The International History Review

ISSN: 0707-5332 (Print) 1949-6540 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rinh20

Information and Confusion: Russian Resident Diplomacy and Peter A. Tolstoi's Arrival in the Ottoman Empire (1702–1703)

Jan Hennings

To cite this article: Jan Hennings (2019) Information and Confusion: Russian Resident Diplomacy and Peter A. Tolstoi's Arrival in the Ottoman Empire (1702–1703), The International History Review, 41:5, 1003-1019, DOI: 10.1080/07075332.2018.1504225

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2018.1504225

Published online: 14 Jan 2019.

THE INTERNATIONAL HISTORY REVIEW
2019, VOL. 41, NO. 5, 1003–1019
https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2018.1504225

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Information and Confusion: Russian Resident Diplomacy and Peter A. Tolstoi's Arrival in the Ottoman Empire (1702–1703)

Jan Hennings

ABSTRACT

This article explores the arrival of the first Russian resident ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in a period when Russian diplomacy underwent major transformations. It focuses on Peter A. Tolstoi's network and the management of information gathered during the first year of his appointment in Adrianople (1702–03). The article revisits the notion of resident ambassador, not as a hallmark of 'modern European diplomacy' with an overemphasis on the diplomat as a state-representative and office-holder, on the states system, or on institutional reform, but to suggest that a resident embassy in the early modern period was more than a formal, self-contained, and sovereign institution located in a particular place. The transformation from ad-hoc to resident diplomacy in Russian–Ottoman relations did not originate from the adoption of European diplomatic norms alone: it created new or relied on the existing trans-imperial networks of the ambassador rather than on bilateral inter-state relations. The example of Russian–Ottoman relations demonstrates that while the new diplomacy introduced by Peter I was driven by Europeanization and reform, the transformations emerged from the adaptation to circumstances in different locations and depended on the development of contacts embedded in the geo-cultural and religious entanglements of the region.

KEYWORDS

Russian diplomacy; Peter A. Tolstoi; resident ambassador; Russian-Ottoman relations

Introduction

Traditionally, the office of resident ambassador has been seen as an institution of modern and, by implication, western diplomacy: 'a principle symbol of the absolute sovereignty of the modern state, […] as good a test as any for "modernity"'.[1] Diplomatic history wedded the presence of permanent foreign representatives at European capitals with the process of state-building, the bureaucratization, and professionalization of the diplomatic corps as well as the emergence of a states system that witnessed the rise of the resident ambassador from the beginning of the early modern period. As was noted by Donald Queller, 'by about the end of the fifteenth century […] modern states were conducting frequent or continuous diplomatic relations very much as we do now'.[2]

Since Garrett Mattingly and Donald Queller presented their observations on European resident diplomacy published in 1937 and 1967, respectively, followed by classic accounts of the rise of modern diplomacy,[3] the historiography has undergone important reorientations.[4] Challenging

CONTACT Jan Hennings hennings@ceu.edu
This article has been republished with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

explicitly modernising and eurocentric patterns in the history of international relations, the new diplomatic history has turned away from an understanding of diplomacy that assumed the state as an abstract sovereign actor competing with other states and exhibiting clearly defined and cohesive institutional structures and bureaucracies which corresponded by and large with historians' notions of nineteenth-century great powers or modern nation-states.

In this burgeoning and diverse body of literature, a new emphasis is placed on specifically early modern forms of communication, sociability, informal exchanges, cultural mediation, and the diplomatic exchanges between regions that had previously been thought to constitute incompatible spheres of diplomatic cultures.[5] A developing notion is that early modern diplomacy cannot be reduced to the interactions between separate states that were sustained by foreign policy institutions alone. Diplomacy was 'carried out via mobile and transnational networks of figures whose activities were informed by their educational backgrounds, intellectual and cultural interests, religious convictions, and webs of personal connections', as Daniel Riches suggests in a recent book on Brandenburg-Swedish relations in the seventeenth century.[6] The renewed interest in diplomatic actors (as opposed to acting states) embraces accredited ambassadors as well as lower ranking embassy personnel, secretaries, and intermediaries who were involved in the diplomatic process, not only in the Protestant North or the Italian peninsula, but also extending to North Africa, the trans-imperial entanglements in the Eastern Mediterranean and wider early modern Eurasia.[7] Transformative developments in diplomatic history are no longer seen exclusively as shifts in the European international system – such as the emergence of the Westphalian legal order, the 'diplomatic revolution' in the eighteenth century, or the post-1815 Concert of Europe – but as transformations that formed part of a process of intercultural diplomacy.

Russian diplomacy also underwent significant transformations, perhaps unprecedented, if not in scale, then in momentum. In Russia, the process, whose beginning Mattingly, Queller, and others dated to the dawn of early modernity, only started to take off around 1700, as Tsar Peter I ushered Russia into the emerging system of states through forceful attempts at building new alliances with western powers and the institutional restructuring of government.[8] In the two decades following the return of his Grand Embassy to Europe in 1698, Peter I created a new diplomatic corps that included a growing network of diplomats of various rank, dispatching envoys (including foreigners under the patronage of the tsar) to Vienna, Copenhagen, The Hague, Paris, London, and Constantinople but also maintaining representatives in Berlin, Gdan'sk, Hamburg, Dresden, and other places.[9]

The inception of resident diplomacy in Russia, whose rulers had hitherto relied on ad-hoc embassies to other courts, was a pivotal moment of change. It went hand in hand with reforms in the style of negotiation, the day-to-day running of diplomatic missions, the alignment of diplomatic ranks according to legal conventions and doctrines that distinguished between ambassadors, envoys, and residents. Adjustments occurred in diplomatic ceremonial. Russian representative rose to defend the sovereign dignity of the tsar in quarrels over honour and precedence, notably in defence of Peter I's emerging claims to imperial status, which culminated in the change of his title from tsar to imperator.[10] Peter I also introduced regular correspondence as a new form of diplomatic documentation, replacing the old Muscovite ambassadorial books (*posol'skie knigi*) that had previously compiled the diplomats' instructions and the reports that diplomatic representatives submitted at the end of their missions along with other documents accumulated during an embassy.

These transformations piloted a new era of Russian foreign relations. Russian–Ottoman exchanges have received relatively little attention in this context. To be sure, Russian–Ottoman relations underwent significant changes in the eighteenth century particularly during Russian imperial expansion under Catherine II: Russia registered a decisive victory in 1774, which eclipsed Ottoman dominance in the Black Sea and paved the way for the annexation of Crimea as well as for the new settlements in 'Novorossiia' north of the peninsula. Catherine II achieved what Peter

I had failed to accomplish: permanent access to the Black Sea.[11] Consequently, as Peter I gave up his designs on the south and turned away from his Muslim neighbour to move west and face Sweden in the Baltic, the historiography has followed the turns of its protagonist and predominantly focused on European affairs.[12] The common image of Petrine diplomacy that emerges is one of a unilateral transfer of western ideas and practices that formed part of Peter I's attempts at modernising and westernising Russia in order to make it a part of the European international system.

The aim of this article is to demonstrate why – for the discussion about resident diplomacy and its implications for the transformations in intercultural foreign relations – it is worth returning to the south at the beginning of the eighteenth century when Russia sent its first ever permanent resident (and fully accredited ambassador) to Constantinople, Peter Andreevich Tolstoi. In doing so, the article continues to revisit the notion of resident ambassador, not as a hallmark of 'modern European diplomacy' with an overemphasis on the diplomat as a state-representative and office-holder, the states system, alliance building, or institutional reform, but to suggest that a resident embassy in the early modern period was more than a formal, self-contained, and sovereign institution located in a particular place. The transition from ad-hoc to resident diplomacy in Russian–Ottoman relations should not be reduced to the adoption of European diplomatic norms as such: it also created new or used existing structures in trans-imperial settings rooted in the intercultural, personal networks of the ambassador. The state, embodied by its ruler, played a decisive role in creating the diplomat's network in that it was Peter I who appointed Tolstoi to serve as permanent ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. The example of Russian–Ottoman relations demonstrates, however, that while the new diplomacy introduced by Peter I was driven by the impetus of Europeanization and reform, the transformations emerged from local circumstances depending on the formation and development of contacts embedded in the geo-cultural and religious entanglements of the region.

