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**DIPLOMACY, POWER AND CEREMONIAL ENTRY:
POLISH-LITHUANIAN GRAND EMBASSIES
IN MOLDAVIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

I

In 1700, a grand embassy, headed by the *voievode* of Łęczycza, Rafał Leszczyński, set out on its way to Istanbul. As it was the first embassy of this rank to move between the two capitals after the peace between Poland-Lithuania and the Sublime Porte had been restored in 1699, the mission was crucially important. Leszczyński was to push for the revision of some arrangements stipulated in the Karlowitz treaties, demand the incorporation of the Moldavian towns of Hotin (Ukr. Khotyn; Pol. Chocim) and Cernăuți (Ukr. Chernivtsi; Pol. Czerniowce) to the Polish Crown, keep an eye on the peace negotiations between the Porte and the envoys of the tsar, and ransom the Polish captives from the Ottomans. In order to achieve all these objectives, he was ordered to organise post service between the Polish court and Istanbul for the duration of the mission, mostly by winning over the favour of the Moldavian *hospodar*, Antioh Cantemir.

It seems that all these goals were secondary to the ceremonial rights that Leszczyński demanded from his hosts, both in Moldavia and in Istanbul. Those ceremonial conflicts led to the aggravation in relations with the *hospodar* and significantly threatened the success of negotiations. The dominating approach to ceremonial disputes in Polish-Ottoman relations was the one presented by Władysław Konopczyński in the 1930s. According to him, the ‘proper’ political goals of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were to fall victim to the excessive ambition and absurd vanity of its diplomat.¹ When we look closer at the guidelines that Leszczyński received from the king,

¹ Władysław Konopczyński, *Polska a Turcja 1683–1792* (Warsaw, 1936), 45–6.

we can see that the struggle over ceremonial, which Konopczyński has interpreted as the sign of diplomat's incompetence, was precisely what he had been ordered to do by the king.² Ceremonial was thus a *raison d'état*, and not a sham.³ However, if major policy-makers perceived ceremonial struggle over ceremonial as a matter of the reason of state, one has to ask, how did it precisely serve the interests of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth?

The scope of this article is to examine the dynamics of ceremonial entries in Polish-Moldavian diplomatic relations from the mission of Count Krzysztof Zbaraski in 1622–3 to the embassy of Stanisław Chomętowski in 1712–14, which marked the end of the period of major political interaction between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its southeastern neighbour. At the same time, it constitutes a watershed in the history of Moldavia – in 1711 the first Phanariot hospodar, Nicolae Mavrocordat, was appointed, marking a new stage of Moldavia's political integration into the Ottoman imperial system.

While the pattern of ceremonial entry was relatively stable, the precise form of the ceremonial was shaped by a number of contingent factors, starting from the relative power balance in the region, the hospodar's strength and ideological program, the social status of Polish-Lithuanian envoys, and the negotiating strategies adopted on the eve of the ceremony. Thus, while the ceremonial was to a great extent dependent on both the custom and the will of the actors involved, it was neither fully functional nor did it fully reflect the intentions

² *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego do Turcji w 1700 roku: diariusze i inne materiały*, ed. Ilona Czamańska (Leszno, 1998), 236.

³ The research of diplomatic ceremonial has lately undergone a major development that liberated it from the label of antiquarianism. For methodological considerations, see Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Die Wissenschaft der feinen Unterschiede. Das Präzedenzrecht und die europäischen Monarchien vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert', *Majestas*, x (2002), 1–26; *eadem*, 'Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol: Neue Forschungen zur symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, xxvii, 3 (2000), 389–405; André Krischer, 'Souveränität als sozialer Status: Zur Funktion des diplomatischen Zeremoniells in der Frühen Neuzeit', in Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota, and Jan Paul Niederkorn (eds.), *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Vienna, 2009), 1–32. For the discussion of the role of political ceremonial in Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, 'Semiotics of Behavior in Early Modern Diplomacy: Polish Embassies in Istanbul and Bahçeşarayı', *Journal of Early Modern History*, vii, 3–4 (2003), 245–56.

of the participants. In order to discern this pattern, the first part of the article is devoted to describing the negotiations preceding the entry and the elements that formed the core of this ceremonial event and to identifying the main points of contention between the Polish-Lithuanian diplomats and their Moldavian hosts. In the second part, I will try to analyse the dynamics of 'ceremonial conflict' throughout the period, and to draw conclusions concerning the interrelation between the developments in Moldavia, Poland-Lithuania and the wider region of southeastern Europe.

The grand embassies sent to Istanbul usually followed the fixed route that paralleled the course of the main commercial routes in the eastern Balkans. Usually the assembling point for the embassies was Lvov, from where a courier was sent to inform the Moldavian hospodar of the road taken by the envoy, and to make preliminary arrangements concerning crossing the border with Moldavia.⁴ After the embassy had set out, it stopped for some time in Kamieniec Podolski (Ukr. Kam'ianets' Podil's'kyi) in order to settle details concerning crossing of the border and the receiving of the ambassador by the Moldavian officials. It also had a more practical side, as Moldavia adhered to the 'eastern European' diplomatic model,⁵ which implied provisioning the diplomatic legations at the expense of the host. When one considers the often enormous size of the Polish-Lithuanian envoys' entourage, it becomes clear that provisioning a diplomatic mission with food was a major logistic challenge for the Moldavian officials. After this, the embassy set off for the border, and crossed it either in the vicinity of Hotin (crossing the Dniestr River) or, in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, near Śniatyń.⁶

The first ceremonies took place at the crossing of the border. Usually, the welcoming party consisted of a few detachments of Moldavian cavalry and a governor (*pârcălăb* or *starosta*) of the

⁴ *Źródła do poselstwa Jana Gnińskiego wojewody chełmińskiego do Turcyi w latach 1677–1678*, ed. Franciszek Pułaski (Warsaw, 1907), 202.

⁵ Leonid A. Yuzefovich, "Kak v posol'skikh obychayakh vedëtsya ...": *Russkii posol'skii obychai kontsa XV – nachala XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1988), 61–2; Stanisław E. Nahlik, *Narodziny nowożytnej dyplomacji* (Wrocław, 1971), 132; Stanisław Grzybowski, 'Organizacja polskiej służby dyplomatycznej w latach 1573–1605', in Zbigniew Wójcik (ed.), *Polska służba dyplomatyczna XVI–XVIII wieku. Studia* (Warsaw, 1966), 195.

⁶ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 194.

district. The rank of the meeting party was sometimes higher, as in 1712, when Chomełowski was received by the Moldavian *hătman*, Ioan Buhuș.⁷ The envoy was thus first greeted at the border by ‘the foremost boyars’ accompanied by two detachments of cavalry. Then he proceeded towards Cernăuți, and half a mile before the city he was welcomed by the ‘*hătman* in person, with the drums, kettledrums and music and assisted by ten banners of Moldavians’.⁸ After the traditional exchange of gifts, the envoy was conducted to his quarters, which ended the first ceremonies on Moldavian soil.

After this first encounter, the embassy marched towards Iași (Jassy), a journey that usually took about a week. At all the stops, the accounts claim, the envoys were ‘received with great honours’, even if they were coupled with complaints about the scarce provisions provided by the Moldavian officials.⁹ On the eve of reaching Iași, the embassy halted and put up a camp near the Jijia River. From there, the secretary of the legation sent a courier to the hospodar’s court in order to initiate negotiations over the shape of ceremonial entry to be performed the following day.

Before discussing the patterns of negotiations, let us examine what concepts of ceremonial each side had at the outset. Most scholars dealing with the ceremonial in Polish-Moldavian relations tacitly assumed that there was a fixed code of ceremony and that the ‘proper’ shape of the entry was known to all the participants. Thus, any alteration by the hospodar or the envoy in the ‘proper’ and ‘ancient’ forms has been considered in the scholarship as a sign of vanity. In fact, the opposite seems to be true: to learn the earlier ceremonial forms, each side used a different set of sources, and relied on these in order to further their claims during the negotiations.

