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ARTICLES

REVIEW ARTICLE

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

JAN HENNINGS

The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue: Pomp and Circumstance in Tsar Peter I's Visit to Vienna in 1698

THE INDEPENDENCE AND equality of sovereign states are today formally enshrined in international law as principles governing the conduct of international relations. Diplomatic protocol, by symbolizing the principles, harmoniously represents the political process.[1] Even if conflicts arising from protocol during difficult negotiations still are not uncommon,[2] seventeenth-century practice as presented in diplomatic dispatches appears to the modern mind to be a curious and never-ending argument about lavish ceremonies arranged for visiting dignitaries.[3] In early modern European diplomacy, the relationship between the ceremonial symbols and the mechanisms of power was closer and carried more weight. Whereas protocol is asked today to anticipate conflicts over status, in early modern Europe it was expressly designed to signify the relative status of the honoured guest and the sovereign host.[4]

Diplomatic protocol in early modern Europe was inextricably intertwined with the code of behaviour prevailing among the aristocratic elite at court.[5] In a hierarchical society in which honour and prestige were basic

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1 J. R. Wood and J. Serres, *Diplomatic Ceremonial and Protocol: Principles, Procedures, and Practices* (London, 1970), pp. 17ff.

2 See e.g., S. Schattenberg, '"Gespräch zweier Taubstummer"? Die Kultur der Außenpolitik Chruščevs und Adenauers Moskaureise 1955', *Osteuropa*, vii (2007), 27-46.

3 See B. Conrad-Lütt, 'Hochachtung und Mißtrauen: Aus den Berichten der Diplomaten des Moskauer Staates', in *Deutsche und Deutschland aus russischer Sicht, 11.-17. Jahrhundert*, ed. D. Herrmann (Munich, 1989), pp. 149-78.

4 For ambassadorial ceremonial, see W. J. Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A System's Approach', *Journal of Modern History*, lii (1980), 452-76; L. Bély, 'Souveraineté et souverain: La question du cérémonial dans les relations internationales à l'époque moderne', *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France* (1993), 27-43. For approaches to diplomatic history that take account of ritual, see *Internationale Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ansätze und Perspektiven*, ed. H. Kugeler, C. Sepp, and G. Wolf (Hamburg, 2006), esp. pp. 9-35.

5 See L. S. Frey and M. L. Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity* (Columbus, 1999), pp. 207-17.

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values, social respect was the currency that secured the coveted few places at the top of the hierarchy and the power that derived from them. The distribution and redistribution of power that accompanied the gain in or loss of prestige, was expressed in elaborate and hugely expensive ceremonies and entertainments. Thus, rational behaviour was understood to be what helped to preserve or increase, by symbolic means, one's potential for power within the hierarchy.[1]

The power potential of prestige was an equally important determinant in early modern international relations. The diplomat's reception at the frontier, his progress towards the capital, his solemn entry, and his public audience with the monarch were meticulously choreographed to ensure that the respect shown to a diplomat, thus indirectly to his sovereign, accorded with his sovereign's rank.[2] Far from being merely preoccupied with outward appearance – at best leading to a seemingly irrational waste of money – the choreography applied a 'rational' set of rules that ranked each member of the so-called *société des princes.*[3]

This definition of ceremonial fits with contemporary description.[4] In 1723, in the revised edition of a work published in 1715, Gottfried Stieve described ceremonial as a set of behaviours that include the way people stand, sit, and look, and the way they dress. He defined diplomatic ceremonial as an 'order introduced … under sovereigns or persons that equal them, according to which they have to respect each other, their ambassadors, or envoys in meetings, so that no one is rewarded too much or too little.'[5] Stieve distinguished ceremonial from 'compliments' originating in

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See also, H. M. Scott, 'Diplomatic Culture in Old Regime Europe', in *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century: Essays in Honour of T. C. W. Blanning*, ed. H. M. Scott and B. P. Simms (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58-85.

1 See N. Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. E. Jephcott, *The Collected Works of Norbert Elias*: II (Dublin, 2006), p. 101, passim. Cf. J. F. J. Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 192-5; A. Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: Der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711-40)* (Darmstadt, 2003), pp. 296-301; and J. F. J. Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 181-259. For honour in early modern Russia, see N. S. Kollmann, *By Honor Bound: State and Society in Early Modern Russia* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), pp. 1-30.

2 For Muscovy, L. A. Iuzefovich, *Put' posla: russkii posol'skii obychai. Obikhod. Etiket. Tseremonial. Konets XV – pervaia polovina XVII v.* (St Petersburg, 2007), passim; C. Garnier, '"Wer meinen Herrn ehrt, den ehre ich billig auch". Symbolische Kommunikationsformen bei Gesandtenempfängen am Moskauer Hof im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte*, vii (2005), 27-51. See also, M. S. Flier, 'Political Ideas and Rituals', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. M. Perrie, D. C. B. Lieven, and R. G. Suny (Cambridge, 2006), i. 387-408.

3 L. Bély, *La société des princes: XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1999), pp. 396-409.

4 See M. Vec, *Zeremonialwissenschaft im Fürstenstaat: Studien zur juristischen und politischen Theorie absolutistischer Herrschaftsrepräsentation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998), ch. 1.

5 G. Stieve, *Europäisches Hof=Ceremoniel […]* (Leipzig, 1723), p. 2. Diplomatic ceremonial was also referred to as 'state ceremonial' (*Staats-Ceremoniel*) to distinguish it from other forms of ceremony: see J. B. v. Rohr, *Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der grossen Herren […]* (Berlin, 1729), p. 1. See

'courtesy': diplomatic ceremonial was legally binding.[1] Although the 'Superbia' one ruler claimed over another derived from a higher dignity ascribed with claims to jurisdiction, dignity was not laid down in a legal text;[2] it had to be made visible and established by ceremonial precedent, the outcome of meetings at which political relationships were represented in spatial and temporal metaphors derived from the human body (top and bottom, left and right), space (near and far), and time (acceleration and delay).[3] Who wore a hat, and who doffed one, and at what moment? Who was given the place of honour at the right hand? Who stood, or under certain circumstances sat, at what distance from the monarch? In which rooms did the participants meet? Who had to wait for whom, and for how long? Such, among others, were the means by which an ambassador represented the relative status, and by implication, the power, of his sovereign.

In the pre-modern state, such rituals depended not only on the physical presence of the principals but also on the attendance of an audience who, by its witness, confirmed the status displayed.[4] To assume, and to defend a position in a community of competing sovereigns, a monarch had to ensure that his status was regularly represented, in public, before the court, at home as well as abroad. Early modern international relations placed such emphasis on ceremonies because these occasions not only *depicted* the relations between states, but they also helped to *create* the political order in which monarchs acted in bids to achieve their goals.[5] Every diplomat paid minute attention to public ceremonies because modifications, however slight, would be interpreted as a precedent that enabled witnesses to challenge, and perhaps diminish, his sovereign's prestige, signifying a loss of power. Thus, although ceremonies were usually agreed

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also, Rohr, *Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der Privat-Personen […]* (Berlin, 1728, repr. Leipzig, 1990).

1 Stieve, *Hof=Ceremoniel*, pp. 2ff. See also, Duindam, *Myths*, pp. 102-7; Pečar, *Ökonomie der Ehre*, pp. 142-4; A. Krischer, *Reichsstädte in der Fürstengesellschaft. Zum politischen Zeichengebrauch in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt, 2006), pp. 26-8.

2 See B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Die Wissenschaft der feinen Unterschiede: Das Präzedenzrecht und die europäischen Monarchien vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert', *Majestas*, x (2002), 1-26.

3 For space in ceremonial, see B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol: Neue Forschungen zur symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, xxvii (2000), 396-7. See also, Iu. M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. A. Shukman, with an introduction by U. Eco (London, 1990), esp. pp. 131-3.

4 J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, 1992, repr. 2002), pp. 5-14. Cf. U. Daniel, 'Überlegungen zum höfischen Fest der Barockzeit', *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, lxxii (2000), 45-66, who rightly points out that the representation of power was not only staged before the subjects of a monarch but before the wider circle of the European court society. See also, J. Paulmann, *Pomp und Politik: Monarchenbegegnungen in Europa zwischen Ancien Régime und Erstem Weltkrieg* (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 47-55.

5 B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne: Begriffe – Forschungsperspektiven – Thesen', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, xxxi (2004), 503.

beforehand, they were often interrupted, even with violence, as a means of enforcing disputed claims to status.

The more prestigious the place held in the hierarchy of states, the more ceremonies became the focus, as well as the expression, of political competition.[1] Perhaps the most famous example occurred in London in 1661, when the long-lasting antagonism between France and Spain broke out in a fight between the ambassadors of Louis XIV and Philip IV. Louis, whose ambassador, the comte d'Estrades, had lost the struggle for the *place d'honneur* at a ceremonial parade, threatened to declare war on Spain unless Philip, in future, conceded Louis's claim to precedence (which he did). Louis expected the public acknowledgement of his claim to bring 'definite advantages in negotiations and general political position',[2] even though the Austrian Habsburgs continued to give precedence to the Spanish ambassador, and popes treated the French and Spanish ambassadors as equals.[3]

Similar disputes over ceremonies were given as one of the reasons why Russia, in 1700, declared war on Sweden. Charles XII of Sweden's refusal to offer reparation for the ceremonial insult to Peter I at Riga in 1697 may have been less a pretext for war than the reason for it.[4] Disagreements about ceremonies did not simply interrupt the business of international politics: they were themselves political struggles.[5] The relations between states were not expressed solely in diplomatic correspondence, or in words argued over at conferences before being written down in protocols and treaties: they were also expressed symbolically, and most effectively in ceremonies.

This article investigates the semiotic dimensions of Tsar Peter I's Grand Embassy to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold I,[6] as an

1 See also, B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Die zeremonielle Inszenierung des Reiches, oder: Was leistet der kulturalistische Ansatz für die Reichsverfassungsgeschichte?', in *Imperium Romanum, irregulare corpus, Teutscher Reichs-Staat: das Alte Reich im Verständnis der Zeitgenossen und der Historiographie*, ed. M. Schnettger (Mainz, 2002), pp. 233-46.