To demonstrate this, the article focuses on Peter Tolstoi's first year at the sultan's court in Adrianople (Edirne), following the ambassador in his pursuit of collecting intelligence to compile a detailed report in response to very specific questions presented to him in a set of secret instructions. Gathering information was a core aspect of his mission. In the first months of his appointment between his arrival in August 1702 and the submission of his report in May 1703, he had only limited access to intelligence. Nevertheless, he managed to put together a detailed account on the Ottoman Empire shortly after he had settled down in Adrianople. The first part of the article introduces the kind of information Tolstoi collected to illustrate the range and scope of his text; the second explores the web of contacts that allowed the diplomat to deliver the report in such short time. A combined examination of what information Tolstoi collected, how it was written down in different genres of texts, and who contributed to the diplomat's task, provides an insightful example of early eighteenth-century resident diplomacy, highlighting its embeddedness in trans-imperial interconnections. The focus on information gathering permits scholars to reassess the notion of resident diplomacy and to understand the nature of the transformation that occurred in Russia: not as a transition from an anachronistic system of ad-hoc diplomacy to the modern office of ambassador but rather as changes within wider early modern forms of political and intercultural communication.

The Russian resident embassy in the Ottoman Empire was of course not unique in that diplomats in other locations faced similar day-to-day challenges of building information networks, setting up a residence, recruiting local personnel for their household, negotiating the norms of diplomatic conduct, and melding into new diplomatic circles with specific forms of sociability. This also held true for foreign representatives who took up residence at the Russian court.[13] However, the Russian empire's resident embassy at the sultan's court occupied a special place among the various locations that now accommodated Russian permanent diplomatic representations, at least from a historiographical perspective. The legacy of the European states system, with clearly defined centre-periphery relations, has ceased to be the only measuring stick for

diplomacy in other parts of the world, and indeed also for early modern Europe.[14] The new diplomatic history has made great efforts to 'provincialize' European diplomacy and overcome received notions of cultural difference, insider/outsider divisions, and backwardness. Still, the European experience – mediated by western language sources – often remains the fulcrum in much of the scholarship on cross-cultural diplomatic contacts. Studying the tsar's embassy at the sultan's court has the benefit of moving beyond the conversation about eurocentrism by privileging the perspective of two polities that the eurocentric view had once excluded from the evolution of modern diplomacy: Russia and the Ottoman Empire.[15] The focus on Tolstoi and his arrival in the Ottoman Empire does not make Russian–Ottoman diplomacy an exceptional case but renders redundant the centre-periphery divide between European and non-European states, as it considers how two empires, now centres, conducted diplomatic relations among themselves, without falling prey to the eurocentric implications that the concept of 'resident diplomacy' bears in the older literature.

Tolstoi's embassy and information gathering

The dispatch of a permanent diplomatic representative to the Ottoman Empire happened at an important juncture of reform and transformation in Russian history. The great reform projects under Peter I had already announced themselves and raised hopes and fears outside Russia, where the tsar would soon be celebrated as 'a Turk of the north', as Leibniz famously put it on the occasion of the Battle of Poltava in 1709.[16] Members of Tolstoi's retinue carried the marks of reform on their faces when the embassy arrived in Adrianople 'with a Train of above 150 Men, all finely and richly dressed *alla Franca*, with their Beards shaved, (except two Priests) these being excepted by the Czar's Order'.[17]

Article thirteen of the Treaty of Constantinople (1700), signed between Russia and Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the Peace of Karlowitz, had stipulated that the Russian tsar be allowed to establish a diplomatic residence in the Ottoman capital for the 'creation and advancement of current affairs', so that his representative lived near the Sublime Porte and received all the privileges that diplomats from other powers enjoyed there.[18] This was a new departure in Russian–Ottoman relations, although it by no means marked their beginnings. Since *c.* 1500 numerous ad-hoc embassies had been exchanged between Moscow and Constantinople for the purposes of ceremony, politics, and commerce. The Russian court's and the Orthodox clergy's high demand of high-quality cloths had made Muscovy an important market for Ottoman textiles, while Muscovite fur and to a lesser extent rhubarb and tea were coveted commodities in the Ottoman Empire.[19] These relations had already required regular and sustained contact before the establishment of a permanent residence in Constantinople.

The organisation of diplomacy, however, introduced many novelties into this tradition. When, in 1701, the Russian ambassadorial chancellery (*Posol'skii prikaz*) prepared the dispatch of Tolstoi, it initially relied on its own sources, consulting its archival collections for precedents. The documentation of embassies to the Ottoman Empire from the years of 1622, 1634, 1642, and 1667 was dug up from the chancellery's archives to determine the amounts needed to equip the ambassador with all necessary provisions. The scribes prepared excerpts and presented their calculations to Peter I who decided to give Tolstoi 2000 roubles for the first year so 'that he may live at the sultan's court', with the promise of sending further instalments through promissory notes in the future. Tolstoi's sizeable retinue included translators for Greek, Italian, and Latin, each receiving 100 roubles per year. The chancellery also assigned several oral interpreters who accompanied the ambassador to cover his day-to-day dealings in Greek, Ottoman Turkish, and Tatar.[20]

Peter Tolstoi, a direct ancestor of the famous nineteenth-century writer, Lev Tolstoi, was born and raised to adulthood when foreigners still referred to Russia as 'Muscovy'. An old-Russian

noble steeped in Orthodox culture, he was absorbed into Peter I's reform project when, in his forties, he travelled to the Italian peninsula and Venice, passing through Poland and parts of the Holy Roman Empire, in order to study the language and shipbuilding. He had already turned 57 years old and had relatively little diplomatic experience when the tsar dispatched him to Constantinople. But he was well travelled, knew Italian, and enjoyed the patronage of the tsar.[21]

Tolstoi was a prolific writer. He mastered an unusual range of genres for a Muscovite of his generation. For example, he wrote a travel account to document his personal experience in Italy.[22] He also prepared a detailed account of the Ottoman fleet as well as the Black Sea.[23] Tolstoi commanded a range of specifically diplomatic writings. He gave reports in the highly systematised tradition of Muscovite bureaucracy; he was in fact one of the last diplomats in Russia to compile such an account of his mission, a so-called *stateinyi spisok* that formed part of the ambassadorial books that the ambassadorial chancellery in Moscow collated.[24] He also produced regular diplomatic correspondence sent by post to conform to new ways of diplomatic practice introduced by Peter I.

Tolstoi spent 12 years on the Bosporus, arriving in Adrianople, the then-residence of Sultan Mustafa II, in 1702, settling into his post in Constantinople a year later, and returning to Russia in 1714 after he had been held captive in the Seven Towers, the Yedikule Fortress, during a period of open warfare between the two empires (the 1710/11 Pruth River Campaign). His diplomatic charges included the observation of Ottoman foreign policy, the maintenance of peaceful relations with the Porte, the prevention of Ottoman support to the Swedish king, and the exploration of the possibility of maritime trade in the Black Sea region.[25] One of Tolstoi's main tasks was to gather intelligence about the Ottoman Empire. Between February and April 1702, the ambassadorial chancellery prepared secret articles, or instructions, (*tainye stat'i*) with a catalogue of questions and advice.[26] These were handed to the ambassador together with the tsar's letter to Sultan Mustafa II and the then-grand vizier, Amcazade Köprülü Hüseyin Pasha, as well as Tolstoi's credentials.[27]

While there was nothing unusual about diplomats being tasked to collect intelligence about the place of their residence, this marked a novelty in Russian diplomacy, and the range and type of questions reveal the state of knowledge about the Ottoman Empire at the Russian court.[28] Russia had maintained contacts with the Ottoman world both in war and peace. And yet, readily accessible information on the empire and recent developments beyond the southern borderlands remained scant. Andrei I. Lyzlov's political-military history and ethnographic descriptions of the Tatars and Ottomans had been circulating at the Russian court since the early 1690s but only in manuscript form.[29] It is indicative that a translation of the Qur'an, for example, and the first Russian 'orientalist' explorations of the Ottoman Empire only became available in published form long after Tolstoi had returned from his mission in Constantinople.[30] Russian foreign policy could not rely on the kind of archives that the Venetian bailos had amassed through their regular dispatches and the famous *relazioni*. Russian ambassadorial books, produced by previous ad-hoc embassies to the Ottoman Empire, contained detailed descriptions of ceremonial precedents, Russian diplomats' conduct, and past negotiations that had occurred in Russian–Ottoman diplomatic exchanges, but they offered little information on current affairs or on the Ottoman Empire and the sultan's court more generally.