The most important theoretician of diplomacy in early modern Poland-Lithuania, Krzysztof Warszewicki, has stressed the importance for diplomats of learning the customs of a receiving country.¹⁰ This

⁷ Nicolae Mavrocordat to Stanisław Chomełowski, Iași, 12 Oct. 1712, Warszawa, Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie (hereafter AGAD, AKW), dz. Turecki, 79/822.

⁸ AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 79/956, p. 46.

⁹ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 50; *Wielka legacja Wojciecha Miaskowskiego do Turcji w 1640 r.*, ed. Adam Przyboś (Warsaw and Cracow, 1985), 109.

¹⁰ Krzysztof Warszewicki, *O posle i poselstwach*, ed. Jerzy Życki (Warsaw, 1935), 46; Tetyana Grygorieva, ‘Yakosti ta funktsii dyplomata u rann’omoderny period: v

was no easy task, as there were no codified rules for ceremonial at most European courts in the seventeenth century and even the existence of such code did not necessarily mean the actual application of rules written down.¹¹ As far as envoys to Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire are concerned, Tetyana Grygorieva has shown that the significant sources of information were more experienced members of the entourage.¹² Some of the envoys had some experience of their own concerning Polish-Moldavian relations, as did for example Wojciech Miaskowski, who, before he was appointed as ambassador, had already operated on the borderland for almost three decades. However, in general, we learn relatively little about the information drawn from members of the embassy. Instead, more often it is the written sources that are mentioned in the reports from the embassies, that were singled out as the main basis of diplomats' claims.

The guidelines for negotiations received from the court do not devote much attention to the ceremonial details, usually ordering the envoy to defend the honour and glory of the king and the Commonwealth. Jan Gniński, for example, was reminded in 1677 that 'the envoy should avoid anything that would place the reputation of the king and the Commonwealth in peril'.¹³ A similar conduct was advised in 1619, as Piotr Oźga was setting out on his mission to the Sublime Porte.¹⁴ At the same time, the envoys were sometimes ordered during their mission to 'learn, what are the customary ceremonies and ancient

uyavlennyakh teoretykiv ta u praktychnykh instruktsiyakh poslam z Rechi Pospolytoї do Osmans'koї imperii v XVII st.', *Sotsium. Al'manakh sotsial'noї istorii*, iv (2004), 33.

¹¹ Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of Power: Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam, 2002), 102.

¹² The role of the entourage in the transmission of information concerning ceremonial was examined by Tetyana Grygorieva in her paper 'Ottoman Palace Ceremonial: Translated and Edited by Polish-Lithuanian Ambassadors', presented at the conference 'Entering the Gate of Felicity: diplomatic representation of Christian powers in early modern Istanbul' at Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas (GWZO) in Leipzig on 14–16 Oct. 2011.

¹³ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 203.

¹⁴ 'Instructia Je[go] Kmci Urodzonemu Piotrowi Oźdze Staroście Trembowelskiemu do Cesarza Tureckie[go] Osmana Posłowi Wielkiemu w Warszawie dnia XIX Mca Octobra Roku 1618', Kórnik, Biblioteka Kórnicka (hereafter: BK), MS 362, p. 465.

custom of the Turks and the Moldavian hospodar when receiving the grand ambassador'.¹⁵ Although this stipulation was formulated in the rhetoric of 'ancient custom', it is revealing that the envoy was to *learn* how this ancient tradition did actually look like.

The only exception to these rather vague guidelines was the instruction given to Rafał Leszczyński in 1700. This envoy received unusually precise information, stipulating that he should demand from the hospodar to meet him one mile from the Moldavian capital, as was customary. An analogous stipulation was made with respect to the Wallachian hospodar.¹⁶

Given that the diplomats received only vague information on the 'proper' form of ceremonial to follow, and the sources remain relatively silent on the role played by the members of legation in this respect, it seems that the most important source on ceremonial was constituted by the travelogues and reports from previous missions to Istanbul. Their role in providing the blueprint for 'proper' ceremonial forms obliges us to bring them under close scrutiny.

Reports by the envoys were widely read among the Polish-Lithuanian nobility. The law requiring that diplomatic reports be read at the diet was introduced only in 1669; however, it was rather the official recognition of a long-established custom than an actual innovation.¹⁷ What is more, the envoys themselves took care to disseminate the accounts of their missions in an act of their own 'self-fashioning' with a clearly political aim. As Ilona Czamańska remarked on the accounts describing Leszczynski's mission, the scope of this literary production and later dissemination was clearly political and served to present the envoy as a bold and self-sacrificing statesman.¹⁸ The same was true for other envoys, some of whom belonged to the highest echelons of Polish-Lithuanian nobility, as was the case of Krzysztof Zbaraski and Jan Gniński. While their accounts were relatively easily accessible, it is clear that they were written not with an informative aim, but rather a propagandistic one (if we can use this anachronistic term).¹⁹

¹⁵ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 203.

¹⁶ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 236.

¹⁷ Zbigniew Wójcik, 'Dyplomacja polska w okresie wojen drugiej połowy XVII w. (1648–1699)', in *idem* (ed.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, ii: 1572–1795 (Warsaw, 1982), 299.

¹⁸ Ilona Czamańska, 'Wprowadzenie', in *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 35–6.

¹⁹ This practice was no different from the practice of diplomatic report-writing

What sources did each envoy use? In 1640, in his report that he presented at the diet after the conclusion of his mission, Wojciech Miaskowski supported his harsh response to the alleged affront made by the hospodar by claiming that his actions were analogous to those performed by Piotr Ożga in 1619 and Count Krzysztof Zbaraski in 1622, when the hospodar of the time had refused to meet the envoys in person.²⁰ Similarly, the account by Franciszek Kazimierz Wysocki, the embassy's secretary of Hieronim Radziejowski in 1667 and the acting ambassador after the latter's death in Istanbul, refers to the same practice and to the precedent during Zbaraski's legation as well.²¹ Zbaraski's mission was also a major point of reference for Jan Gniński in 1677–8, although the latter had also read the diary from Radziejowski's mission.

Starting from 1677, the sources used by diplomats become more diversified. In 1700, Leszczyński referred to Gniński as the main source of his information, copying the travelogue of the latter's mission. In his turn, in 1712–14 Stanisław Chomętowski drew most of his information from Leszczyński when he demanded that the hospodar grant him the same ceremonial entry 'as the previous envoy'.²² However, it seems that he also put other sources to use during his embassy, as he refers to a set of 'diaries' without specifying the authors. Extending our chronological focus beyond 1714, we can see that Paweł Benoe made reference in 1742 to the embassy of Chomętowski, in which he participated himself,²³ whereas Józef Podoski, in 1760, used the 'printed accounts of the legations of Zbaraski, Leszczyński and Chomętowski'.²⁴ The table below summarises this variation.

in other early modern polities at that time. Filippo de Vivo in his insightful study of circulation of political information in early modern Venice provided an exemplary case of dissemination of Venetian *relazioni*, see *idem, Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford and New York, 2007), 57–70.

²⁰ *Wielka legacja*, 82.

²¹ Wrocław, Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich (hereafter: BOss.), MS 1614/II, p. 4–5.

²² 'Dyaryusz poselstwa do Turek Jasnje Wielmożnego Jmści Pana Woiewody Mazowieckiego, Posła Wielkiego do Porthy, które sie niżej tym opisaniem wyraża', AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 97/1144, p. 2.

²³ Paweł Benoe to Stanisław Chomętowski, 1 May 1714, AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 79/1209. I am grateful to thank Mariusz Kaczka for bringing my attention to this document.

²⁴ BOss., MS 614/I, p. 20r.