2 W. Roosen, 'The Functioning of Ambassadors under Louis XIV', *French Historical Studies*, vi (1970), 331.

3 Roosen, 'Ceremonial', p. 463.

4 L. A. J. Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven, 2000), pp. 28ff. For contemporary elaboration, see P. P. Shafirov, *A Discourse Concerning the Just Causes of the War between Sweden and Russia: 1700-21*, intro. W. E. Butler (Dobbs Ferry, 1973).

5 See also, D. Cannadine, 'Introduction' to *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. D. Cannadine and S. R. F. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 1-19. For political representation in Peter I's reign, see R. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton, 1995/2000), i. ch. 2. For court politics under Peter I, see P. Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671-1725* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 426ff.

6 For recent studies, see E. Schlöss, 'Über die Begegnung des Zaren Peter I. mit dem Kaiser Leopold I.', *Wiener Geschichtsblätter*, xlix (1994), 149-62; I. Schwarcz, 'Velikoe posol'stvo i Venskii dvor: K voprosu o prebyvanii Velikogo Posol'stva v Vene', in *Tsentral'naia Evropa v novoe i noveishee vremia:*

example of the role of politics in ceremony and ceremony in politics. It ignores the reason for Peter I's visit to Vienna – his wish to persuade Emperor Leopold I to prolong the war with the Ottoman empire – and does not dissect the ceremonies for evidence of the differences between Habsburg and Muscovite traditions. Rather, it asks how far ceremony constrained or facilitated political communication.

Peter I's embassy to Vienna illustrates the theatricality of diplomatic dialogue in the age of baroque culture; the way in which rulers and statesmen changed the scenery in the *theatrum praecedentiae* in order to reconcile seemingly incompatible ceremonial demands and to forward negotiations with other states.[1] However rigid were the rules governing precedence, and however greatly they constrained rulers as well as their subjects, ceremonies were understood to be a system of signs, to be adjusted and manipulated short of undermining the established hierarchical system. The crucial arena for such manoeuvres was the court. The degree to which spectators, most often aristocrats and courtiers, took part determined the degree to which symbolic communication between the negotiating parties was perceived to be binding. In 1698, the relations between the tsar and the emperor necessitated the communication of conflicting political messages. These passed through three separate, if interconnected, channels of communication (see Figure 1) that followed distinct sets of semiotic rules and involved the court, as witness, in varying degrees. First, public ceremonies expressed, and thus substantiated, the established hierarchical relationship between tsar and emperor in the international system. Second, private ceremonies facilitated a personal relationship between two royal allies, portrayed as equal brothers. Third, the negotiations about the Ottoman war were kept secret, away from public view, to prevent the disagreements over the war from challenging the symbolically established order and striking at the foundations of monarchical authority.

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Until Russia's emergence as a European great power in the eighteenth century, neither the tsar, or grand duke of Muscovy – as he was known to Europeans until 1721 when Peter I styled himself as emperor – nor the Holy Roman Emperor maintained a resident ambassador at the other's court. Instead, a series of short-term embassies settled questions arising from their relations with their common neighbour, Poland-Lithuania, and their potential enemy, the Ottoman empire.[2]

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sbornik k 70-letiiu T. M. Islamova, ed. A. S. Stykalin and T. Islamov (Moscow, 1998), pp. 55-68.

1 Z. Zwantzig, *Theatrum Praecedentiae, Oder Eines Theils Illustrer Rang-Streit [...]* (Berlin, 1706).

2 See B. Meissner, 'Die zaristische Diplomatie. A. Der Gesandtschafts-Prikas (Posol'skij Prikas)',

Embassies of ambassadorial rank were rare. According to European diplomatic practice, diplomats were assigned ambassadorial status only if they represented abroad in full the ceremonial honours to which their sovereign claimed to be entitled.[1] Only the ambassador, not the envoy or the resident, possessed the 'representative character' that embodied the persona and, with it, the prestige of his sovereign. In the words of the English historiographer royal, James Howell, 'ambassadors are the emissititious [*sic*] eyes of a prince, they are his ears and hands, they are his very understanding and reason, they are his breath and voice.'[2] The exiled former under-secretary (*pod'iachii*) of Muscovy's ambassadorial department (*posol'skii prikaz*), Grigorii K. Kotoshikhin, commented from exile in Sweden in 1666 that the tsar tended not to send high-ranking representatives to Vienna, as 'the journey is long, [leads] through many different countries, and grand ambassadors will suffer much harm and losses on the way.'[3]

Only two Muscovite embassies with ambassadorial rank were sent to Vienna between the end of the Thirty Years War and Peter I's arrival in 1698, in 1679 and 1687.[4] In 1679, imperial officials responsible for the reception of the ambassadors had difficulty in deciding where to place the tsar within the hierarchy of European monarchs. After a search through the court archives failed to turn up a precedent, the emperor called a conference at which his officials recommended him to recognize the tsar to be a '*monarcha et princeps coronatus autocrator etc.* as much as the king of Spain and other absolute potentates'.[5] Thus the embassy was received with the *honores regii* accorded to crowned heads as an unambiguous sign

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Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, iv (1956), 237-45, and C. Roll, 'Hatten die Moskowiter einen Begriff vom Reich? Beobachtungen zu den Kenntnissen und Vorstellungen von der politischen Ordnung des Alten Reichs am vorpetrinischen Zarenhof', in *Imperium Romanum*, ed. M. Schnettger, pp. 135-65, for Austro-Russian relations.

1 See D. B. Horn, 'Rank and Emolument in the British Diplomatic Service 1689-1789', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser., ix (1959), 19-49; W. J. Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV: The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA, 1976), pp. 59-64. For the emergence of the system of ranks at the imperial court, see K. Müller, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen im Jahrhundert nach dem Westfälischen Frieden: 1648-1740* (Bonn, 1976), pp. 116-24.

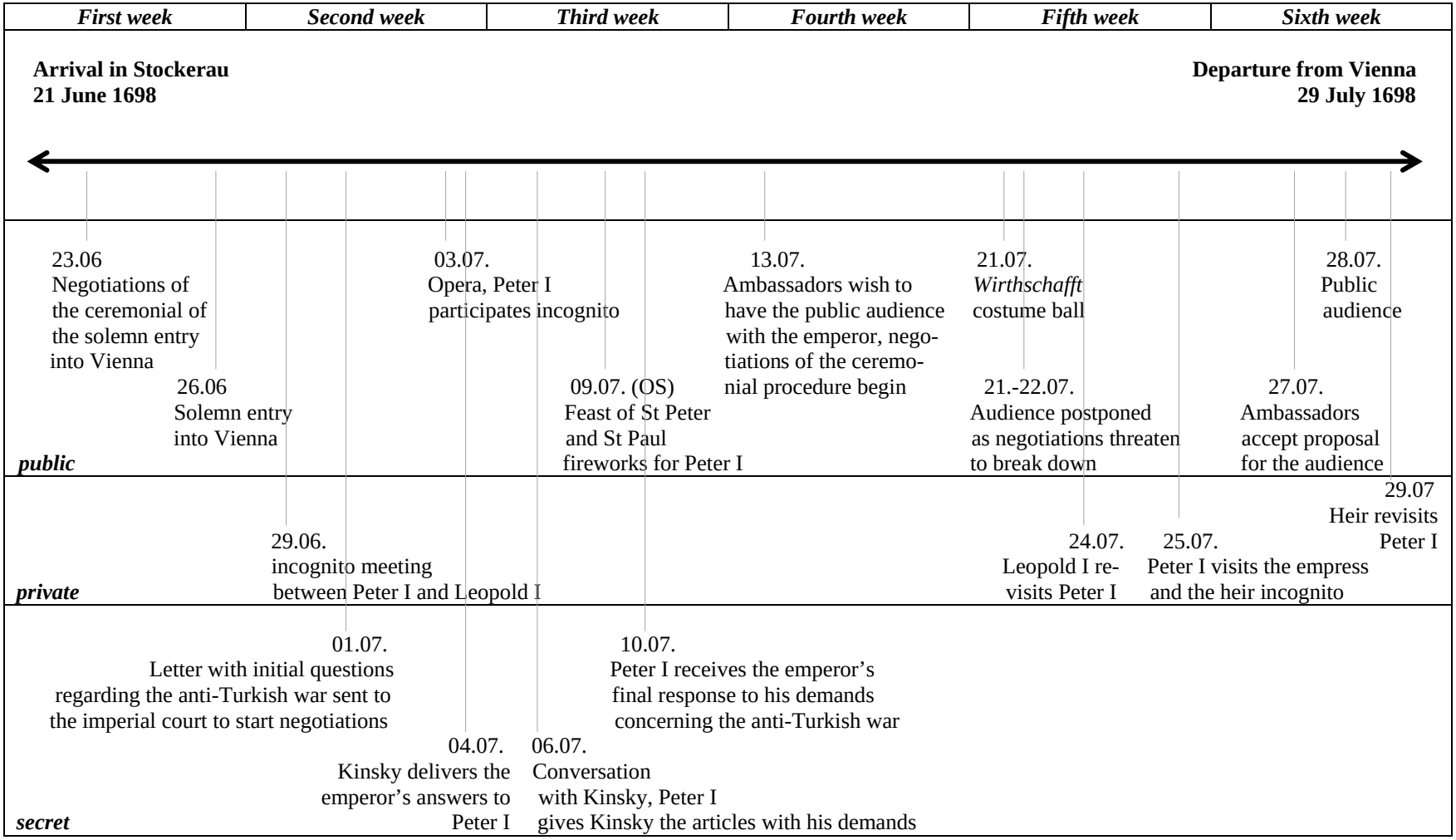
2 J. Howell, *Proedria vasilike a Discourse Concerning the Precedency of Kings […]* (London, 1664), p. 182. See also, J. C. Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale Historico-Politicum […]* (Leipzig, 1719/20), i. 368-76.

3 G. K. Kotoshikhin, *O Rossii v tsarstvovanie Alekseia Mikhailovicha*, ed. G. A. Leont'eva (Moscow, 2000), p. 62.

4 See *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder*, ed. L. Bittner, L. Gross, and L. Santifaller (Berlin, 1936-65), i. 434ff.