The permanent presence of a resident ambassador provided the opportunity to lay the groundwork for this kind of intelligence. The authorities in Moscow therefore encouraged Tolstoi to study his environment at the Ottoman court closely in order to collect a wide range of information. The chancellery enquired about people, customs, religion, mores, and mentality, the sultan and his inner circle, the government and military, plans for war, relations with individual powers, the empire's finances, its army and navy, the ways of governing the eastern provinces, the diplomatic corps at the sultan's court, trade, towns, engineering, shipbuilding and so on.[31] Peter I himself authored some of the enquiries presented to Tolstoi.[32] The questions reflect the tsar's interest in shipbuilding, engineering, recruitment, military reforms, as well as the

employment of foreigners in Russian service, revealing his ambitions for reorganising the Russian state. One particular concern was whether, after the end of the war with the Holy Roman Empire, the sultan introduced new European ways or whether the Ottoman court was content with the old methods. Acutely aware of the need for intelligence, he also asked Tolstoi to find out if the Patriarch of Jerusalem might recommend a reliable person that could inform him about these issues.[33]

Within a few months after his arrival in Adrianople Tolstoi responded to all questions with scrupulously detailed answers. Already in May 1703, the ambassador returned a more than 150-page long manuscript.[34] It is worth providing a brief, albeit incomplete, summary of the intelligence he gathered in order to convey the detail, complexity, and range that his account exhibits. Tolstoi's ability to obtain both comprehensive and specific knowledge about the Ottoman Empire in such short time raises important questions about his sources and methods of information gathering. He relied on local conduits of information as well as networks transcending the bilateral relations between the two empires.

The Ottomans' perception of Russia was of crucial importance to the diplomat. Tolstoi reported that the Ottomans were not at war currently – and could not afford to be – but that they watched two powers across two seas very carefully: Russia across the Black Sea and Venice in the Mediterranean where they were contemplating war over the Morea peninsula which had gone to the Venetians in the Treaty of Karlowitz.[35] They also feared the Russian monarch who had been in possession of the fortress of Azov in the Black Sea since 1696. Recapturing Azov was not a priority for the Ottomans. What troubled them was the rise of a maritime power in the north.[36] According to the ambassador, their concern regarding Russia was rooted in the 'fear and horror' that their Christian population, whom they saw as internal enemies, could ally itself with Orthodox Russia and rise against them, since 'for one Turk, the sultan has ten Christians under his yoke'.[37] Tolstoi saw this as the reason why the Porte opposed the tsar's plan of using the Black Sea as a hub for commerce between the two empires despite their need for Russian goods such as fur: the Ottoman government did everything to avoid increased contact between Russians and their co-religionists in the empire.[38]

Tolstoi also paid close attention to relations with groups within the empire or with foreign states, in particular the religious conflicts with the Safavids. As for the Arabs, Tolstoi noted that they were constantly fighting with each other, and the Ottomans had to pay them to prevent the robbery of pilgrims. The ambassador explored the empire's relations with France and Poland, trade with Great Britain and the Dutch Republic. He explained how the War of the Spanish Succession influenced the sultan's stance on France and Spain and how this manifested itself in the ways in which the Porte treated the French ambassador.[39]

Tolstoi devoted much space to the diplomatic corps in Constantinople and the Ottomans' attitude towards them.[40] He started with a full list of diplomats residing in Constantinople at the time of his arrival in Adrianople.[41] According to Tolstoi, the Ottoman court found the French ambassador insufferable for his arrogance but maintained respectful relations with him. He informed about the presence and interests of various powers in the Mediterranean and gave a long account on piracy along the Barbary Coasts. Unlike the French and Venetian representatives, the ambassador wrote, the Ottomans held the English in high regard because they had only come for trade which is why the English had negotiated 3% custom duties in their capitulations as opposed to the French who had to pay 5%. Tolstoi said the Porte regarded the Dutch as a quiet and content people who never sought any argument, and that they had no pirates. He also described the role of Ragusan merchants in the Ottoman Empire and the situation of the foreign representatives from the Republic of Ragusa who paid an annual tribute to the sultan and were received with due ambassadorial honours at the same time.[42]

Tolstoi also offered practical information about the running of an embassy in Constantinople. For example, he explained the influence of the Phanariot Greeks in Ottoman foreign policy. The diplomat found out that the English ambassador had five translators for various languages in his

household, and that the Levant Company paid for their expenses. He reported that the French representative kept one translator at the sultan's court, while in Constantinople, the French had five persons for translation services and supported a retinue of fifteen or more courtiers of high rank, which served the reputation of his monarch very well. Tolstoi had an eye for the diplomatic precedence system. He knew that he would have to make a bid for a place in the hierarchy of princes that corresponded with the tsar's honour, for Constantinople served as an important stage where European diplomats not only presented themselves to the Ottoman court but also competed for ceremonial honours among each other.[43]

The Russian court was aware of the sensitivity of some of the information it requested. The catalogue of questions it had prepared ended with the instruction that Tolstoi should write down his answers in secret and send them with a trusted person. In case he had to send the text with a courier, he was advised to instruct the latter to keep his writings undisclosed under the threat of his sovereign's wrath or pain of death.[44] In case his conversations with Ottoman representatives raised suspicion regarding matters in Ukraine or with the Tatars, Tolstoi was ordered to report to Moscow by post via the governor of Kiev to ensure timely transmission of all relevant information.[45]

This cursory summary of Tolstoi's report represents just a fraction of the facts gathered by the diplomat to inform his superiors in Moscow about the Ottoman Empire. Even this small selection demonstrates the breadth of scope and the level of detail at which Tolstoi managed to convey intelligence. How did the first permanent Russian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire get hold such wide range of information? The question that arises is not whether the ambassador was correct or erred in what he knew about the Ottomans but how he obtained intelligence and was able to provide the chancellery with a relatively quick turnaround of immensely detailed answers. The key to this achievement, and central to the creation of a permanent diplomatic residence was less about setting up office and building a bureaucratic structure in Constantinople. Tolstoi's need for quickly accessible intelligence shows that the resident ambassador was not merely a foreign policy institution that sustained bilateral contacts between the Ottoman and Russian governments. As will become clear, what counted for more was the ambassador's ability to firmly embed himself in a group of people whose loyalties were not necessarily bound up with the sovereign state but rested in informal personal connections, religious affiliations, trade interests or regional expertise, and who could provide the information necessary to conduct foreign relations.

