



RUSSIA AND COURTLY EUROPE

Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648–1725

JAN HENNINGS

Russia and Courtly Europe

In this new book on early modern diplomacy, Jan Hennings explores the relationship between European powers and Russia beyond the conventional East–West divide from the Peace of Westphalia to the reign of Peter the Great. He examines how, at a moment of new departures in both Europe and Russia, the norms shaping diplomatic practice emerged from the complex relations and direct encounters within the world of princely courts rather than from incompatible political cultures. He makes clear the connections between dynastic representation, politics, and foreign relations and shows that Russia, despite its perceived isolation and cultural distinctiveness, participated in the developments and transformations that were taking place more broadly in diplomacy. The central themes of this study are the interlocking manifestations of social hierarchy, monarchical honour, and sovereign status in both text and ritual. Related issues of diplomatic customs, institutional structures, personnel, negotiation practice, international law, and the question of cultural transfer also figure prominently.

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Jan Hennings

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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Notes on Transliteration, Spelling, and Dates</i>	xi
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xii
Introduction	1
Geometry of Power: Court Society and Diplomacy	12
Ritual and Recognition	15
Contemporary Definitions of Diplomatic Ceremonial	19
The Court and the Public	22
1 Barbarous Ceremonies? Russia's Places in Early Modern Diplomacy	25
Russia: A Blind Spot in the System?	25
Discourses of Russian Barbarism	35
Ceremonial Counterpoints	44
Ceremonial Discourse and Its Sources: Who Were the Barbarians?	63
2 Facts and Fictions: The Organisation of Diplomatic Practice	69
The Ambassadorial Chancellery	69
<i>Pristavy</i> , <i>Introducteurs des Ambassadeurs</i> , and Masters of Ceremonies	77
Ceremony and the Written Word	82
The Sovereign's Breath and Voice: Representation and Diplomatic Ranks	90
Differences and Similarities	108
3 Through the Prism of Ritual: Anglo-Russian Encounters in the Seventeenth Century	112
Routine	112
The Embassies of Dokhturov and Colepeper (1645–1649)	115
The Commonwealth's Embassy to Russia (1655)	122
Prozorovskii's Embassy (1662/63)	127
Reading between the Gestures I: Aleksei Mikhailovich vs. Louis XIV	131
Carlisle's Embassy (1663/64)	139
Reading between the Gestures II: Perception and Deception	154

4	Stage and Audience: The Grand Embassy to Vienna (1698) and Peter I's Visit to Paris (1717)	160
	Vienna 1698	160
	Public Ceremonies	167
	Divertissements	171
	Private Meetings	177
	Secret Negotiations	182
	Paris 1717	187
5	From Insult to Emperor: Changes and Continuities in the Reign of Peter I	202
	Anti-ceremonial Peter?	202
	Ceremony and Reform	208
	Ceremonial Knowledge	215
	Peter I's Honour and the British Constitution	220
	Emperor	237
	Empire	239
	Conclusion	247
	<i>Bibliography</i>	255
	<i>Index</i>	292

Illustrations

- I.1 Geometria and Justitia watching the social order.
Frontispiece to J. B. v. Rohr, *Einleitung zur Ceremoniel-Wissenschaft der grossen Herren* (Berlin, 1733). URL: <http://digital.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/hd/content/pageview/1116988>. Reproduced by permission of Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle (Saale). page 13
- 1.1 Public audience of Ambassador Petr I. Potemkin at Versailles in 1681 (BnF, Estampes et Photographie, Reserve QB-201(59)-Fol-Hennin, 5223). Reproduced by permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France. 37
- 2.1 Portraits from the *Tsarskii tituliarnik* (1672). In order of appearance: Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, King Louis XIV, Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, Elector of Brandenburg Frederick William (RGADA, f. 135, otd. V, rubr. III, no. 7, ll. 50, 118, 132, 196). Reproduced by permission of Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov. 73
- 3.1 Title page to G. Miede, *A relation of three embassies from His Sacred Majestie Charles II to the great Duke of Muscovie, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark, performed by the Earl of Carlisle in the years 1663 and 1664* (London, 1669). Reproduced by permission of Houghton Library, Harvard University, and ProQuest – *Early English Books Online*. 155
- 3.2 *Posol'skaia kniga*, Russian account of Charles II's 1663 embassy to Moscow (RGADA, f. 35, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 1, 2). Reproduced by permission of Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov. 155
- 4.1 Bird's-eye view of Peter I's Grand Embassy's sojourn in Vienna (1698). 162
- 4.2 Reconstruction of the floor plan of the Favorita (first floor). E. Schöss, *Baugeschichte des Theresianums in Wien* (Vienna, 1998), p. 58. 168

- 4.3 Viennese ceremonial record: The public audience of Peter I's Grand Embassy at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor (HHStA, ZA Prot, 5, fol. 431v). Reproduced by permission of Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna. 170
- 4.4 Russian ceremonial records: The Russian sketch of the Grand Embassy's public audience (RGADA, f. 32, op. 1, d. 45, l. 649ob). Reproduced by permission of Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov. 171
- 4.5 Depiction of the *Wirtschaft* festivity held in the Favorita in honour of Peter I's Grand Embassy to Vienna. *Historisch-Politischer Kalender* (1698). Printed in V. S. Moldavan, V. T. Pashuto, V. T. *Moskva: illiustrirovannaia istoriia*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1984–86), I, p. 142. 173
- 4.6 List of the participants of the *Wirtschaft* (HHStA, ZA Prot, Bd. 5, fol. 439). Reproduced by permission of Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna. 174
- 4.7 The seating plan at dinner at the *Wirtschaft*. *Theatri Europaei Continuati Funffzehender Theil / Das ist: Abermalige Außführliche Fortsetzung Denck- und Merckwürdigster Geschichten* (Frankfurt a. M., 1707), p. 474. Reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library. 175
- 4.8 Viennese ceremonial records: Sketch of the gallery in the Favorita, depicting the positions taken by the participants during the private meeting between Peter I and Leopold I (HHStA, ZA Prot, 5, fol. 423). Reproduced by permission of Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna. 179
- 5.1 Depiction of the peace celebrations held at the Russian ambassador's residence in Paris on the event of the Peace of Nystad 1721 (AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, l. 399). Reproduced by permission of Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi imperii. 207

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Notes on Transliteration, Spelling, and Dates

The transliteration of Russian words and names follows the Library of Congress system apart from names that have become familiar in other spelling (such as Peter I or Catherine II). All translations from Russian, German, and French sources are my own, unless otherwise indicated. The spelling has been retained as it appears in the original sources. Unless otherwise specified in the text, dates are given according to the Old Style Calendar then in use in both Russia and Britain, except in [Chapter 4](#) where dates follow the New Style which was used in most parts of continental Europe. The beginning of the year is uniformly taken as 1 January. Where in doubt, it is assumed that resident diplomats followed the style in use at the court where they resided.

