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SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION IN HABSBURG-
-OTTOMAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.
THE GRAND EMBASSY
OF JOHANN RUDOLF SCHMID
ZUM SCHWARZENHORN (1650–51)*

Abstract

In seventeenth-century Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic relations, grand embassies played a crucial role in preserving the peace between the two empires. In the last decade, they have gained some popularity as a subject of historical research. The grand embassy of Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn (1650–51), however, has thus far received only little attention. This paper aims to analyse symbolic communication between Habsburgs and Ottomans during Schmid's mission by examining its three main events: the border exchange ceremony, the entry into Constantinople, and the audience with the sultan.

Keywords: Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn, Habsburg-Ottoman relations, grand embassy, symbolic communication, ceremonial

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Habsburg-Ottoman relations were primarily studied from a military or political perspective that focussed on Austria's struggle against the Turks. In recent years, however,

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historians have turned to other approaches, following the trend of a New Diplomatic History.¹ Researchers have examined diplomatic networks, knowledge transfer and lower-ranking members of embassies² as well as the material culture of diplomacy and gift-giving, cultural practices and symbolic communication.³ While historians have previously called early modern diplomatic ceremonial ‘ridiculous practices’,⁴ alleged an

¹ Ursula Lehmkuhl, ‘Diplomatiegeschichte als internationale Kulturgeschichte: Theoretische Ansätze und empirische Forschung zwischen Historischer Kulturwissenschaft und Soziologischem Institutionalismus’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 27, no. 3 (2001), 394–424; Heidrun Kugeler, Christian Sepp and Georg Wolf, ‘Einführung’, in *Internationale Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit. Ansätze und Perspektiven*, ed. by Heidrun Kugeler, Christian Sepp, and Georg Wolf (Hamburg: Lit-Verlag, 2006), pp. 9–35.

² Zsuzsanna Cziráki, ‘Language Students and Interpreters at the Mid-Seventeenth-Century Habsburg Embassy in Constantinople’, *Theatrum Historiae*, 19 (2016), 27–44; ead., “‘Mein gueter, väterlicher Meister’ – Wissenstransfer unter kaiserlichen Gesandten an der Hohen Pforte in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts’, *Chronica – Annual of the Institute of History, University of Szeged*, 19 (2019), 42–83; János Szabados, “‘Ih awer befeise mih, daß ih sie beidte zue nahbarn mahen khan’”. Die Karriere des deutschen Renegaten (Hans Caspar) in Ofen (1627–1660) im politischen und kulturellen Kontext’, vol. 1 (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Szeged, 2018).

³ Ernst D. Petritsch, ‘Zeremoniell bei Empfängen habsburgischer Gesandtschaften in Konstantinopel’, in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota, and Jan P. Niederkorn (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), pp. 301–22; Hedda Reind-Kiel, ‘Pracht und Ehre. Zum Geschenkwesen im Osmanischen Reich’, in *Das Osmanische Reich in seinen Archivalien und Chroniken*, ed. by Klaus Kreiser and Christoph Neumann (Istanbul: Steiner, 1997), pp. 161–90; Harriet Rudolph, ‘The Material Culture of Diplomacy. The Impact of Objects on the Dynamics of Habsburg-Ottoman Negotiations at the Sublime Porte’, in *Politische Kommunikation zwischen Imperien. Der diplomatische Aktionsraum Südost- und Osteuropa*, ed. by Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Harriet Rudolph, and Christian Steppan (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2013), pp. 211–38; Arno Strohmeyer, ‘Internationale Geschichte und Ernährungsforschung: Verwendungsformen und Funktionen des Kaffees in der habsburgisch-osmanischen Diplomatie’, in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis. International History in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Barbara Haider-Wilson, William D. Godsey, and Wolfgang Mueller (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017), pp. 613–33.

⁴ William Roosen, ‘Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A System Approach’, *Journal of Modern History*, 52, no. 3 (1980), 452–76 (p. 452).

‘increasing disproportion between effort and significance’,⁵ and attributed ceremonial practices to the ‘ambassadors’ pomposity’,⁶ modern research has observed that, in pre-modern times, the ceremony was an integral part of political communication.⁷ The rank of a sovereign within the international state system was manifested by the ceremonial honours he and his ambassadors received (or could enforce) during public meetings, making symbolic acts precedents with legal quality.⁸ It has been argued that ceremonies should be interpreted as ‘a “play” being acted out [...] on a “stage”, with “actors” [...] in front of an “audience”’⁹ that ‘transformed imagined relations of power into perceptible spatial and temporal arrangements’¹⁰ and not only represented said relations but also reproduced them.

This article will analyse the symbolic communication between Habsburg and Ottoman representatives during the grand embassy of Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn (1590–1667),¹¹ who

⁵ Karl Teply, *Kaiserliche Gesandtschaften ans Goldene Horn* (Stuttgart: Steingrüben, 1968), p. 46.

⁶ Bertold Spuler, ‘Die europäische Diplomatie in Konstantinopel bis zum Frieden von Belgrad (1739)’, part 2, *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven*, 11, no. 2 (1935), 171–222 (p. 180).

⁷ Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, ‘Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol. Neue Forschungen zur symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 27 (2000), 389–405; ead., ‘Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne. Begriffe – Thesen – Forschungsperspektiven’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 31, no. 4 (2004), 490–527.

⁸ Christine Vogel, ‘The Caftan and the Sword. Dress and Diplomacy in Ottoman-French Relations Around 1700’, in *Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives*, ed. by Claudia Ulbrich and Richard Wittmann (Würzburg: Ergon, 2015), pp. 25–44 (p. 30).

⁹ Arno Strohmeyer, ‘The Theatrical Performance of Peace. Entries of Habsburg Grand Embassies in Constantinople (17th–19th Centuries)’, in *New Trends in Ottoman Studies: Papers presented at the 20th CIÉPO Symposium, Rethymno, 27 June – 1 July 2012*, ed. by Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno: 2014), pp. 486–94 (p. 487).

¹⁰ Christine Vogel, ‘The Art of Misunderstanding. French Ambassadors Translating Ottoman Court Ceremonial’, in *New Trends in Ottoman Studies*, pp. 495–504 (p. 498).

