highest level⁴. Vargas, who had previously served Charles V as ambassador to the first two sessions of the Council of Trent and then in Venice until 1558, was an experienced diplomat with a deep knowledge of Italian politics.⁵ And yet his relationship with Pius IV could not have been more different from Da Mula's. He could not establish a rapport with the pope: where da Mula charmed, Vargas antagonized him to the point of fury. Vargas never obtained a red hat from Pius, though not for want of trying, and his efforts repeatedly undermined the relationship between Pius and his master Philip II. In that respect, his failure achieved a paradoxically similar result to da Mula's success. However, in this case the results were far more immediately damaging for Vargas' master than for the Venetian senate.

This paper reflects on what we know about Vargas' activities in the light of precedent or possible objectives and fills out our understanding of a man whom recent historiography has marked out as irascible, impetuous, and even devious. Through his letters to Charles V and Philip II, Vargas has been an important and influential source for Spanish-Italian relations and Italian religious history in the

⁴ See, for example, Vargas to Philip II, 13th December 1563, Archivo General de Simancas (hereafter AGS), *Estado 895*, n.º 41, in Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur politischen, kirchlichen und Cultur-Geschichte der sechs letzten Jahrhunderte*, 3 vols, Regensburg: Manz Verlag, 1862-1863, vol. 1, p. 543, Vargas to Philip II, 2nd September 1563, AGS, *Estado 895*, n.º 55 or Requesens to Philip II, 26th December 1563, *Estado 895*, n.º 3, which also allude to Vargas' infirmities.

⁵ On Vargas' role at Trent, see Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, 4 vols, Freiburg: Herder, 1951-75, which contains a smattering of reference to him throughout and Constancio Gutierrez, *Españoles en Trento*, Valladolid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1951, pp. 478-493, which aggregates them into a single biographical assessment.

Tridentine period and thus is both a fascinating individual and also an emblematic one who reveals much about how Spanish agents operated in at the papal court. Some older histories of Spanish diplomacy in Rome have addressed his life: Ricardo de Hinojosa wrote about him in his brief study of Philip II and the conclave of 1555 as did Luis Serrano in a brief study of Pius IV and Spanish ambassadors⁶. Yet recent historians have generally overlooked character and motivations: Thomas Dandeleit, in his well-known book on Spanish Rome, mentions Vargas but once as a mere name⁷. Michael Levin uses him rather more in his account of Spanish Ambassadors as Agents of Empire but offers no biographical information – as if who he was, where he came from and what his interests were had no impact on what he did or wrote⁸. This lacuna is unfortunate for several reasons, not least because one legacy of Vargas' campaign to enter the College was that subsequent generations in Spain remembered him as a celebrated jurist who upheld the principle of papal absolutism. His letters from Trent were published in 1699 and he appears in, amongst other works, Nicolas Antonio, *Bibliotheca Hispania Nova* and Alvarez y Baena's *Hijos ilustres de Madrid*⁹. But Vargas' career may highlight one of Spain's limits of empire—the theme of a recent *festschrift* for Geoffrey Parker—in this important theatre of the Spanish Monarchy's political and dynastic concerns¹⁰. Agents were sometimes incompetent and unreliable. It is not clear how far the king was able to diagnose or remedy either problem.

My contention here is that Vargas' career neatly illustrates well-known problems that Spanish diplomats faced in Rome and also the difficulty that Spanish monarchs faced in controlling them—a facet to the wider problem of double loyalty to Church and state which José Martínez-Millán and Manuel Rivero Rodríguez have explored

⁶ Ricardo de Hinojosa, *Felipe II y el conclave de 1559*, Madrid: Tip. de M. Ginés Hernández, 1889. Luis Serrano, "El papa Pío IV y dos embajadores de Felipe II", *Cuadernos de Trabajo de la Escuela Española de Arqueología e Historia en Roma*, 5 (1924), pp. 1-65.

⁷ Thomas Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 126-127.

⁸ Michael Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

⁹ José Antonio Álvarez y Baena, *Hijos ilustres de Madrid*, 4 vols, Madrid: Benito Cano, 1789, vol. 2, p. 91. Nicolas Antonio, *Bibliotheca Hispania Nova*, 2 vols., Madrid: Joachim de Ibarra, 1783, vol. 1, pp. 493-494. *Lettres et Mémoires de François de Vargas... touchant le Concile de Trente, traduits de l'Espagnol par M. Michel Le Vassor*, Amsterdam, 1699.