Abbreviations

AAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
<i>ADB</i>	<i>Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie</i>
AN	Archives nationales
AVPRI	Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi imperii
ÄZA	Ältere Zeremonialacten
BA	Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal
BM	Bibliothèque Mazarine
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
Bodl. Libr.	Bodleian Library
CP	Correspondance politique
d.	<i>delo</i> (file)
fol(s).	folio(s)
f.	<i>fond</i> (collection)
HHStA	Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv
<i>IPO</i>	<i>Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis</i>
l., ll.	<i>list, listy</i> (folio, folios)
MD	Mémoires et documents
NS	New Style (Gregorian Calendar)
ob	<i>oborot</i> (verso)
op.	<i>opis'</i> (inventory)
OS	Old Style (Julian Calendar)
otd.	<i>otdel</i> (section)
<i>PDS</i>	<i>Pamiatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenii drevnei Rossii s derzhavami inostrannymi</i>
<i>PiB</i>	<i>Pis'ma i bumagi imperatora Petra Velikogo</i>
<i>PSZRI</i>	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii</i>
RGADA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov
rubr.	rubric
<i>SIRIO</i>	<i>Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva</i>
SP	State Papers
TNA	The National Archives
v	verso
ZA Prot	Zeremonialprotokolle

Introduction

In July 1721, the Russian ambassador Prince Vasilii L. Dolgorukov called on the home of the French secretary of state for foreign affairs, Cardinal Guillaume Dubois, to congratulate him on his recent promotion to the cardinalate. The diplomat's visit ended on Dubois' doorstep before it even began, however, owing to the cardinal's fastidious refusal to grant Dolgorukov or any foreign representative the customary right to the place of honour – 'the right hand' – in his house, a refusal which caused much commotion among the diplomatic corps in Paris.¹ Dubois explained to Dolgorukov that 'the subordination to the hierarchies and ranks, that form the constitution of a state, belong to the customs and conventions which foreign representatives are bound to follow; otherwise they would act against the law of nations because they would violate the public order'.² Defending his actions, the cardinal alluded to well-documented precedents from the preceding century, conferring on his decision the power of historical example and reminding the ambassador that 'there are not two courts where the ceremonial would be the same in all circumstances'.³ The Russian diplomat deduced that Dubois was irked by the prospect of forfeiting his rank as state secretary if he should surrender the honour position in the ritual. Dolgorukov reverted to his sovereign, Tsar Peter I, for advice on how to proceed in this 'considerable business'.⁴

This episode serves as more than a testament to the wider anthropological assumption that ritual is inherent to human action.⁵ It is also

¹ Dolgorukov to Peter I, 24 July 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, ll. 217ob–19ob.

² Dolgorukov to Peter I, 11 August 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, l. 248.

³ Dubois referred to an edition of A. de Wicquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (The Hague, 1681), pp. 542ff. Dolgorukov to Peter I, 11 August 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, ll. 248, 249ob.

⁴ Dolgorukov to Peter I, 4 August 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7., ll. 239–40ob.

⁵ W. James, *The ceremonial animal: a new portrait of anthropology* (Oxford, 2003), p. 7. The anthropological literature on ritual is too voluminous to be discussed here. For an overview, see C. M. Bell, *Ritual theory, ritual practice*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 2009). An up-to-date historical introduction is B. Stollberg-Rilinger, *Rituale* (Frankfurt a. M., 2013).

emblematic of early modern political culture more broadly, which was punctuated with similar instances of incessant manipulation and disputes over punctiliousness of ceremony. Honour, as displayed in face-to-face interaction, and how it was documented, pervaded almost all areas of early modern life. Political and social practices relied on the presence of the protagonists for the demonstration of rank and prestige which, in a thoroughly hierarchical society, controlled access to privilege, power, and political participation. The representation of status was inseparable from politics and policy because such rituals did not merely reflect existing social structures and power relations but also produced these structures, or, as witnessed by Dubois: they constituted the public order.⁶

This nexus between personal presence, status performance, symbolic practice, and political representation encompassed the world of dynastic courts, and their elites, as much as life in the city, in the university, in local government, across large polities, and in the colonies of the New World.⁷ Ceremonies and subtleties of honour were also important generators of both the social order and political legitimacy in early modern Russia, as a long and distinguished tradition in the study of political

⁶ B. Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne: Begriffe – Forschungsperspektiven – Thesen', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 31 (2004), 489–527. For the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of face-to-face society (*Anwesenheitsgesellschaft*), see R. Schlögl, 'Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden: Formen des Sozialen und ihre Transformation in der Frühen Neuzeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 34 (2008), 155–224.

⁷ The present book owes many of its insights to recent German-language research that has recovered the links between symbols and politics and shaped new approaches to the pre-modern world, mainly at the Münster-based Collaborative Research Centre 'Symbolic Communication and Social Value Systems from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution', and notably in B. Stollberg-Rilinger's work on the Holy Roman Empire. See her *The emperor's old clothes: constitutional history and the symbolic language of the Holy Roman Empire*, trans. T. Dunlap (New York, Oxford, 2015). See also D. Cannadine, 'Introduction: divine rites of kings', in *Rituals of royalty: power and ceremonial in traditional societies*, ed. D. Cannadine, S. R. F. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 1–19; M. J. Braddick, 'Administrative performance: the representation of political authority in early modern England', in *Negotiating power in early modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland*, ed. M. J. Braddick, J. Walter (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 166–87. For courts, J. Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550–1780* (Cambridge, 2003), ch. 6; G. Sternberg, *Status interaction during the reign of Louis XIV* (Oxford, 2014). For universities, see M. Füssel, *Gelehrtenkultur als symbolische Praxis: Rang, Ritual und Konflikt an der Universität der frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt, 2006). For towns, T. Weller, *Theatrum Praecedentiae: zeremonieller Rang und gesellschaftliche Ordnung in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt, Leipzig 1500–1800* (Darmstadt, 2006); A. Krischer, *Reichsstädte in der Fürstengesellschaft. Zum politischen Zeichengebrauch in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt, 2006), and P. Seed, *Ceremonies of possession in Europe's conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), for colonies.

rituals and the role of rank and precedence (*mestnichestvo*) in Russian history has shown.⁸

The principles that governed life at home also held true abroad. Even for the most courtly and haughty ambassador, whether European or Russian, the display of honour in direct contact was more than an expression of vain formality, personal pride, or self-worth. It was a constitutive component of a state's sovereignty and legitimacy, and as such was precious and well-protected capital in relations between states. Early modern diplomats, then, faced a dilemma. How did diplomacy establish effective communication between rulers over long distances if their political culture necessitated ritual and bodily presence? Complex structures of diplomatic representation resulted from this paradox, including convoluted hierarchies, a large variety of roles, innumerable distinctions, and projections of power that through the continual mise-en-scène of sovereign dignity and rank maintained the international order.

