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The Gift-Giving Culture of Anglo-Muscovite Diplomacy, 1566-1623.

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Abstract

In 1589, the government of Tsar Feodor I of Muscovy returned the gift of golden medals received from Queen Elizabeth I, describing the offending objects as neither commendable nor agreeable. The rejection was accompanied with opprobrious public speeches about the gift's unsuitability and a threat to transfer Muscovite favour unto other European nations if Elizabeth offered no immediate redress. In her defence, Elizabeth argued that diplomatic gifts were to be accepted not in respect of the object itself, but of the royal majesty from whom it was presented. While the episode appears to show a petty squabble over material trinkets, its diplomatic repercussions were significant as the following five years would be dedicated to the repair of Anglo-Muscovite relations. Clearly, gifts were integral to the mechanics of early modern diplomacy.

This thesis explores an intriguing, but as yet scarcely studied, facet of diplomatic history: the operation of Muscovite diplomacy prior to the reign of Peter the Great. It focuses on Muscovy's long-term relations with England (Muscovy's first continual diplomatic relationship with a Western European power in the sixteenth century) and examines the exchange of sovereign gifts between the two royal courts. The principal novelty of this research lies in its departure from the anthropological definition of the gift as a 'material' object, instead it argues that non-tangible components, such as royal favours, were also 'gifts', provided they were given willingly, were reciprocated– if not necessarily symmetrically, and created emotional, political and social bonds between the participants. As an example of such intangible gift, this thesis uses the Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* (a charter of mercantile privileges). In this way, the research explores the full range and complexity of diplomatic gift-exchange between the two monarchies in a crucial period of dynastic change in both countries.

Frequently, gift-giving is interpreted as either a means of intercultural communication *par excellence* or, in the case of a rejected gift, as evidence of an inevitable clash of cultures. This thesis, however, demonstrates that diplomatic gift-exchange was a multi-faceted process. Royal intentions were complex and, therefore, required different levels of engagement; their transmission was reliant upon intermediaries (ambassadors), and the reception of gifts was intrinsically linked to diplomatic aims. Secondly, in contrast to the widespread assumption that the diplomatic cultures of England and Muscovy were discordant, day-to-day diplomatic exchanges (including gift-giving) drew the Tsars into a shared

ceremonial arena, where other rulers competed for the symbolic resources of sovereignty. The exchange of gifts between the two states facilitated the process of gradual integration of the apparently alien Muscovite Tsar into the English (and essentially European) standardised codes of diplomatic behaviour and ceremonial communication. It was not until the reign of Peter I, however, that the Tsars fully became prominent members of the European society of princes.

Diplomatic practice was neither universal nor culturally specific; such assumptions are obstructive to a better understanding of the mechanics of cross-cultural interactions. Ultimately, diplomatic ceremony and gift-giving were driven by notions of sovereign honour and the symbolic language of the court society, and not by political, national or cultural incommensurability. Thus, the foundations of Muscovy's gradual integration into European codes of diplomatic behaviour can be traced to the reign of Ivan IV, and specifically, to the continuous Muscovite diplomatic relationship with the English Crown.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library, London
BLOU	Bodleian Library, Oxford University
CSP(D/F/V)	*Calendars of State Papers* (Domestic, Foreign, Venetian)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
Hakluyt, *PN*	R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiqves and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea or ouerland, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the Earth, at any time within the compasse of these 1600. yeres*, 2 vols (London, 2 edn., 1599-1600).
HMC, *Downshire*	Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Downshire, Preserved at Easthampstead Park, Berkshire*, 6 vols (London, 1924-95)
HMC, *Salisbury*	Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, 24 vols (London, 1883-1970)
Massa, *Short History*	I. Massa, *A Short History of the Beginning and the Origins of these Present Wars in Moscow under the Reigns of Various Sovereigns down to the Year 1610,* ed. and trans. G.E. Orchard (Toronto, 1982)
MS	Manuscript
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OSP	*Oxford Slavonic Papers*
Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*	S. Purchas*, Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, 5 parts (London, 1625).
RGADA	Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, Moscow
Sbornik	*Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obschchestva*, 148 vols (St. Petersburg, 1867-1916)
SP	State Papers
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London

List of Illustrations

Introduction

Amidst the State Papers, held at the National Archives in London, is a folio containing a list of gifts presented to James I by the royal Muscovite ambassadors in November 1617.[1] The list includes a bejewelled Persian dagger, luxurious damask cloth, Muscovite sable furs and gowns of ermine, as well as gifts of hawks and gerfalcons. These opulent objects represented a material intervention in the ongoing negotiations for the acquisition of English political, monetary and military aid against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the seventeenth century. Yet, while the Anglo-Muscovite alliance was of great necessity to Tsar Michael Romanov (r.1613-1645), the English Crown continuously vetoed the proposal, as Michael's role in James' foreign policy was geopolitically peripheral. The Muscovites thus turned to gifts as a means of advancing their diplomatic objectives. Traditional Muscovite gifts of furs were combined with expensive Persian commodities, gained through the extensive trading and diplomatic networks of the Tsar with Eastern rulers. Both were intended to serve as a visual embodiment of the mercantile wealth at the disposal of the Muscovite Tsar. The Muscovite gifts provide an excellent example of how the Romanov government intended to shape its relations with the English Crown. In this instance, it was one that proposed an exchange of an exclusive access to the vast mercantile wealth and trading networks of the Muscovites for a direct English military intervention in the Muscovite-Polish conflict, as well as political recognition of Michael's status as Tsar. Overall, the Muscovite strategy was successful, though not to the extent that Michael had expected. Begrudgingly, the English Crown agreed to provide a monetary loan and ordnance but retained its political neutrality.[2]

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[1] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 37r.

[2] The Muscovite gifts of 1617 are discussed at length in Chapter 5. For an overview of the diplomatic context of 1617 Muscovite embassy see P. Dukes, G.P. Herd and J. Kotilaine (eds), *Stuarts and Romanovs: The Rise and Fall of a Special Relationship* (Dundee, 2009), pp. 32-5.

Diplomatic gifts, such as those above, have not traditionally occupied a central place in the history of Anglo-Muscovite relations.[3] Instead, discussion of given and received gifts is often used as anecdotal evidence of Anglo-Muscovite political and cultural incompatibility or as a reference to the peculiarity of Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial.[4] The practice of exchanging gifts, however, was a prominent feature of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Gifts accompanied ambassadors to London and Moscow, held a place of honour within ceremonial processions, invited admiration from contemporary observers and reaffirmed the amity and allegiance between the two states. Most importantly, through the exchange of gifts English and Muscovite rulers competed for status symbols, as well as asserted their sovereign identity in relation to each other.[5]

1. Themes: Diplomacy, Gifts and Royal Letters

This thesis explores an intriguing, but as yet scarcely examined facet of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy: the transmission and exchange of material and intangible gifts as a means of political communication between pre-Petrine Muscovy and England.[6] Unlike English relations with France or Spain, its relationship with Muscovy was asymmetrical and characterised by the disparity in political agendas and diplomatic objectives.[7] Since the English 'discovery' of Muscovy in

[3] The history of Anglo-Muscovite relations has been predominantly focused on the commercial relationship between the two states, see for instance, T.S. Willan, *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555* (Manchester, 1953).

[4] O. Dmitrieva, 'From Whitehall to the Kremlin: The Diplomacy and Political Culture of the English and Russian Courts', in O. Dmitrieva and T. Murdoch (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars* (London, 2013), p. 17.

[5] F. Heal, 'Presenting Noble Beasts: Gifts of Animals in Tudor and Stuart Diplomacy', in T. Sowerby and J. Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, c. 1410-1800* (New York, 2017), pp. 187-203.

[6] Until the eighteenth century Russia was known to foreign visitors as Muscovy. As this thesis focuses on pre-eighteenth century diplomacy, for the purposes of comprehension and clarity the terms Muscovy and Muscovite Tsars are used instead of the more familiar modern terms of Russia and Russian Tsars.