5 C[eremonial] P[rotocols], June-July 1679 [Vienna, Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv], Z[eremonial] A[kten] Prot[okolle], 3, fo. 204v. See also, H. D. Körbl, 'Zeremonielle Aspekte des diplomatischen Verkehrs: Der Besuch der moskowitischen Großbotschaft im Wien des Jahres 1679', in *Der Wiener Hof im Spiegel der Zeremonialprotokolle (1652-1800): Eine Annäherung*, ed. I. Pangerl, M. Scheutz, and T. Winkelbauer (Vienna, 2007), pp. 573-625.

FIGURE 1. Bird's-eye View of the Grand Embassy at the Imperial Court.


First week
Second week
Third week
Fourth week
Fifth week
Sixth week
Arrival in Stockerau
21 June 1698
Departure from Vienna
29 July 1698
23.06
Negotiations of the ceremonial of the solemn entry into Vienna
26.06
Solemn entry into Vienna
03.07.
Opera, Peter I participates incognito
09.07. (OS)
Feast of St Peter and St Paul
fireworks for Peter I
13.07.
Ambassadors wish to have the public audience with the emperor, negotiations of the ceremonial procedure begin
21.07.
Wirthschafft costume ball
21.-22.07.
Audience postponed as negotiations threaten to break down
27.07.
Ambassadors accept proposal for the audience
28.07.
Public audience
29.07
Heir revisits Peter I
public
29.06.
incognito meeting between Peter I and Leopold I
24.07.
Leopold I re-visits Peter I
25.07.
Peter I visits the empress and the heir incognito
private
01.07.
Letter with initial questions regarding the anti-Turkish war sent to the imperial court to start negotiations
04.07.
Kinsky delivers the emperor's answers to Peter I
06.07.
Conversation with Kinsky, Peter I gives Kinsky the articles with his demands
10.07.
Peter I receives the emperor's final response to his demands concerning the anti-Turkish war
secret

of the recognition of the sovereignty manifest in their dignified appearance. Sovereignty was not conceived of in the abstract: as it meant less the independence of the state than the status of the ruler, it was signified by the ceremonial treatment of his persona. Only by establishing his claims to status ceremonially could a claimant hope to join the group of independent monarchies.[1] At Vienna in 1679, imperial officials recognized the tsar as a sovereign among sovereigns, though of lesser rank than the emperor who placed himself above kings. The ceremonies observed at that time determined the honours paid to Peter I's diplomats in 1698.[2]

By a *ukaz* of December 1696,

> the Sovereign decreed … to send grand ambassadors with full powers [*poslat' velikikh i polnomochnykh poslov*] to neighbouring countries, to the emperor, to the kings of England and Denmark, to the Roman pope, to the Netherlands, to the elector of Brandenburg, and to Venice … for the confirmation of ancient friendship and love, for common affairs of the whole of Christendom: the weakening of the enemies of the cross of the Lord, the Turkish sultan, the Crimean khan, and all Muslim hordes.[3]

The itinerary listed in the official instructions to the ambassadors did not match the embassy's route. First, they were to travel through Swedish Livonia and Courland (avoiding Poland) to Vienna, to conduct negotiations with the Holy Roman Emperor, Peter I's ally in the struggle against the Turks. From there, they were to continue to Rome, Venice, the Netherlands, England, Denmark, and, finally, to visit the elector of Brandenburg, Frederick III. In the event, the route was changed, as Peter I's envoy to Vienna, Koz'ma N. Nefimonov, had renewed the anti-Ottoman alliance shortly before the embassy's departure from Moscow in March 1697. Rather than going to Vienna, it first spent two months visiting the elector of Brandenburg at Königsberg. From there it travelled to the Dutch Republic. In January 1698, Peter and a small entourage sailed for England, where he stayed until April. In both countries, he familiarized himself with the political situation in western Europe, and studied navigation and shipbuilding. When he learned that, despite Nefimonov's efforts, the Holy League was likely to make peace with the Ottomans through the mediation

1 B. Stollberg-Rilinger, '*Honores Regii*: Die Königswürde im zeremoniellen Zeichensystem der Frühen Neuzeit', in *Dreihundert Jahre preussische Königskrönung: eine Tagungsdokumentation*, ed. J. Kunisch (Berlin, 2002), pp. 1-26.

2 For 1687, see C. Augustynowicz, '"Ablegations-negocien von keiner erhöblichkeit?" Wirken und Wirkung der Moskauer Großgesandtschaft in Wien 1687', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, l (2003), 43-63.

3 Ukaz, 6 Dec. 1696 (OS), quoted in N. G. Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia Petra Velikago* (St Petersburg, 1858-63), iii. 6.

of William III, the visit to the imperial court was revived. After Peter I rejoined the embassy in the Dutch Republic, it travelled to Vienna by way of Bielfeld, Minden, Hildesheim, Halle, Leipzig, and Dresden.[1]

The ambassadorial department, in organizing the Grand Embassy, followed long-established tradition.[2] In Muscovy, unlike Europe, the doctrine of representative character did not determine the rank of the diplomat. The three Muscovite ranks of ambassador (*posol*), envoy (*poslannik*), and herald (*gonets*) reflected mainly the importance of the mission or the social status of the men appointed.[3] The task of fostering the alliance against the Ottomans warranted giving the Grand Embassy ambassadorial rank, and before their arrival at Vienna, the imperial court recognized them as 'grand ambassadors with full powers' (*gevollmächtigte grossgesande*), to be addressed as 'Excellenz'.[4] This form of address, which signified ambassadorial rank to listeners as well as the addressed, also signified the emperor's acceptance of the ambassadors as 'representatives' of the tsar.[5]

According to Muscovite custom, three officials were appointed jointly to head the embassy. Peter I's favourite, Franz Lefort, appointed chief ambassador, had mainly ceremonial responsibilities.[6] The second and third ambassadors, Fedor A. Golovin and Prokopii B. Voznitsyn, were responsible for the practical organization of the embassy and negotiations. Both were experienced diplomats; Voznitsyn, in particular, was said to be knowledgeable about the customs and manners of foreigners.[7] The embassy numbered around 250. Lefort alone was accompanied by six pages, four dwarfs, servants, musicians, trumpeters, surgeons, a pastor, and well-equipped guards.[8] Among them was Peter, travelling incognito as a common soldier, Petr Mikhailov.

1 R. Wittram, 'Peters des Großen erste Reise in den Westen. Hermann Aubin zum 23. Dezember 1955', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, iii (1955), 373-403. See also, D. Iu. Guzevich, *Velikoe posol'stvo*, Korni Peterburga (St Petersburg, 2003), passim, and A. G. Gus'kov, *Velikoe Posol'stvo Petra I: Istochnikovedcheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow, 2005), ch. 3.

2 Cf. Kotoshikhin, *O Rossii*, pp. 62-94, with the *nakaz* (instructions to the diplomats) in *P[amiatniki] D[iplomaticheskikh] S[noshenii drevnei Rossii s derzhavami inostrannymi]*, viii. 661-99. Cf. M. M. Bogoslovskii, *Petr I: materialy dlia biografii* (Moscow, 1940-8), ii. 8ff., who underestimates the significance of the *nakaz*.

3 V. E. Grabar, *The History of International Law in Russia, 1647-1917: A Bio-Bibliographical Study*, trans. W. E. Butler (Oxford, 1990), pp. 56-9.

4 Draft, Dietrichstein to Lefort, 23 April 1698 [Vienna, Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv], Ä[ltere] Z[eremonial] A[kten], Kart. 18, Diarium [über den Aufenthalt des Czar Peter I. in Wien], fo. 56r-v.

5 Rohr, *Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der grossen Herren*, p. 377.

6 For Lefort, see M. C. Posselt, *Der General und Admiral F. Lefort. Sein Leben und seine Zeit: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Peter's des Grossen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1866).

7 J. P. Abelinus et al., *Theatrum Europaeum [...]* (Frankfurt am Main, 1646-1738), xv. 330 ff. See also, D. Altbauer, 'The Diplomats of Peter the Great', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, xxviii (1980), 1-16.

8 A. Babkin, 'Pis'ma Frantsa i Petra Lefortov o "Velikom Posol'stve" ', *Voprosy Istorii*, iv (1976), 123; Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia*, iii. 572-6.

The tsar's concealment as a member of the embassy's guard is often attributed to his remarkable character, in particular his alleged dislike of ostentation.[1] It is generally accepted that he travelled under an assumed identity to enable him to study carpentry and shipbuilding in the countries he visited without being inhibited by protocol and public responsibilities. The incognito took odd forms, if one is to believe contemporary accounts that the tsar, who was six feet seven inches tall, sometimes lifted up a dwarf to cover his face.[2] However curious it may appear, it can be explained by recognizing its diplomatic functions.

As the Habsburgs awaited the embassy's arrival, imperial officials planned a programme for the tsar's entertainment: visits to the imperial treasury (*Schatzkammer*), picture galleries, libraries, and gardens.[3] Nevertheless, the tsar's presence had to remain, officially, unacknowledged ('all' incognito').[4] But how to treat him as if he were not there? And why was it important to disguise his majesty when everybody knew who he was?[5]

Julius Bernhard von Rohr stated in 1729 that 'the [Holy] Roman Emperors always … claimed the prerogative never to have to give the *place d'honneur* at the right hand to any other crowned head … in their own houses or courtly camps … Therefore, the Muscovite Tsar Peter … residing in Vienna in 1698, could only see and visit the Roman Emperor … incognito and without ceremonies.'[6] The tsar's arrival at the imperial court reignited a long-standing ceremonial rivalry.

In 1721, Peter I gave himself the title of emperor and autocrat of all the Russias (*imperator i samoderzhets vserossiiskii*) to demonstrate Muscovy's arrival in the West and its claim to higher international status after the victory over Sweden.[7] Once Muscovy aimed to integrate fully with the European state system, its ruler's title became more problematic. As long as Muscovy was placed within the 'barbarian world' outside the European

1 See, e.g., M. S. Anderson, *Peter the Great* (2nd ed., Harlow, 1995), pp. 39ff. The myth of Peter's straightforwardness was in existence before his death: see L. A. J. Hughes, 'Russia: The Courts of Moscow and St Petersburg *c.*1547-1725', in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics, and Culture under the Ancient Régime, 1500-1750*, ed. J. Adamson (London, 1999), pp. 312ff.