¹⁰ Tonio Andrade and William Reger, eds., *The Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

in a recent edited collection¹¹. Vargas' correspondence was voluminous—but from Philip's point of view was also uncorroborated. Vargas seemed to be serving his master, but how well? And how far was his real agenda to serve himself? Philip's responses to Vargas betray that he was both aware of and unbothered by some of Vargas' potentially problematic activities. That too raises further questions of import: how far did Philip appreciate Vargas' record of failure? How far were competence or reliability relevant to his appointment policy? Did other rulers in fact do more than Philip to control the quality of service their agents provided? "Everything was extraordinary in Rome" is always the old way of shrugging aside papal history and the workings of the papal court¹². But as Catherine Fletcher has recently argued, the papal court and the city of Rome were central to the formation of the modern European diplomatic system¹³. If only for that reason, we cannot simply dismiss its quirks as anomalous—rather, they would often seem to present a useful lens that magnifies problems that also existed elsewhere. Tetiana Grygoryeva has shown how, in contrast to Philip, Polish kings kept a tight leash on their ambassadors at the Sublime Porte, the other great diplomatic centre of the age¹⁴. Gabor Karman has also found similar patterns of disobedience amongst Transylvanian agents there to that of Vargas in Rome¹⁵. The issues Vargas' case raises were not isolated—indeed, Garrett Mattingly flirted with discussing them in the 1950s¹⁶. So there is probably much that we can learn from Philip's ambiguity towards his unfaithful agent: it rather underlines the value those who represented him abroad had to Philip's plans and perhaps also explains why those who took this role rarely achieved great successes on his behalf.

¹¹ José Martínez-Millán and Manuel Rivero Rodríguez (eds.), *La doble lealtad: entre el servicio al rey y la obligación a la Iglesia*, Madrid: Libros de la corte, 2014. On Philip II's problems with the papacy, see John Lynch, "Philip II and the Papacy", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol. 11, 1961, pp. 23-42.

¹² Frank Spooner, *The International Economy and Monetary Movements in France, 1493-1725*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972, p. 15.

¹³ Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

¹⁴ Tetiana Grygoryeva, "Zur Selbstdarstellung polnisch-litauischer Botschafter im frühneuzeitlichen Istanbul", in Peter Burschel and Christine Vogel, eds., *Die Audienz: Ritualisierter Kulturkontakt in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2013, pp. 81-100.

¹⁵ Gábor Kármán, *A 17th Century Odyssey in East Century Europe: A Biography of Jakab Harsányi Nagy*, PhD Dissertation, Central European University, 2010.

¹⁶ Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955.



Figura 1. Lucas Vorsterman, retrato de Francisco de Vargas y Mexía, grabado, Bruselas, Abrahams Teniers, 1660, © Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

Like so many sixteenth-century diplomats, Francisco Vargas (Fig. 1) remains an enigmatic figure—the amount we know about his life is almost inversely in proportion to the contribution he has made to wider histories of international relations and diplomacy in this period¹⁷. His own letters reveal the date of his birth—either 1499 or 1500¹⁸. He was the son of Antonio de Vargas from Toledo and Juana de Vargas y Mexía from Vallecas near Madrid—both descendants of Pedro Ibáñez de Vargas, the famous *reconquistador* who took Toledo with Alfonso VI in 1085 and, perhaps, relations of the more famous Vargas, including Francisco the Chancellor of Castile (d. 1524) and Diego de Vargas y Mexía (d. 1476?), Governor of Madrid and a captain of the king's horse at the battle of Olmedo in 1445. Vargas had a brother, Juan, who later became Spanish ambassador in Paris (1577-81) and two sisters, both of whom married into leading families at the Castilian court¹⁹. Vargas

¹⁷ For previous research into Vargas' life, see Gustave Constant, *Rapport sur une mission scientifique aux archives d'Autriche et d'Espagne*, Paris: Imprint national, 1910, pp. 359-85 and Gutierrez, *Españoles en Trento*, pp. 478-493.

¹⁸ Francisco Vargas to Álvaro de la Quadra, 16th August 1562, AGS, *Estado* 862, n. 62.