This book is about Russia's place in that order. It explores Russian foreign relations through the lens of ritual and court culture in the crucial phase before Russia's rise as a so-called great power in the eighteenth century. Russia (or Muscovy, as it was known to foreign visitors until the eighteenth century) usually escapes traditional accounts of diplomatic history in the search for the origins of modern foreign relations. Russia might not have participated in the achievements of Renaissance diplomacy with its classic ideal of the resident diplomat, and, lying on the edge of Europe, it took some time to contribute to the rise of modern

⁸ For an overview, see M. S. Flier, 'Political ideas and rituals', in *The Cambridge history of Russia*, ed. M. Perrie, D. C. B. Lieven, R. G. Suny, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 2006), I, pp. 387–408. For Muscovy, R. O. Crummey, 'Court spectacles in seventeenth-century Russia: illusion and reality', in *Essays in Honor of A. A. Zimin*, ed. D. C. Waugh (Columbus, 1985), pp. 130–58; N. S. Kollmann, 'Ritual and social drama at the Muscovite court', *Slavic Review*, 45 (1986), 486–502; P. A. Bushkovitch, 'The epiphany ceremony of the Russian court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Russian Review*, 49 (1990), 1–17; M. S. Flier, 'Breaking the code: the image of the tsar in the Muscovite Palm Sunday ritual', in *Medieval Russian culture*, ed. M. S. Flier, D. B. Rowland (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 213–42; D. Miller, 'Creating legitimacy: ritual, ideology, and power in sixteenth-century Russia', *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 21 (1994), 289–315; N. S. Kollmann, *By honor bound: state and society in early modern Russia* (Ithaca, NY, 1999); S. Bogatyrev, *The sovereign and his counsellors: ritualised consultations in Muscovite political culture, 1350s–1570s* (Helsinki, 2000); A. Berelowitch, *La hiérarchie des égaux: la noblesse russe d'Ancien Régime (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2001); D. B. Rowland, 'Architecture, image, and ritual in the throne rooms of Muscovy, 1550–1650: a preliminary survey', in *Rude & barbarous kingdom revisited: essays in Russian history and culture in honor of Robert O. Crummey*, ed. C. S. L. Dunning, R. E. Martin, D. B. Rowland (Bloomington, IN, 2008), pp. 53–71. For imperial Russia, see R. Wortman, *Scenarios of power: myth and ceremony in Russian monarchy*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ, 1995/2000); E. A. Zitser, *The transfigured kingdom: sacred parody and charismatic authority at the court of Peter the Great* (Ithaca, NY, 2004).

diplomacy by integrating itself as member of the European states-system rather reluctantly.⁹ But the gulf at the beginning of the early modern period between the new diplomacy of southern and western Europe and the continent's eastern fringes requires qualification, as from the later Middle Ages Muscovite diplomatic practice, and also that of both Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire, was evolving in processes not at all dissimilar to the ways in which connections between ritual, communication, negotiation, and military conflict shaped Renaissance diplomacy.¹⁰

A seemingly distant world, Russia of course remained a remote and exotic land for early modern Europeans.¹¹ Yet, diplomacy is also always concerned with crossing cultural boundaries over large distances, some more penetrable than others. The last two decades have seen a renaissance of diplomatic history under the label of the 'new diplomatic history' which has shifted the perspective away from the study of great – essentially European – affairs, and the modern state-focused notion of international relations, to a broader appreciation of cross-cultural exchange, individual actors, and the complexity of early modern polities in the evolution of diplomatic practice.¹²

⁹ The *locus classicus* is G. Mattingly, *Renaissance diplomacy* (New York, NY, 2009, originally published in 1955), and M. S. Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy, 1450–1919* (London, 1993). Russia's place in early modern international relations will be discussed in [Chapter 1](#). For a balanced critique of Mattingly, see M. Mallett, 'Italian renaissance diplomacy', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 12 (2001), 61–70. See also C. Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: the rise of the resident ambassador* (Cambridge, 2015), for a recent nuanced assessment of resident diplomacy.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, esp. chs. 3 and 5; I. Lazzarini, *Communication and conflict: Italian diplomacy in the early Renaissance, 1350–1520* (Oxford, 2015). For Muscovy, R. M. Croskey, *Muscovite diplomatic practice in the reign of Ivan III* (New York, London, 1987). See also the materials in the composite work by G. Labuda, W. Michowicz, eds., *The history of Polish diplomacy X–XX c.* (Warsaw, 2005), and A. S. Kaminski, *Republic vs. autocracy: Poland-Lithuania and Russia, 1686–1697* (Cambridge, MA, 1993). A similar argument has been put forward by D. Goffman, 'Negotiating with the renaissance state: the Ottoman empire and the new diplomacy', in *Early modern Ottomans: remapping the empire*, ed. V. Aksan, D. Goffman (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 61–74.

¹¹ M. Poe, 'A distant world: Russian relations with Europe before Peter the Great', in *The world engages Russia*, ed. C. Whittaker (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 2–23.

¹² See T. Sowerby's forthcoming survey of the field, 'Approaches to early modern diplomacy', *History Compass* (2016). Only a selection of representative examples from the growing body of literature can be included here. Most contain useful overviews with ample references to further individual case studies: D. Frigo, ed., *Politics and diplomacy in early modern Italy: the structure of diplomatic practice, 1450–1800*, trans. A. Belton (Cambridge, 2000); C. Windler, 'Diplomatic history as a field for cultural analysis: Muslim-Christian relations in Tunis, 1700–1840', *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), 79–106; T. Osborne, *Dynasty and diplomacy in the court of Savoy: political culture and the Thirty Years' War* (Cambridge, 2002); H. Kugeler, C. Sepp, G. Wolf, eds., *Internationale Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ansätze und Perspektiven* (Hamburg, 2006); L. Bély, *L'art de la paix en Europe: naissance de la diplomatie moderne, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 2007); J. Watkins, 'Toward a new diplomatic history of medieval and early modern

In diplomacy, then, the geopolitical distance between Russian and European rulers gradually gave way to physical proximity, as diplomatic representatives journeyed through vast expanses of land or across seas, slowly approaching the centre of the realm to face the monarch in his chambers. From the moment of crossing the border to the first public audience with the sovereign and beyond, the actions of diplomatic dignitaries were governed by an elaborate ceremonial. The prince invested his diplomat with surrogate authority, and each of his actions, however arbitrary or 'symbolic', acquired the importance of a political synonym that could initiate and alter relationships, for better or for worse. Ritual provided the structure for the diplomat's interactions with his host from the frontier to the capital, assuming ever-greater grandeur and complication as he approached the centre of power.¹³

Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38 (2008), 1–14; H. v. Thiessen, C. Windler, eds., *Akteure der Aussenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel* (Cologne, 2010). T. Hampton, *Fictions of embassy: literature and diplomacy in early modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY, 2009); J. Black, *A history of diplomacy* (London, 2010); R. Adams, R. Cox, eds., *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011); C. Brauner, *Kompanien, Könige und caboceers. Interkulturelle Diplomatie an Gold- und Sklavenküste, 17.-18. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2015); P. Burschel, C. Vogel, eds., *Die Audienz: ritualisierter Kulturkontakt in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2014); D. Riches, *Protestant cosmopolitanism and diplomatic culture: Brandenburg-Swedish relations in the seventeenth century* (Leiden, Boston, 2013), esp. the introduction for a useful summary of the new diplomatic history; M. van Gelder, T. Krstić, 'Cross-confessional diplomacy and diplomatic intermediaries in the early modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 19 (2015).

