

PERFORMANCE OF DIPLOMACY IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD, Symposium, 17–18 March 2017, Vienna, Don Juan Archiv

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An international symposium ‘The Performance of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World’ took place in Vienna, on 17–18 March 2017. The two-day conference was organized by the Don Juan Archiv Wien (represented by Suna Suner and Reinhard Eisendle) in cooperation with the University of Granada (Laura Oliván Santaliestra) and Stvdivm Faesvlanvm (Ernst Weidinger and Marcel Molnár). The participants gathered to discuss diplomacy as a spectacle, a performance, an artistic endeavour, orchestrated events and festivities, in which the foreign ambassador played the main role, while the rulers and members of his host court were members of the audience. The conference primarily focused upon, firstly, the presentation of the sphere of diplomatic relations from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries as a ground for cultural exchange, and secondly, the role of an ambassador as a cultural mediator. The organizers particularly encouraged presentations on theatricality of diplomatic missions – the role of an ambassador both as an actor and as an impresario, interactions between court ceremonies and theatrical performances, the role of performance in political and diplomatic communication, and the cultural origins of diplomatic performances. The theatricality of diplomacy can also be understood literally – theatres could have served as diplomatic spaces, while actors and other performers could have served as diplomatic agents, spies and informants. It was the second of the diplomatic history conferences to have been organized by the Don Juan Archiv. In 2016, a symposium ‘Gender and Diplomacy: Women and Men in European and Ottoman Embassies from the 15th to the 18th Century’ took place at the same location in Vienna. Before that, and in parallel with the diplomatic history conferences, the Don Juan Archiv organized a series of symposia on Ottoman Empire and European Theatre From the Beginnings to 1800 – the first of these took place in 2008.

The first day’s proceedings began with introductions and greetings from the conference organizers representing the host institutions, and with opening lectures,

given by Nathalie Rivere de Carles ('Theatres of Diplomacy. Thinking, Performing and Perfecting Diplomacy on the Early Modern Stage'), Wilhelm Berger ('Diplomacy and Melancholy') and Matylda Urjasz-Raczko ('The Performance of Otherness. Two Polish-Lithuanian Diplomats on Their Missions to the Mediterranean World [1627–1647]'). After a short coffee break, all participants once again gathered in the main Conference Room for a panel on secrecy and provocation in diplomacy. The papers here assessed the role of ambassadors as secret agents and spies who created and developed networks of information, or who, through provocation and disrespect, ensured the failure of their mission. The symbolic significance of the ambassadors' appearance at public events and the use of this opportunity for informal and secret negotiations were discussed by Elizabeth Montanez Sanabria, Maria Telegina and John Condren.

In the afternoon, two parallel panel sessions were held. The first featured a series of papers addressing rituals and performance of transitional diplomacy, concerning the wedding of a Holy Roman Emperor to a Portuguese princess (Tiago Viúla de Faria), and on papal diplomacy and ceremonies, which detailed the reception and dispatching of ambassadors. That included presentations on how to receive the Pope's representative (the case of Tudor England, described by Ekaterina Domnina) and how to properly send one to Rome (the case of the admiral of Castile, outlined by Cristina Aguero). The other panel session was dedicated to the performance of diplomacy in Ottoman-European relations. Rubén González Cuerva approached the subject in a slightly unorthodox way: instead of concentrating on the space of conflict between the West and the East, he showed the common space of understanding, describing an alliance between the Catholic emperor Charles V and the Muslim king Muley Hassan in light of their extraordinary meeting in Tunis. This was a cross-cultural encounter which also required an extraordinary ceremonial setting. The second paper, from Maria Pia Pedani, focused on the inverse – a space of misunderstanding and the significance of cultural differences in diplomatic communication, using the example of Venetian correspondence with Istanbul. The last presentation, by Zsuzsanna Cziráki, discussed the question of representation in diplomatic communication in the case of multicultural states. The speaker raised the question of Hungary's role in Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic relations, and of who exactly the Austrian Habsburgs' ambassador in Istanbul was representing.

The second afternoon panel session of the conference's first day followed a similar structure: it featured papers focusing on the ways in which art was used to provide space for diplomatic negotiations. Two papers – by Teresa Chirico and Lars-Dieter Leisner – discussed how musical performances, such as concerts or balls, were simultaneously used as (back)stage for diplomatic games. Cristina Fernandes also addressed the aspect of space, albeit in a more direct, literal way.

She introduced to the audience the issue of how one Portuguese ambassador used and arranged the space of Basilica of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli in Rome as a theatrical stage for diplomatic purposes. The final presentation by Pilar Diez Del Corral touched upon a somewhat different, more social issue of human relations. Interpersonal interactions, in this case between the queen dowager of Poland, Maria Kazimiera, and foreign ambassadors and their wives in Rome, also constituted space for diplomatic competition and the symbolic struggle for domination. The speaker also took a closer look at relations between ambassadors themselves and their spouses (ambassadors), and assessed how a 'working couple' found their way in the world of early modern diplomacy. That session was followed by another, presenting reflections on European-Ottoman diplomatic relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first paper by Özgür Kolcak dealt with the embassy of imperial ambassador Walter Leslie to Adrianople and Constantinople; while Yasir Yilmaz presented another imperial ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Albrecht Caprara, and the written account of his secretary, Johann Giovanni Benaglia. The two final papers, by Seyfi Kenan and Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, were dedicated to international matters, as the panellists crossed more borders and focused on diplomatic relations between Ottoman envoys and permanent embassies with European states in the eighteenth century.