2 Abelinus et al., *Theatrum Europaeum*, xv. 334. For Peter I's physical appearance, see Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, pp. 357-63.

3 Ceremonial papers, June [?], ÄZA, Kart. 18, Diarium, fo. 72r-v.

4 CP, June 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 420v. For the protocols in facsimile with parallel transcription, see E. Schlöss, 'Zar Peter der Grosse in Wien: Übertragung der Blätter 411 bis 452 der Ceremonialprotocolle 1698 (ZA Prot. 5) in die Schrift unserer Zeit wort- und zeilengetreu', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, li (2004), 375-546.

5 The tsar's presence was reported in the press; see W. Griep and F. Krahé, *Ausstellungskatalog 'Peter der Große in Westeuropa': Die Grosse Gesandtschaft 1697-8 (Übersee-Museum Bremen/Ausstellung 'Schätze aus dem Kreml – Peter der Große in Westeuropa')* (Bremen, 1991), pp. 43ff.

6 Rohr, *Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der grossen Herren*, p. 343.

7 R. Wittram, *Peter I. Czar und Kaiser: Zur Geschichte Peters des Großen in seiner Zeit* (Göttingen, 1964), ii. 462-74.

state system established in 1648 by the treaties of Westphalia,[1] some states treated it as an empire without fearing ceremonial, or political, consequences. The English court, for example, often used the title 'emperor' when addressing the tsar because the 'Muscovite emperor' resembled the emperor of China: so far away that his status need not be measured against that of the Holy Roman Emperor, to whom kings yielded precedence. Once Peter I began to reform his realm on a Western model, the English began to worry. The first English diplomat to be paid the honours of ambassador extraordinary at Peter I's court, Charles Whitworth, in 1709, explained that the previous recognition of the tsars' imperial honours might now undercut Queen Anne's own, merely royal, status.[2]

Ceremonial conflicts revolving around titles – and the higher status of an emperor than a king – caused embarrassment and resentment through the late nineteenth century. For example, Francis II took care to have himself declared emperor of Austria before agreeing to Napoleon's demand to dissolve the Holy Roman Empire.[3] And Queen Victoria took delight after 1876 in being able to sign herself Queen-Empress in letters to the self-proclaimed German emperor, after Benjamin Disraeli had arranged for her to be proclaimed empress of India.

In contrast to the English, the imperial court had been worried about Muscovy's pretensions long before Peter I's push to the West. Leopold I's long reign (1658-1705) had been punctuated with arguments over Muscovy's claim to equality. The emperor treated any claim by a Christian ruler to equality as a contradiction in terms: Christian sovereigns deferred to the emperor as the protector of the church. The imperial envoy at Moscow in 1661-2, Augustin von Meyerberg, had disputed with Muscovite officials over whether the emperor and the tsar should be addressed and address one another as 'Majesty'. Meyerberg complained that the Muscovites referred to his sovereign as 'his imperial high-mightiness' (*kayserliche grossmächtigkeit*) and not as 'his imperial majesty'. In Moscow, this inferior form of address (*vel'mozhnost'* in Russian) was employed because Leopold,

1 See E. V. Anisimov, 'The Imperial Heritage of Peter the Great in the Foreign Policy of His Early Successors', in *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. H. Ragsdale and V. N. Ponomarev (New York, 1993), p. 22. Cf. H. Duchhardt, '"Westphalian System". Zur Problematik einer Denkfigur', *Historische Zeitschrift*, cclxix (1999), 305-15.

2 K.-H. Ruffmann, 'England und der Russische Zaren- und Kaisertitel', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, iii (1955), 217-24; I. de. Madariaga, 'Tsar into Emperor: The Title of Peter the Great', in *Politics and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Collected Essays by Isabel de Madariaga* (New York, 1998), pp. 15-39. For Whitworth, see J. M. Hartley, *Charles Whitworth: Diplomat in the Age of Peter the Great* (Aldershot, 2002).

3 P. H. Wilson, 'Bolstering the Prestige of the Habsburgs: The End of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806', *International History Review*, xxviii (2006), 709-36. Cf. L. S. Frey and M. L. Frey, '"The Reign of the Charlatans Is Over": The French Revolutionary Attack on Diplomatic Practice', *Journal of Modern History*, lxv (1993), 706-44.

too, had refused to address Tsar Alexis, Peter's father, as 'Majesty' to avoid jeopardizing his own claim to superior status.[1] In 1675, the head of the ambassadorial department, Artemon S. Matveev, gave the imperial envoys, Hannibal F. von Bottoni and Johann C. Terlinger von Guzmann, a memorandum that urged the emperor, first, to present future Russian diplomats with their recredentials in person and from his own hands at an audience, and not to employ courtiers to hand them over according to Habsburg practice; and second, to address the tsar as 'Majesty' (*velichestvo*) in official correspondence. The ambassadorial department gave as the reason: 'so that His Tsarist Majesty and His Imperial Majesty were equal in honour [*v ravnoi chesti*], for these two Great Sovereigns have for one another agreeable brotherly friendship and love, and they address each other as brothers in their instruments'.[2] In the Muscovite view, sovereigns who address one another as brothers are equals. If the imperial court refused to grant these privileges, as they did, the Muscovite court would reciprocate.

Given these experiences, the presence in Vienna of a tsar whose behaviour was known to be unpredictable was an obvious challenge to Leopold I's status. As Peter I embodied as tsar all of his predecessors' demands for equal status, any deviation from established ceremonial might imply recognition of the challenge to the emperor's claim to the highest rank among sovereigns. Therefore, the imperial court had to ensure that the two men did not meet, in public, in their capacities as emperor and tsar. The ceremonies between them were planned and executed as if the tsar was not present.

Incognito did not require the disguising of the person, and body, of the prince, or of his individual identity. It simply implied that a monarch, having put aside his majestic attributes when appearing before the court, invited everybody to pretend that he was absent. Incognito was a political strategy used in the symbolic context of diplomacy, and not a game of hide-and-seek.[3]

* * * * *

1 K. Meyer, '"Kayserliche grossmächtigkeit". Titularfragen bei den Verhandlungen zwischen Kaiser und Zar 1661/2', in *Rossica Externa*, *Festgabe für Paul Johansen zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Weczerka (Marburg, 1963), pp. 115-24. For the tsars' title, see A. I. Filiushkin, *Tituly russkikh gosudarei* (Moscow, 2006), passim, and M. Szeftel, 'The Title of the Muscovite Monarch up to the End of the Seventeenth Century', *Canadian American Slavic Studies*, xiii (1979), 59-87.

2 Zapis', uchinennaia v Moskve mezhdu rossiiskim i tsesarskim dvorami, 9 Oct. 1675 (OS), *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii*, i. 1011. See also, *PDS*, v. 313ff.

3 For the political significance of Peter I's love of mockery, inversions of social structures, and play, see Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, pp. 248-97, and E. A. Zitser, *The Transfigured Kingdom: Sacred Parody and Charismatic Authority at the Court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca, NY, 2004), pp. 12ff.

Several pageants (see Figure 1) formed the basis of the diplomatic dialogue during the Grand Embassy's stay at the imperial court. Of these, the solemn entry into Vienna, on 26 June 1698, was the first step in the symbolic process by which the hierarchical relationship between tsar and emperor was reaffirmed and displayed before selected witnesses.[1] The entry gave a foretaste of the next ceremonial occasion, namely the public audience that brought the ambassadors to the seat of power, that is, before the emperor himself.

The audience with the emperor staged the presentation of the ambassadors' credentials. As a legal document, the credentials qualified an ambassador to act on behalf of his sovereign, who guaranteed his diplomat's reliability and demanded assurances of his safety.[2] Under normal circumstances, credentials were presented shortly after an embassy's arrival. The ceremony began with the collection of the foreign diplomats from their residence, continued with a parade through the city to the court, and, after the diplomats had presented their credentials to the monarch, ended with a feast. The public audience for Peter I's ambassadors took place more than a month after its solemn entry, and only one day before the Grand Embassy departed.[3] The negotiations over the audience almost broke down as the Muscovite ambassadors argued with imperial officials over ceremonies designed to affirm – in the ambassadors' eyes, to decrease – the tsar's prestige relative to the emperor's. The protracted argument led Peter to postpone his departure, even after he had received alarming news of the uprising in June of the musketeers (*strel'tsy*) in Moscow. As Peter wished Lefort and Golovin to return with him to Moscow (Voznitsyn stayed in Vienna), he was obliged to wait until they had had their public audience with the emperor.

On 13 July, when the Muscovite ambassadors were certain that the customary gifts for the emperor would arrive from Moscow in time, they asked for their public audience. The emperor's cup-bearer, Baron Königsacker, who had led the solemn entry into Vienna, proposed a ceremony modelled on the precedent of 1679. The imperial court would convey the ambassadors and their entourage from their lodgings in carriages reserved for such solemn occasions. The mayor would supply forty Viennese townsmen to carry the tsar's gifts for the emperor. The procession through the streets of Vienna, to be headed by a Muscovite diplomatic

1 Report, Grand Embassy, 11-16 June 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1319ff. See also, A. de Wicquefort, *The Embassador and His Functions*, trans. Mr Digby (London, 1716, repr. Leicester, 1997), pp. 127-64.
2 See Stieve, *Hof=Ceremoniel*, pp. 235ff. For the credentials of the Grand Embassy, see report, Grand Embassy, 17 July 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1399ff.
3 The account derives from CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fos. 428r-39r, 440v-41v, 443v-51r, and report, Grand Embassy, July 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1368ff.

secretary, on horseback, holding aloft the credentials, would accompany the ambassadors as far as the inner courtyard of the emperor's residence, the *Favorita.* From here, they would ascend the grand staircase leading to the knights' hall (*Ritterstuben*), in which foreign diplomats were usually welcomed and in which they would remove their hats. The knights' hall was also called the *Peregrinsaal* (derived from the Latin word *peregrinus*, meaning foreigner) because foreign diplomats had to pass through it before entering the emperor's chambers.[1] From there, the chief steward, also with his head uncovered, would lead them towards the antechamber, past the imperial guards and townsmen who would stand on both sides of the room with the gifts in their hands. The chamberlain would accompany them through the first antechamber to the entrance to the secret council room in which the audience would be held. There, the ambassadors and the Muscovite nobles would wait for the invitation to approach the emperor, who would be standing on a pedestal beneath a canopy. He would ask about the tsar's health while gently touching his hat, though not removing it. From his elevated position, he would legitimize the ambassadors' diplomatic mission through the acceptance of their credentials. Muscovite nobles would then be invited to kiss the emperor's hand, and to lay the tsar's gifts at his feet.