¹⁹ *Clausulas de los testamentos y cobdicio otorgados por D. Juan de Vargas Mexia*, Madrid, 1704, f. 2v; f. 5v. On Juan de Vargas, see Valentín Vázquez de Prada, "Philippe II et la France De Caeau-Cambresis à Vervins. Quelques réflexions. Quelques précisions" in Jean-François Labourdette, Jean-Pierre Poussou and Marie-Catherine Vignal (eds), *Le Traité de Vervins*, Paris: Presses l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000, pp. 135-158 and *Felipe II y Francia (1559-1598): Política, Religión y Razón de Estado*, Pamplona: EUNSA, 2004.

himself married a woman called Inés de Villafañe²⁰. He also had sons: Bartolomé, who became a Dominican missionary in Peru, Jerónimo, who was illegitimate, and possibly a third who predeceased him²¹. But almost no evidence of his career before he became an ambassador survives at all. He may have studied at Alcalá around 1520, but the registers of students only begin from 1523 and cannot confirm this²². In 1545 he was procurator fiscal in Castile and was sent as part of the Spanish delegation to Trent where he arrived on 29th June that year²³. (Reconstructing his life in these decades is particularly confusing because a number of other men with the same name achieved prominence in both Madrid and Alcalá.)²⁴ Vargas continued to live in Trent for around seven years, becoming Charles V's principle agent there. After Julius III suspended the Council in 1552, Charles appointed Vargas as his ambassador in Venice, a position he held until 1558. Vargas seems to have still been in Italy when the Spanish ambassador in Rome Juan de Figueroa died suddenly and, perhaps as a result, Philip II instructed Vargas to assume de Figueroa's ambassadorial duties²⁵. He remained in post for four years, eventually returning to debrief Philip in in Barcelona in the autumn of 1563. Vargas, now in receipt of a modest royal pension, retired immediately into private life in the monastery of Cisla near Toledo²⁶ He died there in 1566²⁷.

As ambassador in Trent, Venice and Rome, Vargas' role had a number of different components, which historians have identified as aspects to early modern

²⁰ Vargas to Granvelle, 7th April 1562, Besançon, *Ms Granvelle* 8, 34r-39v. Weiss, *Papiers d'état du cardinal de Granvelle: d'après les manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Besançon*, 9 vols, Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1841-52, partly reproduces this document, vol. 6, p. 539 (n. 80).

²¹ Justo Cuervo, *Historiadores del Convento de San Esteban de Salamanca*, 3 vols., Salamanca: Imprenta Católica Salmanticense, 1914-15, vol. 3, p. 307; p. 804. *Los testamentos otorgados por D. Juan de Vargas Mexia* 6r. Vargas to Granvelle, 4th August 1564, Besançon, *Ms Granvelle* 13, ff. 215r-216v.

²² Gutierrez, *Españoles en Trento*, p. 479.

²³ Sebastien Merkle, ed., *Concilium Tridentinum: Diariorum, Actorum, Epistularum, Tractatum Nova Collectio*, 13 vols, Freiburg: Herder, 1901-2001, vol. 1, p. 212.

²⁴ Gutierrez, *Españoles en Trento*, pp. 478-80nn. José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, *Felipe II. La educación de un "felicísimo príncipe" (1527-1545)*, Madrid: Polifemo, 2013, p. 568.

²⁵ Constant, *Rapport sur une mission scientifique*, p. 363.

²⁶ Vargas to unknown, 14th July 1562, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu: Lainii Monumenta*, 8 vols., Madrid: Lopez del Horno, 1912-1917, vol. 8, pp. 188-189nn. On Vargas' pension, which was around 3,000-4,000 *reales* per annum, see Juan de Vargas to Granvelle, 4th August 1564, in Weiss, *Papiers de Granvelle*, vol. 8, p. 465.

²⁷ Prospero d'Arco to Maximilian II, 20th April 1566, Weiner Staatsarchiv, *Rom Correspondenz*, fasc. XXVI [Arco], f. 221.

diplomatic practice. As a royal agent in a foreign court, his primary role was to represent the Spanish king physically, a necessarily part of asserting and reinforcing his status amongst monarchs. Michael Levin has shown just how important this was to Charles V and Philip II in their quest for pre-eminence—they wanted their place in the princely order acknowledged regularly and everywhere through public and ceremonial marks of respect²⁸. Yet, an ambassador also had a second role, as the purveyor of *noticias* and *novedades*— he was the king's eyes and ears at a given court and within a given locality. Vargas wrote regularly to both Spanish kings with all the information he could gather and commented on what they might do with it. "It has occurred to me to express these ideas to Your Majesty", he told Philip II in 1560, "not because I thought to say something new, but only because I see it as my duty, seeing what happens in the world, which is filled with mutability and inconstancy and there may be nothing in which one can trust, except in vigilance and power"²⁹. Finally Vargas' role also had a transactional function: he was the man through whom the king articulated propositions and reached agreements. Some ambassadors enjoyed considerable discretion in how they approached such negotiations, for they were obviously much better placed to understand the vagaries of local politics or concerns than the distant king or his council. For Vargas, this role as a channel for dialogue assumed particular importance in both his placements at Trent and in Rome. In the former case, he had to build up a party within the Council to maintain Charles V's interest there; in the latter, he likewise had to cultivate a following for the Spanish Monarchy and its interests amongst the cardinals. On his part, in both cases, this required persuasive rhetoric, cultivation of friendships, distribution of munificence and even, occasionally, hard bargaining. Above all, it placed the ambassador at the centre of a dense nexus of patronage in which he became, in Thomas Dandelelet's words, "the arbiter of monarchical favour" and which brought with it the opportunity for self-enrichment, which those with the right personality could readily exploit³⁰.