[7] M.S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553-1815* (London, 1958), p. 30.

1553, the merchant-adventurers of the Muscovy Company (with the support of the English sovereign) sought to gain and monopolise access to the mercantile benefits of the Muscovite trade routes.[8] The Muscovite Tsars, in the meantime, expected the commercial relationship between the two states to naturally evolve into a political and military alliance.[9] Unsurprisingly, the divergence of interests often led to instances of conflict and political clash between the Muscovite Tsar and English diplomatic representatives.[10] Infamously, Ivan IV (r.1547-84, also known as Ivan 'the Terrible'), frequently berated Queen Elizabeth for favouring the affairs of the merchants above those of princes, while in 1600s Boris Godunov (r.1598-1605) refused to deal with the English requests for new trading rights and privileges until the Crown had addressed his concerns over the nature of Anglo-Ottoman relations. Likewise, for the English Crown the necessity to negotiate an unwanted alliance, in order to protect its mercantile position, was a consistent problem, though the arrival of Muscovite ambassadors was a source of amusement and annoyance to the officials who were required to attend on them at formal functions. In 1617, one English contemporary marvelled at the peculiar manner of the Muscovite ambassadors in approaching the King with their 'left hand on their breeches behind', a gesture 'very strange and unusual in these parts [England]'.[11]

Despite the apparent differences, not only in the divergence of political interests but also within the conduct of diplomacy itself, England and Muscovy maintained functional and mutually beneficial commercial and diplomatic relations for almost

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[8] For an overview of English commercial activities in Muscovy see T.S. Willan, *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553-1603* (Manchester, 1956); S.H. Baron, 'Osip Nepea and the Opening of Anglo-Russian Commercial Relations', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 11 (1978), pp. 42-63.

[9] For example, see I.I. Lubimenko, 'The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars', *The American Historical Review 19* (1914), pp. 525-42.

[10] G. Fletcher's *The Summe of My Negotiation: Civility and Sequestration*, 21 September 1589, BL, Lansdowne MS 59, fos 157r-160v.

[11] Cited in G.M. Phipps, *Sir John Merrick: English Merchant Diplomat in Seventeenth Century Russia* (Newtonville, MA, 1983), pp. 137-8.

a century. This implies the existence of a degree of flexibility on the part of the English Crown and the Muscovites, but it can also suggest that the perceived incompatibility between Muscovy and England was not as extensive as assumed by previous scholarship. Jan Hennings, in his study of Muscovite relations with Europe in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, observes that Muscovite relationships with Western Europe were driven by the 'converging notions of sovereign honour' and the 'symbolic language of court society' rather than discordant national and ideological representations.[12] In other words, premodern diplomatic practice evolved through a flexible process of negotiation and the creation of a transcultural political space of shared (but not universal) norms. The foundations of the shared ceremonial space between Muscovy and England, however, were not a seventeenth-century phenomenon and can actually be traced to the sixteenth century, and in particular to the commencement of diplomatic relations between Ivan IV and the Tudors. The gift-exchange that accompanied Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic interaction serves as an excellent example of this development. By participating in the exchange of gifts, English and Muscovite rulers were able to assert their rank and express their sovereign dignity through a carefully orchestrated selection and presentation of objects.

The study of asymmetrical diplomatic relationships has not traditionally focused on the examination of gifts, though recent research has begun to address the matter, especially within the context of European-Asian encounters.[13] While the state of current historiography is addressed at length in Chapter 1, one of the key themes to emerge from the ongoing research is the notion that gifts might have been incommensurable. In other words, early modern diplomatic gifts did not share a common scale of value along which they can be compared. For

[12] J. Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe: Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648-1725* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 253.

[13] A great example of this development is the volume edited by Z. Biedermann, A. Gerritsen and G. Riello (eds), *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (New York and Cambridge, 2018).

example, in his study of the diplomatic gift-exchange between France and Siam in the late seventeenth century, Giorgio Riello observes the disparity between the gifts of the French and those of the Siamese.[14] He notes that while the French incorporated objects specifically selected to address the ambitions and personal interests of the Siamese King, the Siamese gifts of porcelain, Chinese cabinets and screens made a great visual effect but were otherwise unwanted by Louis XIV.[15] Scholars have likewise implied an existence of incommensurability within the Anglo-Muscovite exchange based on the profound difference in the nature of objects that were selected.[16] These implications, however, stem from an unequal examination of Anglo-Muscovite gifts, which is predominantly concerned with surviving examples of English gifts of silver-gilt plate. Art historians, for instance, often describe English gifts as 'works of art' and as the finest examples of Renaissance silverware.[17] This description is different to a contemporary Muscovite portrayal, which was concerned with the size and weight of these objects rather than their craftsmanship. Less attention has also been paid to the monetary value of Muscovite gifts of furs, including that of sables, which were one of the most fashionable luxury commodities of the period. Rather than being incommensurable, the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange was commensurable, if at times asymmetrical. Both the English gifts of silver-gilt plate and Muscovite sable furs fulfilled a shared function of affirming friendship between the sovereigns of both states.

The selection, presentation and reception of diplomatic gifts were intrinsically linked to political and economic aims and aspirations. The ambitions of the English Muscovy Company, for instance, were to monopolise access to Muscovite

[14] G. Riello, '"With Great Pomp and Magnificence": Royal Gifts and the Embassies between Siam and France in the 1680s', in Biederman et al. (eds) *Global Gifts*, pp. 235-65.
[15] G. Riello, '"With Great Pomp and Magnificence"', pp. 247, 261.
[16] For example, see O. Dmitrieva and T. Murdoch (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars* (London, 2013).
[17] N.E. Abramova, *The English Silver of the 16th-20th Centuries* (Moscow, 2014), pp. 9-10

trade and commodities. Yet the scope of the Company's trading rights and exemptions was dependent on Muscovite royal favour. To attain, and retain, the favour of the Muscovite Tsar, an establishment, as well as maintenance, of a royal friendship between the two states was necessary. This was imperative as the Muscovites insisted on conducting mercantile and diplomatic relations with the participation of the English Crown. The central role of English diplomatic gifts was thus to embody the 'brotherly/sisterly love' conveyed by the English sovereign to their Muscovite counterpart. It was important that the selected objects imbued a sense of royalty and visual opulence. Hence, exquisite objects of silverware and furniture, alongside exotic animals, birds and new firearms were selected as English diplomatic gifts. A similar function was fulfilled by the Muscovite gifts. The selection of sable furs, for example, can be attributed to their status as Muscovy's principal luxury commodity. In Tudor England, such furs were used to line the sleeves, edges or inside of garments, and to decorate collars, sleeves, hems and hats.[18] Since the reign of Henry VIII, their use was also restricted to royalty and upper echelons of the English nobility.[19] The selection of furs as diplomatic gifts also enabled the Muscovites to create a visual embodiment of the vast affluence of their lands. The visual rhetoric created by such gifts, alongside the Muscovite offer to grant mercantile privileges, was used as a bargaining tool to extract various concessions and advance Muscovite aspirations.

Moreover, within an asymmetrical diplomatic relationship, such as that of England and Muscovy, the non-tangible components, like royal favour, were more significant. This thesis argues that these non-material components should be understood as gifts, provided they were given willingly, were reciprocated – if not necessarily symmetrically – and created emotional, political and social bonds

[18] E.M. Veale, 'Fashions in Fur', in eadem, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (2nd edn., London, 2003), pp. 133-55.
[19] Ibid., pp. 140-8.

between the participants. As examples of such intangible gifts, it uses the Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* (a charter of mercantile privileges) and English royal letters of recommendation.[20] In this way, this thesis explores the full range and complexity of diplomatic gift-exchange between England and Muscovy in a crucial period of dynastic change in both countries.