¹³ The best introduction is A. Krischer, 'Souveränität als sozialer Status: zur Funktion des diplomatischen Zeremoniells in der Frühen Neuzeit', in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. R. Kautz, J. P. Niederkorn, G. Rota (Vienna, 2009), pp. 1–32. See also W. J. Roosen, 'Early modern diplomatic ceremonial: a system's approach', *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980), 452–76; L. Wolff, 'A Duel for ceremonial precedence: the Papal Nuncio versus the Russian ambassador at Warsaw, 1775–1785', *International History Review*, 7 (1985), 235–44; 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 Russia, see, among others, C. Garnier, "'Wer meinen Herrn ehrt, den ehre ich billig auch". Symbolische Kommunikationsformen bei Gesandtenempfangen am Moskauer Hof im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte*, 7 (2005), 27–51; C. Roll, 'Europäische Gesandtschaften am Zarenhof: Zeremoniell und Politik', in *Zarensilber: Augsburger Silber aus dem Kremlin*, ed. C. Emmendorffer, C. Trepsch (Munich, 2008), pp. 30–55; M.-K. Schaub, 'Comment régler des incidents protocolaires? Diplomates russes et françaises au XVII^e siècle', in *L'incident diplomatique (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, ed. L. Bély, G. Poumarède (Paris, 2010), pp. 323–36; R. Schilling, 'Kommunikation und Herrschaft im Moment der Ankunft: Ein Empfang in Moskau (1603) und eine Audienz in Versailles (1686)', in *Die Ankunft des Anderen: Repräsentationen sozialer und politischer Ordnungen in Empfangszeremonien*, ed. S. Baller et al. (Frankfurt a. M., 2008), pp. 135–51. The most comprehensive, in-depth study on the subject focuses on the eighteenth century: O. G. Ageeva, *Diplomatičeskii tseremonial imperatorskoi Rossii. XVIII vek*. (Moscow, 2012).

Some interpretations locate these ritual procedures in the sphere of spectacle, propaganda, ideology, and myth, describing them as an ‘original expression of [Russian] national culture’.¹⁴ Leonid A. Iuzefovich sees a reason for this distinctive Russianness in the fact that the emerging Muscovite state believed itself to be exposed to numerous cultural influences and desired to assert its own place in the international arena after it had gained independence from the Mongols.¹⁵ One main occupation in the study of diplomatic ritual has been indeed the search for clues of Russian national identity and the cultural origins of Muscovite diplomacy. While the spectrum ranges from Western to Asian or Mongol; to Byzantine, Old-Russian, Polish-Lithuanian; or a mixture of all those strands, the ramification remains the same, that Russian ceremonial exhibited a double-layered foreignness: it emerged from foreign influences and remained deeply foreign to European diplomatic culture.¹⁶ Russia distinguished itself from other cultures by receiving various traditions and moulding them into an expression of self-consciousness which was genuinely Russian: by implication, this saw a radical break under Peter I when Russian diplomacy became essentially European. Conversely, the tsars’ sense of magnificence demonstrated at secular and religious solemnities, as well their claim to imperial superiority, is often seen as a symbol of Muscovy’s exotic Orthodox ritualism which caused amazement and wonder among visitors to the Russian court. As one scholar put it, an obstacle to Peter

¹⁴ L. A. Iuzefovich, ‘*Kak v posol’skikh obychaiakh vedetsia*’: *Russkii posol’skii obychai kontsa XV – nachala XVII v.* (Moscow, 1988), p. 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11f. See also the revised version: *Put’ posla: russkii posol’skii obychai. Obikhod. Etiket. Tseremonial. Konets XV – pervaiia polovina XVII v.* (St Petersburg, 2007), p. 13.

¹⁶ N. I. Veselovskii, ‘Tatarskoe vliianie na russkii posol’skii tseremonial v moskovskii period russkoi istorii’, in *Otchet o sostoianii i deiatel’nosti Imperatorskogo S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta za 1910*, ed. I. A. Ivanovskii (St Petersburg, 1911), pp. 1–19; V. I. Savva, *Moskovskie tsari i vizantiiskie vasilevsy: o vliianii Vizantii na obrazovanie idei tsarskoi vlasti moskovskikh gosudarei* (Khar’kov, 1901, reprint, The Hague, Paris, 1969), pp. 191, 268–70; Also representative for pre-revolutionary historiography: V. Leshkov, *O drevnei russkoi diplomatii* (Moscow, 1847), pp. 57ff., passim. L. A. Iuzefovich, ‘Russkii posol’skii obychai xvi veka’, *Voprosy istorii*, 8 (1977), 114–26; Iuzefovich, *Put’ posla*, pp. 5–13; I. Semenov, *U istokov kremlevskogo protokola: istoriia vozniknoveniia rossiiskogo posol’skogo tseremoniala i nrvy Kremliia v XV–XVII vekakh* (Moscow, 2005), pp. 197ff. For a Soviet account that stresses western but accommodates certain Byzantine and indigenous Slavic influences, see V. P. Potemkin et al., eds., *Istoriia diplomatii*, 2nd rev. edn., 5 vols. (Moscow, 1959–1979), I, pp. 303–15. It is interesting to note that the first edition of this work (published in 1941) had argued that Russian ceremonial was a faithful copy of its Western counterpart. The later ‘Stalinist’ revision added some Byzantine and original Slavic origins. This point is noted in G. Scheidegger, *Perverses Abendland, barbarisches Russland: Begegnungen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im Schatten kultureller Missverständnisse* (Zurich, 1993), p. 30.

I's contacts with the West, Russian diplomatic practice before Peter I 'had become frozen in an elaborate ritual whose many formalities and details admitted of little modification; it seemed all too often that protocol, rather than negotiation, had become its chief preoccupation'.¹⁷ Such interpretations address the important aspect of the uses of ceremony in the display of national cultural and ideological legacies, but they obfuscate complex patterns of political interaction in early modern diplomacy. This was a period – aptly characterised by Hillard von Thiessen as 'diplomacy of the *type ancien*' – when international relations were still a personal affair between rulers embedded in multilayered networks of diplomatic actors rather than the domain of representatives of national governments; a period when the idea of the nation as a political actor was still unborn and the socio-hierarchical environment of princely courts provided the dominant model for diplomats acting on a distinct combination of protocol and political practice.¹⁸

This book builds on the new diplomatic history and grapples with the old but persistent juxtaposition of Russia and Europe or, in its more encompassing version, Russia and the West. A core theme in Russian historiography, shaped by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intellectual debates, Cold War rivalries, and strict chronological divisions, this distinction may have appeared just as strange to early modern contemporaries as their obsessive concern with ceremony appears to us.¹⁹ This book firmly places 'Russia and the West' within the diplomacy of the *type ancien* and consciously avoids essentialising diplomatic cultures as specifically Russian or European. But this is not an easy task. The particular challenge lies in being unable to resolve these antitheses in anything other than the language of antithesis. Oppositions like this have defined both thought and language of generations of diplomatic historians.²⁰ Methodological reorientation, selection of different source materials, and analytical rigour will not make them go away. It appears impossible, even futile, to escape the firmly rooted

¹⁷ A. Bohlen, 'Changes in Russian diplomacy under Peter the Great', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, 7 (1966), 341–58, here on p. 343.

¹⁸ H. v. Thiessen, 'Diplomatie vom *type ancien*. Überlegungen zu einem Idealtypus des frühneuzeitlichen Gesandtschaftswesens', in *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen*, ed. H. v. Thiessen, C. Windler, pp. 471–503.

¹⁹ See Daniel Rowland's compelling discussion of the Russia/West dichotomy in early modern history: Rowland, 'Architecture', p. 62. For a recent debate about the Petrine and Russia/West divide and its wider implications for early modern Russian historiography, see Bushkovitch, 'Change and culture in early modern Russia' and N. S. Kollmann, 'A deeper early modern: a response to Paul Bushkovitch', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 16 (2015), 291–329.