The salient point about Vargas' long diplomatic career is that he did not particularly excel in any of these activities—that judgment may be pejorative, but

²⁸ Michael Levin, "A New World Order: The Spanish Campaign for Precedence in Early Modern Europe", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6, 2002, pp. 233-264.

²⁹ Vargas to Philip II, 22nd August 1560, AGS, *Estado 886*, n.º 59.

³⁰ Dandelelet, *Spanish Rome*, p. 125.

it matters. The relationship between Vargas' official aims and his achievements ultimately reveals much about his qualities as a diplomat and the motivations that drove him to act as he did. In Venice, Vargas' tenure was tempestuous: he famously stormed out of the city after a dispute over precedence between him and the French ambassador. Michael Levin has treated the details of this controversy at some length and there is no need to repeat them here. However, two things stand out about this fiasco: first, Vargas may have saved Spanish honour, but only by throwing all other aspects of his brief out of the window; second, even if Philip was satisfied with Vargas' course of action, for the most part this was because Vargas himself was the monarchy's principle source of information about what was going on. The Venetians seem to have been willing to broker a compromise to the problem, but Vargas' quixotic behaviour prevented that³¹. Philip himself behaved somewhat oddly in this exchange, offering inducements to the Venetians to relent on their decision but also encouraging Vargas to hold his ground. In any case, the affair was not a success for Spanish diplomacy in this Italian state: Habsburg precedence was not restored, Philip's relations with the Venetians deteriorated after that and the stream of possibly quite useful intelligence Vargas had been providing on Ottoman activities slowed up. Vargas' tenure in Rome was no less tempestuous. He had only been settled in the city for a few months when Paul IV died precipitating a papal conclave. Philip gave him difficult instructions, which required him to block the candidacy of Ercole Gonzaga – but surreptitiously, for the cardinal and his nephew, the duke of Mantua, were close allies and clients of Spain. Philip's instructions may in fact have been impossible to carry out. Either way, Vargas made a tremendous mess of them and several of Philip's clients within the Sacred College subsequently denounced his behaviour. Cristoforo Madruzzo, the prince-bishop of Trent told Philip directly: "I have never seen such confusion as that in which we find ourselves at present, and this even though the number of cardinals serving Your Majesty has never been greater"³². Even the Venetian ambassador in Madrid wrote how Vargas appeared to have offended his allies and "set a bad example to the king's servants"³³. Vargas may not have been as unbearable as some of his successors, but

³¹ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 236.

³² Cristoforo Madruzzo to Philip II, 15th October 1559, AGS, *Estado 885*, n.º 41.

³³ Paolo Tiepolo to the Doge and Senate, 11th December 1559, in Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of state papers and manuscripts, relating to English affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other*

tact and emollience – two key qualities for navigating the vicissitudes of the papal court —were never his forte. Many commented on this, for example, the author of the *Avviso di Roma*, who noted pointedly in March 1560 how Vargas “has been conducting himself with such arrogance and poor grace that he receives little praise not only from His Holiness but from the whole Sacred College”³⁴. Evidently, Vargas had a way with words that alienated people, not least Pius IV himself, who detested Vargas enough to demand Philip recall him on several occasions³⁵. Vargas’ tenure in Rome finally ended in 1563 with Pius and Philip embroiled in the Carranza affair³⁶. Hispano-papal relations were at yet another low —indeed, just a few months before an exasperated pontiff had told Vargas that all he ever did was find fault in his actions and that God would no doubt punish him for his impudence³⁷.