TABLE 1. *The use of accounts from the previous grand embassies to the Porte (1623–1714)*

Embassy	The account used in:
Krzysztof Zbaraski (1622–3)	1640, 1667, 1677–8, 1760 [Podoski]
Aleksander Trzebiński (1634)	–
Wojciech Miaskowski (1640)	–
Mikołaj Bieganowski (1654)	–
Hieronim Radziejowski (1667)	1677–8
Jan Gniński (1677–8)	1700
Rafał Leszczyński (1700)	1712–14, 1760 [Podoski]
Stanisław Chomętowski (1712–14)	1742 [Benoe], 1760 [Podoski]

What is striking is the unequal employment of respective accounts as sources of information on ceremonial, especially that of Count Krzysztof Zbaraski. While accounts of his mission dominate and remain the sole point of reference until after 1678, in the later half of the period the sources used are more up-to-date. Nonetheless, the accounts from the years 1634–54 are never referred to. How can we explain this difference? The answer seems to lie with the social status of Polish-Lithuanian envoys. Even a cursory investigation shows that all the ‘canonic’ accounts refer to the embassies headed by personages belonging to the highest echelons of Polish-Lithuanian nobility. Jan Gniński, Rafał Leszczyński and Stanisław Chomętowski held the office of the *voyevode*, and Zbaraski, although not a member of the Senate, was without doubt a political heavyweight, too. At the same time, among those envoys whose embassy reports did not become so popular among the subsequent diplomats, only Bieganowski and Radziejowski were senators. Moreover, when we look closer, even these cases show that there was a clear correlation between the social status of an envoy and the popularity of his account. Although he reached the senatorial rank, Mikołaj Bieganowski was no major figure in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; he received the lower-ranking senatorial office *as a result* of his diplomatic career and not as a result of his social position. On the other hand, Radziejowski was an able and influential politician; he died of illness in Istanbul, however, and the mission was concluded by the secretary of the embassy, Franciszek Kazimierz Wysocki, belonging at most to the lower gentry. Thus, we can see that social status of an envoy correlated with his

capability to disseminate the account of his embassy and, at the same time, with his political interest in doing so.

There is only one mention in the sources about a Polish envoy using a Moldavian source. According to Petre P. Panaitescu, one of the members of Rafał Leszczyński's entourage received a copy of Miron Costin's historical poem in Polish from the scribe of the hospodar's chancellery, Józef Wargalowski.²⁵ However, it took place only after the arrival of the embassy in Iași. What is more, Costin's poem was largely a historical work and it contained little information concerning ceremonial.

Moldavian sources of information on ceremonial are more difficult to identify. For sure, a court officials who remembered previous embassies and had the ceremonial know-how played a significant role; however, their role is almost untraceable in the sources. In addition, the information in the chronicles is sketchy: the only seventeenth-century chronicle that contains any information on the ceremonial entry of a Polish-Lithuanian ambassador is the *Chronicle of Moldavia*, written by Miron Costin.²⁶ It is telling that the description is of Zbaraski's entry to Istanbul and not to Iași. Costin, brought up and educated in the Commonwealth, probably drew on the description from the Polish chronicle by Paweł Piasecki.²⁷ The only source that contains actual prescriptions for the ceremonial entry of a grand embassy is the so-called *Condica lui Gheorgachi*. This ceremonial book, written in 1762 at the request of hospodar Gheorghe Callimachi, is a compilation of different descriptions of ceremonial that was to serve on different occasions. Despite the fact that it was written in the second half of the eighteenth century, the ceremonial entry described is that carried by Stanisław Chomętowski in 1712.²⁸ While this compilation is the only one that has been preserved, it is certain that other such texts also existed and that they were employed as a working basis for negotiating the ceremonial.²⁹

²⁵ Petre P. Panaitescu, 'Introducere', in *Istorie în versuri polone despre Moldova și Țara Românească (1684)*, ed. *idem*, *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile sectiunii istorice*, s. iii, vol. x, 7 (Bucharest, 1929), 367.

²⁶ Miron Costin, *Latopis Ziemi Mołdawskiej i inne utwory historyczne*, ed. Ilona Czamańska (Poznań, 1998), 148.

²⁷ Ilona Czamańska, 'Wstęp', in *ibidem*, 61; Dan Simonescu (ed.), *Literatura românească de ceremonial. Condica lui Gheorgachi, 1762* (Bucharest, 1939), 25.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 305–6.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 195.

As we can see, each side entered the negotiations with the texts that were supporting its own concept of a 'proper' ceremonial. As the differences between these texts were often substantial, it seems reasonable to assume that tension was created even before the start of the negotiations over the ceremonial.

The negotiations added to this dynamic. Although many historians claim (or tacitly assume) that the ceremonial was derived from ancient customs, neither the Polish envoys nor the Moldavian hospodars seem to have had much respect for these 'ancient customs'. This becomes evident when we look at the negotiation process. Revealing in this respect is the case of Leszczyński, who admitted in the report of his mission that he had drawn the description of ceremonies from Gniński's account, but that he had added a number of claims in order to 'enhance the honour of the Commonwealth for the future'.³⁰ It is thus clear that such practice was a purposeful 'invention of tradition' rather than an allegiance to 'ancient custom'. Of course, it was not only the Polish-Lithuanian diplomats who used such plays; Moldavians also tried to tip the balance in their favour. For example, in 1700, the hospodar denied that there was a practice of letting the envoy ride on the right, more honourable side of the road, whereas all the other sources tell us otherwise.³¹ Thus, it comes as no wonder that negotiations on both sides were subject to a raise in tension, and that tense relations could threaten the smooth settling of the precise ceremonial form to be put in practice.

From the reports we can infer a number of elements concerning ceremonial entry that triggered controversy between the Poles and Moldavians. The most comprehensive list was compiled by Rafał Leszczyński, who singled out his demands: firstly, the envoy was to be welcomed by the Moldavian grand chancellor (*mare logofăt*) and then by the hospodar in person; he even mentioned the distance from the capital at which each of the two dignitaries should encounter him (a mile for the chancellor and half a mile for the Moldavian ruler). Secondly, the order of the entry was specified; finally, entry was to be accompanied by artillery salutes and ringing bells in Iași. Closer scrutiny shows that the above points of contention remained relatively

³⁰ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 52.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 52, 142.

stable throughout the period, although the relative weight of each of these stipulations varied over time.

The Polish-Lithuanian requests were strongly opposed by the Moldavian hosts. In 1700, Antioh Cantemir declined most of the demands, claiming that

no envoy had ever been granted such things ... no hospodar would go that far to welcome the ambassador, to the extent that there would be artillery salutes, and that he [i.e., the hospodar] would dismount and walk the latter to his quarters.³²

The practice of ruler's personal meeting with the ambassador led to the most controversial encounters. The Moldavian rejection of this request was perceived by the Polish side as a grave diplomatic misdemeanour and resulted in a serious breach in relations between the diplomat and the hospodar. Other cases were not so fateful, although lengthy discussion whether it was the ruler or the envoy who should have the honourable right side proved that diplomacy knew no vacuum.

The main strategy of both the Polish-Lithuanian and Moldavian negotiators was to claim that the 'ancient forms' of the 'proper' diplomatic protocol should be preserved. The Polish-Lithuanian side employed the accounts of the previous embassies but – as we have seen – did not hesitate to 'enhance' them, whenever they saw it fit. The Moldavians rejected these arguments, claiming that such honours had never been granted to the previous embassies.

One of the more interesting arguments was made by Franciszek Kazimierz Wysocki, the secretary of embassy in 1667, entrusted with the negotiations over the ceremonial. During the dispute over whether the hospodar should meet the envoy in person, he put forward a historical-legal argument:

This custom was settled in the ancient pacts, and approved in the later one, when the Moldavian hospodars (as there was one ruler for a country divided later into two), whatever the obligations they previously had to the King of Poland, promised to keep it up in perpetuity.³³

³² *Ibidem*, 52.