The relationship between the tsar and the emperor implied by these arrangements did not satisfy Muscovite expectations. For example, first, the ambassadors demanded more carriages and twice the number of townsmen in attendance as signs of the emperor's esteem for the tsar. Second, they objected to removing their hats when passing through the knights' hall; this honour should be paid to the emperor in person, not to his subjects. Third, the ambassadors interpreted the delay while they waited outside the secret council room until the audience was granted as a humiliation: they wished to be presented to the emperor immediately by announcing the tsar's title in his presence. Fourth, they argued that the way they gave their gifts – placing them at Leopold I's feet – would be perceived as the payment of tribute.

In almost every respect, the ambassadors' pretensions broke with the precedent from 1679. The imperial court recorded in a protocol dated July 1698 the reasons for its refusal to agree. First, an ambassador might not pass through the antechambers wearing a hat; the emperor would not grant such a privilege to a crowned head. Nor, second, might an ambassador enter the audience chamber while being announced by reading his master's title in the presence of the emperor; it would imply that the emperor was obliged to wait for the ambassador, instead of the Muscovite ambassador's

1 For the floor plan, see E. Schlöss, *Baugeschichte des Theresianums in Wien* (Vienna, 1998), p. 48.

being obliged to wait for the highest ruler on earth. Third, the imperial court denied that the established way of giving the gifts could be viewed as the payment of tribute. As the emperor gave gifts in return, an act of mutual courtesy did not imply further obligation. Fourth, the number of men assigned to carry the gifts could not be increased because, the imperial court claimed, it did not want to place an additional burden on the inhabitants of Vienna.

Imperial officials had offered a few alterations to established usage, to accommodate Muscovite tradition. One was the inquiry about the tsar's health at the reception of the ambassadors halfway up the grand staircase. But as the imperial officials objected to changes that denied the emperor his precedence, they threatened to cancel the public audience if the ambassadors continued to make difficulties. On 27 July, after a long and vexatious argument, the Muscovites gave way, to avoid the embarrassment of not having had their presence publicly acknowledged prior to their departure. Thus, the next day, the day before Peter I, Lefort, and Golovin left Vienna, the Grand Embassy was received in public audience by the emperor before the imperial court and finally submitted its credentials. The issue of recredentials did not arise as Vosnitsyn stayed on in Vienna.

The imperial officials grounded their refusal to accept the ambassadors' demands on the practice at other courts. Concessions to the tsar carried the risk that other European monarchs, treating the concessions as a precedent, would try to increase their status in relation to the emperor by their own ceremonial innovations at the imperial court or during the reception of an imperial ambassador. In more abstract terms, the presentation of credentials was a ritual that confirmed the place of an ambassador's sovereign within the hierarchy acknowledged by the manner of his solemn entry into the city. Without the performance of the ceremonies, the credentials themselves and the monarch's address to his guests had no meaning. The symbolic language of the audience gave legal status to the script embodied in the ceremonies by communicating its meaning to a wider public.[1] The ritual of the public audience with the emperor, by translating a diplomatic document into the language of honour, gave every diplomatic relationship its place in the established, hierarchically organized, political order. The prerequisite for such a relationship was the ceremonial acknowledgement by the Muscovite ambassadors of the emperor's primacy.

1 See Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Symbolische Kommunikation', p. 516, and P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. J. Thompson, trans. G. Raymond and M. Adamson (Cambridge, MA, 1991), ch. 2.

FIGURE 2. Sketch of the assembly at the audience. CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 431v. Reproduced by permission of Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv Vienna. The same sketch is included in report, Grand Embassy, 4 July 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1371. Left to right: imperial ministers, Emperor Leopold I, imperial guards, the imperial vice-chancellor Count Kaunitz, the Russian ambassadors, their secretary, interpreter, Muscovite nobles, Baron Königsacker, imperial interpreter, commissary Haaß.

Raÿß Ministri

HH: Guarde Haubtleuthe

Graff Kaunitz Reichs
Vice Canzler

HH: Legati
Ihre Secretarij, Dolmetsch,
und
Edelleuthe

Baron Königsacker
Raÿ: Dolmetsch
Commissari Haus.

Public ceremonies constrained all of the participants. Only a strictly choreographed ritual could express the hierarchical relationship of the parties by anticipating the ever-likely disputes. Until the ceremony of presentation had reaffirmed the relative status of the two states, personal meetings between their rulers in view of the court were prohibited, lest they jeopardize an agreement over the issue of status. For this reason, Peter I, despite being incognito, did not attend the audience but only the banquet afterwards in the Grand Embassy's residence.

One way to enable Leopold I to meet Peter I without prejudicing the outcome of the negotiations over the ambassadors' public audience was a *divertissement.* The imperial court invited the Grand Embassy to a costume ball, a *Wirtschaft*, on 21 July.[1] The event was staged on two floors of the *Favorita*, which was turned into the mock-up of a tavern in which the innkeeper entertained travellers from different countries played by eighty imperial courtiers aided by forty of their servants.[2]

Leopold I chose the programme, identities for the travellers, and the costumes. He himself took the role of innkeeper, then sent Peter I the list from which he asked him to choose. After Peter had chosen the role of Frisian peasant, the other costumes/roles were assigned by lot.[3]

The seating at dinner (Figure 3) made witty allusions to political and social antagonisms – impersonators of Spaniards placed opposite impersonators of Frenchmen, Muscovites opposite Poles, shepherd near soldier, and hunter near gardener, and so on – in a stereotypical view of the world. The emperor's conspicuous position as the host – sitting with only his wife, the Empress Eleonore Magdalena, at the head of the table in a position of unchallenged superiority, implied that the rules of precedence were not entirely suspended. Elsewhere, however, the order of precedence of both the guests and their assumed personae were ignored.[4] Peter Lefort, the nephew of the Muscovite ambassador, explained to his father that 'all people attending the feast were equal to each other,' and that 'there was not the least hierarchy.'[5]

The political implications of the ball were different from those of the solemn entry and the public audience with the emperor. Free from the constraints of ceremony, the ball allowed political relationships between Muscovy and the Habsburgs to be expressed more freely. During it, the

1 For a description, see CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fos. 439r ff.

2 For *Wirtschaften*, see C. Schnitzer, *Höfische Maskeraden: Funktion und Ausstattung von Verkleidungsdivertissements an deutschen Höfen der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 220-43.

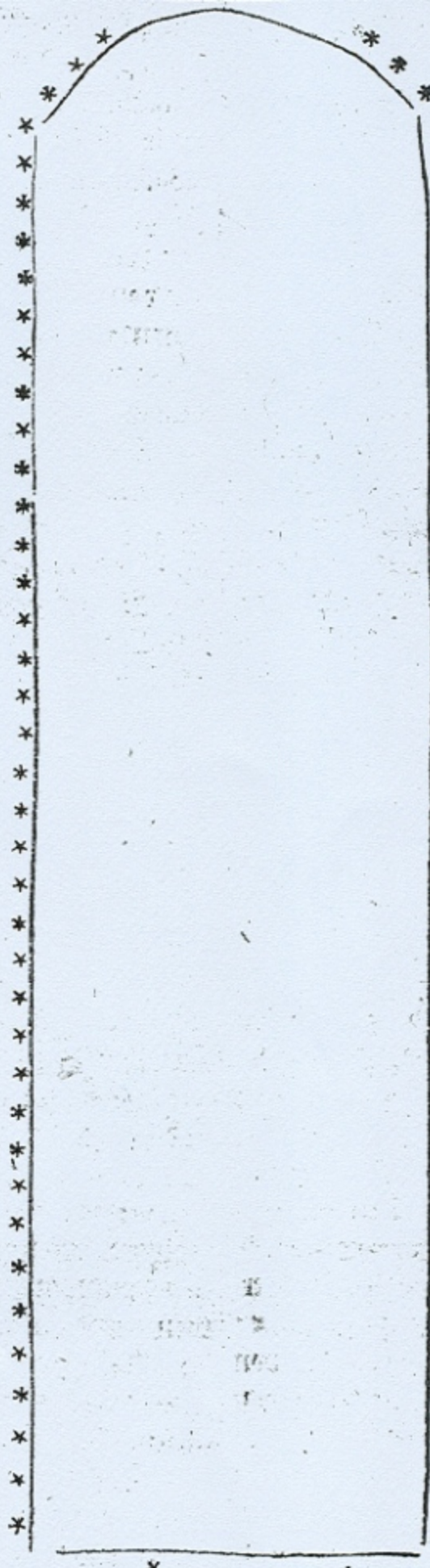
3 For the list of guests with their costumes, see Abelinus et al., *Theatrum Europaeum*, xv. 472-5; Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, i. 157-60.

4 Schnitzer, *Höfische Maskeraden*, pp. 231-43.

5 Quoted in Posselt, *Lefort*, ii. 495.

FIGURE 3. The seating plan at dinner at the *Wirtschaft*. Abelinus et al., *Theatrum Europaeum*, xv. 474. Reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library. The court printed and circulated the seating plan five days after the festivity (CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 439r).

Alter Teutscher.
Alte Teutsche.
Spanier.
Spanierin.
Polacke.
Polackin.
Venetianer.
Venetianerin.
Niederländer.
Niederländerin.
Grieche.
Griechin.
Türcke.
Türckin.
Armenianer.
Armenianerin.
Egyptier.
Egyptierin.
Tartar.
Tartarin.
Indianer.
Indianerin.
Schäfer.
Schäferin.
Ziegeuner.
Ziegeunerin.
Gärtner.
Gärtnerin.
Spanischer Bauer.
Spanische Bäuerin.
Englischer Bauer.
Englische Bäuerin.
Schwäbischer Bauer.
Schwäbische Bäuerin.
Frießländischer Bauer.
Frießländische Bäuerin.
Hannoverischer Bauer.
Hannoverische Bäuerin.
Marckschreyer.
Marckschreyerin.