¹¹ Peter Meienberger, *Joh. Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn als kaiserlicher Resident in Konstantinopel 1629–1643. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und der Türkei in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1973); Arno Strohmeyer,

travelled to Constantinople in 1650 to consolidate the peace between the two empires. It will focus on the three key ceremonial events of the mission: the border exchange ceremony, the entry into Constantinople and the audience with the sultan. Grand embassies were reciprocal, non-permanent diplomatic missions of the highest rank between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, established in the peace treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606). Their purpose was not only to deliver ratified peace treaties and conduct negotiations on the release of prisoners and present gifts but – arguably more importantly – to ‘[present] peace to the outside in a symbolic and ritual way’.¹² In the last decade, the interest of historians has been drawn to grand embassies, in particular, the ambassadors travelling to the Sublime Porte after wars between the two empires, for example, Walter Leslie (1665–66),¹³ Walter IV von Oettingen-Wallerstein (1699–1701),¹⁴ Damian Hugo von Virmont

‘Kategorisierungsleistungen und Denkschemata in der diplomatischen Kommunikation Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn als kaiserlicher Resident an der Hohen Pforte (1629–1643)’, in *Politische Kommunikation zwischen Imperien. Der diplomatische Aktionsraum Südost- und Osteuropa*, ed. by Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Harriet Rudolph and Christian Steppan (Innsbruck–Bozen: Studienverlag, 2013), pp. 21–29; Arno Strohmeyer, ‘Der Dreißigjährige Krieg in der Korrespondenz des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn (1629–1643)’, in *Dynamik durch Gewalt? Der Dreißigjährige Krieg (1618–1648) als Faktor der Wandlungsprozesse des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Michael Rohrschneider and Anuschka Tischer (Münster: Aschendorff, 2018), pp. 315–35; Elisabeth Schraut, ‘Johann Rudolf Schmid von Schwarzenhorn. Sklave der Osmanen – Dolmetscher am Hof des Sultans – Gesandter des Kaisers’, in *Kaiser und Sultan. Nachbarn in Europas Mitte 1600–1700*, ed. by Badisches Landesmuseum (Karlsruhe: Hirmer, 2019), pp. 379–83.

¹² Strohmeyer, ‘Theatrical Performance’, p. 487.

¹³ Philip Steiner, ‘Zwischen religiösen Vorbehalten und diplomatischem Pflichtgefühl. Die habsburgische Großbotschaft unter Walter Leslie an die Hohe Pforte (1665–1666)’, *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 132 (2012), 276–303; id., ‘Die habsburgische Großbotschaft unter Walter Leslie anhand des Reiseberichts des jesuitischen Gesandtschaftskaplans Paul Tafferner (1665/66)’, in *Die Schlacht von Mogersdorf/St. Gotthard und der Friede von Eisenburg/Vasvár 1664. Rahmenbedingungen, Akteure, Auswirkungen und Rezeption eines europäischen Ereignisses*, ed. by Karin Sperl, Martin Scheutz, and Arno Strohmeyer (Eisenstadt: Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung, 2016), pp. 233–68.

¹⁴ Arno Strohmeyer, ‘The Symbolic Making of the Peace of Carlowitz: The Border Crossing of Count Wolfgang IV of Oettingen Wallerstein during his Mission as Imperial Ambassador to the Sublime Porte (1699–1701)’, in *The Treaties of Carlowitz*

(1719–20)¹⁵ and Anton Corfiz von Ulfeld (1740–41),¹⁶ and also ambassadors such as Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein (1628–29)¹⁷ whose mission took place during peacetime. Some of the embassies are well documented, either by contemporary printed reports and diaries or by modern critical editions,¹⁸ which allows us to compare the missions and identify ceremonial ‘norms’ and variations. Schmid’s grand embassy, however, has received little attention to date.

THE GRAND AMBASSADOR

Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn was born on 17 April 1590 in Stein am Rhein, in present-day Switzerland. Little is known about his early life, but following the death of his father, Felix Schmid, his uncle took him on as an apprentice.¹⁹ At the age of 12, he was taken by an Austrian officer to Verona, where he learned Italian. Four

(1699): *Antecedents, Course and Consequences*, ed. by Colin Heywood and Ivan Parvev (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 213–35.

¹⁵ Arno Strohmeyer, ‘Die Theatralität interkulturellen Friedens: Damian Hugo von Virmont als kaiserlicher Großbotschafter an der Hohen Pforte (1719/20)’, in *Frieden und Friedenssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit. Das Heilige Römische Reich und Europa. Festschrift für Maximilian Lanzinner zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Guido Braun and Arno Strohmeyer (Münster: Aschendorff, 2013), pp. 413–38; Strohmeyer, ‘Theatrical Performance’.

¹⁶ Christoph Würflinger, ‘Symbolische Kommunikation im habsburgisch-osmanischen Konfliktmanagement. Die Großbotschaft des Anton Corfiz Graf Ulfeld nach Konstantinopel 1740/41’ (unpublished master’s thesis, University of Salzburg, 2017).

¹⁷ Klára Berzeviczy, ‘Fragen des Zeremoniells während einer Gesandtschaftsreise. Einige Bemerkungen zum Reisebericht des H.L. Freiherrn von Kuefstein’, in *Quelle & Deutung I. Beiträge der paläographischen Tagung Quelle und Deutung I am 27. November 2013*, ed. by Balázs Sára (Budapest: Eötvös-József-Collegium, 2014), pp. 53–70; Peter Burschel, ‘A Clock for the Sultan: Diplomatic Gift-giving from an Intercultural Perspective’, *Medieval History Journal*, 16, no. 2 (2014), 547–63.

¹⁸ Karl Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins Gesandtschaftsreise nach Konstantinopel. Ein Beitrag zum Frieden von Zsitvatorok (1606)* (München: Oldenbourg, 1983); Julia Kellner, ‘Edition der politischen Korrespondenz des Grafen Hermann Czernin, kaiserlicher Großbotschafter an der Hohen Pforte (1644–1645)’ (unpublished master’s thesis, University of Salzburg, 2015).

¹⁹ Meienberger, p. 102.

years later, they went to Hungary, where the officer fought (and fell) in the Long Turkish War (1593–1606).²⁰ Schmid was captured by the Ottomans and taken to Constantinople where he learned to read and write Ottoman Turkish and became a translator. In 1624, the imperial envoy, Johann Jakob Kurz von Senftenau, ransomed him and he was able to return to the Holy Roman Empire as a free man. From 1625, he was employed by the Aulic War Council and participated in several diplomatic missions to the Ottoman Empire.²¹ His career certainly benefitted from his friendship with Michel d'Asquier,²² who was an influential translator at the imperial court.