2. Chronology

In contrast to the majority of academic scholarship on Anglo-Muscovite relations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the chronological scope of this thesis is not defined by either the regnal years of English and Muscovite rulers or the period of 1553-1649 that is commonly ascribed as the start and end date of Anglo-Muscovite commercial relations.[21] Instead, its point of departure is 1566. Both Bell and Huttenbach independently identify the English embassy of 1566 as the first instance of an official and royally-endorsed diplomatic interaction between Queen Elizabeth I and Ivan IV.[22] While there was certainly an exchange of gifts between English merchant-envoys and the Muscovite Tsar before 1566, these gifts were predominantly presented on behalf of the Muscovy Company rather than the Crown. The focus of this thesis is on the royally-endorsed and commissioned gifts, but in this respect, the position of the Company within the Anglo-Muscovite relationship presents a significant challenge. For the duration of the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic interaction, the Muscovy Company was financially responsible for the commission and transportation of royal English

[20] The mercantile charter is discussed at length in Chapter 6, while Chapter 7 is dedicated to the examination of Anglo-Muscovite royal letters.

[21] 'The voyage of Richard Chanceller […] the first discouerer by sea of the kingdome of Moscouia, Anno 1553', in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 1, pp. 237-73; *A Declaration, of His Imperiall Majestie, The Most High and Mighty Potentate Alexea [Alexis], Emperor of Russia, and great Duke of Muscovia, &c. Wherein is Conteined his Detestation of the Murther of Charles the First, King of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1650).

[22] G.M. Bell, *A Handlist of Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688* (London, 1990), p. 221; H.R. Huttenbach, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy. Reconstructed from Unpublished Sources', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 9 (1975), pp. 179-203.

gifts to the Tsars. On some occasions, as shown in Chapters 4 and 5, the English royal gifts were essentially chosen from the high-quality commodities the Company imported into Muscovy. The arrangement absolved the English Crown from the financial burden of commissioning, supplementing and purchasing gifts to be sent to the Tsars, but it does raise an important question of whether the presented gifts were representative of royal interests or those of the Company. In other words, if these objects were not procured by the Crown, were they really a 'royal' gift?

The distinction lies in the way in which these gifts were presented. A gift given on behalf of the English sovereign was perceived by the Muscovites as a 'royal' gift, even if it was not procured or commissioned by the Crown. The Muscovites described these gifts as *pominki* or remembrances.[23] Alongside the sovereign gifts, each ambassador was expected to present gifts on behalf of himself, or the Company if the diplomat was a Company agent. These gifts were regarded as being distinct from those of the sovereign.[24] Upon departure, English ambassadors would likewise receive two sets of gifts. The first would contain the Tsar's reciprocal gifts to the English monarch, and the second (described as *zhalovannie*) would be given to the diplomat in an acknowledgement of their duties.[25] Thus, a distinction should be made between the gifts that were presented by a royally-appointed embassy and that of unofficial missions undertaken by the agents of the Company. The latter were accorded less pomp, ceremony and recognition by the Muscovites and, at least until the reign of Michael Romanov, any potential gifts presented only on behalf of the Company were undocumented.[26] References to these gifts in English sources are likewise

[23] L.A. Iuzefovich, *Put' Posla: Russkii Posol'skii Obychai. Obikhod. Etiket. Tseremonial. Konets XV-Pervaia Polovina XVII vv.* (St. Petersburg, 2007), p. 116.
[24] Ibid., pp. 121-2.
[25] Ibid., pp. 125-6.
[26] Most of the references to English and Muscovite gifts presented before 1617 can be found within the records of the Muscovite *Posol'skii Prikaz* (Ambassadorial Chancellery), in particular the

scarce, as the majority of the Company's records were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666.[27] Additionally, following Elizabeth's agreement to conduct diplomatic negotiations with Muscovy on an ambassadorial level in 1566, all unofficial missions were replaced with royal embassies.[28] For the purpose of this thesis, the focus is on 'sovereign' gifts (*pominki*), presented by royally-appointed ambassadors on behalf of both English and Muscovite sovereigns. In this manner, the gifts presented by Elizabeth's first ambassador, Anthony Jenkinson, were the first gifts presented on behalf of the English Crown to the Tsar and serve as the starting point of the discussion.[29]

Similarly, 1623 is taken as the end point, since it marked a significant change in the conduct of English relations with Muscovy. By 1621, the financial strain of the continuous exchange of royal English and Muscovite embassies resulted in a petition by the Muscovy Company to James I to cease an exchange of royal ambassadors.[30] In 1623 the Muscovites agreed to a new diplomatic arrangement, whereby ambassadorial duties were assigned to the principal agent of the Company in Moscow, who acquired the additional role of an English resident diplomatic representative.[31] Although the agents were still expected to present gifts to the Tsar, the gifts were once again presented on behalf of the Company rather than the Crown, and on one occasion, the resident agent arrived without any gifts.[32] Likewise, the growing preoccupation of the English

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Ambassadorial *knigi* (books). The Ambassadorial Book relating to Anglo-Muscovite interaction can be found in RGADA, Moscow, fond 35, opis' 1.

[27] The early records of the Company perished in the Great Fire of London in 1666, but surviving material relating to the Company's activities post-1666 can be found at the Guildhall Library in London.

[28] Huttenbach, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy', pp. 179-80.

[29] The first royal gifts presented on behalf of the Muscovite Tsar to the English sovereign were those of Osip Nepeia's embassy of 1557, most of which perished in a shipwreck: Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 289.

[30] Phipps, *Sir John Merrick*, pp. 151-3.

[31] The first of such diplomatic representatives was Christopher Cocks (fl. 1620s), who was sent to Moscow in April 1623; subsequent agents included Fabian Smith (d. 1632) in 1626, Thomas Wynche (fl. 1630s) in January 1633 and Simon Digby (fl. 1620s-40s) in 1635; Bell, *Handlist*, p. 225.

[32] S. Konovalov, 'Anglo-Russian Relations, 1620-24', *OSP*, 4 (1953), pp. 71-131.

Crown with domestic affairs and the shift of English mercantile interests towards the West marked a gradual decrease in the Crown's direct involvement in Anglo-Muscovite affairs. Ultimately, almost eight months after the execution of Charles I (r.1625-1649), Tsar Alexis I (r. 1645-1676) expressed his solidarity with the English monarchy by expelling all English merchants affiliated with the Muscovy Company and terminating all trading agreements with the Commonwealth, thereby bringing an end to the Anglo-Muscovite commercial partnership.[33]

The selected timeframe enables the thesis to trace instances of changes and continuity within the broader trajectory of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange that encompassed the reigns of several monarchs. Gifts presented on behalf of Elizabeth, for instance, are compared not only to the reciprocal gifts the Queen received from the Muscovite Tsars but also with those sent by her successor, James I, following his accession to the throne of England in 1603. Correspondingly, the Muscovite gifts are similarly compared with the English gifts and those presented by individual Tsars. The comparative approach allows the thesis to identify and evaluate the influence of individual dynastic aspirations, personal interests, and even gender, on the selection, presentation and reception of diplomatic gifts.

Broadly, this thesis proposes to complement the growing interest in the study of inter-princely relations across a larger geographical region than previously examined by scholars of diplomatic history, which had predominantly focused on Europe. It 'de-centralises' Europe to identify multifaceted patterns of diplomatic developments in the early modern period, but without applying anachronistic notions of globalisation. Muscovy's diplomatic interaction with Europe in the pre-Petrine period has not received a comprehensive evaluation, in contrast to

[33] G.M. Phipps, 'The Russian Embassy to London of 1645-46 and the Abrogation of the Muscovy Company's Charter', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 68 (1990), pp. 257-76.

increasing research on the foreign relations of other Eastern powers, most notably the Ottomans.[34] In part, this is due to considerable geographical, disciplinary and linguistic challenges. The majority of previous research has approached the subject from a traditional and conservative methodology of diplomatic studies.[35] Only in the last decade, academics have begun to apply a multidisciplinary approach to the study of Muscovite diplomacy and foreign relations.[36] Chronologically, however, extant research is still restricted to a post-Westphalian Russia and the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1721).[37] The thesis thus aims to redress the lacunae and to offer a reassessment of pre-Westphalian Muscovite diplomacy through an examination of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange.