³³ 'Ten zwyczaj pakta i dawne postanowiły, i wszystkie potym aprobowały, kiedy mówią *palatini Moldavienses* (bo jeden był dawniej ziemie potym rozdwojonej) *qualicumque conditione erga praeteritos reges Poloniae fuerint, eadem nunc quoque et in futurum sit.*', BOss., MS 1614/II, p. 4.

Wysocki's knowledge of Moldavian history was approximate at best (Moldavia and Wallachia were never united until mid-nineteenth century); his argument probably referred to the homage acts of the 1430s, when Moldavia was divided between the hospodars Ilie and Ștefan.³⁴ His argument was organised not around the concept of custom, but around that of the *obligation* of Moldavian hospodars to the Polish Crown, deriving from the vassal status of Moldavia in the fifteenth century. This is a powerful reflection of the concept of *ius precedentiae*: the 'proper' ceremonial reception of a diplomat was derived from this objective duty and was a question of jurisprudence.

This argumentation had two weak points. Firstly, it was impossible for Wysocki to prove that the ceremonial he was demanding was the one that had been carried out during the period he referred to. Secondly, the link between the ceremonial and legal status proved double-edged: the Moldavians replied that the hospodars of the fifteenth century were vassals of the Polish Crown and were thus bound to grant such honours to their suzerain. This vassal status ceased to exist and at that time, the Moldavian hospodar no longer had any duties to the king of Poland.³⁵ Wysocki's attempt to shift the dispute to legal ground was met with a counter-argument, also deriving from the legal framework of early modern diplomacy.

Another strategy applied by the Moldavians was to bring the Sublime Porte as the alleged opponent of granting ceremonial rights to the Polish-Lithuanian envoys. In 1667 and 1700, they claimed that it was the Ottomans who had put a prohibition on firing a salute to greet royal ambassadors.³⁶ This was clearly a way of rejecting the claims of the ambassadors without straining the mutual relations with them. What is interesting, Polish-Lithuanian envoys also knew how to play 'the Ottoman card' and threatened to file a complaint against the hospodar with the Sublime Porte if their demands were not met.³⁷

Finally, in extreme cases the envoys threatened to withdraw from negotiations and to treat the Moldavian hospodar as *persona non grata*. In 1640, Wojciech Miaskowski refused to attend the audience as

³⁴ Ilona Czamańska, *Moldawia i Wołoszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku* (Poznań, 1996), 282.

³⁵ BOss., MS 1614/II, p. 4.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, MS 1614/II, p. 6; *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 52–3, 141–2.

³⁷ BOss., MS 1614/II, p. 6.

a retorsion due to the fact that Vasile Lupu did not meet him in person during his entry.³⁸ In 1667, Radziejowski claimed that – if his demands were not met – he would march around Iași without stopping and would set a camp outside the city.³⁹ Those cases were extreme, though. At the other pole from those cases was Chomeńowski's embassy in 1712–14, when hospodar Nicolae Mavrocordat quickly agreed to all the demands made by the ambassador.⁴⁰ Most often, however, a working compromise was reached that would satisfy both sides. For example, in 1700 Leszczyński agreed to drop his demand for an artillery salute for the firing of muskets during his entry in exchange.⁴¹

The negotiations preceding the ceremonial entry were of utmost importance in the diplomatic practice. They served to bring together two sides with disparate aims and sets of information sources and allowed them to achieve a workable compromise over the ceremonial to be put in practice the next day. Reaching an agreement did not necessarily mean that it would be applied; it was up to the participants whether they would adhere to the rules they had themselves set.

In the morning, embassies set out from the camp and took the road towards Iași. The first meeting with the Moldavian officials usually took place a 'great mile' from the city.⁴² The boyars were headed by a member of the Moldavian Princely Council. While *Condica lui Gheorgachi* claims that it was the *hățman* whose duty was it to meet the ambassador, it seems that this responsibility was not fixed with any official throughout the seventeenth century.⁴³ The head of the Moldavian delegation dismounted, greeted the ambassador in the name of the hospodar and asked about the envoy's health. Then both Moldavians and the embassy resumed the march towards Iași, with the Moldavian official riding on the lefthand side of the ambassador.

The next stage of the ceremonial entry was the meeting with the hospodar – in many respects the culminating point of the entry. This meeting was a potentially contentious moment as each side could

³⁸ *Wielka legacja*, 82.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ BOss., MS 1614/II, p. 4–5.

⁴¹ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 53.

⁴² *Ibidem*, 243; Simonescu (ed.), *Literatura românească*, 306. One mile was 7.8 kilometers.

⁴³ AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 79/954, p. 2; Simonescu (ed.), *Literatura românească*, 306; *Źródła do poselstwa*, 10; *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 123, 142.

utilise it in order to 'set' the ceremonial at its own favour, thus altering the agreement reached previously. The meeting usually took place about half a mile from the city and any move beyond this distance by the greeting party was considered a special honour (as William Roosen has termed it – 'stroking')⁴⁴ granted to the envoy, as was claimed to be the case in 1700.⁴⁵ The distance of half a mile seems, however, to have been commonly accepted as honourable enough and it is often mentioned into primary sources. The only exception are the guidelines issued for the Leszczyński's mission, when the ambassador claimed 'a mile' away. Nonetheless, in the ensuing negotiations the latter accepted the standard distance as adequately safeguarding the honour of the Commonwealth and the king.

The most important personage in the receiving party was without doubt the hospodar himself. However, surprisingly little is to be found about the way the hospodar presented himself during those ceremonies. He was usually depicted as mounting a Turkish horse and wearing light armour.⁴⁶ Additionally, in 1700 headgear is mentioned;⁴⁷ in all likelihood it is the same *cuca* cap as that described in 1653 by Paul of Aleppo: 'a sable cap, very precious, worthy the king, with a golden fibula of great value'.⁴⁸

In 1622, the welcome ceremony was given a particular form; the meeting between the hospodar and Count Zbaraski took place twice. Firstly, the two met near Ștefănești, before reaching the vicinity of Iași, while the second time the meeting conformed to the pattern characteristic for other embassies.⁴⁹ It is not clear why such an arrangement took place, although it entered the repertoire of Polish-Lithuanian claims, as Radziejowski insisted on this practice in 1667, undoubtedly inspired by the narrative of Zbaraski's embassy.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ William Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach', *Journal of Modern History*, lii, 3 (1980), 469.

⁴⁵ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 237.

⁴⁶ Samuel Twardowski, *Przeważna legacja Krzysztofa Zbaraskiego od Zygmunta III do sultana Mustafy*, ed. Roman Krzywy (Warsaw, 2000), 64.

⁴⁷ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 53.

⁴⁸ Paul de Alep, 'Călătoriile Patriarhului Macarie al Antiohiei în Țările Române', trans. Maria M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, in *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vi (Bucharest, 1976), 134.

⁴⁹ Twardowski, *Przeważna legacja*, 63.

⁵⁰ BOss., MS 1614/II, p. 5.

While the person of hospodar remained central to the ceremonial entry, the boyars remained in the background and rarely played an individual role during the ceremonies. According to *Condica lui Gheorghachi*, it was the hospodar who met the ambassador with ‘all the country’s glory and all boyars, great and small’.⁵¹ However, we rarely even may learn the names of most notable attendees, although there are some exceptions to this, as with *hătman* Lupu Bogdan in 1700.⁵² Even with such sketchy information, we can still suppose that the hospodars were anxious to boost their prestige by forming a large retinue that, according to Samuel Twardowski, in 1622 numbered two hundred boyars.⁵³

In the case of the hospodar’s absence, the duty of meeting the ambassador was bestowed upon one of the senior members of the Hospodar’s Council. Again, however, the hierarchy seems blurred and it is likely that the appointment of the official responsible for the ceremonial entry was contingent and not linked with any particular office. Thus, in most of the cases, the duty was carried out by the *hătman*, usually accompanied by the *mare logofăt*. This hierarchy is not ultimately clear as the *hătman* was the official of a lower rank than the *logofăt*, and the Council included a number of other officials whose rank was higher than that of the *hătman*.