When the imperial resident ambassador in Constantinople, Sebastian Lustrier von Liebenstein, resigned from his post, Johann Rudolf Schmid was chosen as his successor and travelled to the Golden Horn in 1629.²³ After his return in 1643, he became a member of the Aulic War Council and was made *Waldmeister* in Lower Austria, which secured him an income. In 1645, he married Helena Fellner von Feldegg, who brought considerable property to the marriage. Two years later, he was ennobled and was allowed to use the name 'zum Schwarzenhorn'.²⁴

After Sultan Ibrahim died in 1648 and Mehmed IV ascended the throne, Schmid was sent to Constantinople as an envoy in 1649 to negotiate the renewal of the peace treaty.²⁵ As grand ambassador, he was chosen to deliver the ratified treaty one year later – the highlight

²⁰ Theodor Vetter, 'Schmid von Schwarzenhorn, Freiherr Johann Rudolf', in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 31 (1890), pp. 695–99, <<https://www.deutschebiographie.de/pnd108194221.html#adbcontent>> [accessed 13 May 2020].

²¹ Meienberger, pp. 104–05.

²² Alastair Hamilton, 'Michel d'Asquier, Imperial Interpreter and Bibliophile', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 72 (2009), 237–41.

²³ Meienberger, pp. 105–06.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15; the name stems from the house where he was born ('zum schwarzen Horn').

²⁵ Lisa Brunner, 'Habsburgisch-osmanisches Konfliktmanagement im 17. Jahrhundert', in *Quellen zur habsburgisch-osmanischen Diplomatie im 17. Jahrhundert*, in *Die Internuntiaturs des Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn (1649): Reisebericht, Instruktionen, Korrespondenz, Berichte*, ed. by Arno Strohmeyer and Georg Vogeler (2019), <<http://gams.uni-graz.at/o:dipko.hbg>> [accessed 13 May 2020]; his correspondence during this mission and his final report as well as his secret report are currently being edited by a research group at the University of Salzburg.

of his career, which he described in his final report.²⁶ Schmid was an unusual choice for such a mission: unlike other grand ambassadors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he did not come from a noble background. However, due to his intercultural expertise, he was very well suited for the job. Besides his ceremonial duties, Schmid had to conduct negotiations over the Hungarian border region, lobby for the Catholic friars in Jerusalem and recruit translation students.²⁷ In his secret report, he portrayed the Ottoman political elite as well as their foreign and domestic policies. Concerning the distribution of power within the Ottoman elite, he stated, ‘The Ottoman Porte has such an odd government, that I am not sure whether to call it a monarchy, an aristocracy, a democracy, or a triumvirate’.²⁸ Upon his return to Vienna, Schmid commissioned both a painting and a goblet that depicted scenes from the grand embassy.²⁹

In the following years, he continued his service in the Aulic War Council as procurator for oriental affairs. His last diplomatic mission in 1664 led him to the Federal Diet of Switzerland, where he asked for support against the Ottomans on behalf of the emperor. During this

²⁶ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (hereafter cited as ÖStA), Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv (hereafter cited as HHStA), Staatenabteilungen (hereafter cited as StAbt), Türkei I, 124/1, Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn: *An die röm: kay: auch zu Hungarn und Böhaimb königl: May: Erz Herzogen zu Öesterreich etc., meinen allergnädigsten herrn allerunnderthänig, gehorsambste Haupt Relation deroelben Hoffkriegs Raths, Waldmaisters in Oesterreich undter der Ennsß unnd nach der ottomannischen Portten abgefertigten Oratoris, Johann Rudolph Schmid, freyherrn zum Schwartzhorn, die nach gedachter Portten mier allergnädigist anvertraut und hiemit allerunderthanigist abgelegte ambassada betr[effend]* (hereafter cited as Schmid, Final Report), 10 June 1651.

²⁷ Meienberger, pp. 121–22.

²⁸ ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 124/2, Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzhorn, *An die Röm: Kay: auch zue Hungarn und Böhemb königl: May. etc., Ertzhertzogen zue Österreich, meinem allergnädigstn Kayßer und herren über die gehorsambist eingeraichte Haupt: verner allerunderthenigiste gehaimbe Relation und beschreibung von ietzigem Ottomanischen Reich, desselben Governo und Ministris, auch übrige beschaffenheit mit angeheffen, underschidlichen nottwendigen erinerungs puncten und gehorsambist, unmaßgeblichen gutachten deroelben Hoffkriegs Rabt, Waldtmaisters in Österreich under der Enßß und nach gedachter Portten abgeordneten Oratoris Johann Rudolph Schmidts, freyherrn zum Schwartz Horn* (Secret Report), 8 June 1651.

²⁹ Schraut, pp. 380–83.

assignment, he briefly returned to his hometown, Stein am Rhein. Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn died, in Vienna, on 12 April 1667.³⁰

THE BORDER EXCHANGE CEREMONY

Several months before his departure, Schmid was appointed *Reichsfreiherr* (Baron of the Holy Roman Empire), so that he had a title to match the prestige of a grand embassy.³¹ In July 1650, court interpreter Michel d'Asquier was sent to Ofen (Buda) because the Ottoman version of the peace treaty did not include the correct title of the emperor.³² After some negotiations, the errors were rectified, and preparations could continue; the Aulic War Council informed the grand ambassador about the successful mission on 14 September 1650.³³

On 30 October 1650, Schmid departed from Vienna with an entourage of 150 people,³⁴ a number that roughly equalled the embassy of his predecessor, Hermann Czernin von Chudenic.³⁵ Four days later, he

³⁰ Meienberger, pp. 129–38.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³² Instructions for d'Asquier: ÖStA, Kriegsarchiv (hereafter cited as KA), Zentralstellen (hereafter cited as ZSt), Hofkriegsrat (hereafter cited as HKR), Hauptreihe (hereafter cited as HR), Bücher, 302, fol. 91v; Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Leopold Wilhelm, 13 July 1650: ÖStA, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (hereafter cited as FHKa), Sammlungen und Selekte (hereafter cited as SUS), Reichsakten (hereafter cited as RA), 280, fols 709r–10v.