²⁰ I. B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'the East' in European identity formation* (Manchester, 1999), esp. ch. 3, for Russia; R. N. Lebow, *A cultural theory of international relations* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 10.

vocabularies of a tradition that the present work interrogates across both Russian and diplomatic history.²¹ As a result, I will use these oppositions liberally throughout this comparative venture, not in order to imply that such distinctions determined early modern foreign relations in any way but to remind the reader that despite existing discourses of otherness and mutually ascribed stereotypes, the concrete practice of face-to-face encounter may well contradict and challenge the assumptions that we draw from a deeply ingrained notion of cultural difference.²²

The book's chief aim, then, is to locate Russia in a context of wider, transcultural developments in early modern diplomacy by understanding diplomatic representation from within the practice and documentation of ritual itself, rather than by tracing the cultural origins of power imagery and myth and reifying idiosyncratic ceremonial traditions. It confronts the widely published ethnographical literature about 'the rude and barbarous kingdom' with the routines and ruptures of diplomatic encounters, bringing into sharp relief the differences and interdependencies between discourse and practice.²³ A basic assumption in the history of international relations has been the supremacy of the territorially bounded, sovereign nation state and that, in turn, diplomatic culture emerged from national traditions.²⁴ The book breaks away from this convention. It transcends the national paradigm and argues that diplomatic culture was itself a product of continuous cultural exchange.²⁵

²¹ The general implications of this problem have been elaborated in D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton, NJ, Oxford, 2000), esp. pp. 4f. and passim in the introduction.

²² I believe that a more radical approach – to drop such juxtapositions and vocabularies all together – would either lead to the use of awkward language or sweeping attempts at correlating political entities in novel ways, ultimately replacing one problem with another. A similar challenge presents the use of commonly established terms such as 'international', 'states-system', 'great power', or even 'diplomacy', which had not assumed their contemporary meaning before the eighteenth or the end of the eighteenth century. I will continue to use these terms for the sake of consistency although I am keenly aware – and it is indeed the purpose of this book to raise the awareness – that their modern connotations more often than not belie the distinct nature of early modern foreign relations. For 'diplomacy' and 'great power', see 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, B. Simms (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58–85, here on pp. 58f.; H. M. Scott, *The emergence of the eastern powers, 1756–1775* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 7–10. For 'international', see Lebow, *A cultural theory*, p. 10.

²³ L. E. Berry, R. O. Crumme, eds., *Rude & barbarous kingdom: Russia in the accounts of sixteenth-century English voyagers* (Madison, WI, 1968).

²⁴ For a survey of international political thought that considers international relations beyond the idea of state sovereignty and aptly puts the nation state in historical perspective, see E. Keene, *International political thought: a historical introduction* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 1–22.

²⁵ I follow Clifford Geertz's classic notion that 'culture, here, is not cults and customs, but the structure of meaning through which men give shape to their experience, and politics is

The practice of diplomacy provided an arena in which representatives of different or overlapping norm systems negotiated the meaning of body language, of words and symbols that provided procedures to engage in diplomatic dialogue. Therefore, the book focuses on the negotiation of diplomatic norms in direct interaction, both verbal and non-verbal, rather than locating the evolution of diplomatic practice in the indigenous customs or ideologies of political communities whose confrontations resulted in an involuntary clash of pre-existing and incompatible values.²⁶ It adopts a comparative perspective in order to clarify how dynastic competition impeded or expedited the standardisation of rules and procedures of diplomacy beyond national boundaries and to show to what degree Russia participated in this process. It argues that shared concepts of honour, prestige, and courtly representation involved Russian, Habsburg, English, French, and other European diplomats in a similar rivalry over the resources of glory and status. Disagreements arising from irreconcilable claims to status signified mutual understanding of what was politically at stake. Concrete ceremonial practice differed within Europe from court to court, as well as between Europe and Russia. And yet, in this arena of diplomacy, conflict, more often than not, was a sign of common discernment rather than an expression of cultural misunderstanding.

It is not the purpose of this book to give a comprehensive account of late Muscovite as well as Petrine diplomacy and foreign relations. The entire work combines, in chronological order, an exploration of Russia's images in various types of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literatures with a series of case studies of Russian–European encounters from the Peace of Westphalia (1648) to the end of Peter I's reign (1725). The convergence of increased diplomatic activity in Russia since the 1650s and new developments in diplomacy in the century after the Thirty Years' War offers good grounds for comparing Russian–European practices from the second half of the seventeenth century until the early eighteenth century.²⁷

not coups and constitutions, but one of the principal arenas in which such structures publicly unfold'. C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973, reprint, 2000), p. 312. See also his definition of 'culture' in *ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁶ Such an approach to early modern diplomacy, which emphasises the negotiation of norms and the flexibility of intercultural practices as opposed to the notion of a cultural clash, has been advanced by Christian Windler in his pioneering work on French consuls in the Maghreb: C. Windler, *La diplomatie comme expérience de l'Autre: consuls français au Maghreb (1700–1840)* (Geneva, 2002), esp. pp. 29ff; 549ff. For a recent inspiring discussion of cultural commensurability and its production through, amongst others, diplomatic encounters and intercultural communication, see S. Subrahmanyam, *Courtly encounters: translating courtliness and violence in early modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

²⁷ See B. N. Floria, *Russkoe gosudarstvo i ego zapadnye sosedi: 1655–1661 gg.* (Moscow, 2010), pp. 10ff., for Russian diplomacy. For post-1648 diplomacy, see [Chapter 1](#) below.

Any analysis of Russian diplomatic practice that treats Peter I's reign as a volte-face risks contrasting ritual behaviour as anachronistic and fundamentally 'Muscovite' with a European, bureaucratic, and more rational diplomacy introduced by Peter I. In order to redress the balance between such continuities and discontinuities, the present study examines Russian diplomatic practice across the conventional Petrine divide.²⁸ What follows is a prelude that bears out the connections between ritual, hierarchy, sovereignty, concepts of majesty, and social status, examining how the mindset of early modern court society, with its deeply ingrained sense of dynastic supremacy, impacted on foreign relations in the age of the baroque, a period that is also known to have witnessed the gradual emergence of the European states-system.

Chapter 1 briefly traces Russia's place in the international order through its prevailing image as an exotic outsider, as promoted in early modern ethnography, international law, diplomatic theory, contemporary state descriptions and historiography. It then shifts the perspective to introduce new materials and discuss the reasons for the integration of Russian rulers into the precedence system by contemporary scholars of *ius praecedentiae* (precedence law) and *Zeremonialwissenschaft* (ceremonial science). This angle provides some first counterpoints against Muscovy's diplomatic outlier status proliferating in the literature more common to students of Russian history, as these authors consciously incorporated Orthodox Russia into the ceremonial sphere of sovereigns well before the rise of Peter I, despite their pronounced reservations about Russian culture and customs.