One reason why Vargas was so ineffective as a negotiator in Rome was clearly that he spent much of his time pursuing his own agenda. Above all, he wanted to become a cardinal —Paul IV, impressed by Vargas’ piety and learning, had apparently promised him this shortly when he first arrived in Rome in 1559, but died before he could promote him. For the next four years, Vargas directed his energies towards persuading Pius IV that he should honour his predecessor’s wishes and spend considerable political capital in Rome on furthering this goal. In March 1560 Vargas asked Pius IV to promote him and also to appoint him to the offices recently vacated by the late Spanish cardinal Pedro Pacheco, but was rebuffed³⁸. It was likely for this reason that Vargas then performed an extraordinary volte-face towards Paul’s nephew Carlo Carafa, a man whom he had previously described as “pure poison” when they met in Venice in 1556, in the hope that he would become his patron³⁹. When Pius IV placed Carafa on trial for treason in

libraries of northern Italy, 38 vols., London: Longman, Roberts & Green, 1864-1947, vol. 7, p. 137 (n.º 117).

³⁴ *Avviso di Roma*, 2nd March 1560, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV), *Urbinati Latini* 1039, ff. 113r-134r.

³⁵ Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages: Drawn from the Secret Archives of the Vatican and Other Original Sources*, trans. Ralph Francis Kerr, 40 vols., London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1891-1953, vol. 16, p. 364.

³⁶ José Tellechea Idígoras, “Carranza y Pío IV: el proceso (1559-1564) enjuiciado por el reo”, *Salmanticensis*, 22, 1975, pp. 527-554.

³⁷ Vargas to Philip II, 23rd May 1562, in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 1, pp. 429-430.

³⁸ *Avviso di Roma*, 23rd March 1560, BAV, *Urb. Lat.* 1039, ff. 141r-142r.

³⁹ Vargas to Juana of Portugal, 7th June 1556, Royall Tyler (ed.), *Calendar of letters, despatches, and state papers, relating to the negotiations between England and Spain: preserved in the archives at Simancas and elsewhere*,

June 1560, Vargas became the cardinal's staunchest defender, describing him as Philip's greatest friend in Rome and lobbying hard for Philip to intervene to stop the present injustice to one of his own loyal subjects⁴⁰. This was unlikely to have been out of genuine conviction of Carafa's innocence, but Vargas may well have calculated that a triumphant Carafa would be in a good position to support his case against a weakened pope. Vargas' position over Carafa greatly irritated Pius. The pope began to refuse him audiences and on 13th July Vargas tried to circumvent the refusal by accosting the pope in the street. He threw himself audaciously at the pope's feet as he passed by, begging to receive a blessing. But Vargas had misjudged the situation and received a curt reply that he should lift himself up and stop blocking the road⁴¹. Carafa was eventually executed, much to Vargas' disappointment. But Vargas' interest in becoming a cardinal did not falter. He continued to harbor this ambition in 1562, but failed once again. A different reason was given this time for his rejection: Vargas was still married. Vargas protested that this was not an insurmountable obstacle, but Pius would have none of it. A great shame, thought Granvelle, for he was so learned he had the piety and intelligence not only to become a cardinal but even to be pope should the need arise!⁴² Perhaps reflecting on this, the following year Vargas produced the only published work we can reliably attribute to him: *De Episcoporum iurisdictione et pontificis maximi auctoritate*⁴³. The content of this dense work of canon law is revealing: it is a staunch defence of papal rights over the authority of bishops —against others who might have tried to usurp them, including of course secular princes. Now, it is not completely impossible to see how the sentiment in this work could be reconciled with Philip's understanding of his prerogatives, but Cesare Baronio notoriously offended Philip III for something that was not necessarily worse⁴⁴. In any case, the work was pro-papal enough to catch Pius' attention and, revising his opinion of Vargas, he insisted that it be published straight away⁴⁵.

13 vols., London: Longman, Roberts & Green, 1862-1954, vol. 13, p. 268.

⁴⁰ Vargas to Philip II, 10th June 1560, AGS, *Estado* 887, n. 21.

⁴¹ *Avviso di Roma*, 13th July 1560, BAV, *Urb. Lat.* 1039, ff. 181r-182v.

⁴² Vargas to Granvelle, 7th April 1562, Besançon, *Ms Granvelle* 8, ff. 34r-39v.

⁴³ Francisco Vargas, *De Episcoporum iurisdictione et pontificis maximi auctoritate*, Rome: Paolo Manutio, 1563.

⁴⁴ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 25, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁵ Vargas to Philip II, 2nd September 1563, AGS, *Estado* 895, n.º 55.