Ungar.
Ungarin.
Frantzoß.
*Frantzösin.
*Moscowit.
*Moscowitin.
*Croat.
*Croatin.
*Schweitzer.
*Schweitzerin.
*Alter Römer.
*Alte Römerin.
*Persianer.
*Persianerin.
*Africaner.
*Africanerin.
*Chineser.
*Chineserin.
*Mohr.
*Mohrin,
*Nürnberger Bräutigam.
*Nürnberger Braut.
*Soldat.
*Soldatin.
*Pilgram.
*Pilgerin.
*Jäger.
*Jägerin.
*Frantzösischer Bauer.
*Frantzösische Bäuerin.
*Welscher Bauer.
*Welsche Bäuerin.
*Straßburger Bauer.
*Straßburgische Bäuerin.
*Holländischer Bauer.
*Holländische Bäuerin.
*Sclav.
*Sclavin.
*Jude.
*Judin.

Wirthin. Wirth.

innkeeper (Leopold I) approached the Frisian peasant (Peter I), to propose a toast to the friendship between the tsar and the emperor, both of them supposedly 'absent':

> He [the innkeeper] assumed that he [the Frisian peasant] knew the Grand Tsar of Moscow, to whom he wished well. Whereupon the ostensible Frisian peasant thanked him politely, raising the cup and giving his answer: he had to admit that he indeed knew the Grand Tsar of Moscow inside out. He was a friend of His Imperial Majesty and an enemy of his enemies. For the sake of the emperor's love and interest, he would drink down this cup and return it empty, even if it was filled with poison.[1]

In this way, the roles played by the princes allowed them to make lighthearted allusions to their political relationship before Europe's high nobility. After Peter I had drained the cup, he again assured Leopold I of his goodwill before passing the cup to the heir to the Habsburg throne, Joseph I, king of the Romans, disguised as an Egyptian. Leopold later gave the cup from which they had drank, a 'Cristallo di Rocca', to Peter, together with three Spanish horses as a personal gift.[2]

The ball lessened the tension resulting from the negotiations about state ceremonies.[3] The Muscovite ambassadors had first asked to be received in the public audience by the emperor on 13 July, to be told to wait until after the 21st: Leopold I, who had already decided to hold the ball on that day, insisted that the audience should follow, not precede, it.[4] If his intention was to ease the settlement of the disagreements over ceremonies, the date proved fortunate; the day after the Muscovite ambassadors had objected to the proposed ceremonies. On the morning of the 21st, Königsacker visited the ambassadors to tell them, in person, that the emperor would not agree to their proposed alterations. When the ambassadors refused to withdraw their demands, Leopold decided to cancel the public audience but advised Königsacker not to inform the ambassadors until the next day.[5] Conciliating them with splendid *divertissements* might persuade them to give way in the arguments over public ceremonies and distract Peter I's attention from the equally difficult negotiations about the Ottoman empire.

Other festivities were also designed to portray an idealized relationship between Leopold I and Peter I. On 3 July, Peter attended the opera at the court's invitation.[6] Six days later, on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul

1 Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, i. 159.
2 Abelinus et al., *Theatrum Europaeum*, xv. 474; CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 441v.
3 See also, V. Bauer, *Die höfische Gesellschaft in Deutschland von der Mitte des 17. bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts: Versuch einer Typologie* (Tübingen, 1993), p. 58.
4 CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 428r-v.
5 Ibid., fo. 437r.
6 Ibid., fo. 423r-v.

(according to Muscovite dating), the ambassadors returned the compliment by inviting five hundred guests to a garden party at the residence to celebrate the tsar's name day.[1] The programme was designed to flatter Peter. In a speech on the occasion, a Jesuit at the Habsburg court, Father Wolf, playfully compared Peter's role as tsar with Saint Peter's role in the church: 'Just as the Lord God gave Peter the Apostle the keys, he would offer them to His Majesty, the sovereign tsar, to enable him to take these keys and open up and possess the Turkish realm.'[2] In the evening, trumpets and kettledrums accompanied a fireworks display ordered by Leopold, in which the letters 'VZPA [*sic*] – Vivat Czar Petrus Alexiowiz' lit up the night sky.[3]

The acknowledgement of Peter I at such imperial festivities carried no legal or politically binding implications. But the Habsburgs, by their behaviour, conveyed the impression that they supported him against the Ottomans, even if political circumstances prevented the emperor from taking any action. The role of the festivities was to disguise and, ideally, to reconcile the differences that had arisen between Muscovy and the empire over status as well as peace or war with the Ottomans.

* * * * *

THE USE OF costumes facilitated personal contact between Peter I and Leopold I, but not their meeting as allies. A relationship that implied loyalty to an alliance required a different vehicle: a private space in which the two men could meet as tsar and emperor, and not as pretend innkeeper and peasant, but unburdened with the sign language of public ceremonies that would have reopened the argument about status.

Shortly after the Grand Embassy's arrival, the vice-chancellor of Bohemia, Count Tschernin, visited the embassy to discuss Peter I's stated wish to meet the emperor incognito. Tschernin explained that 'grandees usually have preliminary negotiations about the subjects to be discussed, so that one can give more adequate answers, and, no less important, know how they ought to behave to one another in the ceremonial.'[4] On such occasions, explicit reference to state affairs was taboo. The tsar replied 'that he would not assert any pretensions and that his treatment should instead rest with His Majesty [the emperor]. He would also not mention the negotiations [about the Ottoman war] which he would leave to his ambassadors.'[5]

1 *Pokhodnyi zhurnal: 1698 g.* (2nd ed., St Petersburg, 1911), p. 27.
2 Report, Grand Embassy, 29 June 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1363.
3 CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 427v.
4 CP, June 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 421r.
5 Ibid., fo. 421r-v.

On 29 June, Tschernin collected Peter I and a small entourage, and brought them, in his own carriage, to the garden behind the *Favorita*. They crossed the garden to the back door of the palace and ascended the winding staircase to the gallery. As they crossed the threshold, Leopold I and his ministers entered the gallery from the opposite side, approaching Peter to meet him beside the window in the middle of the room. Peter, however, increased his pace as soon as he caught sight of Leopold, and advanced one window too far. Leopold, who was wearing a hat, asked Peter, who had removed his, to put it back on. Peter did so, with a reluctant gesture, to take it off again and to show his preference for meeting the emperor bare-headed. Then Leopold, too, took off his hat.

The two men conversed out of earshot of their entourages. Only Lefort, who acted as interpreter, could later recall the words of Peter I's greeting to Leopold I: 'My brother! … I expressly came here to meet you and to affirm the alliance which already exists between us.'[1] The meeting seemed to please both men, according to the Habsburg account: 'For the rest, as one could glimpse his [Peter's] face, he was in good spirits, and it seemed as if he departed from His Majesty with good cheer.'[2] Lefort was even more enthusiastic: 'Never have I witnessed such a great brotherhood between these two monarchs. Until now, everything has met the wishes of both monarchs.'[3]

In the Muscovite tradition, the tsar addressed the emperor as 'brother' to indicate their equal status.[4] This rule did not apply at the Habsburg court. In the quarrel over forms of address in 1675, Matveev had claimed that the emperor should acknowledge the tsar's equality by referring to him as 'Majesty' in official correspondence because they already addressed one another as brothers. Bottoni and Guzmann had replied that the recognition of 'Majesty' could not be inferred from the alleged brotherhood between monarchs: the emperor's biological brother (his brothers had already died) would not be addressed thus; nor, they supposed, would the brother of the tsar.[5] During the Grand Embassy's public audience on 28 July, the emperor inquired after the health of his 'beloved brother' the tsar without, in his own opinion, acknowledging their equality.[6]

In private, the Habsburgs did not challenge the Muscovite notion of brotherly equality.[7] Such a compliment would help to establish a personal

1 Quoted in Posselt, *Lefort*, ii. 486.
2 CP, June 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 422v.
3 Quoted in Posselt, *Lefort*, ii. 487.
4 Grabar, *International Law in Russia*, p. 6; Iuzefovich, *Put' posla*, pp. 14-23.
5 C. V. Wickhart, *Moscowittische Reiß=Beschreibung [...]* (Vienna, *c.* 1675/6), p. 113.
6 CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 431r, 448r.
7 Cf. J. Rousset de Missy, *Le cérémonial diplomatique des cours de l'Europe […]* (= Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens, suppl. vols. 4-5) (Amsterdam, The Hague, 1739), i. 512, who

relationship between the two sovereigns and strengthen the alliance between the states they embodied as absolute monarchs. The gallery of the *Favorita* seemed better suited than the secret council room for the ceremonial representation of equality, with its implication of friendship and alliance.

Its two entrances were placed diagonally in the opposite corners (see Figure 4, nos. 1 and 2). One led to the secret council room, the other to the garden; a design that enabled the two rulers to enter the room simultaneously, approach each other at the same pace, and meet in the middle (as marked by the widows) on an equal footing. When Peter I entered from the garden, outside, while Leopold I entered from inside, from the seat of imperial authority, the meeting created the perfect symmetry between guest and host. That the meeting was to be read as a sign of the two monarchs' friendship was shown in their embrace of one another as equal brothers and allies. Thus, Leopold neither made his guest wait nor stood on a pedestal to receive him, as he would at the ambassadors' public audience. He met Peter on the same level, after both had moved forwards at the same time.

The most obvious symbolic expression of equality was the outcome of Peter I's insistence on taking off his hat. Both men were supposed to wear hats to signify that neither need acknowledge the other's superior status. As a consequence, Peter's gesture obliged Leopold I to follow his example. Even though the sign of equality contradicted the emperor's claim to precedence signified at the public ceremonies, here, in private, neither monarch competed over status.

Given that monarchs could divest themselves of their public ceremonial personas, the question arises as to how binding was anything said at private meetings between them. At public ceremonies, precedence – as a signal of claims to status as well as power – was confirmed by the attendance of the court or townsmen as witnesses. The legal implications of the proceedings at public audiences put the emperor at risk of setting a precedent when meeting another monarch in the presence of the court. Its exclusion was a prerequisite for a personal encounter meant to strengthen the imperial-Muscovite alliance to a degree not represented by the public symbols of their respective status within the international hierarchy.