The only case when some agency was ascribed to Moldavian officials was during the return of Miaskowski’s embassy from Istanbul in 1640. According to Zbigniew Lubieniecki’s travelogue, the boyars met the diplomat ‘out of their humanity, and not on the hospodar’s order, as the hospodar remained inimical to the envoy’.⁵⁴ This statement, although at first glance reflecting the mutual dislike and enmity between Miaskowski and Vasile Lupu, seems improbable. As Miaskowski himself asserted, the head of the Moldavian boyars’ delegation was *hătman* Gavriil Coci, the hospodar’s brother, his loyal supporter and an individual without any political ambitions.⁵⁵ Thus, it seems that the welcome ceremony, even if not attended by the hospodar, was nonetheless orchestrated by the ruler himself.

⁵¹ Simonescu (ed.), *Literatura românească*, 306.

⁵² *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*; Twardowski, *Przeważna legacyja*, 64.

⁵³ Twardowski, *Przeważna legacyja*, 64.

⁵⁴ *Wielka legacja*, 165.

⁵⁵ Nicolae Stoicescu, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova. Sec. XIV–XVII* (Bucharest, 1971), 378.

The bulk of the hospodar's entourage consisted of the military assist. The size of escort varied greatly and was dependent on the rank of a given embassy as well as the atmosphere reigning in Polish-Moldavian relations. While the most solemn embassies were assigned significant numbers of troops to serve as their assist, some envoys of lower rank remained dissatisfied with the size of the military contingent sent to welcome them in Iași. The most extreme case was that of Jerzy Kruszyński in 1636, when he complained that only two Moldavian banners were assigned to his embassy by the hospodar.⁵⁶ Similarly, Wojciech Miaskowski claimed eight years later that he was received merely by 'the *hätman* ... and six Cossack banners'.⁵⁷ By contrast, more grandiose embassies sent in the times of good Polish-Moldavian relations could count on a more impressive escort. In 1700, Leszczyński was reportedly accompanied by seventeen banners of Moldavians, Chomętowski twelve years later – by twelve; and Jan Gniński – by about thirty.⁵⁸

Another important component in the Moldavian retinue was the music band. In *Condica lui Gheorgachi* it was called *mehterhaneaoa*, which implies that it may have been organised on the basis of a Janissary military band – the *mehterhane*. In the late seventeenth century, Janissary bands became a fashionable element of the court ceremonial over the whole of Europe.⁵⁹ This would have been even more so in the case of Moldavia, which stayed under Ottoman hegemony throughout the period. The sheer number of borrowings from the Ottoman ceremonial vocabulary (*alai*, *mehterhane*, *ciohodar*) suggests that the Moldavian court pattern was definitely closer to the Ottoman model than that of other European courts.⁶⁰

As far as music is concerned, musicians in the ambassador's proper entourage also played a significant role. Leszczyński, for example, took

⁵⁶ Robert Kołodziej, 'Diariusz podróży do Stambułu w 1636 roku', in Małgorzata Ewa Kowalczyk (ed.), *Z dziejów kultury czasów nowożytnych. Wybór tekstów źródłowych* (Toruń, 2009), 20.

⁵⁷ *Wielka legacja*, 109.

⁵⁸ AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 79/940, p. 2; *Źródła do poselstwa*, 10; *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 53, 143, 215.

⁵⁹ Edmund A. Bowles, 'The Impact of Turkish Military Bands on European Court Festivals in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Early Music*, xxxiv, 4 (2006), 533–60.

⁶⁰ Simonescu, 'Introducere', in *idem* (ed.), *Literatura românească*, 217–18.

with him seven trumpeters and a number of drummers. They played simultaneously with the Moldavian band and we can only imagine the noise and the competition created between them, particularly when combined with 'Gypsy violinists' mentioned by Franciszek Gościecki in his account of the 1712 embassy.⁶¹ Hence it comes as no surprise that many participants, even if they showed genuine curiosity about the Moldavian instruments, did not appreciate the musical elements of the ceremony, complaining about the quality of Moldavian musicians as 'most unskilled, playing the trumpets as if they were playing for dogs'.⁶²

Finally, another important element of the hospodars' entourage were the banners. While in some cases the banners described belonged to various Moldavian cavalry units (as in 1636), we also have two testimonies concerning the hospodar's banners. In 1622, hospodar Ștefan Tomșa received Count Zbaraski under two banners: a green one with the Ottoman crescent and a red one with the Moldavian coat of arms.⁶³ Twardowski explained in a margin note that the first one was bestowed upon the hospodar as the vassal of the Ottoman sultan and the second one was the symbol of Moldavia.

Veniamin Ciobanu treated this somewhat unusual hierarchy of displayed banners as a political statement made by the hospodar, who, at the time, was in bad terms with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: flying the Ottoman banner before the Moldavian one was intended to assert that Tomșa was under the Sultan's protection.⁶⁴ Such an explanation seems plausible at first glance, yet two elements raise some doubts. Firstly, the order in which Twardowski listed the two banners did not necessarily reflect the intentions of the Moldavian ruler but, rather, could merely have reflected a way of ordering the account for stylistic purposes. Secondly, and most importantly, one evidence to the contrary has been found in the reports of other embassies – the Polish-Lithuanian envoys wanted both banners flown during the ceremonies. Indeed, in 1677, hospodar Antonie Ruset excused

⁶¹ Franciszek Gościecki, *Poselstwo wielkie Jaśnie Wielmożnego Stanisława Chomętowskiego Wojewody Mazowieckiego ... od Augusta II. króla polskiego, xiążęcia saskiego elektora y Rzeczypospolitej do Achmeta IV [sic!] ... przez lata 1712, 1713, 1714 odprawione* (Lvov, 1728), 51.

⁶² *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 124.

⁶³ Twardowski, *Przeważna legacja*, 64.

⁶⁴ Veniamin Ciobanu, *Politică și diplomație în secolul al XVII-lea: Țările Române în raporturile polono-otomano-habsburgice, 1601–1634* (Bucharest, 1994), 206.

himself to Gniński for not flying the Ottoman banner, claiming that he had been forbidden to do so by the Grand Vizier's order.⁶⁵ Interestingly, Gniński considered flying the Ottoman banner as something that would enhance the prestige of the ceremonial entry and not as a reassertion of the Sublime Porte's domination over Moldavia.

As for the ceremonial meeting proper, gestures played a crucial role and even if we lack explicit statements about them, the mere comparison of different accounts can help us to discern both the main points of contention and the literary strategies applied to boost the envoy's prestige in the eyes of his audience back home. One important example is the gesture of removing headgear, a gesture well established in the Polish-Lithuanian as well as wider European socio-cultural context.⁶⁶ Timing also mattered, and the person perceived as ranking lower in social hierarchy was expected to remove his headgear first.

When applied to the accounts of 1700 Leszczyński's embassy, 'the imbalance of honour' becomes clear. In his account, the hospodar Antioh Cantemir removed his hat first while the envoy did the same shortly after, reciprocating the gesture.⁶⁷ This sequence of events is confirmed by two more narratives of the embassy.⁶⁸ It may thus seem that the hospodar recognised his position as inferior to that of the Polish-Lithuanian ambassador. However, a closer look at the sources gives way to alternative explanations. All the sources that present the story mentioned above, discern striking affinities of structure and vocabulary. They were clearly composed under Leszczyński's supervision, relying on his own account as the blueprint. They present a coherent picture that was designed to serve Leszczyński and to present him as an able and efficient diplomat in the eyes of the readership.

The only account of this event that did not come from Leszczyński's initiative seems to be the one ascribed to Michał Bułhak, the treasurer of the embassy. In his account, the hospodar and the ambassador did not even remove their headgear but rather raised them a little. Bułhak

⁶⁵ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 10.