The following four chapters peel away the layers of discourse by analysing diplomatic face-to-face encounters in order to confront the discursive image of Russia with the reality of diplomatic practice. These chapters move away from abstract norms regulating conflicts over dynastic supremacy and political power status and explore the tsars' place in concrete ritual junctures at prominent Western courts (Vienna, Versailles, and London) as well as the treatment of diplomatic dignitaries in Moscow and St Petersburg. Ceremonial records, memoirs, diplomatic reports and correspondences, as well as courtly media, form the basis for these chapters. Locating Russia in the wider picture of early modern court culture and its bearing on diplomacy requires a comparative approach that brings Russian and Western language materials into a dialogue beyond mere

²⁸ See also R. E. Martin, 'The Petrine divide and the periodization of early modern Russian history', *Slavic Review*, 69 (2010), 410–25; D. Ostrowski, 'The end of Muscovy: the case for circa 1800', *Slavic Review*, 69 (2010), 426–38; and Nancy Kollmann's balanced response: N. S. Kollmann, 'Comment: divides and ends – the problem of periodization', *Slavic Review*, 69 (2010), 439–47.

juxtaposition. This book uses both published and unpublished materials from libraries and archives in Great Britain, France, and Austria, as well as their equivalents from the Russian archives as an empirical basis for comparing diplomatic interactions closely with regard to the ways in which the production of these texts was enmeshed with ceremonial practice itself (and vice versa).²⁹ Such comparisons neither lead to the postulation of a single unified diplomatic sphere, nor do they lay bare the cultural bedrocks of fundamentally different practices. Instead, they permit to explore differences, similarities, and variances across diplomatic cultures beyond the assumptions about cultural incompatibility which prevail in much of Western early modern discourse about Russia and its historiographic legacy. A comparative study of ritual practices – court personnel, ceremonial procedure, argument strategies in asserting precedence, the codification of precedents, diplomatic ranks, etc., helps to understand how convergences and variations across diplomatic cultures could evolve within shared patterns of communication.

Chapter 2 opens with an overview of the administration of diplomatic procedure, focusing on Russia and covering, in a comparative perspective, basic aspects of institutional structures, personnel, the formation of diplomatic ranks, as well as the documentation of ceremony. This chapter clarifies central terms used in French, English, German, and Russian in order to trace the multidirectional transfer of ceremonial practice between European courts and to discern the specificities of Russia's participation in this process.

Chapter 3 begins with a survey of the routine of an embassy at the Russian court as a foil to the actual conflicts and ruptures that emerged from disagreements over ritual procedures. Based on English ambassadors' dispatches, Russian embassy reports, and the documentation of diplomats' sojourns in Moscow, this chapter reconstructs, as an example for Muscovite diplomacy, how both the English and Russians battled over the norms that underpinned their political exchanges in the second half of the seventeenth century and how this process influenced the negotiation of trade privileges, the main concern of Russian–English diplomacy in both the Commonwealth and Restoration periods.

Chapter 4 examines the role of ceremonies in politics during both Peter I's Grand Embassy at the court of Leopold I in Vienna in 1698 and the negotiations of an alliance treaty between Russia, Prussia, and France in Paris in 1717. These two milestones of Russia's relations with the Holy Roman Empire and Franco-Russian diplomacy highlight both the beginning and an advanced stage of an important transition period in Russian

²⁹ The sources will be introduced and discussed in **Chapter 2**.

diplomatic practice. At the same time they exemplify many important features of diplomatic dialogue in the early modern period: the mechanisms of ceremonial, its inherent difficulties and tactics to surmount these through strategies such as incognito or the pretended absence of ceremony, European court's insecurity in dealing with Russia, its recognition as a Christian power, and the ambivalent role of the tsar as a diplomat. This chapter continues to investigate the relationship between negotiation and court pageantry, yet its specific focus is on the participants' and the public's role in the rituals.

The **final chapter** returns to the court of the tsar, tracing changes and continuities of diplomatic practice under Peter I. It shows that, while the reforms he introduced did not completely eradicate Muscovite practice, they rather adapted the pre-existing norms that his predecessors had negotiated in diplomatic relations with other powers. Even if these transformations signalled a clear change in Russian diplomacy, the underlying norms that imbued political practice with notions of honour and hierarchy fundamentally remained the same, as can be seen in the related legal and ceremonial consequences resulting from the 1708 arrest of Andrei A. Matveev, Peter I's ambassador in London. The book concludes by exploring a precedent that rises the apogee of Russian claims to status. It examines Peter I's justifications for styling himself as *imperator* in 1721, suggesting that the tsar's powerful ceremonial coup which reorganised what Dubois called the 'public order', adopting the imperial title, was a new departure based on the continuation of old practice.

Geometry of Power: Court Society and Diplomacy

Historians almost universally accept that *gloria* and honour pervaded all areas of early modern life, especially that of court society: 'This was a culture in which status counted for everything.'³⁰ An allegorical frontispiece to a popular eighteenth-century handbook of ceremony and decorum (Figure I.1) illustrates contemporary efforts to measure and codify such intangible values as prestige and honour. Geometria leans against a ball-headed obelisk, the symbol of the *gloria principis*.³¹ She gauges the honour of princes with units of 'Titulaturen, Courtoisien, References, Compliments, Ceremonien', labelled on a measuring rod extending vertically along the

³⁰ T. C. W. Blanning, *The pursuit of glory: Europe, 1648–1815* (London, 2008), p. 113.

³¹ For a discussion of the image, see M. Vec, *Zeremonialwissenschaft im Fürstenstaat: Studien zur juristischen und politischen Theorie absolutistischer Herrschaftsrepräsentation* (Frankfurt a. M., 1998), pp. 167f., based on G. Frühsorge, 'Vom Hof des Kaisers zum "Kaiserhof": Über das Ende des Ceremoniells als gesellschaftliches Ordnungsmuster', *Euphorion*, 78 (1984), 237–65, here pp. 249f.

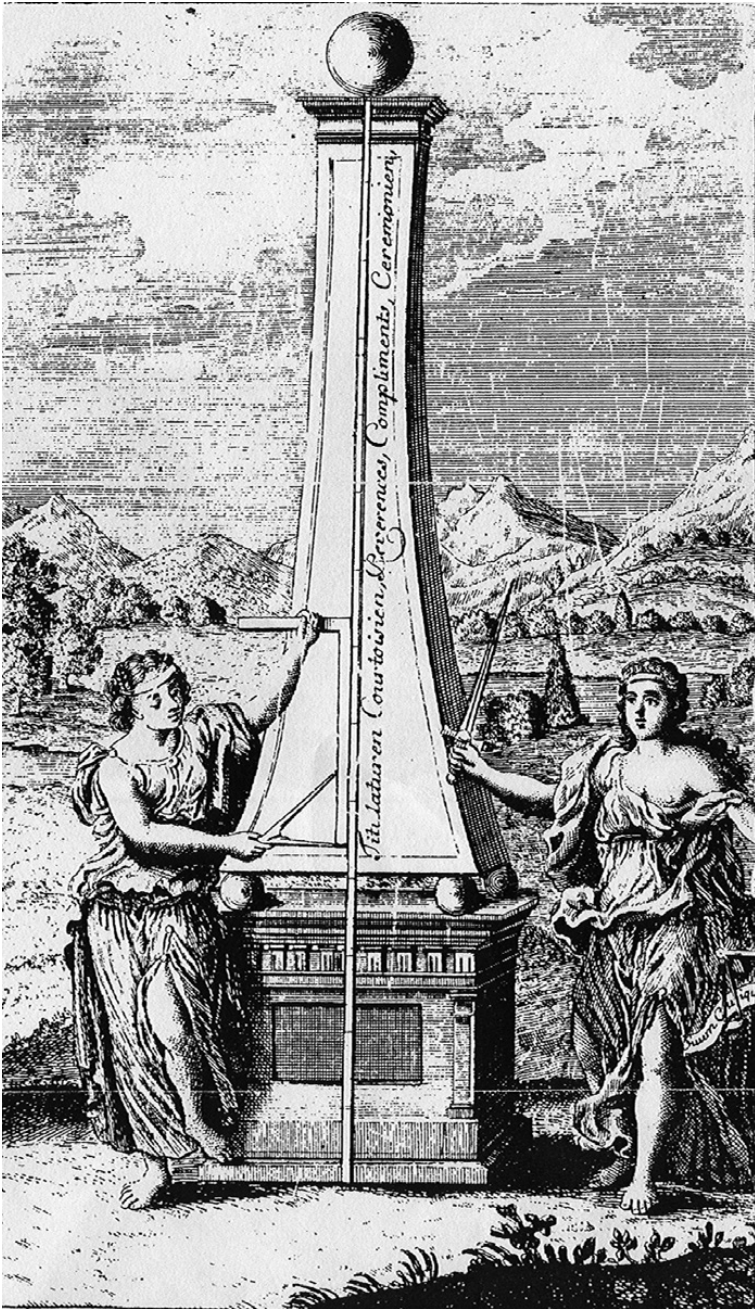


Figure I.1 Geometria and Justitia watching the social order.
Frontispiece to J. B. v. Rohr (1729).