Moreover, studies of early modern diplomatic interaction often focus on the one end of what was essentially a two-way relationship. Instead, this thesis presents a balanced examination of both English and Muscovite gift-giving and shows the ways in which English and Muscovite sovereigns could borrow and adapt elements of the gift-giving ceremony from each other to further their political and economic aspirations. This thesis challenges our existing conceptions of the diplomatic gift-exchange within cross-cultural interactions and demonstrates how diplomacy evolved within a transcultural space of shared ceremonial norms,

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[34] D. Goffman 'Negotiating with the Renaissance State: the Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy', in V.H. Aksan and D. Goffman (eds), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 61-74; A. Gatward Cevizli, 'More than a Messenger: Embodied Expertise in Mantuan and Ottoman Envoys in the 1490s', *Mediterranean Studies*, 23 (2014), pp. 166-89; idem, 'Portraits, Turbans and Cuirasses: Material Exchange between Mantua and the Ottomans in the 1490s' in Z. Biedermann et al. (eds), *Global Gifts*, pp. 34-55.

[35] For instance see M.S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia*; W.E. Butler, 'Anglo-Russian Diplomacy and the Law of Nations', in A.G. Cross (ed.), *Great Britain and Russia in the Eighteenth Century: Contacts and Comparisons* (Newtonville, MA, 1979), pp. 296-305; P. Dukes, 'Paul Menzies and his Mission from Muscovy to Rome, 1672-1674', *The Innes Review*, 35 (1984), pp. 88-95.

[36] For example, R. Wortman, *Visual Texts, Ceremonial Texts, Texts of Exploration: Collected Articles on the Representation of Russian Monarchy* (Boston, MA, 2014), pp. 27-46; E. Welch, 'Between Italy and Moscow: Cultural Crossroads and Cultural Exchange', in H. Roodenburg (ed.), *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe: Forging European Identities 1400-1700*, 4 (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 59-99.

[37] For instance, K. Boterbloem, 'Russia and Europe: The Koenraad van Klenk Embassy to Moscow (1675-76)', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14 (2010), pp. 187-217.

which were built on mutual notions of sovereign honour rather than political and cultural incompatibility.

3. Source Material

Although Anglo-Muscovite relations have been the focus of several scholarly studies, the existing research remains restricted in the selection and scope of its source material. A most noticeable impediment is the imbalance between the incorporation of source material from the British and Russian archives. The majority of Anglophone publications continue to rely solely on the documents found within the collections of the British archives, supplemented by the printed material drawn from the anthologies of nineteenth-century historians like Yurii (George) Tolstoi.[38] To an extent, the imbalance is the result of the inaccessibility of Russian archives to Western scholars, especially in the Soviet period, but the practice is still prevalent within recent publications despite the improvements in the accessibility and digitisation of Russian archival material. Rayne Allinson's monograph, *A Monarchy of Letters* (2012), offers a good example of such practice. Allinson provides a chapter on the examination of the exchanged correspondence between Ivan IV and Elizabeth I, but the analysis of English royal letters is based only upon the drafts and copies preserved in the British Library and the National Archives in London rather than the original English letters kept in Moscow.[39] In the same way, Felicity Stout's examination of Giles Fletcher's 1588 embassy to Moscow makes a brief reference to, but does not engage with, the Muscovite *delo* (a diplomatic report) that recorded the

[38] Y. Tolstoi (ed.), *The First Forty Years of Intercourse between England and Russia, 1553-1593* (St. Petersburg, 1875).
[39] R. Allinson, A *Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012).

particulars of Fletcher's visit.[40] As a result, the examination of the embassy, including the rejection of Fletcher's gifts, is approached exclusively from the perspective and perceptions of the English Crown.[41]

The broader implication of such an imbalance of source material is that the examination of Anglo-Muscovite relationship tends to focus on the one end of what was essentially a two-way relationship. Thus, it is convenient to attribute instances of tension or clashes between English ambassadors and Muscovite officials to Muscovite barbarism and lack of sophistication, as well as incompatibility. Yet, an examination of English embassies through the perspective of both English and Russian source material reveals the complexity of the relationship and provides justified explanations for Muscovite actions, which in turn enriches our understanding of early modern cross-cultural diplomatic encounters. Jan Henning's recent monograph, *Russia and Courtly Europe* (2016) is exemplary in demonstrating the advantages of exploring the rich source material of Russian archives and incorporating these findings into the study of early modern European-Muscovite interactions.[42] The discussion that follows below is a brief overview and examination of the versatile body of primary source material that is used by this thesis in its analysis of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange.

a) Archival Source Material

All academic publications on the subject of Anglo-Muscovite relations draw from an extensive corpus of English diplomatic documents that are preserved within the collections of British archives, predominantly the British Library and the

[40] F.J. Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 78-81. The Muscovite *delo* relating to Fletcher's embassy is published in *Vremennik Imperatorskago Moskovskago Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiiskikh,* 8 (Moscow, 1850), part II, pp. 1-96.
[41] Stout, *Exploring Russia*, pp. 71-7.
[42] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, pp. 112-54.

National Archives in London.[43] The material consists of drafts and copies of English royal letters, diplomatic instructions, memorandums and reports of English ambassadors, as well as contemporary English translations of Muscovite royal letters. The wealth of English diplomatic material is of great value to the re-creation of the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic narrative. The royal instructions given to ambassadors, alongside the letters exchanged between the Secretaries of State and the diplomats dispatched to Moscow, reveal the economic and political matters at the heart of each embassy. Meanwhile, copies of royal letters shed light upon the different personalities of the correspondents, their ambitions and political aspirations. Notably, although there are several original Muscovite royal letters preserved at the National Archives in London, an examination of these documents is predominantly absent in Anglophone research.[44] The absence can be attributed to the linguistic and palaeographical challenges of working with such materials, as well as the convenient availability of contemporary English translations. As a result, Anglo-Muscovite correspondence is often explored only for its semantic content, while the material attributes of the letters, and the insights they offer into the epistolary conventions of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, remain overlooked.

While the source material preserved in the British archives offers a wide-ranging coverage of Anglo-Muscovite relations, there are notable limitations. Firstly, there is a profound lack of documents covering the periods of 1561-8, 1575-81 and 1594-7. However, rather than attributing the lacunae to the destruction or natural degradation of source material, it is likely that these periods imply a time of relative stability in Anglo-Muscovite relations, especially as diplomatic activity (and its paper-trail) tended to intensify during instances of tensions and

[43] This includes the Cotton MSS series kept in the British Library and the State Papers (especially SP 91) preserved at the National Archives in London. Additional documents are kept within the collections of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, and Cambridge University Library. See bibliography for more details.
[44] TNA, SP 102/49.

disagreements arising from the asymmetrical nature of this diplomatic relationship. Similarly, the period of 1606-13 is also sparsely documented, but this was likely a reflection of the political and economic breakdown of Muscovite central government during the Time of Troubles.[45] Secondly, English diplomatic documents provide no insight into the Anglo-Muscovite exchange of gifts. The majority of instructions given to English ambassadors contain no references to the selection and presentation of royal gifts. The absence of gifts within the English diplomatic corpus is reflective of the fact that practical arrangements relating to the commission, transportation and presentation of English royal gifts were entrusted to the agents of the Muscovy Company rather than Crown officials. The Company records, however, were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666 and, thus, only occasional reference to gift-giving can be found within the source material held at the British Archives. The most notable examples are the royal instructions given to Thomas Randolph (ambassador in 1569), which mention a gift of a silver-gilt standing cup, and the report of Sir Jerome Bowes (ambassador in 1583) that records gifts of silver-gilt plate and a crossbow. Both of these examples are discussed at length later in this thesis.