The principle of incognito proved to be a useful diplomatic mechanism. It not only concealed monarchical identity under an assumed character, as at the costume ball, but also, as on this occasion, meeting incognito meant meeting 'unbeknownst', without witnesses. At a private meeting unconstrained by legally binding ceremonial, the acknowledgement of equality

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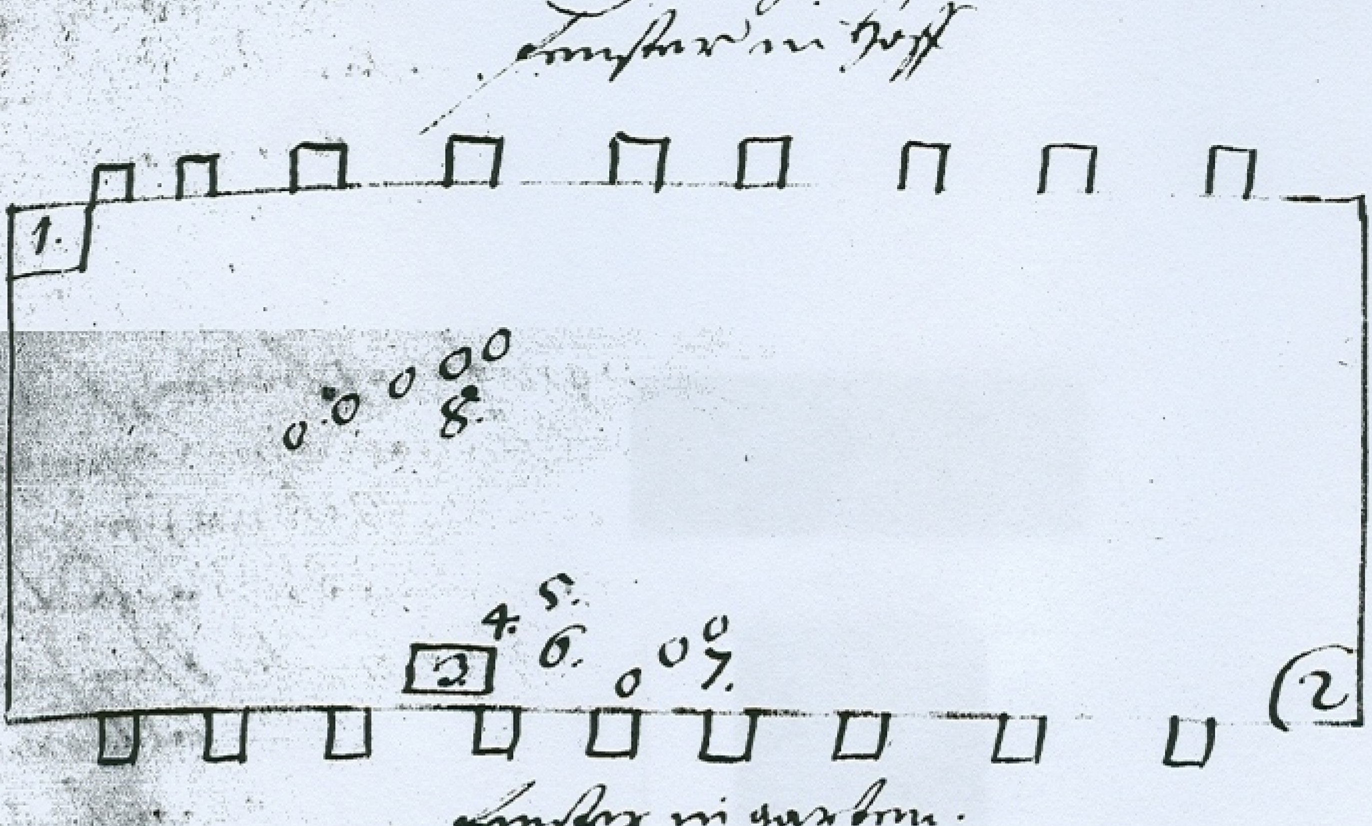
contradicts the notion of brotherhood.

FIGURE 4. Sketch of the gallery in the *Favorita*, depicting the positions taken by the participants during the private meeting between Peter I and Leopold I. CP, June 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fo. 423r. Reproduced by permission of Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv Vienna. 1 – entrance from which the emperor entered the room; 2 – winding staircase from which the tsar entered the palace coming from the garden; 3 – small table; 4 – tsar; 5 – emperor; 6 – Lefort; 7 – three Muscovites nobles; 8 – imperial ministers.

Abbildung der galleria



N.o 1. Thür allwo ihro Kay: Mtt in die galleria eingang.

N.o 2. Thüren allwo der Czar ein.

N.o 3. Tischl in der galleria.

N.o 4. Allwo der Czar gestanden.

N.o 5. Allwo Ihro Kay: Mtt gestanden.

N.o 6. Allwo Mons.r le fort gestanden.

N.o 7. Allwo die 3. Moscouiter gestanden.

N.o 8. Allwo die Kay: Ministri gestanden.

was not binding. Nevertheless, as incognito did not imply secret, the meeting was carefully planned; the ceremonies – the protocols speak of *Caeremoniali* – symbolized and, thus, created the amicable relationship between two allied monarchs. Afterwards, an account of the meeting that matches the one given in the protocols was distributed in print to communicate to a wider audience the nature of the two monarchs' alliance:

> As they were approaching one another, the tsar made a deep bow to which the emperor responded likewise, and they embraced each other. The emperor urged the tsar to cover his head, which he did, but he doffed his hat shortly afterwards, whereupon the emperor did the same in return. The conversation lasted for about twenty minutes, and nobody was allowed to join … They addressed each other as brothers … and, in the salutation, the emperor attested his delight to meet the tsar as a glorious monarch and his ally … The tsar replied in the same manner … and he mentioned that everything in his country stood ready for the emperor's order.[1]

Thus, the court (and later, historians) received word of a ceremony that symbolically acknowledged the equal status of the two sovereigns for the sake of representing a strong personal bond. The public's physical distance, and the lack of direct witness, ensured that the ceremony did not undermine the hierarchical order as represented in its public counterpart.

A few weeks later, on 24 July, Leopold I visited Peter I at his lodgings. This meeting followed the same pattern. The emperor, accompanied by a small group of courtiers, was brought to the garden of the palace in which the Grand Embassy was accommodated. Peter received the group in the garden and entered a room in the palace alongside the emperor. Neither wore a hat and they exchanged mostly compliments for a quarter of an hour, as the historian Matthias Fuhrmann understood in 1739. The next day, the tsar took leave of the emperor, the empress, and the king of the Romans, Leopold's designated successor as emperor.[2] The meeting made the two rulers 'even more allied through the … granted honour'.[3]

It may appear paradoxical that Leopold I repaid Peter I's compliment at the moment that Königsacker's negotiations about ceremonies with the Muscovite ambassadors had been suspended on the 21st, owing to the dispute about the tsar's status. There was no contradiction between the emperor's willingness to acknowledge the tsar as an equal brother while simultaneously ordering imperial officials to reject the claim when made by the Muscovite ambassadors. The private ceremonies served a different

1 *Die Entreveüe zwischen dem Kayser/ und dem Czaar/ den 29. Junii 1698* (n.p., 1698).
2 CP, July 1698, ZA Prot, 5, fos. 441v-443v.
3 P. M. Fuhrmann, *Alt- und neues Wien, oder dieser […] Stadt chronologisch- und historische Beschreibung* (Vienna, 1738/9), ii. 1193.

purpose – to buttress the alliance – and they implied a lesser degree of political obligation.

The role of the private meeting also makes clear why the emperor refused to discuss affairs of state, however urgent. As a device to place the relations between two states in an established hierarchy, the public ceremonies buttressed a ruler's authority, not only his status in the hierarchy but also his political power. The lack at the private meeting of such symbolism of power projection inhibited the resolution of affairs of state. The meeting lacked both a legal and a representative foundation from which to proceed; it was, itself, the buttress to a political relationship. Moreover, as nobody other than Lefort was supposed to participate in the conversation, Leopold I could not turn to his officials for expert advice, reason enough not to discuss the affairs of the Ottoman empire.

One might expect that the emperor and the tsar, when they met, were bound to have talked about political issues of importance to both of them. However, the prevailing diplomatic practice at the imperial court did not allow for such discussion.[1] Personal encounters between monarchs were rare, not least because of the difficulties that arose over the staging of ceremonies.[2] That Leopold I and Peter I met at least four times was itself extraordinary. Peter's presence in the Grand Embassy and his interest in meeting other rulers in person were novel and complicated late seventeenth-century international relations.[3] The two rulers' avoidance of serious topics is attributable less to the disenchantment with politics usually attributed to Leopold, than to the constraints imposed by symbol and ceremony on the monarch's political activities.[4]

* * * * *

Peter I's goal – to persuade the Holy League of Austria, Poland, Venice, and Muscovy to prolong the war against the Ottoman empire – seemed likely from the outset to prove unreachable. The coalition was disintegrating because Leopold I had shown an interest in allowing William III of England to mediate peace with Sultan Mustafa II. Without Leopold's support, however, Peter doubted whether he could expel the Ottomans from the northern shore of the Black Sea. Having evicted them from Azov in 1696, he aimed at evicting them from the Crimea by capturing Kerch.[5]

1 Cf., Posselt, *Lefort*, ii. 487; Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia*, iii. 127; Schwarcz, 'Velikoe posol'stvo', pp. 58ff.
2 Paulmann, *Pomp und Politik*, pp. 30-7.
3 For Peter I's meeting with William III of England at Utrecht in Sept. 1697, see G. Barany, *The Anglo-Russian Entente Cordiale of 1697-8: Peter I and William III at Utrecht* (New York, 1986), esp. p. 67.
4 Cf. Bogoslovskii, *Petr I*, ii. 471; Schwarcz, 'Velikoe posol'stvo', p. 59. See also, J. P. Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (London, 1977), p. 9.
5 Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, p. 22.