³³ Notification for Schmid: ÖStA, KA, ZSt, HKR, HR, Bücher, 302, fol. 130v; Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Leopold Wilhelm, 28 September 1650: ÖStA, FHKa, SUS, RA, 280, fols 723r–v.

³⁴ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 5r.

³⁵ Georg Wagner, 'Österreich und die Osmanen im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Hermann Graf Czernins Großbotschaft nach Konstantinopel 1644/45', *Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs*, 14 (1984), 325–92 (p. 343); both embassies were considerably larger than Adam von Herberstein's in 1608 (110 members; Nehring, p. 44) or Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein's in 1628/29 (100 members; Karl Teply, *Die kaiserliche Großbotschaft an Sultan Murad IV. 1628: des Freiherrn Hans Ludwig von Kuefsteins Fahrt zur Hohen Pforte* [Vienna: Schendl, 1976], p. 23), but pale in comparison with later missions, such as Walter Leslie's in 1665–66 (350 members; Harald Heppner, 'Johann Josef von Herberstein und die kaiserliche Großbotschaft nach Konstantinopel, 1665/66', in *Österreichische Osthefte*, 20 [1978], 116–23 [p. 119]), or Damian Hugo von Virmont's in 1719/20 (500 members; Strohmeier, 'Internationale Geschichte', p. 622).

arrived at the border fortress of Komorn (Komárom), where he inspected the troops and fortifications. In the meantime, court interpreter Michel d'Asquier, who had accompanied Schmid, went to Buda to prepare the border exchange³⁶ and collate the different versions of the peace treaty to prevent discrepancies. The pasha of Buda, however, denied this request.³⁷ Translation errors were not uncommon in Habsburg–Ottoman relations; for example, in the Turkish version of the treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606), the omission of the phrase ‘semel pro semper’ regarding tribute payments was the basis of Ottoman tribute demands throughout the seventeenth century.³⁸ Nonetheless, preparations for the exchange ceremony at the border continued.

The exchange ceremony was scheduled for 20 November at 9 o'clock in the morning at the village of Szöny, not far from Komárom. After disembarking, Schmid and his escorts rode their horses to the location of the ceremony where three wooden columns were arranged – the middle one marked the border between the two empires, the other two stood on the Habsburg and Ottoman side respectively at a distance of 30 steps.³⁹ Dismounting their horses was the first challenge for the ambassadors: whoever stepped on the ground first was deemed inferior. In 1699, the Ottoman ambassador started dismounting his horse early, leading his escorts to have to hold him above the ground and push him back on, to prevent a ceremonial defeat.⁴⁰ Schmid does not mention any disruption, merely observing that the Ottoman ambassador, Hasan Pasha, was already waiting at his column.⁴¹ The ambassadors subsequently

³⁶ Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Leopold Wilhelm, 11 November 1650: ÖStA, FHKA, SUS, RA, 280, fols 726r–v.

³⁷ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 6v.

³⁸ Dennis Dierks, ‘Übersetzungsleistungen und kommunikative Funktionen osmanisch-europäischer Friedensverträge im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert’, in *Frieden durch Sprache? Studien zum kommunikativen Umgang mit Konflikten und Konfliktlösungen*, ed. by Martin Espenhorst (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), pp. 133–74 (pp. 134–36).

³⁹ Legend has it that Suleiman the Magnificent himself ordered the installation of the columns. However, neither Hermann Czernin nor Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein nor any previous grand ambassadors mention the columns, which indicates that they were a novelty in 1650.

⁴⁰ Strohmeyer, ‘Symbolic Making’, p. 228.

⁴¹ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 8r.

took steps towards the middle column, where, again, arriving first was interpreted as begging for peace – an interpretation both sides desperately wanted to avoid. During the exchange ceremony in 1628, the Ottoman ambassador slowed down and then even stopped, which caused Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein to protest and even threaten to abort the ceremony.⁴² Schmid mentions no such incidents and emphasises their simultaneous arrival at the middle column, where they shook hands and embraced. Handshakes and embraces were considered gestures of reconciliation and friendship in both cultures.⁴³ The friendship between the emperor and the sultan was not, of course, an emotional bond but a beneficial relationship.⁴⁴ In addition to this abstract sense of friendship between two empires, friendship, in this case, also had a personal meaning: Schmid knew Hasan Pasha from his long service as an imperial resident ambassador at the Sublime Porte. During the subsequent conversation, both ambassadors expressed their desire for peace. Another ritual that featured prominently in other ambassadors' reports is noticeably absent in Schmid's account: there is no indication of a shared meal or coffee, which in both cultures are symbols of trust and friendship.⁴⁵

Hasan Pasha suggested that, for 'eternal commemoration', the columns that marked the border should not merely be wooden, but made of stone – a suggestion that Schmid approved. In his final report, he argued that, in doing so, ploys could be prevented and the Ottomans would be forced to accept the disputed border⁴⁶ – despite his intercultural expertise and his 'friendship' with Hasan Pasha, Schmid still reveals his mistrust of the 'hereditary enemy'. Although in his final report, Schmid claimed that the commander of Komárom had already

⁴² Berzeviczy, pp. 59–60; for the Ottoman perspective see Richard Kreutel, *Im Reiche des Goldenen Apfels. Des türkischen Weltbummlers Evliyâ Çelebi denkwürdige Reise in das Giaurenland und in die Stadt und Festung Wien anno 1665* (Graz: Styria, 1963), p. 274.

⁴³ Strohmeyer, 'Symbolic Making', pp. 229–30.

⁴⁴ Strohmeyer, 'Die habsburgisch-osmanische Freundschaft (16.–18. Jahrhundert)', in *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen. Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Arno Strohmeyer and Norbert Spannenberger (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2013), pp. 223–38 (p. 226).

⁴⁵ Strohmeyer, 'Symbolic Making', pp. 226–27.