An important collection of source material, largely overlooked by Anglophone historiography, is preserved within the Russian archives, especially at the State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA) in Moscow. The collection (fond 35) covers the period of 1557-1795 and incorporates original English royal letters, contemporary copies of Muscovite *zhalovannye gramoty* (charters of mercantile privileges granted to the Muscovy Company) and the *Posol'skie Knigi* (Ambassadorial Books), produced by the Muscovite *Posol'skii Prikaz* (Ambassadorial Chancellery).[46] Each *kniga* (book) represents a compilation of documents relating to Muscovite diplomatic relations with a specific

[45] See TNA, SP 91/2.
[46] RGADA, Moscow, fond 35, opis' 1, 2 and 4.

sovereignty.[47] The *knigi* consist of copies of the sets of instructions given to Muscovite ambassadors (*nakazy*), diplomatic reports (*stateinye spiski*), as well as the exchanged correspondence between the *d'yaks* (secretaries) of the *Prikaz* and the local boyars and officials tasked with supervising the journeys of foreign diplomats. The *knigi* likewise contain summaries of the accommodation and victuals given to individual embassies, Russian translations of foreign royal letters and a brief summary of the course of the negotiations of each embassy.[48]

Additionally, mirroring Muscovite preoccupation with diplomatic ceremony and ritual, the *knigi* recorded descriptions of ambassadors' public entrances into Moscow and their formal audiences with the Tsar. The incorporation of descriptions of diplomatic ceremony was of great importance to the Muscovites, as each action undertaken by a foreign diplomat was assessed to determine if sufficient honour had been bestowed upon the Tsar. The reports of Muscovite ambassadors were likewise expected to note down all of the ceremonies they were accorded at foreign courts so that a similar judgement could be made and the Tsar's honour protected. As a part of Muscovite emphasis on the expressions of honour and declarations of friendship, an important role was ascribed to diplomatic gifts. Every gift given to the Tsar on behalf of a foreign sovereign (and later the ambassadors' personal gifts) was carefully recorded within the *Posol'skaia Kniga*. The descriptions of gifts are brief. Standing cups, for instance, are described simply as 'cups with covers', but each gift was appraised and accorded a value based on its weight. The reciprocal Muscovite gifts presented to a foreign embassy at the conclusion of the negotiations were recorded in a

[47] An examination of the *knigi* as source material for historical research is discussed in N.M. Rogozhin, *Posol'skie Knigi Rossii Kontsa XV-nachala XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1994). For a classic study of the *Posol'skii Prikaz,* see S.A. Belokurov, *O Posol'skim Prikaze* (Moscow, 1906).

[48] The detailed records of the *prikaz* have encouraged upcoming researchers to examine Muscovite diplomatic gift-exchange within the framework of 'gift-economy'. Maria Telegina's research paper on 'Missions of the Ottoman Ambassador Thomas Kantakouzenos to Moscow in 1621-1637', presented at the Splendid Encounters 6 Conference (Prague, 2016), highlighted the financial appeal of the gift-exchange, since the gifts received by the ambassador often doubled and tripled the value of the gifts he had given to the Tsar.

similar manner. By the seventeenth century, additional books of receipt and expenditure were produced by the Muscovite royal court to record the various arrivals and departures of gifts to and from the Tsar's treasury. The *Prikhodnaia Kniga* (a book of receipt), alike to the Ambassadorial *kniga*, noted down all of the gifts that the Tsars received from foreign diplomats, alongside the gifts received from native Muscovite aristocracy and foreign citizens living in Moscow.[49] The book even includes the list of gifts presented by the agents of the Muscovy Company, including instances when the latter were not acting in the capacity of a royal representative, which were not otherwise recorded in the Ambassadorial Books. Meanwhile, the *Raskhodnaia kniga* (a book of expenditure) offers a list of reciprocal commodities (mostly sable furs and black fox pelts) that were given as gifts on behalf of the Tsar.[50]

Although the Muscovite *knigi* represent an essential source of material for the study of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange, there are some notable restrictions in the scope of the preserved collections. Unfortunately, Muscovite interactions with England in the 1560s and the 1570s are sparsely recorded, as the bureaucratic machinery of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* was still being developed. Hence, the surviving *knigi* contain no *dela* (records) relating to the arrival of royal English ambassadors before 1583. In order to examine the gift-exchange of the early Anglo-Muscovite relations, this thesis relies on scattered reference to gifts within the British archival collections and the earliest examples of English plate preserved in the Armoury, which are discussed below. Likewise, some of the later records, including the *delo* concerning the arrival of Sir Richard Lee in 1600, are noted as being lost.[51] In the example of Lee's embassy, the only reference to the English gifts of 1600 appears in contemporary observations of a

[49] Books of Receipt can be found in RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, dela 144-97.
[50] Books of Expenditure can be found in RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, dela 334-6.
[51] Although the original manuscript is recorded as being 'lost', a copy is preserved as a microfilm.

Dutch merchant Isaac Massa.[52] It is clear that in order to build a comprehensive portrayal of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange, an amalgamation of both British and Russian archival material is essential. Furthermore, a consistent evaluation of the Muscovite *Posol'skie knigi* is virtually non-existent in Anglo-Muscovite historiography.

b) Printed Primary Source Material

This thesis uses printed material as a means of supplementing evidence that no longer survives in its original form. A good example of this is the Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota*, the originals of which would have been kept by the Muscovy Company and are believed to have been destroyed in 1666. Fortunately, copies and translations of a fraction of these documents were included within the printed collections of Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas. Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations* (first published in 1589) and Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1625) were intended to celebrate the adventurous spirit of English explorers, including the English 'discovery' of Muscovy.[53] Alongside extracts from the journals of English merchant-adventurers (that offer valuable glimpses into the early modern Muscovite society and court culture), the books include contemporary English translations of Muscovite royal letters and charters of privileges. The printed translations were copied from those produced by the agents of the Muscovy Company, which were originally kept by the Secretary of State. Notably, only a small fraction of original English translations of the charters have survived within the collections of the British archives and thus Hakluyt's and Purchas' volumes remain the principal sources of material for the examination of the charters. As shown later in this thesis, a systematic analysis of the *gramoty* offers a valuable insight into

[52] I. Massa, *Short History*, trans. and ed. G.E. Orchard (Toronto, 1982).
[53] R. Hakluyt, *PN*, 1 (London, 2 edn., 1599-1600); S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2 (London, 1625).

the complexity of Anglo-Muscovite gift-giving that was not restricted to the exchange of material commodities.

As shown above, there are notable lacunae within both British and Russian archival source material regarding the gifts presented by a specific embassy. The example of Lee's embassy of 1600 has already been noted above, but that of Jerome Horsey in 1586 is likewise important. Similarly to Lee, a description of the gifts of Horsey's embassy is absent from English archival material, and no *delo* of the embassy has been preserved in the Russian archives. The only description of the English gifts of 1586 (and the reciprocal gifts of the Muscovites) can be found within Horsey's memoir published in 1621.[54] While the material is full of boastful gusto and vindication against previous accusations of ill-behaviour and fraud, it offers a detailed description of not only the objects and animals that were presented but also the interaction between the English and Muscovite rulers and the gifts.