Tolstoi's contacts and sources of information

In the secret instructions, the *Posol'skii prikaz* gave concrete advice to this purpose. Tolstoi was asked to treat with foreign diplomats politely: he should visit and invite them to his house 'as is customary in the whole world among foreign ministers residing at great courts'.[46] Tolstoi was told to meet with other foreign representatives, not least, presumably, to tap into the information flow that circulated among the diplomatic corps in Constantinople. Indeed, the advice was well received. Later, in 1707, having spent 5 years in the Ottoman Empire and widened the circle of his informants, Tolstoi would describe the essence of diplomatic experience in the capital with respect to the nature of sharing information as follows: 'We are here in Constantinople, passing time with diplomatic affairs, acting as millers who live on the same river, and each of us diverts the water to his wheel, mindless of the harm to others: everyone only considers their own use.'[47]

When Tolstoi dispatched his answers to the secret instructions, however, he could not rely on other official representatives as a source of information. He was still residing in Adrianople, and there were no diplomats of rank around him at the time, since these resided on the Bosporus, save a few translators whom they kept near the sultan's court.[48] In letters to his brother, he

wrote that his arrival in Adrianople was pleasant, with due honours, plenty of food and drinks and spacious accommodation. However, he was kept in the city and was not given permission to move to Constantinople because he was distrusted,[49] mainly by the new grand vizier, Daltaban Mustafa Pasha, who, with Tolstoi's appearance at the sultan's court, sensed danger coming from the Black Sea, as the diplomat explained in a ciphered dispatch to Peter I.[50]

Tolstoi reached Adrianople on 29 August 1702 and remained there, physically separated from the diplomatic corps, until September 1703 when he followed the Ottoman court to relocate to the Bosporus. Even then Tolstoi was not allowed to leave his residence until the first audience with the grand vizier in the capital in February 1704.[51] The beginning of his stay in Adrianople was punctuated with quarrels over the arrangement and delay of his reception by the vizier and the sultan – a prerequisite for the ambassador's free movement and ability to meet members of other embassies.[52] Tolstoi wrote back to Moscow: 'I am not happy: residing here is more harmful than useful. I have lived here for four weeks and still have not seen the sultan or the vizier'.[53] The difficulties seemed to have continued beyond the initial diplomatic huff over ceremonies. He wrote in retrospect, in June 1703, that all foreign representatives' translators present in the city enjoyed great liberty while he was not allowed to receive anyone.[54] Earlier in April he had complained that 'I live in a new house in the city, but it is impossible for anyone to visit me […], janissaries stand guard at my house – to my honour apparently – and they do everything so that no Christian may come to me.'[55]

Clearly, as Tat'iana Bazarova notes, the ambassador could not draw on his own experiences for his detailed report on the Ottoman Empire given the short timespan in which the text was written, the isolation he found himself in, and the restrictions he faced.[56] What, then, were Tolstoi's sources, and what was his role as the first Russian resident ambassador in the creation of such a report and the transmission of information? The narrative he submitted to the *Posol'skii prikaz* in May 1703 did not name the sources, but in his regular correspondence, as well as in the ambassadorial books, where the ambassador listed important encounters and paraphrased all sorts of conversations he had, it becomes clear with whom he was in contact and who fed him with information. This makes it possible to trace his exchange of information, their origin and reliability, and explains why his correspondence conveys a very different impression about the nature of intelligence than the neatly assembled facts that the ambassador presented in his answers to the chancellery or in the narratives that were published later. The following insights into Tolstoi's encounters at various stages of his itinerary on his way to Adrianople and during his stay there will serve to illustrate this point.

An ambassador had to accept that building trust and information networks to acquire news was no easy task. In the absence of reliable knowledge, ambassadors had to deal with ignorance, an overabundance of rumours, imposters, and confusion.[57] Tolstoi had his first encounter with uncertainty when he set out to the Ottoman Empire via Kiev and Iași, the Moldavian capital, and across the Danube to his first destination, Adrianople. One Frenchman by the name of Kapun approached the ambassador in Moscow to ask if he could take him in his retinue to Constantinople. Kapun claimed to have just come from there on business. Tolstoi sensed deceit (*kovarstvo*) and rejected the request. The same foreigner approached him again in Kaluga south of Moscow, announcing that he would take up residence in the Ottoman capital and claiming that he had a passport from the tsar. Tolstoi sent him away, but the Frenchman followed him to Kiev where two Greeks told the diplomat that they had heard the man converse with others in the Turkish language. Apparently, the person then revealed himself as a resident of Constantinople and offered his services to the Russian ambassador purporting that he had gained the trust of Ottoman ministers. Tolstoi warned the governor of Kiev and requested that this person – 'who spoke with simplicity and not from the heart' – be arrested to prevent his passage to Constantinople and avert harm that the ambassador saw coming from the tsar's enemies.[58]

A more reliable source of information, that helped Tolstoi to prepare his report, proved to be the hospodar (or voivode) of Moldavia, Constantine Ducas, who received the diplomat with the 'usual diplomatic ceremonies', granting him the place of honour upon his arrival in Iași, using the occasion to enquire about the possibility of him entering a suzerainty relationship with the tsar. Tolstoi replied that this was impossible at the moment because he was a subject of the Ottoman sultan, and he added, almost as a promise, that his submission to the tsar's authority would remain a project for the future 'when the days of liberation from the Muslim yoke will be near'.[59]

Tolstoi had been sent to the sultan's court to maintain peace and develop commercial relations. He explained that the tsar wanted undisturbed passage for merchants from the Sea of Azov. Therefore, he asked the hospodar not to let any merchants travel through Moldavia on their way to Constantinople to shift the trading route to the sea and suggested that Ducas also trade with the Russians via the sea. But the Ottomans did not trust the tsar's intentions, as became clearer to the ambassador during the conversation with the Moldavian ruler. While Tolstoi explained that the tsar wanted to divert Russian–Ottoman trade from land to the Black Sea, Ducas warned the ambassador that the Ottomans feared that the tsar was about to breach the peace signed in Constantinople in 1700. He had news that the Porte had heard about Russian troops that gathered near Crimea to set foot on the peninsula.

Also, the sultan had sent an informer to Crimea, travelling through Moldavia, to find out about Russian ships that the Ottomans thought too close to their borders and about news that the Russians planned to build new towns in the region. The Ottoman emissary had told Ducas that the sultan and the vizier were not happy about Russian activities so close to the empire and that they were preparing for hostilities. Tolstoi seemed surprised. The hospodar added that the Ottomans were building ships at unprecedented numbers, giving exact figures, and stressing that they hired captains and experts for high salaries.[60]

As he approached his destination, upon his reception by an Ottoman official near the Danube, Tolstoi enquired about what he had been told on his way there, namely that the sultan was building ships. The official answered that they were preparing for war with the Venetians whom they expected to violate the peace agreement, and asked in return why the tsar was sending troops to Crimea. Tolstoi replied that this information was false, since the tsar's goal was to maintain peace according to the recent treaty, whereupon the official immediately sent a messenger to the sultan to clarify the issue and to prevent a confrontation.[61]

It is important to note that Tolstoi's language clearly and constantly discriminates between what he qualified as news (*vedomosti*) and confusion (*smiatenie*) as if he inserted a filter of caution in order to categorise the quality and reliability of information.[62] Often, news and confusion coalesced into rumour. For example, the hospodar sent a letter to inform Tolstoi of rumours spreading in Constantinople. His 'friends' and representatives wrote that 'it came to the ears of local ministers there' that the tsar planned to build more towns on the rivers near the Black Sea. Ducas warned that the Ottomans would interrogate him about this and that he would remain silent until he received further advice from the Russian monarch.[63]

Another useful source supported Tolstoi's mission and his task of gathering intelligence: Russia's long-standing contact in the Ottoman Empire, the patriarch of Jerusalem. The then-patriarch Dositheos II sustained a deep-rooted network in Constantinople and had already established relations with the Russian government and previous ad-hoc diplomats to advance Orthodox matters.[64] Now the tsar turned to him in a letter reminding him of his good services and requesting that he provide advice and practical help to the new diplomatic representative in all matters.[65] The answer came fast. Shortly after Tolstoi's arrival in Adrianople, on 31 August 1702, the patriarch's nephew, Spiliot, sent Tolstoi a letter with important information.[66] The sultan grieved the old vizier's recent death, and word had it that the new vizier was an unintelligent and unloved person. It also transpired that the Crimean khan had been very active in convincing the Porte that Russia formed a threat to the empire. The khan had written to the sultan numerous times,

spreading the rumour (or confusion) that the Russians were building towns and ships and other such information to stir anti-Russian sentiments and draw the sultan into a confrontation with Russia. Dositheos II continued to inform the ambassador about Tatar-Ottoman relations, allowing the ambassador to give a detailed report back to Moscow regarding the Ottomans' stance towards the Russian court.[67]