⁴⁶ Schmid, Final Report, fols 10r–v.

initiated the construction, stone columns would not be erected for another half-century; during Walter Leslie's mission, the columns were still made of wood.⁴⁷ During the border ceremony, a predetermined number of soldiers were present, in this case no more than 500 on each side, who sounded their trumpets and drums. Mutual affirmations to treat the foreign ambassador well and according to 'international law' and traditional conventions between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires concluded the ceremony.⁴⁸

The border ceremony conveyed one overriding theme – parity. Parity was not only the most important but also the most contested symbol in Habsburg–Ottoman diplomatic relations. From the Ottoman point of view, all non-Ottoman territories were merely *not yet* under the sultan's rule. This ideology of world domination could not tolerate a competing power. During the sixteenth century, the Ottomans undoubtedly viewed the Habsburgs as a tributary state, comparable to the principalities of Transylvania, Wallachia or Moldova, and addressed the Habsburg emperor as *Nemçe qıralı* (king of Germany) or even *Beç qıralı* (king of Vienna).⁴⁹ After the Long Turkish War and the treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606), however, the Ottomans had (at least to pretend) to recognise the Habsburg emperors as equals and accept the reciprocity of embassies. The political reality, of course, influenced this new diplomatic arrangement and, as soon as the Ottomans' military campaigns against the Safavid Empire had ended and rebellions in Anatolia had been put down, they were confident enough to challenge the new order and demand that an imperial ambassador be sent without sending one themselves. Due to the ongoing Thirty Years War, Emperor Ferdinand III had no choice but to concede: when Hermann Czernin travelled to Constantinople in 1644, there was no Ottoman ambassador and, hence, no exchange ceremony.⁵⁰ By 1650, the political situation had

⁴⁷ Steiner, 'Die habsburgische Großbotschaft', p. 293.

⁴⁸ Schmid, Final Report, fols 10v–11v.

⁴⁹ Markus Köhbach, 'Çasar oder Imperator? Zur Titulatur der römischen Kaiser durch die Osmanen nach dem Vertrag von Zsitvatorok (1606)', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 82 (1992), 223–34 (pp. 223–24).

⁵⁰ Kellner, 'Edition der politischen Korrespondenz', p. 25; Hermann Czernin, *Zweite Gesandtschaftsreise des Grafen Hermann Czernin von Chudenic nach Constantinopel*

fundamentally changed. While the treaties of Westphalia had brought peace to the Habsburg Empire, the Ottomans struggled with internal conflict and led a moderately successful military campaign in Candia (Crete), which allowed for a return to equality. The eighth article of the peace treaty of Constantinople (1649) hence ruled that the Ottomans were obliged to send an ambassador to Vienna.⁵¹

After crossing the border, the *bey* of Gran (Esztergom) accompanied Schmid to Buda, where he arrived on 22 November. In an audience with Murad Pasha, who governed the Ottoman part of Hungary, Schmid complained about Ottoman border violations and negotiated the release of prisoners. On 27 November, he continued his journey via Griechisch-Weißenburg (Belgrade), Sofia, Philippopol (Plovdiv), and Adrianopel (Edirne).

ENTRY INTO CONSTANTINOPLE

On 13 January 1651, the ambassador reached Silvrea (Silivri), where the imperial resident ambassador, Simon Reniger, and his interpreter, Nicusio Panaiotti, greeted him. The latter was sent to the grand vizier on the following day to announce Schmid's arrival and negotiate the terms of his entry into Constantinople. In Ponte Piccolo (Küçükçekmece), it was customary for imperial ambassadors to wait for two days to rest and prepare for the entry into Constantinople. In 1650, however, the Ottomans desired Schmid to come to Constantinople immediately, because, as it later transpired, they wanted his audience with the sultan to take place on the same day as the payment of the janissaries,⁵² a 'show' intended to impress the ambassador and demonstrate Ottoman power, and which took place about once or twice every month.⁵³ Schmid

im Jahre 1644, ed. by Graf Czernin'sches Archiv zu Neuhaus (Neuhaus: Landfrass, 1879), p. 13.

⁵¹ Prorogatio Pacis [...], 1 July 1649: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 121/1, fol. 153v–54r.

⁵² Schmid, Final Report, fol. 33v; Strohmeyer, 'Theatralität', p. 429.

⁵³ Maria Pia Pedani, 'The Sultan and the Venetian Bailo: Ceremonial Diplomatic Protocol in Istanbul', in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota, and Jan Paul Niederkorn (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), pp. 287–99 (pp. 291–92).

was able to insist on following his instructions.⁵⁴ The Ottomans suspected that Schmid intentionally delayed his entry, which he, naturally, never admitted. It seems, however, that this suspicion was not entirely unreasonable: in his final report, Schmid refers to his Ottoman escort, Mehmed Aga, who, in 1644, ‘pulled count Czernin out of his bed despite his ill physical condition and forced him to enter [Constantinople]’.⁵⁵ It is thus possible that Schmid’s refusal was an act of revenge for the poor treatment of Hermann Czernin six years earlier.

The entry was scheduled for 18 January 1650. Entries were considered to have played a key role in diplomatic relations as they took place in front of large public audiences.⁵⁶ One hour’s ride before reaching the city, the embassy was greeted by ‘many noble agas’, and ‘beautifully decorated horses’ were given to the embassy; Schmid received a ‘particularly splendidly decorated horse’ from the sultan’s own stables.⁵⁷ Half a mile outside the city gates, the *çavuşbaşı* and the *aga* of the *sipahi* greeted Schmid and accompanied him, each with a large number of subordinates.⁵⁸ The imperial flag had to be pulled down, and no music was allowed inside the city walls.⁵⁹ When Hermann Czernin had entered Constantinople in 1616, he had done so with a flag that depicted the imperial eagle on one side, and the crucified Jesus on the other, alluding to a prophecy according to which such flag would announce the end of Ottoman rule over the city.⁶⁰ This had caused a riot in the city, and Czernin’s escort had almost lost his life. It is unclear whether this was

⁵⁴ Ferdinand III, Instruction für unsern pottscaffter Johan Ruedolph Schmidten, freyherrn zu Schwarzenhorn, waß er an der ottomannischen Porten zu verrichten, s. d.: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/1, fol. 289r.

⁵⁵ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 27r.

⁵⁶ Strohmeyer, ‘Theatrical Performance’, p. 487.

⁵⁷ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 28r.

⁵⁸ Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Ferdinand III, 21 January 1651: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/2, fol. 15r.

⁵⁹ Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Ferdinand III, 22 January 1651: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/2, fol. 17r; Peter Burschel mistakenly claims that Schmid entered the city flying the imperial flag and playing music: Peter Burschel, ‘Space, Time and the Confession of Ritual: A Lutheran Pastor in the Ottoman Empire’, in *New Trends in Ottoman Studies*, pp. 455–68 (p. 463).

