Introduction

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

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

[1] Dolgorukov to Peter I, 24 July 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, ll. 217ob–19ob.
[2] Dolgorukov to Peter I, 11 August 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, l. 248.
[3] Dubois referred to an edition of A. de Wicquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (The Hague, 1681), pp. 542ff. Dolgorukov to Peter I, 11 August 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7, ll. 248, 249ob.
[4] Dolgorukov to Peter I, 4 August 1721, AVPRI, f. 93, op. 93/1 (1721), d. 7., ll. 239–40ob.
[5] W. James, *The ceremonial animal: a new portrait of anthropology* (Oxford, 2003), p. 7. The anthropological literature on ritual is too voluminous to be discussed here. For an overview, see C. M. Bell, *Ritual theory, ritual practice*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 2009). An up-to-date historical introduction is B. Stollberg-Rilinger, *Rituale* (Frankfurt a. M., 2013).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[13] The best introduction is A. Krischer, 'Souveränität als sozialer Status: zur Funktion des diplomatischen Zeremoniells in der Frühen Neuzeit', in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. R. Kauz, J. P. Niederkorn, G. Rota (Vienna, 2009), pp. 1–32. See also W. J. Roosen, 'Early modern diplomatic ceremonial: a system's approach', *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980), 452–76; L. Wolff, 'A Duel for ceremonial precedence: the Papal Nuncio versus the Russian ambassador at Warsaw, 1775–1785', *International History Review*, 7 (1985), 235–44; L. Bély, 'Souveraineté et souverain: La question du cérémonial dans les relations internationales à l'époque moderne', *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France* (1993), 27–43. For Russia, see, among others, C. Garnier, '"Wer meinen Herrn ehrt, den ehre ich billig auch". Symbolische Kommunikationsformen bei Gesandtenempfängen am Moskauer Hof im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte*, 7 (2005), 27–51; C. Roll, 'Europäische Gesandtschaften am Zarenhof: Zeremoniell und Politik', in *Zarensilber: Augsburger Silber aus dem Kreml*, ed. C. Emmendörffer, C. Trepesch (Munich, 2008), pp. 30–55; M.-K. Schaub, 'Comment régler des incidents protocolaires? Diplomates russes et françaises au XVIIe siècle', in *L'incident diplomatique (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)*, ed. L. Bély, G. Poumarède (Paris, 2010), pp. 323–36; R. Schilling, 'Kommunikation und Herrschaft im Moment der Ankunft: Ein Empfang in Moskau (1603) und eine Audienz in Versailles (1686)', in *Die Ankunft des Anderen: Repräsentationen sozialer und politischer Ordnungen in Empfangszeremonien*, ed. S. Baller et al. (Frankfurt a. M., 2008), pp. 135–51. The most comprehensive, in-depth study on the subject focuses on the eighteenth century: O. G. Ageeva, *Diplomaticheskii tseremonial imperatorskoi Rossii. XVIII vek.* (Moscow, 2012).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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