Vargas' behaviour is simultaneously both very easy and very difficult to fathom. Easy, because it fits within a historiographical tradition that has emphasized the extent to which ambassadors sought to —indeed, had to— use their role to advance their private interests. Hard, because Vargas seems to have been so bad at this, failing both to achieve his private objective to enjoy ecclesiastical status and to fulfill his sovereign's aims. Vargas' complaints about money and lack of reimbursements from the crown echo others ambassadors throughout the century: "I supplicate Your Majesty most humbly that you be minded to give me the money to eat" (January 1561), "Never having had the same help with costs as my predecessors..." (September 1563)⁴⁶. Under those circumstances, his desire to become a cardinal and obtain ecclesiastical preferment was not an irrational objective at all. Indeed, several of his predecessors had obtained a red hat for themselves or a close member of their family: Francisco de Rojas in 1506, Jerónimo Vich in 1513, Francisco de Quinoñes in 1528. Moreover, Iberians had formed the second most numerous block within the College during the fifteenth century —a product of strong pressure at and after the Council of Constance to internationalize its membership⁴⁷—. Yet, when Francisco de Rojas and Jerónimo Vich had been seeking promotions to the College, they had done so with Ferdinand II's full knowledge and support (indeed, such negotiations usually needed multiple nodes of support if they were to succeed)⁴⁸. Unlike Vargas, Rojas never asked the pope directly but repeatedly petitioned his sovereign to put his name forward as a candidate, which Ferdinand eventually did on 8th November 1505⁴⁹. Eight years later Vich channeled his ambitions for his brother Guillem Ramón exactly the same way —it still took four years for Leo X to agree the promotion but when he did everyone knew whom he had to thank for it⁵⁰—. By

⁴⁶ Vargas to Philip II, 5th January 1561, AGS, *Estado 889*, n.º 84, Vargas to Philip II, 4th September 1563, *Estado 893*, n. 152. On the general problem, see Paul Dover, "The Economic Predicaments of Italian Renaissance Ambassadors", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12, 2008, pp. 137-167.

⁴⁷ John Broderick, "The Sacred College of Cardinals: Size and Geographical Composition (1099-1986)", *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 25, 1987, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁸ On this point see Isabella Lazzarini, "La nomination d'un cardinal de famille entre l'Empire et la papauté: les pratiques de négociation de Bartolomeo Bonatti, orateur de Ludovico Gonzaga (Rome, 1461)", in Andretta, *Paroles de négociateurs*, pp. 51-69.

⁴⁹ Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *Don Francisco de Rojas, embajador de los reyes católicos: noticia biográfica y documentos históricos*, Madrid: Fortanet, 1896, pp. 14-15; pp. 112-113.

⁵⁰ Jesús Manglano y Cucaló de Montull, Barón de Terrateig, *Política en Italia del Rey Católico, 1507-1516: correspondencia inédita con el embajador Vich*, 2 vols, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato 'Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo', vol. 1, pp. 411-412; pp. 466-68.

contrast Francisco de Quinoñes' achieved his promotion through a papal initiative. We do not know exactly how Charles V reacted to the news when he received it, but Quinoñes, who had previously been Charles' confessor, still continued to receive royal favour in spite of what had transpired. Nevertheless, Charles immediately commissioned Miquel Mai to go to Rome to replace Quinoñes and take over charge of his affairs there. Was Charles concerned that the new cardinal might not be such a zealous advocate for his interests than he had been before? If so, the character of Mai's correspondence—constantly warning of the slipperiness of Italian princes—would have done little to dissuade him of that view⁵¹.

Vargas' approach was not like any of these men. He always put on obsequious professions of outward loyalty to Philip. "I certify to Your Majesty that not since I was born, nor in any other endeavour, have I worked so hard... and I believe that if in the end our hopes failed (may God not allow it), my life may end with them", he wrote in 1559⁵². In 1562: "My only riches, my sole joy is to be held by Your Majesty to be Your perfect servant, to have acted everyday with the integrity and purity of vision that everyone knows me to have"⁵³. Yet, for all Vargas' dramatic words, there is only limited evidence that he fully informed Philip of what he was trying to achieve for himself. He enlisted Cardinal de la Cueva to write to Philip on his behalf in 1561, but did not or could not orchestrate a more concerted effort on his behalf⁵⁴. Explaining Vargas' failure in this respect is problematic: one reason for it was probably that he had so offended many of the Spanish clients in Rome, who would have been his natural supporters, that they would not champion him. Alternatively, he may have felt it undesirable for Philip to openly back his candidacy—after all, Paul IV was said to have wished to promote him on grounds of personal merit—. Paul's views on secular interference in the process of choosing new cardinals were forthright and had been frequently expressed: "What a disgrace that princes should have servants in the Sacred College! How can secrecy be kept or impartiality be hoped for in such a dependent position? To speak plainly, what sort of people have received the purple on such terms?", he had told the future cardinal

⁵¹ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 45-46.