⁶⁰ Strohmeyer, ‘Theatrical Performance’, p. 491.

the ambassador's mistake or deliberate provocation.⁶¹ Schmid attributed it to Czernin's 'unthoughtfulness'.⁶²

The ambassador's exact route through Constantinople is not known. Schmid only tells us that an 'uncountable number of people in the streets and alleys'⁶³ watched the procession. Later missions marched to the city centre, along the walls of Topkapı Palace, through the harbour area and to the Golden Horn, which took about three hours.⁶⁴ The final destination of the entry was the *Nemçe Han* (German house) which was located not far from Topkapı Palace. Unlike other European ambassadors, who resided on the other side of the Golden Horn, in Pera, imperial diplomats lived much closer to the centre of Ottoman power.⁶⁵ However, this came with a significant symbolic disadvantage: the ambassadors of the principalities of Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldova also lived there, which implied that the Habsburgs were tributaries of the Ottomans. Alexander von Greiffenklau zu Vollrads, who was the imperial resident ambassador from 1643 to 1648, reported that 'they say that your Majesty's ambassadors live here as hostages and are therefore separated from the other Christian ministers, who reside together in Pera',⁶⁶ and promptly moved there in 1644. Schmid, however, did not seem to mind.

The entry procession served two purposes. First, it represented the emperor's power, by marching through the city in full dress with beautifully decorated horses, accompanied by a large number of Ottoman escorts, in front of a large crowd. Second, entries with pomp and spectacle could also increase the sultan's prestige.

⁶¹ Teply, *Kaiserliche Gesandtschaften*, p. 49.

⁶² Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Ferdinand III, 22 January 1651: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/2, fol. 17r.

⁶³ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 28v.

⁶⁴ Strohmeyer, 'Theatrical Performance', p. 493.

⁶⁵ Petritsch, 'Zeremoniell', p. 309.

⁶⁶ Letter from Alexander von Greiffenklau zu Vollrads to Ferdinand III, 20 February 1644: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 117/2, fol. 155v.

AUDIENCE WITH THE SULTAN

The audience with the sultan was the highlight of an ambassador's mission. To be admitted, Schmid first had to visit grand vizier Melek Ahmed Pasha, with whom he arranged the date of the audience. On 23 January, Schmid handed over his letters of credence and presented his gifts: silverware and clocks.⁶⁷ The grand vizier thanked him and affirmed his friendship with Schmid. At the end of the audience, 40 caftans were distributed among Schmid's entourage.⁶⁸ For Europeans, caftans were sought-after gifts that caused rivalry among the diplomats. Alexander von Greiffenklaus zu Vollrads, for example, boasted of the number of caftans he received and commented on the French ambassador's envy.⁶⁹ For the Ottomans, however, caftans represented the sultan's protection of the receiver, which implied loyalty to the ruler and, thus, symbolised vassalage.⁷⁰ As an expert on Ottoman culture who had spent decades in Constantinople, Schmid surely knew the symbolic meaning of the caftans. Nonetheless, he participated in this competition among Western diplomats, for whom the Ottomans' intentions were irrelevant.⁷¹

The audience with the sultan was scheduled for 31 January. In the morning, the *çavuşbaşı* and many *çavuş* and janissaries collected Schmid and his entire entourage and accompanied them through the city, where many spectators watched the procession. The Topkapı Palace was specifically designed to demonstrate the sultan's power.⁷² At the second

⁶⁷ N.N., Specification der türggischen Praesenten in Anno 1650, s.d.: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/1, fol. 243r; Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Ferdinand III, 24 January 1651: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/2, fol. 23r.

⁶⁸ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 30v.

⁶⁹ Letter from Alexander von Greiffenklaus zu Vollrads to Ferdinand III, 6 May 1643: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 116/2, fol. 40v.

⁷⁰ Hedda Reindl-Kiel, 'East is East and West is West, and Sometimes the Twain Did Meet. Diplomatic Gift Exchange in the Ottoman Empire', in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 2, ed. by Colin Imber, Keiko Kiyotaki, and Rhoads Murphy (London: Tauris, 2005), pp. 113–23 (pp. 118–19).

⁷¹ Christine Vogel, 'Der Marquis, das Sofa und der Großwesir. Zu Funktion und Medialität interkultureller diplomatischer Zeremonien in der Frühen Neuzeit', in *Die Audienz. Ritualisierter Kulturkontakt in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Peter Burschel and Christine Vogel (Köln: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 221–46 (p. 234).

⁷² Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

gate, the ambassador had to dismount his horse and was greeted by the *agas* of the *janissaries* and *sipahi*. Usually, ambassadors then had to watch the payment of the janissaries, which was a spectacle intended to impress them and show the strength and discipline of the Ottoman military.⁷³ Schmid, having delayed his arrival in Constantinople, thus missed this display – whether it was intentional or not is another matter. Upon entering the divan, the grand vizier, the nine other viziers and both *kadiasker* rose from their seats. Schmid greeted and embraced each of them. Schmid, Reniger and ten other members of the embassy shared a meal with the Ottoman dignitaries.⁷⁴ Unlike Schmid, other diplomats describe the food that was served in great detail.⁷⁵ These banquets were not only acts of friendship but also expressions of an Ottoman sense of superiority: a wealthy ruler receives guests and provides for them. Western diplomats interpreted them as a sign of hospitality and particular respect.⁷⁶ This ‘degrading hospitality’ is also conveyed by the sultan supplying the ambassadors with provisions during their stay in Constantinople.⁷⁷ After the banquet, once again, 40 caftans were given to Schmid and his entourage.

Subsequently, Schmid, Reniger, Panaiotti and nine other members of the embassy were led to the audience chamber, where they were held by a *kapucibaşı* on each side and had to bow to the sultan. While Schmid and Reniger only had to bow, ‘some of the others were forced to kiss the

⁷³ Michael Talbot, ‘Accessing the Shadow of God: Spatial and Performative Ceremonial at the Ottoman Court’, in *The Key to Power? The Culture of Access in Princely Courts, 1400–1750*, ed. by Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastian Derks (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 101–23 (pp. 115–16).

⁷⁴ Schmid, Final Report, fols 34v–35v.

⁷⁵ Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, ‘Polish Embassies in Istanbul or How to Sponge on Your Host without Losing Your Self-Esteem’, in *The Illuminated Table, the Prosperous House*, ed. by Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph K. Neumann (Würzburg: Ergon, 2003), pp. 51–58 (pp. 55–56).