⁶⁶ Maria Bogucka, 'Gesture, Ritual, and Social Order in Sixteenth- to Eighteenth-century Poland', in Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (eds.), *A Cultural History of Gesture: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London, 1991), 193.

⁶⁷ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 53.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 143, 215.

ascribes the hospodar's behaviour to 'the custom of the country, or rather that of the Turks'.⁶⁹ The only person who removed his hat was the hospodar's interpreter, a Greek physician. Moreover, Bułhak claims that the Moldavian ruler and Leszczyński performed this gesture simultaneously, none of the sides granting preeminence to the other. Bułhak's reporting – he claimed that not removing one's headgear derived from a cultural gap between the Poles and the Moldavians – can be compared with that of Baron de Breteuil, who, in 1715, in Versailles, struggled with the Persian envoy Mohammed Beg over the ceremonial rules of the French monarchy and constructed the cultural difference in order to excuse himself for failing to make the Persian ambassador comply with the rules of the Bourbon court.⁷⁰ Even if this was so, Bułhak's account significantly differs from the sequence of events presented in Leszczyński-sponsored accounts. We can thus hypothesise that the official account of the embassy was 'enhanced' to better serve the interests of the ambassador, at least in the given case. The above conclusion seems even more probable when we look at Antioch Cantemir's standpoint throughout the Polish embassy's stay in Iași. The hospodar was presented as careful to grant the guests as little as it was needed and rather unwilling to comply with Leszczyński's requests. It would thus have been surprising for him to have made a gesture of such pronounced symbolic significance of his own initiative. Curiously, it is possible that Leszczyński's 'enhanced' account was transformed into a precedent that was mutually accepted as genuine in subsequent years. An account from the Polish embassy which passed through Moldavia in 1712 states that hospodar Nicolae Mavrocordat greeted Stanisław Chomętowski by removing his hat.⁷¹ As no such gesture performed by a hospodar had been recorded prior to Leszczyński's embassy, we can suppose that it was the latter's account that contributed to this 'invention of tradition'.

Another important element of the ceremonial entry was that of 'offering the hand'. This term had a twofold meaning in the sources

⁶⁹ 'Jegomość tylko trochę ruszył czapki i nie zdejmując *plene* z głowy i w czapce słuchał (bo też tak i hospodar czynił *iuxta morem suae vel potius Turcicae gentis*)', *ibidem*, 123.

⁷⁰ Susan Mokhberi, 'Finding Common Ground Between Europe and Asia: Understanding and Conflict During the Persian Embassy to France in 1715', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xvi, 1 (2012), 53–80.

⁷¹ AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 79/940, p. 2.

– one similar to the modern handshake and the other of inviting the person to ride on the right-hand, more prestigious, side of the road – and the mentions of ‘offering the hand’ remain quite ambiguous. Leszczyński maintained that Cantemir approached him and offered him the right hand.⁷² However, this element is again missing from Bułhak’s account which gives rise to suspicion about the credibility of Leszczyński’s claim. In 1622, a rather comic situation occurred, when Zbaraski and Tomşa made three attempts to shake hands with neither of them wanting to be the first to extend his hand. In the end, Twardowski claims, it was the diplomat who won the contest and Tomşa was obliged to extend his arm first. Revealingly, this gesture was considered by Twardowski as a blow to the hospodar’s prestige.⁷³ Shaking hand and embracing was not always underpinned by such conflicts: in 1677, Gniński and Antonie Ruset embraced each other in a friendly manner.⁷⁴

Compared with these elements, relatively little attention was paid in the sources to the content of the speeches that were delivered during the ceremonies. Usually, the authors mention just that the proclamations contained compliments. It seems probable that the speeches were not transmitted in the accounts due to the fact that neither of the parties had said anything of interest. In 1667, the crisis in mutual relations between the envoy and the hospodar caused the boyars to excuse the absence of the Moldavian ruler during the ceremonies; in 1700, the hospodar expressed his gratitude for the restoration of peace between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Sublime Porte.⁷⁵

In 1700, the language used by both parties was Latin. Antioch Cantemir, who did not know it, relied on the interpreter who delivered the whole speech in the name of his master.⁷⁶ A similar situation occurred in 1742, when the hospodar made recourse to an interpreter in order to communicate with the Polish-Lithuanian embassy.⁷⁷ By contrast, in 1712 Nicolae Mavrocordat impressed the envoy’s entou-

⁷² *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 53, 143, 214.

⁷³ Twardowski, *Przeważna legacja*, 63.

⁷⁴ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 9.

⁷⁵ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 123.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁷ AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 80/701, p. 1.

rage with his flawless Latin.⁷⁸ This comes as no surprise, as Mavrocordat was the son of the grand dragoman of the Porte and a member of the well-educated class of Ottoman society. Speeches were the last element of this stage of the ceremonial entry, after which both parties formed a procession that headed to Iași. Again, relatively little about the internal structure of such processions has been transmitted to us in the written accounts.

The main discrepancy between the Polish and Moldavian sources is connected with the right to ride on the right-hand side of the road. The traditional distinction between 'better' right and 'worse' left was common to the Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic traditions and served as a significant marker of status. This can be seen in the accounts, although it is not described in a straightforward manner. Moldavians often expressed unwillingness to cede the right side to the envoys, mostly during the negotiations. However, during the ceremonies, the Polish-Lithuanian accounts insist that the hospodar 'not showing any reluctance moved his horse to the left and ceded the right-hand side to the ambassador'.⁷⁹ By contrast, though, *Condica lui Gheorgachi* claims that the right-hand side of the road was reserved to the hospodar and the envoy should move to the left,⁸⁰ even if all Polish accounts of Chomętowski's embassy claim otherwise.

The ceremony of the entry, similar to that performed in Istanbul, drew a great number of spectators and without any doubt was a source of entertainment. All accounts discuss at length the presence of the common people along the way and the cheerful welcoming of the procession, and some even claim that the spectators presented the members of the embassy with food.⁸¹ However, unlike in the case of entries in Western European cities, no mention of festive architecture in the form of arches or sculptures was made in the sources.

Another important element of the ceremonial entry were the artillery salutes and the bells ringing during the procession through the city, stipulated in the list of demands made by the Polish-Lithuanian envoys. This demand was not always met by their Moldavian hosts. In 1700, while the promise to ring the bells was swiftly granted by the hospodar,

⁷⁸ Gościecki, *Poselstwo wielkie*, 50.

⁷⁹ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 144.

⁸⁰ Simonescu (ed.), *Literatura românească*, 306.

⁸¹ Gościecki, *Poselstwo wielkie*, 50; AGAD, AKW, dz. Turecki, 79/572, p. 47.

he refused to agree to use artillery in order to salute Leszczyński, excusing himself by saying that his order was due to the presence of Ottoman officials in Iași.⁸² The dispute was finally settled both sides agreeing on a musket salute instead, and the hospodar took it on himself to make it up to the diplomat during the official banquet. Interestingly, we cannot trace any information concerning artillery salutes prior to Leszczyński's mission. Gniński, to whose embassy Leszczyński referred as a blueprint, does not mention any salute but only remarks that during his entry 'the church bells were ringing'.⁸³ However, in 1712 this element was already in place, as Chomętowski mentions that the artillery fired a salute, lasting throughout the procession.⁸⁴

The last element of the ceremonial entry took place after the arrival at the diplomat's quarters. Here, again, the sources diverge concerning the conclusion of the entry. After arriving at Gniński's accommodation, Antonie Ruset in 1677 was said to dismount and to conduct Gniński to his quarters, which – the envoy claimed – was 'the first time such a honour had been granted'.⁸⁵ This sequence of events was also repeated in the account by Leszczyński. The hospodar dismounted, took the ambassador by the hand, walked him to his quarters and after entertaining him for a while, departed and returned to the palace. Leszczyński, for his part, walked Cantemir to the stairs, despite the protests of the latter.⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, the travelogue by Bułhak diverges again from the version presented by the diplomat. According to him, the hospodar did neither dismount nor remove his headgear, but simply showed the ambassador to ascend the stairs and told him that he had ordered everything to be done in order to make Leszczyński's stay comfortable. After this, he turned his horse and rode back to the palace in the assist of his entourage.⁸⁷

This formal farewell concluded the ceremonial entry and signified the end of the ceremonies for that day, while a new set of ceremonies was staged the following day around the public audience and banquet held by the hospodar at his palace. However, these elements of the ceremonial remain beyond the scope of the present study.