monument. Across from Geometria stands Justitia, with a noticeably tense posture. No blindfold blocks her view. In her right hand Justitia bears a sword, and in her left hand she carries a scale with the words *suum cuique* engraved across the top. Justitia cautiously observes Geometria's work. With vigilant eyes and a raised sword, she watches to ensure that 'to each his own' honour is being distributed in a *just* manner, according to social status.

In the vocabulary of diplomatic historians, 'status' is a familiar term, often reappearing as 'great power status'. The term encapsulates a central theme of diplomatic history, namely 'a state's standing within the international hierarchy'.³² According to Hamish Scott, 'a "great power" was simply one that could be recognised to be relatively much stronger and therefore to dominate its lesser rivals'.³³ Indeed, the history of diplomatic relations has traditionally been an account of the rise of European nation states competing for great power status. This process eventually led to the formation of the pentarchy (France, Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia) that, since the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), dominated international politics through the nineteenth century.³⁴ Great power status measured the ability of a state to mobilise its material resources and establish itself as a military power that was recognised as a full player in this balance of power.³⁵

Status and its manifestations in hierarchy, rank, and prestige are common themes of this book but in a very different sense of the word. Here, it is important to introduce a distinction between 'great power status' in the sense of military domination in the states-system, on the one hand, and the form of status that expressed monarchical rank and international standing in the age of court society, on the other. The measurability of might was an issue that remained ambiguous throughout the early modern period. Taking account of military strength alone was not sufficient

³² Scott, *Emergence*, p. 8. ³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ The founding text of diplomatic history which created this master narrative is L. v. Ranke, 'Die großen Mächte', *Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift*, 2 (1833), 1–51. Its legacy is continued and developed further by distinguished recent historians of early modern international relations, see for example D. McKay, H. M. Scott, *The rise of the great powers 1648–1815* (London, 1983), and H. M. Scott, *The birth of a great power system, 1740–1815* (Harlow, 2006), for an updated survey. For a discussion, see Scott, 'Diplomatic culture', pp. 58ff. See also F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the pursuit of peace: theory and practice in the history of relations between states* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 4f. (on Ranke) and ch. 8.

³⁵ Classic overviews are H. Duchhardt, *Balance of Power und Pentarchie: internationale Beziehungen 1700–1785* (Paderborn, 1997); C. Gantet, *Guerre, paix et construction des états, 1618–1714* (Paris, 2003); K. Malettke, *Hegemonie – Multipolares System – Gleichgewicht: Internationale Beziehungen 1648/1659–1713/1714* (Paderborn, 2012), and, for Russia, A. N. Sakharov, ed., *Istoriia vneshnei politiki Rossii: konets XV v.–1917 g.*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1995–1999).

to assess the power of a monarch, or the standing of a court in the international hierarchy.³⁶ To be sure, military victory generated prestige, but members of court society also mobilised different kinds of resources: status crucially depended on the recognition by others, granted through ceremonies, titles, compliments, etc. – Geometria’s measuring units.

While it is easy to agree that honour, status, and prestige played an important role in the fragmented societies of early modern Europe, it is difficult to specify precisely how glory and international prestige were defined, how they were interconnected, and why they mattered.³⁷ Were they simply rewards for effective state organisation and successful warfare? Were they themselves the organising pattern or the motivating reason for military and political undertakings? What was the link between early modern court culture – whose tropes are epitomised by Geometria’s units of measure – and foreign relations in the early modern period? This section takes some steps towards developing the connection between the princely court, ritual, and international politics before the ensuing chapters will turn to mutual perceptions and encounters between Russia and courtly Europe.

Ritual and Recognition

The independence and equality of sovereign states are today formally protected by international law as principles governing the conduct of international relations.³⁸ Diplomatic protocol, by symbolising the principles, harmoniously represents the political process in its reduced form.³⁹

Conflicts over protocol during difficult negotiations still occur in the modern age.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practice, as presented in diplomatic dispatches, comes across to the modern observer as a curious and never-ending dispute about lavish ceremonies

³⁶ H. Kluebing, *Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten: das aussenpolitische Machtproblem in der ‘politischen Wissenschaft’ und in der praktischen Politik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1986), p. 15. See also a more recent synthesis of the subject: J. Black, *Great powers and the quest for hegemony: the world order since 1500* (London, 2008), pp. 67ff.

³⁷ An answer to this question has been attempted by Lebow, *Cultural theory*, who invokes the ancient Greeks and stresses the universal human need for self-esteem, recognition, and personhood.

³⁸ R. H. Steinberg, ‘Who is sovereign?’, *Stanford Journal of International Law*, 40 (2004), 329–49.

³⁹ J. R. Wood, J. Serres, *Diplomatic ceremonial and protocol: principles, procedures and practices* (London, 1970), pp. 17ff.

⁴⁰ For an interesting example from the Cold War, see S. Schattenberg, “‘Gespräch zweier Taubstummer?’ Die Kultur der Außenpolitik Chrusčevs und Adenauers Moskaureise 1955’, *Osteuropa*, 7 (2007), 27–46.

arranged for visiting dignitaries.⁴¹ In early modern diplomatic culture, the relationship between ceremonial symbols and mechanisms of power was closer and of greater importance than it is today. Whereas today, protocol is used to anticipate and pre-empt controversies over status, in early modernity it was expressly designed to signify the relative status of an honoured guest and his sovereign host.⁴²

Diplomatic practice was inextricably linked with the code of conduct prevalent among the aristocratic elite at princely courts.⁴³ In a hierarchical society where honour and prestige were basic values, social respect was the currency used to secure the coveted places at the top along with the power that came with those positions.⁴⁴ Prestige generated privilege that could neither be bought with money nor acquired through education. Prestige was the symbolic capital that the aristocracy derived from its reputation, the age of a dynasty, titles, the proximity to the ruling prince, and other means which were difficult to manifest beyond their symbolic representation.⁴⁵

This feature of court life confronted the contemporaries with a major problem: prestige is an elusive thing. It does not itself create a tangible value and only exists in the moment of its display. Yet, the symbolic recognition of prestige and honour constituted the right to privilege and

⁴¹ Especially in Russia, 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 (1)*, ed. D. Herrmann (Munich, 1989), pp. 149–78.

⁴² Bély, 'Cérémonial'; Roosen, 'Ceremonial'.