⁷⁶ Strohmeier, ‘Theatrical Performance’, p. 491.

⁷⁷ Florian Kühnel, “‘No Ambassador Ever Having the Like’. Die Übertretung der diplomatischen Rituale und die Stellung der Gesandten am osmanischen Hof”, in *Interkulturelle Ritualpraxis in der Vormoderne: Diplomatische Interaktion an den östlichen Grenzen der Fürstengesellschaft*, ed. by Claudia Garnier and Christine Vogel (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 2016), pp. 95–122 (pp. 105–06).

floor, especially those who did not bow quickly enough'.⁷⁸ The origins of this ritual are not quite clear. While it has been argued that it dates back to the assassination of Murad I after the Battle of Kosovo (1389), others claim it was adopted from Byzantine ceremonial.⁷⁹ Either way, the ritual conveys a sense of distrust of the diplomats, who viewed it as an act of humiliation.



1. Elias Widenman, Johann Rudolph Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn, copper engraving, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <<http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/baa7928236>> (accessed 11 May 2020)

A copper engraving by Elias Widenman (Fig. 1), based on a painting by Jeronimus Joachims, shows Schmid sitting on a chair, holding his credentials. On the upper right side, a picture within the picture can be seen, illustrating two consecutive scenes of the audience: (1) Schmid

⁷⁸ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 36r.

⁷⁹ Petritsch, 'Zeremoniell', p. 314.

and Reniger, escorted by an Ottoman, awaiting their reception, and (2) Schmid, held by two *kapucubaşı*, bowing before the sultan, a nine-year-old boy. On the left side, several Ottoman dignitaries are depicted.⁸⁰ Schmid wears a Hungarian hat, symbolising the Habsburg claim over the kingdom of Hungary.⁸¹ It is not quite clear whether the dress he wears is also Hungarian, or a Turkish caftan. According to Ottoman custom, ambassadors could only attend the audience in a caftan,⁸² but it has, nevertheless, been suggested that Schmid wore Hungarian dress.⁸³ Due to the symbolic implications of wearing a caftan, requirements regarding clothes were contested and from 1699 on, the matter was even regulated in the peace treaties, allowing the ambassadors to freely choose their attire.⁸⁴

After the ceremony, Schmid handed over his credentials and the ratified peace treaty. While other European diplomats often complained about the fact that the sultan usually did not move or speak during the audience,⁸⁵ Schmid who, given his background, was very familiar with Ottoman protocol, does not mention this gesture. During Schmid's speech, translated by Panaiotti, the *kapıcı* presented the gifts – each piece separately. The lavish presents, mostly silverware and clocks, were well received by the Ottomans. In an attempt to increase the emperor's reputation, Schmid pretended that the gifts were 'ordinary presents'.⁸⁶ In seventeenth-century Habsburg–Ottoman relations, three categories of gifts have been identified: (1) clocks and machines, (2) silverware,

⁸⁰ Schraut, pp. 380–82.

⁸¹ Lisa Brunner, 'Die "Kleidung" der Diplomatie. Kaftane in den habsburgisch-osmanischen Beziehungen', *historioPLUS*, 4 (2017), <<http://www.historioplus.at/?p=774>> [accessed 13 May 2020], p. 23.

⁸² Tetiana Grygorieva, 'Symbols and Perceptions of Diplomatic Ceremony: Ambassadors of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in Istanbul', in *Kommunikation durch symbolische Akte. Religiöse Heterogenität und politische Herrschaft in Polen-Litauen*, ed. by Yvonne Kleinmann (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), pp. 115–31 (p. 121).

⁸³ Schraut, p. 380.

⁸⁴ Brunner, p. 16.

⁸⁵ See for example Stefan Hanß, 'Udienza und Divan-I Hümayun. Venezianisch-osmanische Audienzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', in *Die Audienz. Ritualisierter Kulturkontakt in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Peter Burschel and Christine Vogel (Köln: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 161–220 (p. 204).

⁸⁶ Schmid, Final Report, fol. 36v.

and (3) furniture, jewels and textiles.⁸⁷ While these categories are mostly similar to other European diplomats' gifts,⁸⁸ textiles only play a minor role in Habsburg gift-giving to the Sublime Porte.⁸⁹ Once again, Schmid's intercultural knowledge proved useful: he knew that the Ottomans favoured clocks and silverware and cared less about the third category; neither furniture nor textiles are registered in his gift index.⁹⁰

Gifts can be viewed as a medium of communication; they are a visual representation of the power relations between the two empires.⁹¹ In 1547, emperor Ferdinand I pledged to send 30,000 florins to the Sublime Porte annually. After that, the Habsburgs made an effort to avoid the term 'tribute' and talked rather about 'gifts', which were not a matter of financial consideration. The imperial self-image did not allow for tribute payments and implied subordination to the *hereditary enemy*. From 1606 on, the term *spontanea munera* (voluntary gifts) was used in peace treaties.⁹² The exact sum was usually agreed upon beforehand; however, the Ottomans did not always stick to the bargain. In 1644, Hermann Czernin noted that the sultan was not content with his gifts and demanded more.⁹³ What the ambassador interpreted as Ottoman greed was, in fact, a demonstration of superiority.⁹⁴ The treaty of 1649

⁸⁷ Anna Huemer, 'Geschenke für den Sultan. Zu Funktion und Ausprägung kaiserlicher Gabensendungen an die Hohe Pforte in ausgewählten Großbotschaften des 'langen 17. Jahrhunderts' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Salzburg, 2016), pp. 114–31.

⁸⁸ Michael Talbot, 'A Treaty of Narratives: Friendship, Gifts, and Diplomatic History in the British Capitulations of 1641', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/ Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 48 (2016), 357–98 (p. 362); Pedani, p. 294.

⁸⁹ Huemer, p. 131.

⁹⁰ N.N., Specification der türggischen Praesenten in Anno 1650, s.d.: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/1, fols 242r–45v.

⁹¹ Valentin Groebner, *Gefährliche Geschenke. Ritual, Politik und die Sprache der Korruption in der Eidgenossenschaft im späten Mittelalter und am Beginn der Neuzeit* (Konstanz: UVK, 2000), pp. 229–30.