⁵² Vargas to Philip II, 5th November 1559, AGS, *Estado 885*, n.º 52.

⁵³ Vargas to Philip II, 23rd January 1562, AGS, *Estado 892*, n.º 1.

⁵⁴ Bartolomé de la Cueva to Philip II, 13th October 1560, AGS, *Estado 886*, n.º 157.

Navagero in 1555⁵⁵. Yet, Pius IV was not Paul IV, so it does not speak any better for Vargas's diplomatic skills if this was the reason for his lack of action than if it was simple unpopularity. Pius clearly was willing to promote those in royal service to the Sacred College: in 1561 he appointed not only da Mula, but also Bernardo Navagero and the French ambassador Philibert Babou de la Bourdaisière perhaps even in the hope that it would divide their loyalties⁵⁶. It is certainly obvious that Vargas did not have the measure of Pius, a man fond of women, wine and song in all the ways Paul IV was not⁵⁷. But it was his role to reach agreement with Pius—and he failed in that on nearly every occasion—.

Yet, there is an alternative explanation for Vargas' failure to win promotion: that he did not read Philip's aims or positions correctly. One reason Vargas failed to attract royal backing was that Philip was already in the process of decoupling service of the pope from service of the Crown: under Charles V it had been normal to build a career alternating papal and royal service, but this was not the way under Philip II⁵⁸. Vargas seems to have misread the situation. On the other hand, a cursive glance at Philip's relationship with his ambassador raises all kinds of questions: what did Philip know about Vargas' activities? If he did know, what efforts did he make to stop him? If he didn't, why didn't he? Was his approach towards Vargas calculated or reactive? Did he suspect what Vargas would be like before he appointed him? And if so, why did he still do so? John Elliott held that Philip chose his agents more in order to keep the balance between rival factions at court than to place the most suitable men in important positions—a position with which Violet Soen has recently disagreed⁵⁹—. Yet, ambassadorial office, even in Rome, was not as important as that of a Governor-General or Viceroy, because it lacked significant executive functions. Does this paradigm therefore even hold at all or not? In March 1560, others in Rome

⁵⁵ Bernardo Navagero to the Senate, 19th December 1555, in Daniele Santarelli (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Bernardo Navagero, ambasciatore veneziano a Roma (1555-1558)*, Rome: Aracne, 2011, p. 105.

⁵⁶ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 15, p. 162.

⁵⁷ See the remarks of the Venetian ambassadors Luigi Mocenigo, Girolamo Soranzo and Paolo Tiepolo in Eugenio Alberi, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, 2nd series, 5 vols, Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1839-1863, vol. 4, pp. 51-52; p. 95; pp. 171-172; pp. 180-181.

⁵⁸ Miles Pattenden, 'Rome as a "Spanish Avignon"? The Spanish Faction and the Monarchy of Philip II', in Piers Baker-Bates and Miles Pattenden, eds, *The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Images of Iberia*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015, pp. 65-84.

⁵⁹ Violet Soen, 'Philip II's Quest: The Appointment of Governor-General during the Dutch Revolt (1559-1598)', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 126, 2011, pp. 3-29.

believed that Philip both knew about Vargas and was sufficiently unhappy with him to have revoked his ambassadorship⁶⁰. Perhaps for this reason, Philip had sent Íñigo López de Mendoza the Count of Tendilla as a special envoy soon after to negotiate about reconvening the Council of Trent. Tendilla also sent regular missives back to Madrid and provided a very different account of how events were unfolding at the papal court from that which Vargas would have had Philip believe. He informed Philip of Vargas' lonely struggle to help the Carafa and advised the king that he should under no circumstances intervene and give them encouragement. He, not Vargas, had Pius IV's ear and was better placed to provide useful information about the pope's plans and attitudes: for Carafa, for the Council, for the Spanish Monarchy⁶¹. Compared to Tendilla's letters, Vargas' read as hysterical and sensational: he saw plots everywhere, including in August 1560 that Pius had conspired with other Italian powers to drive Spain from the peninsula⁶². Philip did indeed then write to Vargas ordering him to moderate his behaviour⁶³. But he did not impose a sanction on his ambassador when he subsequently did not do so. Some sources even indicate that he raised Vargas to the *Consejo de Estado*⁶⁴.