The final category of printed source material used by this thesis are the anthologies of nineteenth-century scholars who collated, transcribed and translated various archival documents relating to Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, including royal letters, reports and journals of English ambassadors and the *dela* of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*. The anthologies are discussed at length in Chapter 1, though it should be noted that recent Anglophone studies of Anglo-Muscovite relations continue to rely on these outdated collections in lieu of the examination of the original Russian archival material. For the purpose of this thesis, the anthologies are primarily used in the same manner as the printed material mentioned above – to supplement the documents that no longer survive in the

[54] J. Horsey, *Travels* (London, 1621). The memoir was published in E.A. Bond (ed.), *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1856). This thesis uses the version published by L.E. Berry and R.O. Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyages* (Madison, WI, 1968), pp. 262-372.

archive collections. The most notable of such anthologies is that of Yurii Tolstoi, published in 1875, that contains transcriptions of English and Muscovite royal letters exchanged between Elizabeth, Ivan IV, Feodor I and Boris Godunov. The book is of great use when dealing with early Elizabethan letters, especially as many of the original Elizabethan letters sent to Moscow are too fragile to be handled or too damaged by mould to be legible.[55] Attention, however, needs to be paid to the fact that the collection is outdated and some of the letters are misdated and misidentified.[56] Overall, the incorporation of selected printed material enables the thesis to cover as many archival lacunae as is possible and enrich the examination of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange by amalgamating a versatile body of source material.

c) Museum Artefacts

The final category of source material used by this thesis are the English diplomatic gifts currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow. The collection features dozens of surviving English gifts of silver-gilt plate, firearms and the 1604 carriage, and is one of the largest collections of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English silverware in the world. In addition to a *de visu* examination of these objects, the thesis uses the extensive catalogues produced by the Armoury museum to gain a better understanding of the historical context of each object.[57] The catalogues offer useful information regarding the objects' dating, materials and craftsmanship, and provide a brief description of its decoration. For some of the gifts, the curators have also attempted to match the objects to their corresponding entry within the

[55] This affects several of Elizabeth's letters to Feodor, which is also noted within RGADA's catalogue: http://rgada.info/opisi/35-opis_2/0006.jpg [accessed 5 April 2018].
[56] For a critique, see Huttenbach, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy', pp. 179-203.
[57] This includes, but is not limited to, I.A. Bobrovnitskaia, *Gosudarstvennaia Oruzheinaia Palata Moskovskogo Kremlia* (Moscow, 1988); E.A. Iablonskaia, *English Firearms of the XVII-the Early XIX Centuries* (2nd edn., Moscow, 2006).

Posol'skie Knigi.[58] At the end of chapter 5, this thesis reproduces some of the catalogues' photographs to provide a visual reference to some of the key objects discussed within the text.

Although material objects provide an immediacy that is lacked by documents, there are methodological challenges in translating their contemporary meanings and intentions. The aim of this thesis is not to inspect these objects exclusively from the point of view of material culture and art history as exemplified by the work of Olga Dmitrieva and Natalia Abramova.[59] This thesis acknowledges the significance of specific decorative motifs and their contribution towards the overall message conveyed by the object, but for the purpose of this study does not trace the development of English decorative art or explores the artistic influence behind the depiction of particular imagery (unless it has a direct link to the diplomatic and political context). It likewise does not dwell in depth on the impact of the exchange upon the development of Muscovite culture and artisan craftsmanship. Instead, objects are evaluated within the framework of intentionality, transmission and reception. In other words, the thesis looks at what messages gifts were intended to convey, how these messages were communicated through the object and whether its meaning was understood by the recipient.

On the whole, the combination of a versatile body of archival, printed and physical source material allows the thesis to produce a comprehensive analysis of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange that aims to redress the previous imbalance and restriction in the scope of the selected source material. To date, the history of early modern Muscovite diplomacy has not benefited from the

[58] The majority of these identifications still remain contested due to the brevity of the descriptions within the *Posol'skie Knigi*, which makes it challenging to distinguish individual objects.
[59] O. Dmitrieva and N. Abramova (eds), *Britannia & Muscovy: English Silver at the Court of the Tsars* (London, 2006).

developments of the 'new' diplomatic history, and this research provides a new perspective on the complexity of Muscovite diplomacy and its relations with England beyond the conventional portrayal of the 'East-West' divide.

4. Methodology: Intention-Transmission-Reception

This thesis proposes to apply a cultural and anthropological framework of intention, transmission and reception to the study of Anglo-Muscovite gifts. In his essay, 'On the Language as Such and on the Language of Man' (1916), Walter Benjamin presents an interesting concept in which every material expression of life is deemed to be a kind of a language since all things communicate some sort of a meaning.[60] Poetry, for instance, arises from the relationship of human expressiveness to objects, as does sculpture and painting. In a similar manner, gifts can be understood as elements of non-verbal communication between England and Muscovy. Benjamin notes that a familiar concept of 'things' in our society is that humans categorise objects by language and use these to further our own interests.[61] Yet, Benjamin describes this as a visible, topmost layer and argues that subconsciously the language of things is transferred to the human language through moods, habits and practices.[62] For example, a painting can be translated into words, as the imagery is examined in order to identify the specific messages its creator intended to convey. At the same time, a painting could also provoke a mood or feeling within the viewer that was not necessarily the intention of its creator, but which reshapes the viewer's perception of the painting. In a similar manner, the objects (and animals) exchanged between England and Muscovy were able to create a shared

[60] W. Benjamin, 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man', in Benjamin, *One-way Street, and other Writings*, trans. E. Jephcott and K. Shorter (London, 1979), p. 107-23. This short essay, composed in 1916, was originally written to clarify the broad lines of Benjamin's theories but was never intended for publication.
[61] Benjamin, 'On Language as Such, p. 74.
[62] Ibid., pp. 107, 109, 111.

ceremonial space between these two seemingly incompatible royal courts. Alongside their role as tokens of friendship, the physicality of the objects themselves could be moulded to create various perceptions and visual rhetoric intended to shape the course of the relationship.

The theory of intentionally has been predominantly applied to literary studies and the history of the book.[63] Nicholas Barker, for example, noted that the reception of any 'bibliographical document' was complementary to the intention that 'set it in motion', whilst transmission of intent was embraced by the material form of the book itself.[64] The versatility of this methodology does not limit its application to texts and offers an effective framework in which to explore the role and purpose of diplomatic gifts. In the Anglo-Muscovite context, the intentionality of gifts was multidimensional. From a ceremonial perspective, gifts were intended to conform to ritual customs and traditions of the princely court in which they were being presented. The Muscovite habit to assess the value of gifts based on their weight (rather than craftsmanship), for example, meant that small gifts, such as jewellery and precious stones, could not be presented in isolation and had to be given alongside larger objects. If such gifts were presented in isolation, they were rejected and returned by the Muscovites on the grounds that they were unsuitable presents for the Tsar. The materiality of the gift could likewise convey specific meanings. Gifts of novelty items, including clocks, musical instruments or furniture, were intended to denote the cultural creativity of the royal court, and showcase the superior craftsmanship of its artisans. On the other hand, Eastern commodities incorporated into Muscovite gift-giving were representative of the trading and diplomatic networks of the Tsars.

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[63] See R. Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (London, 1996); T.R. Adams and N. Barker, 'A New Model for the Study of the Book', in N. Barker (ed.), *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society: The Clark Lectures, 1986-1987* (London, 1993), p. 5-44; N. Barker, *Form and Meaning in the History of the Book: Selected Essays* (London, 2002).
[64] N. Barker, 'Intentionality and Reception Theory', in Barker, *A Potencie of Life*, p. 195.

As noted by Barker, but also emphasised within the reception theory of Stuart Hall, transmission of intent was expressed through the material object itself. Yet, the reception and interpretation of the intended message were often influenced by the existing cultural and social preconceptions.[65] Anthropologists have also cast doubt as to whether the same verbal, symbolic or material expression conveyed identical meanings in different cultural and political contexts.[66] Hall, for example, points out that in some instances the receiver may be able to understand the sender's message but simultaneously either misinterpret the meaning as a more personal message or perceive another unintended meaning based on their own belief.[67] Surviving records often do not have any direct information as to how the gifts were received by either the English Crown or the Muscovite Tsars. The records noting the course of Anglo-Muscovite negotiations, however, reveal that there were plenty of instances when the intended message was misunderstood by the recipient. Furthermore, this was not always the result of cultural incompatibility between the two states but rather a sign of the asymmetrical nature of the Anglo-Muscovite relationship. Ivan IV, for example, regarded the arrival of royal English gifts and ambassadors as a sign of a personal friendship with Queen Elizabeth, and was, therefore, bitterly disappointed and angered when the Queen refused his offer to transmute the commercial relationship between the two states into a political one. Moreover, the success of a diplomatic mission was often reliant upon the skills of individual ambassadors and their familiarity with (or the ability to adapt to) the cultural and ceremonial life of the court to which they were being sent.