⁸² *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 52–3.

⁸³ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 10.

⁸⁴ Gościecki, *Poselstwo wielkie*, 51.

⁸⁵ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 10.

⁸⁶ *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 54, 143, 215.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, 123.

II

The synchronic analysis of different elements of the ceremonial presented above has shown the instability of the ceremonial details, viewed as significant, the different use made of sources when discussing past 'ancient' ceremonial and various attempts to 'capture' the ceremony and use it in order to enhance the diplomat's own position. The second part of the study will now try to make sense of the different ceremonial strategies of both the Polish-Lithuanian ambassadors and the Moldavian hospodars by discussing them against the background of Polish-Moldavian diplomatic relations and internal developments in Moldavia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the seventeenth century.

The first thing that strikes one when analysing the chronology of ceremonial conflicts is the clear chronological distinction that can be made between the stages of 'ceremonial conflict' and 'ceremonial compromise' in this period. The most fiery disputes, which led to a significant worsening in the Polish-Moldavian relations and culminated with the hospodar's abstention from personal participation in the entry occurred in the period from 1636 to 1667, while after this date both sides seemed anxious not to alienate their partner and more willing to reach a mutually beneficial compromise. The hospodars stopped disputing the practice of personal participation in the entries.

Both their contemporaries and later historians have tried to make sense of the ceremonial conflicts; however, they typically took into account only single embassies and did not try to analyse them in a wider context. Below, I will present the most common interpretations of the ceremonial conflicts and later I will proceed to an alternative explanation, trying to present the changes in the Polish-Moldavian ceremonial in a coherent manner.

The strategy often applied by the Moldavians was that of a misunderstanding or an accident. According to Samuel Twardowski, who related events from 1622 on, the somewhat comic dance between Zbaraski and Tomşa, in which neither party wanted to extend arm first, was explained by the Moldavians as the result of the jumpy nature of the hospodar's mount.⁸⁸ In 1640, in turn, the boyars blamed an anonymous Armenian merchant who had allegedly reported that the approaching Polish envoy was not the grand ambassador but

⁸⁸ Twardowski, *Przeważna legacja*, 64.

rather a simple courier for the failure of Vasile Lupu to welcome Miaskowski in person.⁸⁹

Another popular rationalisation of the conflict was the stance adopted by the Sublime Porte. The Porte was said to oppose some elements of the ceremonial since these challenged the privileged status of Ottoman envoys at the Moldavian court. Thus, in 1640 Zbigniew Lubieniecki speculated that the true reason underlying Lupu's stance was his fear of the Ottoman reaction after the revolt and palace coup in Istanbul the same year.⁹⁰ Again, however, this does not seem very plausible as the Ottoman officials not only did not oppose the ceremonies that took place in 1677 and 1700, but also they themselves took part in the ceremonial entries of the Polish-Lithuanian embassies.⁹¹

An interesting argumentation was presented by the author of the account on Jerzy Kruszyński's mission in 1636. In his view, the hospodar did not want to receive the envoy personally, as he perceived him to be a client of Crown Hetman Stanisław Koniecpolski, who was hostile to Vasile Lupu. Before the embassy set out from the Commonwealth, Lupu attempted to obtain an appointment with a person from the entourage of Crown Grand Chancellor Tomasz Zamoyski, whom he perceived as more favourable towards himself.⁹² When he failed to achieve his goal, he preferred to disavow Kruszyński's credentials in the eyes of the Porte by claiming that Kruszyński was not the royal envoy but only a courier of Koniecpolski.

This explanation seems plausible and it convinced the editor of the travelogue to support this interpretation of events.⁹³ However, a number of reservations need to be made. Firstly, Kruszyński was not a grand ambassador of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and it seems that only diplomats holding such rank were expected to be received personally by the hospodar. In fact, Kruszyński's mission was initially planned to be a grand embassy, but the empty treasury brought a change of plans and, as a result, he was sent to Istanbul

⁸⁹ *Wielka legacja*, 110.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁹¹ *Źródła do poselstwa*, 9; *Poselstwo Rafała Leszczyńskiego*, 123.

⁹² Kołodziej, 'Diariusz podróży', 26; Robert Kołodziej, 'Wokół poselstwa Jerzego Kruszyńskiego do Turcji 1636 r.', in Bogdan Rok and Jerzy Maroń (eds.), *Między Lwowem a Wrocławiem: księga jubileuszowa profesora Krystyna Matwijowskiego* (Toruń, 2006), 496.

⁹³ Kołodziej, 'Wokół poselstwa', 496.

as an ordinary envoy.⁹⁴ It is thus possible that when preparing his embassy, initially planned as a grand embassy, he drew his information on the ceremonial from the accounts on Zbaraski. Added to his frustration over his deprivation of rank, the high expectations he had derived from the reports on Zbaraski's mission may have prompted him to present a hard line in negotiations with the hospodar.

Secondly, when analysing the Moldavian external political relations during the reign of Vasile Lupu, Constantin Șerban connected the latter's stance on ceremonial with the juridical status of Moldavia. Echoing the interpretation presented by Moldavians in 1667, he claimed that the practice of personally meeting the envoy was a remnant of the vassal status of the Moldavian hospodars towards the Polish Crown in the Middle Ages. As the vassal ties had ceased to exist by the reign of Lupu, his refusal to perform the ceremony was just a readjustment of the ceremony to Moldavia's existing juridical status.⁹⁵

While more refined than the interpretations presented above, this explanation has a significant flaw: it does not explain why after 1667 the hospodars resumed the practice of encountering ambassadors despite the fact that the vassal ties had not been restored. This phenomenon makes clear the need to see the ceremonial not as a mere superstructure founded on an objective, juridical 'base', as Șerban perceived it, but rather as an autonomous space of negotiation and action, despite being entangled with legal and diplomatic fields.

The most interesting interpretation of the ceremonial conflicts was presented by Franciszek Kazimierz Wysocki, the secretary of the embassy of 1667. After the failure of the negotiations and the refusal of Hospodar Ilie Alexandru to participate in the ceremonies, Wysocki remarked that the latter was

regarding himself highly in the Turkish manner, by which manner the hospodar is fascinated, and it seems that he is fully dependent on the Turks in his entourage, as a child is dependent on its custodians.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Władysław IV to Stanisław Koniecpolski, Warsaw, 22 Dec. 1635, in Agnieszka Biedrzycka (ed.), *Korespondencja Stanisława Koniecpolskiego, hetmana wielkiego koronnego, 1632–1646* (Cracow, 2005), 283.

⁹⁵ Constantin Șerban, *Vasile Lupu: domn al Moldovei (1634–1653)* (Bucharest, 1991), 139–40.

⁹⁶ '[A]lta spirantibus, według geniuszu tureckiego, którym infascinatedo doznałiśmy hospodara i tak się pokazującego, że *dependet* od Turków, których miał przy sobie, jak młody inspektorów', BOss., MS 1614/II, p. 4.

This statement should not yet be interpreted as a reflection of the hospodar's political reliance on the Sublime Porte, as he did not comply with the Polish-Lithuanian demands even when Wysocki – as acting ambassador – gained support for his stance from the Porte. It is the description of Ilie Alexandru as 'fascinated' by the Ottoman court ceremonial points to the deeper reasons of the hospodar's behaviour. In my view, his fascination should not be interpreted as a personal psychological bias, but rather as his willingness to apply a particular autocratic strategy of power that drew its ideology and ceremonial blueprint from the Ottoman and post-Byzantine models.