Tolstoi also became acquainted with one 'Sava Ragunskoi, a merchant of the Christian law and Slavic language'.[68] Savva Lukich Vladislavich-Raguzinskii was of Serbian descent, although – as was typical for the Balkan migrants in Russia at the time – the sources are less precise about his ethnic attribution, since in the records he appeared as 'Venetian, or Illyrian, or Serb, or Greek, or Constantinopolitan'.[69] His family had originally come from a town in Herzegovina and settled in the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), a hub for commerce in the Adriatic Sea whose merchants and dragomans – with their ties to Constantinople's important dynasties of interpreters of Ottoman Turkish – were known to be versed in the trade of news and information.[70] He had studied in Venice, France, and Spain, before he moved to Constantinople.[71]

Tolstoi's predecessors had already relied on Raguzinskii's service during the Russian–Ottoman peace negotiations in Constantinople.[72] Raguzinskii wrote to Tolstoi three weeks after the latter's arrival in Adrianople to offer his services again.[73] Tolstoi gave a warm response – 'my heart glows with love for you' – and expressed his wish to 'see your face' soon and to learn about his dealings and affairs.[74] Their exchanges remained restricted to written correspondence until they met after Tolstoi had moved to Constantinople one year later. For now, Raguzinskii called on the diplomat to gain his support in facilitating trade in the Black Sea. A Turkish ship stood ready to get under way and bring resin, calico and consumables to Azov. Tolstoi recommended him and his Greek retinue warmly and 'with love' so that the Russian court would treat him accordingly.[75] Upon his arrival in Moscow, the merchant not only delivered coveted goods but also gave important navigation information: he sailed from Constantinople to Caffa (Feodosia on Crimea) in 16 days, and his ship took another eight days from Caffa to a landing in the Azov Sea. Apart from delivering a range of intelligence about Ottoman affairs, Raguzinskii also confirmed the news about the dealings of the Tatars and added that in reality the sultan and the Crimean khan were in disagreement. Many people speculated that the khan desired to break the peace between the two empires but the sultan did not want to listen to the Tatar ruler, although, Raguzinskii warned, he did not know this for sure.[76]

The services that Raguzinskii provided to the Russian embassy apart from providing information were of indispensable value. This permits a brief digression into his involvement in Russian–Ottoman relations in order to show how the actual functioning of a resident embassy transcended Tolstoi's status as both office holder and state representative in official bilateral relations: Tolstoi's resident diplomacy was very much a product of the informal, trans-imperial networks that the diplomat concentrated around himself. Importantly, Raguzinskii introduced Tolstoi to the secretary of the French embassy when the diplomat settled in Constantinople, which gave him access to the diplomatic corps there. He also introduced Tolstoi to the Ragusan representative mentioned above, Luca Barka, who, as the first official resident consul appointed to this post in 1688, possessed a wide network in the capital, reaching into important circles at the Ottoman court.[77] Luca became a sort of secret informant of the Russian government. For example, shortly after Tolstoi's arrival, Luca, who resided at the sultan's court as the Ragusan consul ('*burgomistr*'), warned the diplomat that the local people made guesses about the purpose of his mission: never had there been a permanent representative from Russia, and they feared that the only reason for his coming was that the tsar was planning another war. There was great confusion (*smiatenie*) about his arrival in Adrianople and people thought he came to breach the peace.[78]

Raguzinskii helped to recruit and prepare Russian translators for their job in Constantinople. In order to start trade negotiations with the Porte, Tolstoi submitted a memorial to the vizier. Raguzinskii was involved in drafting this text, providing the ambassador information about the trade agreements between the Ottomans and the French and Venetians. He acted as financial

broker for the Petrine government, providing Tolstoi with money in Constantinople. When Luca Barka died in 1709, Tolstoi wrote to Chancellor Golovkin that he asked Raguzinskii – who resided in Moscow at the time – to offer himself as a patron of the nephew of the deceased Barka, Luca junior. Thus, thanks to Raguzinskii's authority among the Ragusans in Constantinople, their new consul in the Ottoman capital became the nephew of the late Luca Barka who also happened to be the brother of a translator in the *Posol'skii prikaz*. Luca junior appeared in secret reports as 'Makariia' who reported to Tolstoi, Golovkin, and Raguzinskii. Luca junior's information on Turkish foreign relations and domestic policy was of crucial importance because he also worked as the dragoman of the English embassy. In return for his services, Raguzinskii received a land grant in Ukraine. Effectively he became a Russian courtier with a house in Moscow, rising to become one of the wealthiest men in Russia thanks to the trade privileges he was granted. In short, Raguzinskii became – in the Black Sea region – what Natalie Rothman has termed a 'trans-imperial subject', one of important intermediaries with 'complex life trajectories that straddled numerous locales, often across empires'.[79] Raguzinskii organised trade, intelligence, and provided the ties for the ambassador to form a network.[80] In other words, he was Tolstoi's trans-imperial confidant in inter-imperial affairs.

In the relationship between the resident ambassador and his network, it is important to distinguish between sources and authorship of information. The report that Tolstoi sent to the *Posol'skii prikaz* in May 1703, and the intelligence collected from his main sources, Raguzinskii, Dositheos II, Spiliot, Luca Barka, and the hospodar of Moldavia differed significantly. In his response to the chancellery's queries, Tolstoi appeared as the omniscient narrator who sourced, selected and controlled information, while in the documentation of daily encounters and correspondence, the author comes across as an actor at the mercy of hearsay, rumours, and confused information, which was not at all unusual in early modern diplomacy.[81]

Tolstoi prepared the report assembled for his superiors in Moscow (and his later descriptions of the Black Sea and the Ottoman fleet) as a factual narrative, leaving little room for rumours or doubt. The direct correspondence with the tsar and the *Posol'skii prikaz*, on the other hand, required the diplomat to classify the information he transmitted according to his assessment, as he was describing his observations, whether he was dealing with news, rumours, hearsay, confusion and so on. The translation of gossip and random news into fact, then, was one of the resident ambassador's main remits. The step from gathering information to presenting intelligence was a conscious and creative switch between genres that a resident ambassador had to master. This process involved his authorship as much as the cultivation and management of the sources that the diplomat could access as part of the resident embassy's network. Of course, any diplomat, whether on an ad-hoc mission or permanently staying at a foreign court faced the task of sorting out information. Permanent presence, however, allowed the resident diplomat to establish ties or consolidate contacts through religious affiliation, patronage relationships, or financial incentive, and to cultivate contacts with local Ottoman officials in the service of the resident ambassador to act as carriers of information.[82]

In foreign relations, diplomacy depended on reliable intelligence. Peter I had signed a peace with the Ottoman Empire to be able to concentrate on new war efforts against Sweden at the beginning of the Great Northern War. The tsar required clear information on the Ottoman court to formulate a foreign policy that took account of the political situation in the south. It was a long step from forming a network and collecting information to transforming and presenting it as consolidated knowledge, a skill that Tolstoi acquired with the changes in diplomatic correspondence introduced by Peter I along with the establishment of permanent diplomatic residences. However, as Mariya Amelicheva has shown, it took decades before Russian residents in Constantinople could provide sufficiently – and even then not perfectly – reliable intelligence.[83]

The themes and issues Tolstoi addressed in the response to his secret instructions at the beginning of his mission are reminiscent of the range of topics that a growing body of western-language advice literature recommended diplomats to study in order to serve their princes'

interests.[84] Abrahm de Wicquefort, in his 1681 diplomatic manual, wrote that 'all ambassadors make a Report', in particular praising those of Venice 'who have made very fine ones'.[85] Venetian diplomats had been collecting information about their hosts and compiling elaborate reports since the late fifteenth century. While Tolstoi's narrative does not follow the same codified rules of the Venetian genre, his choice of topics – focussing on the personalities of the sultan and the grand viziers, his description of politics, military development, geography, religion, etc. – shows significant resemblance to the content of the reports that Venetian diplomats submitted after their missions.[86]

What is more, the differences between diplomatic texts in style, content, and format – between Tolstoi's report submitted in May 1703, on the one hand, and his regular letters and ambassadorial books on the other – are neither unique to Russian diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire nor to the early eighteenth century. As Wicquefort noted, 'there is a great deal of Difference between the Report which the Embassador makes of his Negotiation and Embassy; and the Relation he gives of the Constitution of the State, and of the Court where he has negotiated'. The same differences found in Tolstoi's documentation can also be observed in other periods and regional contexts, for example the dissimilarities between ambassadorial correspondence and published travel accounts, or between the Venetian bailos' regular *dispacci* and their highly-polished end-of-mission reports, the famed *relazioni*.[87]