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[65] S. Hall (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader* (London and New York, 1993); also see S. Bennett (ed.), *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (New York, 1990) and J. Dixon Hunt, *The Afterlife of Gardens* (Philadelphia, PA, 2004).

[66] C. Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology by Clifford Geertz* (New York, 1983), pp. 167-234.

[67] Hall (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, pp. 102-3.

This thesis acknowledges, but does not examine in detail, the role of ambassadors and Muscovy Company's agents within the presentation of royal gifts, as such an examination is beyond the confines of this thesis. It is, however, important to note their contribution and impact within the Anglo-Muscovite exchange. Notably, the Company agents were more successful in accomplishing their diplomatic objectives than the diplomats selected among the minor courtiers. Many of the agents possessed the necessary language expertise, were familiar with Muscovite customs, laws and ceremonial traditions, and held privileges and rights of residence in Muscovite cities.[68] In contrast, English courtier-diplomats were more likely to overlook their role as transmitters of royal messages and spend the majority of their embassies arguing with the Muscovite officials about every aspect of diplomatic ceremonial as a means of elating the status of the English sovereign above that of the Tsar.[69] Examples of both successful and failed presentation of gifts by English ambassadors are provided in chapters 4 and 5. For the Muscovites, the transmission of their intentions and interpretative translations of their gifts was further complicated by the dependence of their ambassadors upon the English merchants, who acted as translators and interpreters.[70] The position enabled the merchants to withhold or alter the meaning of both oral and written Muscovite communication, though evidence of such malpractice is relatively rare, and instances of misunderstanding seem to have been the genuine product of unintentional miscommunication.[71]

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[68] P. Dukes, et al. (eds), *Stuarts and Romanovs*, p. 28.

[69] R.M. Croskey, 'Hakluyt's Accounts of Sir Jerome Bowes' Embassy to Ivan IV', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 61 (1983), pp. 546-64.

[70] The most prominent Company agents employed as translators and interpreters were Robert Best, Henry Lane, Daniel Sylvester, Fabian Smith and Sir John Merrick. Another English agent-diplomat, Jerome Horsey, also claimed to have been fluent in Russian, though his proficiency has been doubted by historians: R. Hellie, 'Horsey, Sir Jerome (d. 1626)', *ODNB*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13813 [accessed 5 October 2017].

[71] An exception is Jerome Horsey's translation of Feodor I's 1589 letter to Elizabeth. The Russian copy of the letter noted that Horsey (in the capacity of a royal ambassador) was sent back to England as he 'has deserved death for his misconduct, for the practises he used betwixt us [Elizabeth and Feodor', and for 'the unbeseeming words he spoke about us [Feodor] and you [Elizabeth]'.

The final aspect of Anglo-Muscovite exchange, which deserves attention, is the question of reciprocity. In his seminal essay *Essai sur le don* (*The Gift*) Mauss divides the physical act of giving gifts into three phases: giving, receiving and reciprocating.[72] Pierre Bourdieu likewise observes the deceptive freedom of a gift and the obligation it placed upon the recipient to give something back.[73] A simple comparison between the English and Muscovite gifts and counter-gifts is, however, counter-effective. A comparison between gifts of silver-gilt plate and furs is of little help to create a new narrative that reaches beyond the level of current academic reflection on Anglo-Muscovite political and cultural incompatibility. Instead, by expanding the anthropological definition of 'gifts' to non-material entities, including royal favour and mercantile privileges, the thesis is able to highlight the complexity of the gift-exchange within an asymmetrical diplomatic relationship, in which non-material gifts were more significant.

In *Stone Age Economics*, the American cultural anthropologist Marshall Sahlins separates reciprocity into three categories: generalised, symmetrical and negative.[74] Notably, each of the categories provides an excellent framework for a demonstration of the mechanics of non-material gift-exchange between England and Muscovy at various stages of the relationship. For example, Sahlins defines the 'generalised reciprocity' as an exchange in which no record was kept of the exact value of the given commodity (gift), but which was accompanied by an expectation that the value of the counter-gifts would over time balance out the exchange.[75] To some extent, such an approach is reflective of pre-Romanov Muscovite gift-giving as expressed through the *zhalovannaia gramota* (a charter

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Horsey's English translation, however, changed the reasoning to his own 'foleishnes is not w[or]thy to be w[i]th us for makinge debatte betwene [our] princly hig[ness] and [you our] loving Sister Queen Elizabeth': Tolstoi, *First Forty Years*, p. 353; TNA, SP 91/1, f. 60r.

[72] M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London, 1990), p. 41.

[73] P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 5-6.

[74] M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York, 1974), pp. 149-84.

[75] Ibid., pp. 222-3.

of trading privileges). The *gramota* did not oblige the English Crown to respond immediately to the gift, but it created an expectation on the part of the Muscovite Tsar that in the long term the English Crown would be obliged to acknowledge Muscovite generosity with a similar gift, preferably in the form of a political alliance. Sahlins' third category of 'negative reciprocity', on the other hand, is representative of the English gift-giving as it defines an exchange in which a party intends to profit from the exchange at the expense of the other. It is reminiscent of English agreement to grant 'gifts' in the form of relatively inconsequential political and military concessions to the Muscovites (for instance, imports of ordnance) as a means of retaining their privileged access to Muscovite mercantile wealth and trade networks. Towards the end of the period, however, non-tangible Anglo-Muscovite exchange evolved into a 'symmetrical reciprocity', in which each party would only give something to the other with an expectation of a fair return at a specified amount, time and place.[76] This characterised the Stuart-Romanov exchange, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, whereby Muscovite gifts of mercantile privileges would only be exchanged for specified pre-conditions as set by the Tsar.

5. Chapter Summaries

Thematically, the thesis is separated into two parts. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 contextualise the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange within the broader subjects of Anglo-Muscovite historiography, diplomatic relations and early modern Muscovite diplomatic culture. Meanwhile, Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 address the exchange of material and non-tangible gifts between the two royal courts. Chapter 1 evaluates the current state of academic scholarship on the themes of 'new' diplomatic history, Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, gift-giving and royal letters. It emphasises that pre-Petrine Muscovite diplomacy still remains a

[76] Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, pp. 201-03.

subject largely neglected by scholars of diplomatic history, even though Muscovy offers a unique perspective on the mechanics of early modern diplomatic relations. Chapter 2 provides a historical background of the development of Muscovite diplomacy, its protocols and ceremony during the reigns of the Tsars Ivan IV, Feodor I, Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov. It shows that the historiographical perceptions of Muscovite diplomatic practice as rigid and conservative are misleading since there is clear evidence to suggest a continuous development of Muscovite diplomacy as initiated by the personal ambitions of Ivan IV rather than a (great) radical revolution during the reign of Peter the Great. Chapter 3 traces the trajectory of Anglo-Muscovite relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by addressing the political, mercantile, dynastic and individual aspirations of English sovereigns and Muscovite Tsars. Rather than offer a chronological narrative of individual embassies, it explores the short- and long-term aims and motivations of both monarchies, and discusses whether a potential dependence of each state upon the other, in fulfilment of these aspirations, encouraged the two governments to search for ways to circumvent their cultural and political differences in pursuit of mutual interests. By exploring the Anglo-Muscovite relationship from the perspective of royal aims and motivations, Chapter 3 addresses the reasons for why both England and Muscovy endured a long-lasting functional diplomatic relationship amidst their political and cultural disparities. Collectively, the chapters set the stage for the discussion of how such circumvention was attempted in practice through the exchange of material and non-tangible gifts.

Frequently, gifts are either interpreted as means of intercultural communication *par excellence* or intercultural gift-giving associated with misunderstandings from an inevitable clash of cultures. Chapter 4, however, explores the ways in which diplomatic gifts provided Elizabeth I and the Tsars with a ritualised means of reinforcing bonds of kinship and friendship. Elizabeth, for instance, used gifts

of silver-gilt plate to further English mercantile interests. In a similar fashion, the Muscovite Tsars employed their grants of privileges and favours as diplomatic bargaining tools to further their own political interests, whilst gifts of furs and falcons served as potent reminders of the mercantile wealth of their vast kingdom. Additionally, the tangible objects themselves were also inevitable contributors towards an exchange of ideas and knowledge across cross-cultural boundaries.