⁴³ Thiessen, 'Diplomatie vom *type ancien*', p. 485f. A concise introduction is, L. Frey, M. Frey, *The history of diplomatic immunity* (Columbus, 1999), pp. 207–17. For the nobility, see H. M. Scott, *The European nobilities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, 2 vols. (London, New York, 1995). For a survey of the growing literature on dynastic courts, see J. Duindam, 'Early modern court studies: an overview and a proposal', in *Historiographie an europäischen Höfen (16. – 18. Jahrhundert): Studien zum Hof als Produktionsort von Geschichtsschreibung und historischer Repräsentation*, ed. M. Völkel, A. Strohmeier (Berlin, 2009), pp. 37–60. For the Russian court, 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 Ancien Régime 1500–1750*, ed. J. Adamson (London, 1999), pp. 295–313; P. Keenan, *St Petersburg and the Russian court, 1703–1761* (Basingstoke, 2013), eps. pp. 6–8. See also P. Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: the struggle for power, 1671–1725* (Cambridge, 2001), that emphasises the strong role of the court in politics and heavily draws on foreign diplomats' correspondences. See also P. V. Sedov, *Zakat Moskovskogo tsarstva: tsarskii dvor kontsa XVII veka* (St Petersburg, 2006), for Tsar Fedor Alekseevich's reign.

⁴⁴ Krischer, 'Souveränität als sozialer Status'.

⁴⁵ The implicit reference is to Bourdieu's concept of interchangeable forms of capital: P. Bourdieu, *The logic of practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1992, reprint, 1999), pp. 112–21, *passim*. For an exemplary study that discusses and fruitfully applies Bourdieu's distinction of economic (material resources), cultural (books, cultural knowledge, academic titles), social (networks), and symbolic capital (prestige based on an act of recognition) to the aristocratic elite at the imperial court, see A. Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711–1740)* (Darmstadt, 2003).

allowed its carrier to assert authority over others within a community of shared expectations.⁴⁶ The distribution and redistribution of power that accompanied the gain in or loss of prestige was expressed in elaborate and expensive ceremonies and entertainments at the court.⁴⁷

In the light of the modern state, and ideological debates surrounding it, courtly pageantry has often been misunderstood as irrational and superfluous, a mere show to gratify a ruler's taste for extravagance. The ideal of secular and effective rulership that worked independently of its pompous representation formed a leitmotif of nineteenth-century scholarship. This ideal exposed the moral failures of absolutistic rulers who abused the state's financial resources for the luxurious needs of court society.⁴⁸ As such, ceremonial conflict emerges as a non-political, irrational, and irrelevant formalism, counterproductive to the business of politics.⁴⁹

At the early modern court, however, rational behaviour was understood to be what helped to preserve or increase, by symbolic means, one's potential for power within the hierarchy.⁵⁰ The essence of state power,

⁴⁶ See the classic definition of honour by J. Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and social status', in *Honour and shame: the values of Mediterranean society*, ed. J. G. Péristiany (London, 1966), pp. 21–77. Honour understood as 'a right to respect' is also emphasised by F. H. Stewart, *Honor* (Chicago, London, 1994). The Russian court's precedence system (*mestnichestvo*) is a good example for the inextricable relationship between a noble's place in court ritual and service appointments in military, diplomacy, and administration, see Kollmann, *By honor bound*, esp. pp. 1–30, and Kollmann, 'Social drama', esp. p. 487.

⁴⁷ The classic is, N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der Aristokratie mit einer Einleitung: Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Neuwied, Berlin, 1969). Although the correlation between power potential (*Machtchancen*) and ceremony has not been questioned, Elias' narrow focus on the monarch has come under attack. J. F. v. Kruedener, *Die Rolle des Hofes im Absolutismus* (Stuttgart, 1973) and H. C. Ehalt, *Ausdrucksformen absolutistischer Herrschaft: der Wiener Hof im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1980) largely adopt Elias' approach in theory. See Pečar, *Ökonomie der Ehre*, pp. 296–301, for a study that challenges the monarch-centred perspective. On whether Elias' findings are generally transferrable to other European courts, see A. Winterling, *Der Hof der Kurfürsten von Köln, 1688–1794: eine Fallstudie zur Bedeutung 'absolutistischer' Hofhaltung* (Bonn, 1986), pp. 151–70. For a fundamental critique, see J. Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the early modern European court* (Amsterdam, 1994), esp. pp. 192–95.

⁴⁸ See Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's assessment of Johann Gustav Droysen's and Ranke's derogatory comments about the coronation of Elector Frederick III into Frederick I, King in Prussia: 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. For a discussion of the 'Verschwendungsargument', see Ehalt, *Ausdrucksformen*, pp. 16–19; Kruedener, *Rolle des Hofes*, pp. 18–24.

⁴⁹ P.-M. Hahn, U. Schütte, 'Thesen zur Rekonstruktion höfischer Zeichensysteme in der Frühen Neuzeit', *Mitteilungen der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 13 (2003), 19–47.

⁵⁰ Elias, *Höfische Gesellschaft*, p. 141, points out that this particular form of 'court rationality' only appears to be irrational in the light of the modern understanding of rational behaviour which is essentially based on economic optimisation and the increase of financial means of power.

in a more modern sense, 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 win the respect of others within a hierarchical community affected power relationships. Ceremonial victory or defeat secured the position of a ruler within this hierarchy. In the age of court society, they were treated as both sign and substance of the latter's authority, his potential to lay claim to privileges before others beneath him and, importantly, to participate in the political process. As Gottfried W. Leibniz acknowledged in 1701 (when pondering on the nature of kingship on the occasion of the coronation of the first Prussian king, Frederick I), a monarch had to cement his authority through ceremonial honours in order to gain the esteem of other sovereigns and exercise his rights and demand his privileges effectively, irrespective of any mismatch between his claimed status and 'hard power'.⁵¹

A monarch did not *eo ipso* embody the independence and power of a state. Sovereignty was a matter of constant recognition of his or her status in the social order. For that, military might alone was not enough. Sovereignty was not conceived of in the abstract. Because it meant less the independence of the state than the social status of the ruler, it was signified by the ceremonial treatment of his persona.⁵² Only by establishing his claims to status ceremonially could a claimant hope to join the group of independent polities and lay claim to the corresponding privileges. Gaining the *honores regii*, for example, as did Frederick III in 1701 by putting a crown on his head, was an indispensable step towards firmly establishing the elector's *ius legationis*, his right to receive and send ambassadors, and ultimately, to participate in diplomatic dialogue.⁵³

Thus, honour and prestige were important determinants of sovereign status 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

⁵¹ 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, 2 vols. (1838/1840), II, pp. 303–12. For a discussion, see Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Honores regii', pp. 5ff.

⁵² This point is elaborated in Krischer, 'Souveränität als sozialer Status'.

⁵³ Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Honores regii'. See also C. Clark, 'When culture meets power: the Prussian coronation of 1701', in *Cultures of power*, ed. H. M. Scott, B. Simms, pp. 14–35, for an interpretation of the coronation ritual. See also C. Clark, *Iron kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947* (London, 2006), pp. 67ff. For a discussion of the *ius legationis*, see H. Kugeler, "'Le parfait ambassadeur.'" The theory and practice of diplomacy in the century following the Peace of Westphalia' (unpublished DPhil dissertation, University of Oxford, 2006), pp. 130ff.