The first Russian resident embassy to the Ottoman Empire, then, was unique in as much as the ambassador stood at the beginning of building and expanding networks and having to master different genres of diplomatic texts. The transformations in Russian diplomacy at the beginning of the eighteenth century generated forms of correspondence that diplomatic historians know from European contexts. Such similarities clearly indicate the Russian court's gradually growing integration into the diplomatic world. And yet, while these changes included important elements of transfer and the adoption of novel diplomatic practices, they formed part of distinctly early modern forms of political communication rather than providing a showcase for the eurocentric, state-focussed characteristics traditionally associated with the concept of resident diplomacy. Tolstoi's gathering and handling of intelligence suggests that the establishment of the tsar's first resident embassy in the Ottoman Empire, and the resulting changes in Russian diplomacy, manifested an early modern convergence of documentation practices. They hardly served as Russia's 'test of modernity'. Instrumental to the success of Tolstoi's mission was the creation and curation of informal networks in the wider Black Sea region rather than the European origins of modern resident diplomacy if the concept implied the institutionalization, bureaucratisation, and professionalisation of his office.

Already at the beginning of his mission, long before Tolstoi would move to Constantinople, this web of information was widely spun and helped the ambassador to gather information in relatively short time despite Ottoman attempts at isolating the diplomat from his environment.[88] One of the most relevant pieces of intelligence that he collected, the Ottoman perception of Russia after the Treaty of Karlowitz, is a case in point. The rumours about imminent Russian hostilities – circulating in the Ottoman capital where they were picked up by Moldavian representatives and forwarded to their ruler who, in turn, shared them with Tolstoi in Iași – originated from the Crimean peninsula. The patriarch of Jerusalem in Constantinople sent his nephew, an Orthodox Greek, to Tolstoi in order to inform the ambassador that the Crimean khan was sending unkind letters about the tsar to the sultan in Adrianople with the aim of inciting a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, a piece of information that a European-educated Serbian merchant from the Ragusan city-state on the Adriatic Sea confirmed in Moscow after he had sailed across the Black Sea. This was a Tatar 'whisper' that connected cities around the sea and across large distances, travelling from Crimea to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Iași in Moldavia and Adrianople and from there to Russia, crossing the sea.[89]

The transformations that occurred in Russian foreign relations at the beginning of the eighteenth century, then, were not a simple process of establishing the office of resident ambassador

on a European model in order to catch up with western developments of state-building as well as new forms of sovereignty and to usher Russia into the centre of European international politics. Such an antagonistic understanding of 'centre and periphery' fails to explain the dynamics behind inter-imperial foreign relations precisely because it was often the people of the 'periphery' and the information flows in the borderlands that connected power centres.

Conclusion

Following Tolstoi from Moscow to Constantinople, and tracing the flow of information he gathered as well as the contacts he maintained at the beginning of his mission, suggests that in order to better understand the functioning of a permanent diplomatic representation it is helpful to conceive of it as a shifting network of people spanning wide distances and exhibiting varying and fragile loyalties that weren't exclusive to the sovereign state but relied on individuals in very different political and religious contexts. The office of ambassador incorporated many lives. The Russian resident diplomat remained the formal ceremonial centre, the negotiating authority as well as the author of official correspondence and presenter of intelligence. Yet, the establishment of an embassy depended less on the smooth running of a state-apparatus than on intermediaries and local contacts who were able to provide information and whose allegiance was not sustained by sovereign appointment but patronage, pecuniary incentive, religious affiliation, trade opportunity, and ultimately their ability to mediate between different normative orders of empire. The nature of the Petrine transformations at the beginning of the early eighteenth century did not mark the transition from 'eastern' ad-hoc diplomacy to the 'modern' office of ambassador. Rather, it allowed the Russian diplomat in the Ottoman Empire to participate fully in early modern forms of diplomatic interaction.

Notes

1. Garrett Mattingly, 'The First Resident Embassies: Mediaeval Italian Origins of Modern Diplomacy', *Speculum*, xii (1937), 423–39, 423.
2. Donald E. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 225.
3. For example, Matthew S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy, 1450–1919* (London: Longman, 1993).
4. See Hamish Scott, 'Diplomatic Culture in Old Regime Europe', in Hamish Scott, Brendan Simms (eds.), *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 58–85.
5. See, for example, Isabella Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict: Italian Diplomacy in the Early Renaissance, 1350–1520* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), for a novel approach to resident diplomacy. David Do Paço, *L'Orient à Vienne au dix-huitième siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015). Daniel Goffman, 'Negotiating with the Renaissance State: the Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy', in Virginia Aksan, Daniel Goffman, (eds.) *Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61–74; Michael Talbot, *British-Ottoman Relations, 1661–1807: Commerce and Diplomatic Practice in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017). See also Tracey A. Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', *History Compass, xiv* (2016), 441–56, for a general survey of the new diplomatic history.
6. Daniel Riches, *Protestant Cosmopolitanism and Diplomatic Culture Brandenburg-Swedish Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2013), 8.
7. Representative examples include, Christian Windler, 'Diplomatic History as a Field for Cultural Analysis: Muslim–Christian Relations in Tunis, 1700–1840', *Historical Journal*, xliv (2001), 79–106; Hillard von Thiessen, 'Diplomatie vom type ancien: Überlegungen zu einem Idealtypus des frühneuzeitlichen Gesandtschaftswesens', in Hillard von Thiessen, Christian Windler (eds.), *Akteure der Aussenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel* (Cologne, Vienna, Weimar: Böhlau, 2010), 471–503; John-Paul Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Paul Dover, (ed.), *Secretaries and Statecraft in the Early Modern World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), and the contributions in the special issue

'Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xix (2015).