⁹² Ernst D. Petritsch, 'Tribut oder Ehrengeschenk. Ein Beitrag zu den habsburgisch-osmanischen Beziehungen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', in *Archiv und Forschung. Das Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte Österreichs und Europas*, ed. by Elisabeth Springer and Leopold Kammerhofer (München: Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 49–59 (pp. 54–57).

⁹³ Czernin, pp. 36–37.

⁹⁴ Strohmeyer, 'Theatralität', p. 433.

called for a gift of 40,000 florins;⁹⁵ Schmid delivered gifts to the value of 48,938 florins for the sultan, with an additional 11,478 florins for Ottoman dignitaries,⁹⁶ which proves that the symbolic meaning was more important than the financial aspect. Throughout the seventeenth century, especially in the 1640s, the Ottomans tried to reintroduce tribute payments, which imperial diplomats were able to avoid. This aspect of gift-giving distinguishes the Habsburg case from other European powers, who used gifts to establish and maintain trade relations with the Ottoman Empire as well as to present their goods to the Ottoman public.⁹⁷

A further symbolic dimension of gift-giving was friendship. The wording of peace treaties between Habsburgs and Ottomans was very clear: gifts were to be given as a sign of friendship. The concept of friendship has been assigned to international relations since antiquity; political friendship was, naturally, purposeful and without emotional ties and gifts played an important role in strengthening this form of friendship.⁹⁸

After the audience, Schmid was shown out and led past the janissaries to the first courtyard of the palace, where he had to wait until the soldiers had moved off. Schmid noted that ‘this audience with the sultan went very well and in a solemn way as your Majesty’s dignity, honour, and reputation demands it, and there were many people in the divan and everywhere’.⁹⁹ The audience ceremonial was about displaying imperial

⁹⁵ Prorogatio Pacis [...], 1 July 1649: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 121/1, fol. 154r.

⁹⁶ N.N., Specification der türggischen Praesenten in Anno 1650, s.d.: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/1, fols 242r–45v.

⁹⁷ See for example Talbot, ‘Treaty’; id., ‘Gifts of Time: Watches and Clocks in Ottoman. British Diplomacy, 1693–1803’ in *Material Culture in Modern Diplomacy from the 15th to the 20th Century*, ed. by Harriet Rudolph and Gregor M. Metzgi (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 55–79; Claudia Swan, ‘Birds of Paradise for the Sultan. Early Seventeenth-Century Dutch-Turkish Encounters and the Uses of Wonder’, *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 29 (2013), 49–63; Pablo Hernández Sau, ‘Gifts across the Mediterranean Sea. The 1784 Spanish Gift-Embassy to Constantinople and its Cross-Cultural Diplomatic Practice’, in *Embajadores culturales. Transferencias y lealtades de la diplomacia Española de la Edad Moderna*, ed. by Diana Carrió-Invernizzi (Madrid: UNED, 2016), pp. 107–35.

⁹⁸ Strohmeyer, ‘Habsburgisch-osmanische Freundschaft’, pp. 223–26.

⁹⁹ Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Ferdinand III, 31 January 1651: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/2, fol. 34v.

power and grandeur – on both sides. On the one hand, Ottoman protocol was designed to impress and intimidate the ambassador and express superiority over the monarch they represented.¹⁰⁰ Depending on the political situation, they might attempt to gain a symbolic advantage and sometimes even humiliate foreign diplomats. On the other hand, imperial ambassadors could increase their emperor's prestige with the magnificent appearance or lavish gifts. European diplomats also reframed the meaning of the caftans they received, turning the Ottomans' gesture of superiority into a competition about honour among themselves.

On 19 February 1651, Schmid took his leave from the sultan with 'the same ceremonies as before',¹⁰¹ and departed on 13 March, arriving in Vienna, after a turbulent journey, on 20 May 1651.¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn is a remarkable figure in Habsburg diplomacy, who, after his return from Ottoman captivity, quickly rose in rank, based on his merits. When he travelled to Constantinople in 1650 as an imperial grand ambassador, he did not just deliver the ratified peace treaty that he himself had negotiated with the Ottomans the previous year; the purpose of his mission was also to present the peace to the public in a symbolic way. Symbolic communication in Habsburg–Ottoman diplomatic relations was characterised by three principal themes: parity, friendship, and displays of imperial power. Although the peace of Zsitvatorok (1606) formally transformed the vassal–master relationship between Habsburgs and Ottomans into one of two equals, the Ottomans challenged this status repeatedly throughout the seventeenth century, and Habsburg diplomats had to work hard to resist these challenges. It has therefore been argued, rightly, that the

¹⁰⁰ Hedda Reindl-Kiel, 'Audiences, Banquets, Garments and Kisses. Encounters with the Ottoman Sultan in the 17th Century', in *The Ceremonial of Audience. Transcultural Approaches*, ed. by Eva Orthmann and Anna Kollatz (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019), pp. 169–207 (pp. 172–74).

¹⁰¹ Letter from Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn to Ferdinand III, 21 February 1651: ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I, 123/2, fol. 85r.

¹⁰² Meienberger, pp. 123–25.

notion of Zsitvatorok as a *caesura* has to be put into perspective.¹⁰³ After Hermann Czernin's mission in 1644–45 when, due to the political situation, the Ottomans were able to refuse to send an ambassador, the border exchange ceremony of Schmid and his Ottoman counterpart, Hassan Pasha, restored symbolic parity between the two empires. With the renewed peace treaty, 'friendship' between the emperor and the sultan could continue. This friendship was, of course, not an emotional bond, but a practical relationship intended to end, or at least limit, violence.¹⁰⁴ It was expressed by gestures such as embraces or kisses, shared meals and gift-giving. Unlike other imperial grand ambassadors, Schmid's intercultural experience allowed him to take into account Ottoman preferences in choosing the gifts he presented, thus contributing to a successful mission. Both sides sought to display imperial power. The Ottomans used military parades and palace architecture, as well as gestures that were perceived as humiliating by European diplomats, to express their superiority. However, in an intercultural setting, symbolic acts could have ambiguous meanings, and Western diplomats could reframe gestures in their favour or, as in the case of Schmid with the payment of the janissaries, avoid them altogether.

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¹⁰³ Strohmeyer, 'Theatralität', p. 435.

¹⁰⁴ Id., 'Habsburgisch-osmanische Freundschaft', p. 226.

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