The second day of the conference again brought parallel sessions. During the first of these, the audience were treated to two presentations focused on texts of diplomacy. Both speakers are specialists in early modern Spanish history, and they had investigated two types of primary source. The first paper gave an insight into documents describing diplomatic performance, in which 'visual language' had to be translated into writing. Abel Servien's funeral speeches ('Oraisons Funèbres'), were the main subject of the second presentation by Conchi Gutierrez. Both presentations showed how performance could have been described, and how words could influence what was seen by spectators.

During the second morning session, focusing on the Imperial Court, three scholars from the Czech Republic presented different cases from the second half of the seventeenth century. The opening paper by Rostislav Smíšek was a result of critical investigation into the writings of Ferdinand Joseph of Dietrichstein, the Master of the Court during the reign of Leopold I, while two others (by Michaela Buriánková and Lenka Maršáľková) presented personalities of some of the foremost imperial diplomats, such as the Count of Kaunitz, and Ferdinand Popel von Lobkowitz. From the last two presentations we learned how imperial diplomats considered that organising festivities in the name of the Emperor was part of their diplomatic duties.

After the break, all participants reunited on the joint panel titled 'Moscow and Paris'. Speakers here discussed different organisational issues of diplomatic

performance, and their meaning according to the hierarchy and the non-verbal communication between the rulers and their subjects. The first paper (by Marta Jaworska) was on performance at the Tsar's Court in the late sixteenth century, as an important part of the foreign ambassadors' receptions. Following this, Jan Waszink outlined the question of sufficient order of ambassadors during ceremonial pageantry, according to Hugo Grotius' blueprint. The panel ended with Philippa Woodcock's presentation on the fireworks which accompanied Parisian public ceremonies more and more often in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries.

The afternoon sessions – two concerning the role of music and theatre in diplomatic performance and the other two dealing with the diplomatic activities of Florence and Genoa – brought more extremely interesting papers, including a study of theatrical performances presenting the myth of Troy, which were used in a strictly political endeavour of creating an anti-Ottoman alliance in 1502 (Attila Györköös). Next, a theoretical approach to theatre-diplomacy connotations was presented by Clemens Peck. The speaker investigated 'the mimetic relations' between actor and character played by him, in comparison to an ambassador and a sovereign he represented. The third presentation, from Irena Veselá, described how opera could have had a very important political connotation, especially when it had been ordered by a newly-crowned king, in this case Emperor Charles VI. *Costanza e Fortezza*, written by Pietro Pariati, was part of a specific communication process between the ruler and his subjects. The following paper, co-authored by Giuseppina Raggi and Andrea Sommer-Mathis, showed how diplomatic events could stimulate cultural exchange between monarchs, using the example of Austrian-Portuguese relations in the mid-eighteenth century. The next presentation (by Vera Grund) also considered cultural diplomacy issues. This time the main character was Giacomo Durazzo, imperial ambassador in Venice, who tried, without success, to introduce French theatre into the *Serenissima*. The last paper presented during this panel revealed how Ottoman ambassadors perceived European culture on grounds of different artistic performances, such as opera and theatre, showed to them at western courts (Hilal Çiftçi & Türkan Polatçı Demirkol).

The session on Florence and Genoa, started with a discussion on satiric correspondence between Niccoló Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini, who had exchanged fake letters in which they discussed important matters concerning the Florentine state (Sergius Kodera). Thanks to the second speaker, Maria Alberti, the audience became more acquainted with Persian ambassadors' reception in Florence during the reign of Cosimo II de Medici. The final speaker of the session, Armando Fabio Ivaldi, analysed the use of ephemeral devices, such as scenography for diplomatic performances, funeral catafalques or arches of triumph, indicating that they were a very important part of artistic activity in seventeenth-century Genoa.

This session was followed by one focusing on ceremony and legitimation. The audience here learned that the political importance of particular embassies did not always play a decisive role when it came to spending money on celebrations. Dorothea Nolde showed this in the first paper, by presenting the case of a major festival in Hanover in 1679. Konrad Bielecki focused in his paper on the use of exotic animals as a representation of power, emphasising the case of the Indian elephant given to the Emperor Maximilian II, and exhibited to the crowd of Antwerp in 1569. Ceremonial entries to various towns and cities were also discussed in the final two papers. The first of these, by Camille Desenclos, dealt with a brilliant example concerning the extraordinary embassy of the Duke of Angoulême to Ferdinand II and Vienna in 1620. The second, by Ondřej Stolička, analysed the ceremonial entrance of rulers and diplomats at the court of Charles II of Spain.

This conference was a good opportunity to discuss performance as an important part of diplomatic interaction. Along with the conferences organised by the Premodern Diplomats Network, these Viennese symposia can become an important element in discussions among historians specializing in early modern diplomacy. The example of Splendid Encounters conferences has proved how much that aspect of academic activity is needed. Thereby, the participation of Don Juan Archiv representatives in the sixth edition of Splendid Encounters, held later in 2017 in Lisbon, shows the links between the two organizations and can be an example of a growing network and a new international platform for exchanging methods and ideas.