8. For an overview, see Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), esp. chs. 2–4, and Vladimir E. Grabar, *The History of International Law in Russia, 1647–1917: A Bio-Bibliographical Study*, trans. William E. Butler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 35–86.
9. Ol'ga G. Ageeva, *Diplomaticheskii tseremonial imperatorskoi Rossii. XVIII vek.* (Moscow: Novyi khronograf, 2012), 34–5; Jan Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe: Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648–1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 213–4; Jeremy Black, *A History of Diplomacy* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 100–1, on foreigners.
10. Isabel de Madariaga, 'Tsar into Emperor: The Title of Peter the Great', in *Politics and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Collected Essays by Isabel de Madariaga* (London, New York: Longman 1998), 15–39. For a discussion of these transformations, see also, Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, ch. 5.
11. For an insightful account of Russian–Ottoman diplomacy in the eighteenth century, see Victor Taki, *Tsar and Sultan: Russian Encounters with the Ottoman Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 36–50.
12. An exception in English language scholarship is, Benedict H. Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1949).
13. See, for example, Christian Steppan, *Akteure am fremden Hof: Politische Kommunikation und Repräsentation kaiserlicher Gesandter im Jahrzehnt des Wandels am russischen Hof (1720–1730)* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), and Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7–11, passim, for a discussion of diplomatic reports on the Petrine court.
14. See Christian Windler, 'Afterword: From Social Status to Sovereignty – Practices of Foreign Relations from the Renaissance to the *Sattelzeit*', in Tracey A. Sowerby, Jan Hennings (eds.), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, ca. 1410–1800* (London: Routledge, 2017), 254–65.
15. Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: 'the East' in European Identity Formation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 39–112.
16. Quoted in Vladimir I. Guerrier, *Leibniz in seinen Beziehungen zu Russland und Peter dem Grossen: eine geschichtliche Darstellung dieses Verhältnisses nebst den darauf bezüglichen Briefen und Denkschriften* (St Petersburg, Leipzig: Commissionäre der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1873), 81.
17. *A. de la Motraye's Travels Through Europe, Asia, and into Part of Africa; with Proper Cutts and Maps*, 2 vols. (London, 1723), i. 209. For the entry into the city, see Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov (hereafter, RGADA), f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 1, ll. 99-101ob, esp. 99ob, on embassy members wearing French clothes.
18. *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii: tom vi 1700–1712* (St Petersburg: Tipografiia II otdeleniia sobstvennoi ego imperatorskago velichestva kantseliariia, 1830), 71–2.
19. Nurhan Atasoy and Lale Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture in Europe 1453–1699* (Istanbul: Armaggan Publications, 2012), 77–110. The great majority of these embassies were Russian, but the Ottomans reciprocated with occasional embassies to the Russian court. A good example is the mission of the Ottoman Greek merchant-diplomat F. Kantakuzin. See Boris N. Floria, 'Foma Kantakuzin i ego rol' v razvitii russko-osmanskikh otnoshenii v 20–30e gg. XVII v.', in Sergei N. Kisterev et al (eds.), *Rossiia i khristianskii Vostok. Vypusk II-III* (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), 248–87.
20. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1701, d. 5, ll. 1-5ob.
21. Tat'iana A. Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty pri osmanskom dvore: stateinye spiksi P. P. Shafirova i M. B. Sheremeteva 1711 i 1712 gg*. (St Petersburg: Istoricheskaia illiustratsiia, 2016), 20. For an inspired biographical sketch of Tolstoi with close attention to his life in Constantinople, see Nikolai I. Pavlenko, *Ptentsy gnezda Petrova* (Moscow: Prospekt, 2016), esp. 138-91.
22. Peter A. Tolstoi, *The Travel Diary of Peter Tolstoi: A Muscovite in Early Modern Europe*, trans. and ed. by Max J. Okenfuss (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987).
23. Peter A. Tolstoi, *Opisanie Chernogo moria, egeiskogo arkhipelaga i osmanskogo flota*, ed. Il'ia V. Zaitsev, Svetlana F. Oreshkova (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Natalis", 2006).
24. Tat'iana K. Krylova, 'Stateinye spiski petrovskikh diplomatov (1700–1714 gg.)', *Problemy Istochnikovedeniia*, ix (1961), 163–81. For the *stateinyi spisok*, see Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, 87–90.
25. The most recent and comprehensive studies of Tolstoi's embassy include the introduction in Bazarova, Russkie diplomaty, and Mariya V. Amelicheva, 'The Russian Residency in Constantinople, 1700–1774: Russian–Ottoman Diplomatic Encounters' (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, 2016), esp. 63–104, for a discussion of Tolstoi's network, its emergence before the diplomat's arrival in the Ottoman Empire as well as its further development during his stay in Constantinople. See also Ismail Bülbül, M. Bilal Çelik, 'Peter Andreeviç Tolstoy'un Istanbul Elçiliği (1702–1714)', *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, xix (2008), 51–66.
26. *Pis'ma i bumagi imperatora Petra velikago*: *tom vtoroi (1702–3)* (St Petersburg: Gosudarstevennaia tipografiia, 1889), 30–34. For a brief summary, see Sergei M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, xv vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1959–66), viii. 61. The secret instructions are also included, together with Tolstoi's responses, in Mikhail S. Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule: Petr*

Andreevich Tolstoi i ego opisanie Osmanskoi imperii nachala XVIII v. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1985), 37–105.

27. *Pis'ma i bumagi*, 51–4. For the dating of these documents, see Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol*, 121, n. 1.
28. Among the core diplomatic activities – representation, negotiation, and information gathering – historians have paid close attention to the latter recently, uncovering the links between news, information flows, personal networks, and (resident) diplomacy, see, for example, Joad Raymond, Noah Moxham (eds.), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Emrah Safa Gürkan, 'Mediating Boundaries: Mediterranean Go-Betweens and Cross-Confessional Diplomacy in Constantinople, 1560–1600', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xix (2015), 107–28; Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*; Matthias Pohlig, *Marlboroughs Geheimnis: Strukturen und Funktionen der Informationsgewinnung im Spanischen Erbfolgekrieg* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 2016).
29. Andrei I. Lyzlov, *Skifskaia istoriia*, ed. Elena V. Chistiakova, Andrei P. Bogdanov (Moscow, 1990).
30. Paul Bushkovitch, 'Orthodoxy and Islam in Russia 988–1725', in Ludwig Steindorff (ed.), *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland: Konzepte und Praktiken, Potentiale und Grenzen, 14. - 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 117–44; Taki, *Tsar and Sultan*, ch. 4.
31. *Pis'ma i bumagi*, 30–3.
32. Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule*, 121, n. 1.
33. *Pis'ma i bumagi*, 33.
34. The manuscript was included in the ambassador's regular correspondence and copied into the *stateinyi spisok*: RGADA, f. 89, op.1, 1703, d. 2, ll. 184ob-265, and d. 3, ll. 280ob–349ob. See Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule*, 35. For a discussion, see Mariia K. Mniakina, 'P. A. Tolstoi i ego opisanie osmanskoi imperii nachala xviii veka', *Vestnik Cheliabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta,* xiv (2014), 74–9.
35. Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule*, 51.
36. Ibid., 49, 94–5.
37. Ibid, 49.
38. This fear was not unfounded. Russia's relations with Ottoman Christians became a more and more relevant factor in Russian-Ottoman foreign policy during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire*, 26–49, and Victor Taki, 'Limits of Protection: Russia and the Orthodox Coreligionists in the Ottoman Empire', *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, mmcdi (2015). Available from https://carlbeckpapers.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/cbp/article/view/201 (Last access 10 October 2017).
39. Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule*, 50–1.
40. For the following paragraphs, see ibid., 81–93.
41. Including the French (Charles de Ferriol, 1692–1711), the Dutch (Jacob Colyer, 1686–1725), the English (William Paget, 1692–1702, then Robert Sutton, 1700/2–1717), and the Venetian (Lorenzo Soranzo, 1699–1704) ambassadors. For the dates and a list of ambassadors residing at the Porte at the time, see Suna Suner, 'The General Index of the Ambassadors to and from the Ottoman Empire', in *Don Juan Archiv Wien*. Available from http://archive.donjuanarchiv.at/go/bot/ (last access 11 October 2017); Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty*, 31–2; Bertold Spuler, 'Die europäische Diplomatie in Konstantinopel bis zum Frieden von Belgrad (1739). 3. Teil, *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven*, Neue Folge, xi (1935), 313–66.
42. For Ragusa's ambiguous status, see Lovro Kunčević, 'Janus-Faced Sovereignty: The International Status of the Ragusan Republic in the Early Modern Period', in Gábor Kármán, Lovro Kunčević (eds.), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 91–112.
43. Christine Vogel, 'Der Sonnenkönig an der Hohen Pforte: Herrschaftsrepräsentation und diplomatische Soziabilität im Palais de France in Konstantinopel', in Claudia Garnier, Christine Vogel (eds.), *Interkulturelle Ritualpraxis in der Vormoderne*: *diplomatische Interaktion an den östlichen Grenzen der Fürstengesellschaft, Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, Beiheft lii (2016), 121–41; Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule*, 87–8. Tolstoi noted, for example, that the Holy Roman Emperor did not usually keep a permanent representative of ambassadorial rank in Constantinople to avoid a conflict with the French representative, see Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty*, 32. Cf. Spuler, 'Die europäische Diplomatie', 339–40.
44. *Pis'ma i bumagi*, 34.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty*, 32–3, quotation on p. 33.
48. Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol v Stambule*, 81, 105.
49. 'Pis'ma (gr.) P. A. Tolstago iz Turtsii k bratu ego I. A. Tolstomu', *Russkii arkhiv*, v/vi (1864), 476, 480.
50. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 33.
51. Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty*, 34.
52. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, ll. 43-43ob. See also 'Pis'ma (gr.) P. A. Tolstago', 478.