The emperor, in his turn, needed friendly relations with Muscovy to form a bulwark against the Ottomans to dissuade them from renewing the war; the private meeting represented the need of each for the other's alliance.[1] Nevertheless, the Habsburgs' decisive victory over the Ottomans at Zenta in September 1697 had enabled Leopold I to propose peace on the basis of *uti possidetis*: the negotiations led in 1699 to the peace of Karlowitz.[2] Leopold sought peace owing to the cost and the possibility of a new struggle in western Europe: the peace of Ryswick had ended the Nine Years War with France in 1697 without resolving the conflict between France and Austria, at a time when the deteriorating health of Charles II of Spain was likely to provoke a new war with France over the succession to the Spanish throne.[3] Thus, although the Austrian Habsburgs wished Peter I to succeed against the Ottoman empire, Leopold could not allow the ceremonies at the private meetings to represent more than a degree of general political goodwill that did not jeopardize his own dynastic interests. Nor could he fulfil the implications of the remarks made to Peter during the festivities.

No attempt was made to represent, in a ceremony, the two rulers' stances towards the Ottoman war. Imperial officials and Peter I exchanged information during the negotiations without concerning themselves with status and prestige. Naturally, the negotiations, being verbal exchanges, are distinguishable from contacts that relied for communication on a non-verbal language of symbol. Nonetheless, the negotiations may not be separated from the other two forms of diplomatic encounter, nor did they occupy the political arena while the others were confined to courtly pageantry. The negotiations were constrained by the forms of diplomatic dialogue. Although the prerequisite for official negotiations was the public audience with the emperor, the Grand Embassy only requested one three days after the negotiations had come to an end. Therefore, the negotiations had to remain secret.

What is more, the negotiations had to be secret because they were conducted in a way that contradicted the political messages the ceremonies conveyed. This point is exemplified in a conversation on 6 July between Peter I and Count Kinsky, who led the imperial delegation.[4] Peter wished to discuss the war in person once an exchange of letters between the court and the embassy had revealed that peace between the Austrian Habsburgs

1 Schwarcz, 'Velikoe posol'stvo', pp. 65ff.
2 See V. Matveyev, *The Karlowitz Congress and the Debut of Russia's Multilateral Diplomacy (1698-9)* (Leicester, 2000), passim.
3 See D. McKay and H. M. Scott, *The Rise of the Great Powers, 1648-1815* (London, 1983), ch. 3.
4 For Kinsky, see S. Sienell, *Die geheime Konferenz unter Kaiser Leopold I.: personelle Strukturen und Methoden zur politischen Entscheidungsfindung am Wiener Hof* (Frankfurt am Main, 2001), pp. 190ff.

and the Ottomans was inevitable.[1] As negotiating with the emperor in person was inconceivable, the Grand Embassy sought to make personal contact between the tsar and a senior Habsburg official who, unlike the Russian ambassadors, did not have 'representative character'. As Kinsky, supposedly, merely conveyed information to the Grand Embassy on the emperor's behalf, conversations with him need not be constrained by the issue of monarchical precedence nor need the tsar appear incognito.

Evgenii Shmurlo argues that Peter I stripped off his disguise and put it back on whenever it suited him, that the incognito was under his sole control: he 'declined meetings with rulers nowhere […] he gave visits to them and received them in return […] he conducted negotiations, visited banquets, gave and received gifts – and all this was performed in his privileged position as tsar.'[2] It is true that Peter conducted the negotiations at Vienna in his capacity as ruler of Muscovy. But this does not imply that he slipped out of his incognito when attending balls or meeting with officials and courtiers. The symbolic forms of communication used at the imperial court prohibited such behaviour. As tsar of Muscovy, he could meet the emperor's officials to discuss state affairs in camera. On all other occasions, he was bound by the rules of diplomatic practice. To have appeared before the imperial court in his majestic persona without pre-arrangement would have openly challenged the emperor's authority.

In conversation with Kinsky, the tsar criticized the emperor on the grounds 'that the conditions of the peace are determined according to the will of his Imperial Majesty, although it should have been agreed by consent of all [his] allies'.[3] He managed to make Kinsky admit that the peace was attributable to the emperor's debts. Such a statement mismatched the ceremonial symbols that represented the Holy Roman Emperor as the pre-eminent ruler on earth whose prestige should have been an indicator of his wealth and power. Such criticism from Peter I's diplomats, in their official role as his representatives, or more rigorous demands for changes to the ceremonies, would have been perceived as an insult from a lesser to a greater power. The forthright discussion required by divergent political interests was inconceivable, in public, given the established hierarchy. The negotiations had to be secret lest they contradict the public ceremonial messages witnessed by the court or released to the press. It is no wonder that, in the press, pomp and ceremony were the

1 Report, Grand Embassy, 21 June 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1334ff.

2 E. Shmurlo, 'Kriticheskie zametki po istorii Petra Velikago', *Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, cccxxix (1900), 73, followed by Bogoslovskii, *Petr I*, ii. 15; Wittram, *Peter I.*, i. 133; Hughes, *Age of Peter the Great*, p. 23.

3 Report, Grand Embassy, 26 June 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1355. For the negotiations, see Bogoslovskii, *Petr I*, ii. 474-81.

political focus on the Grand Embassy; the information about the Ottoman war remained scarce and vague.[1]

The ceremonies at the private meetings also, by implication, belied the substance of the negotiations. Kinsky told Peter I that the emperor did not want to be called to account before God for the Christian blood being shed, when he had the opportunity to end the fighting. Peter, openly questioning Leopold I's loyalty, replied that the Ottomans were weak. He added, accurately, that 'the Emperor hurries to make peace because of the succession to the Spanish throne and the war with the French, and thus leaves his allies in great displeasure';[2] he accused him of being willing to abandon his allies and renege on his agreements.

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That Peter I's language contradicted the symbolic language used at both the private meetings and the public ceremonies explains why negotiations with other states were walled off, in secret, from the sphere that represented claims to status. Secrecy – that is, the absence of ritual-imposing witnesses – permitted mutual criticism without the risk of destabilizing relationships between courts.[3]

The essence of power is usually restricted to, for instance, military forces, availability of material resources, and the number of subjects ruled. But struggles over ceremonies were no less struggles for power. The ability to gain the social respect from others within a hierarchical community affected power relationships. Ceremonial victory or defeat created the position of a ruler within this hierarchy. In the age of the court society, they were treated as a sign of the latter's authority, his potential to lay claim to privileges before others beneath him. As Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz acknowledged in 1701 (when pondering on the nature of kingship on occasion of the coronation of the first Prussian king, Frederick I), it was equally *essential* for the authority of a ruler to gain the esteem of his fellow monarchs in corresponding ceremonies in order to be in the position to demand the rights and privileges he deserved according to his status, irrespective of the gap that might exist between his claim to power and the real forces in his possession.[4]

1 A. Blome, *Das deutsche Russlandbild im frühen 18. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur zeitgenössischen Presseberichterstattung über Russland unter Peter I* (Wiesbaden, 2000), p. 84.
2 Report, Grand Embassy, 26 June 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1357.
3 Cf. the discussion of secrecy in early modern politics, A. Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1994), ch. 2.
4 G. W. Leibniz, 'Anhang, betreffend dasjenige, was nach heutigen Völker-Recht zu einem König erfordert wird', in *Leibnitz's Deutsche Schriften*, ed. G. E. Guhrauer (Berlin 1838/40), ii. 303-12. See also, Stollberg-Rilinger, *'Honores Regii'*, pp. 5ff.

Whereas the Muscovite ambassadors feared the lowering of their sovereign's status, the emperor saw his position atop the hierarchy confirmed by the reassertion of his prestige. The emperor won the zero-sum game in that the Muscovites failed to extract a single token of higher status for the tsar. The ambassadors saw as humiliation[1] the empire's answer to Muscovy's claim to equal status: one that fitted Muscovy into the European state hierarchy as a power ruled by a monarch equal to any other sovereign, including the emperor. Only by refusing could the emperor buttress his claim to pre-eminence.

The Grand Embassy's treatment shows that, at the end of the seventeenth century, the tsar was still not seen to be an ally but, at best, as an associate. The setback over ceremonies, the failure to persuade the emperor to continue the war against the Ottomans, and the disregard of Muscovy's interests during the peace negotiations at Karlowitz – when the tsar was confronted with a fait accompli that belied the promises the emperor had made – show that Muscovy *was* a weak power in the eyes of its European contemporaries: had the emperor perceived the tsar to be a powerful ruler and potent ally against the sultan, he might have buttressed the alliance by granting Peter I more public ceremonial recognition.

If, however, ceremonial signals represented and thereby created power relationships, the emperor had no choice other than to refuse the demands made by the Muscovite ambassadors, even if he had valued the tsar as an ally. Imperial officials understood that both emperor and tsar operated in a hierarchical world, a delicate web of reciprocal power relationships in which concessions to allies over ceremonies could amount to the loss of power in the face of enemies. Austria, after containing the Ottoman empire at Zenta and halting the expansion of France by the treaty of Ryswick, was one of the strongest of the European powers. But the emperor predicted a new struggle to maintain his power and status relative to France in the struggle over the Spanish succession. Thus, the emperor could not imperil his own status by paying greater honours to the tsar than were usually paid to kings such as the king of France. Peter I, who asked for the emperor's assistance, lacked the means of levering the imperial court into recognizing his ceremonial claims to higher authority.

The constraints of public ceremony and the needs of secret negotiations did not preclude the representation of strong personal bonds. In an age when international politics were more a personal affair between rulers than a business between nation states, an alliance was an interpersonal relationship. The alliance between Peter I and Leopold I and the emperor's personal esteem for the tsar are not disproved by their failure to influence the

1 Report, Grand Embassy, 12 July 1698 (OS), *PDS*, viii. 1385-7.

public ceremonies; they were communicated privately. Thus, the political messages exchanged between the Grand Embassy, the emperor, and the court as witness conflicted with one another. The language of hierarchy represented in the public ceremonies contradicted the language of brotherhood represented at the private meetings, and both conflicted with the language of practical politics represented in the negotiations about the Ottoman war. Yet all the parties involved – emperor, tsar, Muscovite ambassadors, imperial ministers, and Habsburg courtiers – proved to be versatile actors when balancing the pomp of monarchy with the circumstance of foreign affairs.

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