Many Romanian historians, starting from Nicolae Iorga, have pointed to the persistence of post-Byzantine models of power and ideology for monarchical rule in southeastern Europe well after the fall of the Byzantine Empire itself. This was also true in the case of the Danubian principalities.⁹⁷ However, the level to which the Moldavian and Wallachian princes resembled the autocratic ideal presented in Byzantine political theory tended to ebb and flow throughout the period; so was the case with the willingness and means to implement such a model. For those who pursued it more eagerly, the ceremonial offered the chance to make their claims visible and convincing. Vasile Lupu and Ilie Alexandru were rulers of high self-esteem and were well acquainted with Ottoman and post-Byzantine concepts of rule. The scholars dealing with Vasile Lupu's reassertion and stabilisation of power, a case without precedent in seventeenth-century Moldavia, underline that his reign, commonly seen as autocratic, did not affect the political institutions of the principality in any decisive manner. Instead of institutional changes, he relied on the appointment of his kin to key positions in the Princely Council and on the consistent strategy of self-fashioning as a strategy to strengthen his position.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Nicolae Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance. Continuation de l'“Histoire de la vie byzantine”* (Bucharest, 1935); Andrei Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în țările române în secolele XVI–XVIII* (2nd edn Bucharest, 2001); Valentin Al Georgescu, *Bizanțul și instituțiile românești pînă la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest, 1980); Radu G. Păun, 'La construction de l'état moderne et le sud-est de l'Europe. Quelques réflexions méthodologiques', *Revue des Études sud-est européennes*, xxxv, 3–4 (1997), 213–26; Radu G. Păun, 'La circulation des pouvoirs dans les Pays Roumains au XVIIIe siècle. Repères pour un modèle théorique', *New Europe College Yearbook 1998–1999* (2001), 265–310.

⁹⁸ Virgil Cîndea (ed.), *Istoria românilor, v: O epocă de înnoiri în spirit european (1601-1711/1716)* (Bucharest, 2002), 137.

Using the latter he not only managed to remain on the throne for nineteen years, but was also recognised as a major political figure in southeastern Europe of his time. Ilie Alexandru was not that successful and his rule was negligible; however, he was more dogmatic in his bid to rule in an autocratic manner. An outsider to the Moldavian milieu (even if descendant of a Moldavian hospodar dynasty), he spent all his life in Istanbul and spoke Greek and Turkish, but no Romanian.⁹⁹ His approach was less pragmatic and more based on his concept of how a sovereign should act. Despite the differences in motivations, both hospodars employed the fusion of post-Byzantine and Ottoman modes of ceremonial to their full.

The authority of the Ottoman sultan was presented symbolically through a staging of immobility of the ruler during diplomatic ceremonies. The sultan remained seated and the whole audience was carried out without his uttering a word. Conforming to the demands of foreign diplomats and participating in their ceremonial entries was out of the question for the sultan, and such encounters occurred only when a foreign embassy was entering provincial towns and was received by Ottoman provincial officials. In the context of the Ottoman ceremonial blueprint, participation in the ceremonial entry of a foreign ambassador was for Ottoman governors, not the sovereign. No wonder then that when the hospodars like Vasile Lupu or Ilie Alexandru attempted to enhance their public image through a careful staging of ceremonies, they had to resist the demands of the Polish-Lithuanian envoys, even at the expense of producing a diplomatic crisis. Ceremonial conflict was therefore as much a problem of diplomacy as of the internal preoccupations of the Moldavian principality.

If this was the rationale behind the stance taken by the hospodars in the years 1636–67, what was the reason for the more conciliatory approach presented by the Moldavian rulers after that period? It seems that the gradual integration of the principality into the Ottoman imperial system was one of the factors explaining this. As Petrică Dumitrache has claimed, the process of integrating Moldavia into the structure of the Ottoman Empire became visible in the later part of the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁰ The rulers of Moldavia during this period seem

⁹⁹ Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină*, 282.

¹⁰⁰ Petrică Dumitrache, 'Instituțiile centrale ale Principatelor Române între

less willing to assert their power in an autocratic manner and slowly began to accept their position both in the country as well as in the wider imperial context. The conclusion to this process was embodied by Nicolae Mavrocordat, with whom Stanisław Chomętowski dealt in 1712: of Phanariot origin, son of grand dragoman of the Porte and with no previous ties to Moldavia, even if he created a court modeled on that of the sultans, it seems plausible to see him as representing the peculiar Phanariot *esprit de corps*, rather than nurturing any grandiose political plans of his own.¹⁰¹ Having neither autocratic ambitions nor much support in Moldavia itself, coupled with his uneasy neighbour in the person of Charles XII of Sweden, still in the Bender fortress, Mavrocordat's main wish was to stay out of trouble. In this context, it comes as no wonder that Chomętowski did not have to struggle over the ceremonial too much to achieve what he wanted. Nonetheless, the tension was still there and according to Franciszek Gościecki, when the hospodar, due to one of his servants, had to wait for the ambassador for hours in the rain, he ordered the servant to be executed. However, he was reportedly persuaded by Chomętowski not to inflict such a harsh punishment upon the courtier.

We can see that ceremonial in the Polish-Moldavian relations was no 'ancient tradition', therefore, but was rather a tradition that was constantly re-invented, reworked and adapted to reflect not only the balance of power, but also aspirations of participants and the sources they could use to learn about the previous iterations of the ceremonial blueprint. This means that both the Polish-Lithuanian diplomats and Moldavian hospodars operated in a way that remained relatively stable throughout the period, but it were the details that made a difference in each case. Some of the changes were made consciously, while some of them emerged from different readings of the sources. Finally, in some instances it was a willingness to reach a compromise that mattered. However, when neither side were able to reach any kind of working compromise, this failure could have

sistemul politic european și cel otoman (1683–1756)', *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A.D.Xenopol"*, xliii–xliv (2006–7), 291–308.

¹⁰¹ On the position of Phanariots and their connection to the Ottoman Empire, see Christine Philliou, 'Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, li, 1 (2009), 151–81; *eadem*, *Biography of An Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, 2011).

far-reaching consequences that went beyond the sphere of symbolic communication. In all these cases, ceremonial could not be reduced to nothing but a mirror of diplomatic status or a sign of vanity.

The implications of this analysis of the ceremonial entries go beyond the narrow field of Polish-Moldavian diplomatic relations in the early modern period. Instead, this analysis shows the complex interaction between the fields of diplomatic practice, internal political projects, individual self-fashioning and literary production that permeate symbolic communication in the pre-modern period. Diplomatic ceremonial cannot be reduced to an 'ancient custom' – an empty form that the parties repeated without real meaning attached to it; nor can it be seen as the application of single 'propagandistic' machinery by a single actor in a top-down manner. Finally, ceremonial dynamics were not a superstructure of an objective, juridical base. Polish-Moldavian ceremonial disputes show how the means of symbolic communication were negotiated, and how they formed an autonomous and dynamic arena for political cooperation and rivalry on an equal footing with the 'hard' diplomacy of treaties, alliances and declarations of war. The ceremonial could soothe disagreements, but it could also aggravate them. In no case can it, however, be reduced to a simple sham.

It is also quite ironic that it was Franciszek Kazimierz Wysocki who provided us with the most insightful view into the mechanism behind the Polish-Moldavian ceremonial conflicts. Deplored in historiography as an incompetent and over-ambitious war-monger, largely due to the failure of his embassy to the Porte in the years 1670–72,¹⁰² he has proven to be an acute observer, understanding very well the role of ideological and symbolic factors in early modern diplomacy.

¹⁰² Ilona Czamańska, 'Czy wojna z Turcją w 1672 roku była nieunikniona? Poselstwo Kazimierza Wysockiego do Turcji w latach 1670–1672', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, xcii, 4 (1985), 769–90.