53. Tolstoi to Golovin, 25 September 1702, excerpt published in Nikolai G. Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia Petra Velikago*, vi vols. (St Petersburg: Tipografiia II otdeleniia sobstvennoi ego imperatorskago velichestva kantseliariia, 1858–1863), iv. 254 (appendix). See also RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 31.
54. Bazarova, Russkie *diplomaty*, 33, 102, n. 152.
55. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1703, d. 3, l. 205. Quoted in Pavlenko, *Ptentsy gnezda Petrova*, 150.
56. Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty*, 26–7.
57. For a discussion of trust and news, see Pohlig, *Marlboroughs Geheimnis*, 276–87.
58. RGADA, f. 89, op 1, 1702, d. 3, ll. 1–2.
59. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, ll. 12–12ob.
60. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, ll. 13–14ob.
61. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, ll. 18–19.
62. For example, RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 18ob.
63. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 21-21ob.
64. For Dositheos II and Russia, see Norman Russel, 'From the "Shield of Orthodoxy" to the "Tome of Joy": the Anti-Western Stance of Dositheos II of Jerusalem (1641–1707),' in George E. Demacopoulos, Aristotle Papanikolaou (eds.), *Orthodox Constructions of the West* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 71–82, esp. 80-2. For his extensive network in Constantinople, see more recently, Vassa Kontouma, 'Christianisme orthodoxe', *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), Section des sciences religieuses*, cxxiv (2017), 207–18.
65. *Pis'ma i bumagi*, 54–6. See also Nikolai F. Kapterev, *Snosheniia ierusalimskogo patriarkha Dosifeia s russkim pravitel'stvom (1679–1707)* (Moscow: Tipografiia A. I. Siegirevoi, 1891), 217–8; Ekkehard Kraft, *Moskaus griechisches Jahrhundert: russisch-griechische Beziehungen und metabyzantinischer Einfluß 1619–1694* (Stuttgart, 1995), 85–91. It is important to note that the involvement of religious figures in diplomacy in Constantinople was not confined to Christian Church hierarchies but also included diplomatic interactions between foreign diplomats and the Şeyhülislam, for example, see Joshua M. White, 'Fetva Diplomacy: the Ottoman Şeyhülislam as Trans-Imperial Intermediary', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xix (2015), 129–51.
66. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1., 1702, d. 3, l. 30–30ob.
67. For a full account of the exchanges between Tolstoi and Dositheos II, see Kapterev, *Snosheniia*, 191–238.
68. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 36ob.
69. Iannis Carras, 'Connecting Migration and Identities: Godparenthood, Surety and Greeks in the Russian Empire (18th-Early 19th Centuries)', in Olga Katsiardi-Hering, Maria A. Stassinopoulou (eds.), *Across the Danube: Southeastern Europeans and Their Travelling Identities (17th–19th C.)* (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2017), 65–109, here on pp. 71, 76. See also Amelicheva, 'The Russian Residency in Constantinople', 89.
70. Vesna Miović, 'Diplomatic Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Dubrovnik', in Kármán, Kunčević (eds.), *European Tributary States* 187–209, esp. 198–205; For the Ragusan dragomans, see Vesna Miović, 'Dragomans of the Dubrovnik Republic: Their Training and Career', *Dubrovnik Annals*, v (2001), 81–94, and, for the connections between diplomatic personnel and the dragomans in Constantinople more generally, Frédéric Hitzel (ed.), *Istanbul et les langues orientales: actes du colloque organisé par l'IFEA et l'INALCO à l'occasion du bicentenaire de l'Ecole des langues orientales, Istanbul, 29–31 mai 1995* (Paris, Montreal: L'Harmattan, 1997).
71. Here and the following paragraphs on Raguzinskii, Inna I. Leshchilovskaia, 'Serb spodvizhnik Petra I: Graf Raguzinskii', *Slavianskii al'manakh* (2002), 70–93; Benedict H. Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire*, 45–6.
72. Leshchilovskaia, 'Graf Raguzinskii', 71.
73. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 1, l. 171ob–172.
74. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 1, l. 172. See also Pavlenko, *Ptentsy gnezda*, 144.
75. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 36ob.; d. 1, l. 181-181ob. See also Ustrialov, *Istoriia*, iv. 254 (appendix).
76. RGADA, f. 89, op 1., 1702, d. 3, ll. 36ob–37.
77. For the Ragusan network in the Eastern Mediterranean, see Miović, 'Diplomatic Relations', 191–98.
78. RGADA, f. 89, op. 1, 1702, d. 3, l. 44-44ob. See also excerpt in Ustrialov, *Istoriia*, iv. 255 (appendix).
79. E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Constantinople* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 11.
80. Raguzinskii's network also reached into the wider circle of Balkan merchants in Moscow and, later, into the Brotherhood of Ottoman Greek merchants in Nezhin (today north-eastern Ukraine), see Iannis Carras, 'Patronage and Russian Expansion to the South, 1696–1774' (Talk at the Russian History Department of the University of Freiburg, 2013, based on chapter 9 of the author's dissertation 'Εμπόριο, Πολιτική και Αδελφότητα: Ρωμιοί στη Ρωσία 1700–1774' [Trade, Politics and Brotherhood: Greek/Balkan populations in Russia 1700–1774]. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Athens, 2011). I wish to thank the author for making this work available to me.
81. Robyn D. Radway, 'The Captive Self: The Art of Intrigue and the Holy Roman Emperor's Resident Ambassador at the Ottoman Court in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xxii (2018), 1–25.

82. For the use of money and gifts to maintain these relationships, see, for example, Bazarova, *Russkie diplomaty*, 72–74; Tat'iana K. Krylova, 'Russko-Turetskie otnosheniia vo vremiia severnoi voiny', *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, x (1941), 250–79, esp. 273. Tolstoi, of course, was not alone in this, as he himself noted when describing the financial efforts that the French ambassador afforded at the Ottoman court to advance their affairs, see Lazarev et al., *Russkii posol*, 84–5; or the Ragusan representatives for whom news meant business: Miović, 'Diplomatic Relations', 82.
83. Amelicheva, 'The Russian Residency in Constantinople', esp. 66–82, passim.
84. Heidrun Kugeler, '"Le Parfait Ambassadeur": the Theory and Practice of Diplomacy in the Century following the Peace of Westphalia'. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford, 2006), esp. 72–8.
85. Abraham de Wicquefort, *The Embassador and His Functions*, trans. Mr. Digby (London, 1716), 413.
86. Filippo de Vivo 'How to Read Venetian *Relazioni*', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Reforme*, xxxiv (2011), 25–59, 25.
87. Tijana Krstić, 'The Elusive Intermediaries: Moriscos in Ottoman and Western European Diplomatic Sources from Constantinople, 1560s–1630s', *Journal of Early Modern History*, xix (2015), 129–51, 129, gives an insightful example of this distinction. For this distinction in Venetian diplomatic documentation, see also Gino Benzoni, 'Ranke's Favourite Source: the Relazioni of the Venetian Ambassadors', *The Courier*, xxii (1987), 11–26, esp. 24 and the contributions in the special issue 'Things not Easily Explained: Introducing the Early Modern Relation', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, xxxiv (2011). See also Eric R. Dursteler, 'Describing or Distorting the "Turk"?: The *Relazioni* of the Venetian Ambassadors in Constantinople as Historical Source', *Acta Histriae*, xix (2011), 231–48. For the difference between travel literature and diplomatic reports, see already Bertold Picard, *Das Gesandtschaftswesen Ostmitteleuropas in der frühen Neuzeit: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Diplomatie in der ersten Hälfte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts nach den Aufzeichnungen des Freiherrn Sigmund von Herberstein* (Graz: Böhlau, 1967), 144–46, and Éric Schnakenbourg, *La France, le Nord et l'Europe au début du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), 463.
88. Pavlenko, *Ptentsy gnezda*, 143–45, confirms that Dositheos II, his nephew Spiliot, Raguzinskii, and the consul of Raguza, Luca Barka, served as the main sources for the ambassador. Cf. Sumner, *Peter the Great and the Ottoman Empire*, 45–6, 63–4. See also Amelicheva, 'The Russian Residency in Constantinople', ch. 2, for a discussion of the reliability of Tolstoi's contacts.
89. Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities.*

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Gerda Henkel Foundation. I wish to thank Mariya Amelicheva, Iannis Carras, Robyn Radway, Tijana Krstić, and Aleksandr Korobeinikov for helpful criticism.