What then are we to make of Vargas' behaviour? How far he fit a wider pattern of early modern diplomatics? His behaviour was not entirely incongruous with that of other Spanish agents in Rome but it is hard to quantify how typical they were of wider diplomacy—either that of the Spanish Monarchy or of the papal court. We know from studies of Italian diplomatic networks that questions of oversight and accountability did indeed loom large for those who commissioned diplomats—the Venetian Republic, unsurprisingly, was at the forefront of all this, routinely

⁶⁰ *Avviso di Roma*, 9th March 1560, BAV, *Urb. Lat.* 1039, ff. 135v-136v.

⁶¹ Tendilla to Philip II, 10th June 1560, AGS, *Estado* 887, n.º 36.

⁶² Vargas to Philip II, 22nd August 1560, AGS, *Estado* 886, n.º 59/60. Levin, *Agents of Empire*, p. 73.

⁶³ Philip II to Vargas, 11th August 1560, AGS, *Estado* 887, n.º 146. Vargas to Philip II, 14th March 1561, *Estado* 890, n.º 26. Vargas also returned briefly to Spain in early 1561, which may or may not be connected to Philip's dissatisfaction, see Vargas to Pius IV, 11th February 1561, *Estado* 891, n.º 37.

⁶⁴ José Roxas y Contreras, *Historia del Colegio Viejo de S. Bartolomé, Mayor de la Celebre Universidad de Salamanca*, 2 vols., Madrid: Andres Ortega, 1768, vol. 1, p. 177. However, Paolo Tiepolo implies that Vargas was raised to the Consejo as early as 1559, letter to the Senate, 10th August, in Rawdon Brown, *Calendar of State Papers: Venice*, vol. 7, p. 119 (n. 92). His status on the Council was certainly regarded as 'honorary' after his return from Rome, 'Relazione di Visconti a Pio IV' (1564), AGS, *Estado* 2021 (*Libros de Berzosa*), ff. 260-261. A further claim that Vargas became Philip's chaplain in 1566 probably confuses him with another man of the same name, Gil Gonzalez d'Ávila, *Teatro de las Grandezas de la Villa de Madrid*, Madrid: Tomás Junti, 1623, p. 207.

incorporating checks and balances in their diplomatic missions⁶⁵. This is ultimately why Da Mula paid such a high price for switching his loyalties. Yet, Philip's attitude towards Vargas seems much more laissez-faire. That in itself is at odds with Geoffrey Parker's well-known, but recently modified, image of the hyperactive royal chief executive who tried to control everything down to the minutest detail, but not necessarily with how he treated other agents in these first years of his reign⁶⁶. Paul Herre argued that Philip was altogether too trusting in these years when it came to Italian politics and it may be that this approach extended to his own agents as well as their Italian counterparts: Vargas maintained good relations with other Spanish agents in Italy (Luis de Ávila called him "a very honourable man, much desirous of helping Your service") and Philip accepted this on credence⁶⁷. Of course, there were those who harboured doubts: to Claude Belin Chasney, a jurist in Philip's service from the Franche-Comté who knew Vargas through Cardinal Granvelle, he was "so stubborn in [his] ideas that [he] never followed advice given to [him]"⁶⁸. However, is still by no means clear that Philip knew what Vargas was doing in Rome at any given moment, or even that he particularly cared. Philip certainly had grounds to suspect Vargas' actions, but did nothing: he neither acted for or against him. He had commissioned Tendilla and in the short term had taken his advice over that of Vargas; ironically, this may have been unwise because Vargas turned out to be in some ways a better judge of Pius' intentions than Tendilla had been. All this, appears to highlight a potential difference between Italian and Spanish diplomatic culture which ought to impact materially on our interpretation of Spanish agency, in Rome at least. Even if Vargas does not fit a broader pattern, his example underlines the intriguing yet all too obscure circumstances in which early modern diplomacy could be conducted. That encourages us to continue reading his letters with skepticism—and no doubt to read those of some of his contemporaries in like manner.

⁶⁵ Donald Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, Geneva: Droz, 1966. Tessa Beverley, *Venetian ambassadors, 1454-94: an Italian elite*, PhD Dissertation, University of Warwick, 1999, pp. 93-113.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. Parker has recently revised this view somewhat in *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

⁶⁷ Luis de Ávila to Philip II, 28th March 1563, AGS, Estado 893, n.º 166. Paul Herre, *Papsttum und Papstwahl im Zeitalter Philipps II.*, Leipzig: Tübner, 1907.

⁶⁸ Prosper Lévesque, *Memoires pour servir a l'histoire du Cardinal de Granvelle*, 2 vols, Paris, 1753, vol. 2, pp. 91-92.