Chapter 5 continues the reassessment of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange and examines the intentions, ways of transmission and reception of gifts exchanged between James, Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov, in the period of 1604 to 1623. In doing so, it emphasises that the prominence of the staple Stuart gifts of silver plate, and Muscovite gifts of sable furs, did not denote a lack of progression within the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange. Instead, it demonstrates an intentional choice by both governments to use these objects as a visual embodiment of the enduring Anglo-Muscovite friendship amidst dynastic changes in both states. It also notes that the presence of notable gifts, including the 1604 English carriage, signalled a clear change in intentions that deserves attention.

Chapters 6 and 7 address the intentionality and reception of non-tangible gifts within the Anglo-Muscovite relationship. Chapter 6 examines the Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* (a charter of mercantile privileges) and notes that, although these documents were undoubtedly of great significance to the progression of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, the *gramota* itself played an important role within the gift-exchange, an aspect that is often overlooked in academic scholarship. The grants represent a Muscovite gift that was designed to elicit an asymmetrical response from the English Crown in the form of political concessions. Finally, Chapter 7 considers to what extent the function and

purpose of royal letters overlapped with that of royal gifts. It shows that the exchange of letters followed similar rules to gift-giving, involving unspoken expectations of reciprocity and courtesy, which were often expressed through an exchange of political news, favours and promises.

6. Notes on Transliteration, Spelling and Dates

The transliteration of Russian words and names follows the Library of Congress system, apart from names and places that have become familiar with other spelling (for example, Michael, Moscow or Archangel). According to the usual conventions, the Old Style (Julian) dating system, then in use in England, is used throughout, but the beginning of the year is uniformly taken as 1 January (unless otherwise specified). The dating of Muscovite sources retains the original Muscovite *anno mundi* but is also provided with a Julian equivalent. Where possible original spelling has been reproduced, and all translations from Russian sources are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Chapter 1

Diplomacy, Gifts and Royal Letters: Literature Review

As noted in the Introduction, this thesis explores the intention, transmission and reception of material (as well as intangible) gifts and royal letters exchanged between the English and Muscovite sovereigns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Prior to the discussion of the exchange itself, it is important to situate this thesis within the broader historiographical context of the early modern diplomacy, gift-giving and Anglo-Muscovite interaction. This chapter evaluates the current state of academic scholarship and focuses on four main categories: the 'new' diplomatic history, Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, gift-giving, and royal letters.

The first category highlights the developments within the study of premodern diplomatic history; specifically the emergence of what John Watkins termed the 'new' diplomatic history.[1] In contrast to the Eurocentric focus and conservative methodology of traditional diplomatic studies, scholars of 'new' diplomatic history have contributed towards substantial developments within the field, with respect to the multi-disciplinary methods they have adopted and the range of subjects they have considered, which merits attention.[2] The second category examines the rich historiography of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy as explored by both Anglophone and Russian scholarship. The prominent feature of these publications is the transition from scholarly interest in re-creating the political and economic narrative of the relationship to the vibrant and inter-disciplinary research which has emerged in the last couple of years that has gradually, but

[1] J. Watkins, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies,* 38 (2008), p. 1.

[2] Relevant studies include, but are not limited to: K. Urbach, 'Diplomatic History since the Cultural Turn', *Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), pp. 991-7; T. Riotte and M. Mösslang (eds), *The Diplomats' World: A Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815-1914* (Oxford, 2008); C. Fletcher, 'Italian Ambassadorial Networks in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14 (2010), pp. 505-12.

tentatively, begun to explore Muscovite diplomacy from new vantage points, including ceremony, direct encounters, gifts and literary representations.[3] While offering new insights and overturning previous assumptions, the chronological scope of such research, unfortunately, remains focused on post-Westphalian Muscovy, especially the reign of Peter the Great, and neglects the crucial transitional period of the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries that set the foundations for Peter's subsequent reforms.

The third and fourth categories discuss the developments within the study of gifts and letters as presented by anthropological and historical research. Since the early twentieth century, much has been written on gifts and the gift-exchange within the human society, most notably by anthropologists and sociologists like Marcel Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu.[4] More recently, the rejuvenation of diplomatic history has stimulated research on the material aspects of early modern diplomacy, in which the study of gifts has become a prominent feature. The bulk of such research, as examined at length below, has approached the subject by exploring the exchange of gifts in bilateral contexts and has raised very important questions about the protocol and code of the exchange, as well as the meaning of gifts.[5] Despite the prominent presence of gifts within Anglo-Muscovite relations, with the exception of a few academic publications, the study of Anglo-Muscovite gifts has been relegated to museum exhibitions.[6] Similarly, while most of the academic scholarship addresses the activities of ambassadors, envoys and agents, it often omits the discussion of the extent to which these activities were empowered by royal letters. Even when

[3] Most notably, M. Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy: Seventeenth-Century English Decorated Royal Letters to Russia and the Far East* (Leiden, 2015); Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe* (Cambridge, 2016).
[4] An effective and concise overview can be found in F. Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 3-30.
[5] See Z. Biedermann et al. (eds), *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia* (New York and Cambridge, 2018).
[6] This is best exemplified by the research of O. Dmitrieva and N. Abramova (eds), *Britannia & Muscovy: English Silver at the Court of the Tsars* (New Haven, 2006).

the discussion of royal letters is incorporated into diplomatic history, the emphasis is on their semantic aspects rather than physical attributes. Current research on the history of manuscripts and material culture has begun to incorporate the methodological approach of palaeography and codicology into the examination of personal and royal letters, but such approach has still not been properly applied to diplomatic letters, particularly those of the Muscovites, though Maija Jansson and Rayne Allinson have examined some of the English royal letters sent to Moscow, albeit in a minimalistic fashion.[7]

By looking at the state of current academic research within each of the four themes, this chapter demonstrates significant developments that have occurred within the field of diplomatic history over the past decade. It identifies the lacunae within existing scholarships, in the scope of their methodology, source material and subject matter, and notes how this thesis aims to remedy some of the omissions to enrich our understanding.

1. 'New' Diplomatic History

Within the last decade, the history of early modern diplomacy, which John Watkins describes as one of the 'most conservative' subfields of history, has experienced a significant scholarly revitalisation.[8] The 'new' diplomatic history, a term coined and popularised by Watkins in 2008, has encouraged scholars to approach the subject from a multidisciplinary perspective. Watkins argues that as diplomacy contributed to the development of multiple discourses that structured European life, its history was, therefore, inseparable from other

[7] J. Daybell and P. Hinds (eds), *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730* (Basingstoke, 2010). It should be noted that the potency of such methodological approaches has encouraged publishers (like Ashgate) to create a book series devoted to material readings in early modern culture.
[8] Watkins, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History', p. 1.

histories, including that of the visual arts, literature and ceremony.[9] Only by bringing a consciousness of diplomatic agency to bear on other areas of cultural and political practice, would scholars be able to expand their investigations beyond the national histories that continue to dominate the research of early modern diplomacy. For this reason, the major distinction between the traditional and 'new' diplomatic history is that the latter centres less on state politics, wars, treaties and the 'great powers' of Europe, and instead explores premodern diplomacy through the perspectives of social, cultural, intellectual, literary, material and art history amongst others.[10] While incorporating such perspectives into the study of early modern foreign relations and diplomatic practice may not be as 'new' as advocated by Watkins, recent scholarships has amplified the issues that were previously only implied. This includes the sense of the transnationality of diplomatic developments and a reminder, as shown by Catherine Fletcher, that diplomatic practice itself was not rigid, but consisted of a series of practices adapted and adjusted to circumstances.[11] The following analysis is not intended to be an extensive evaluation of all the shifts and developments within the study of diplomatic history; the aim is to highlight key areas of development within the methodology and subject matter that is pertinent to the themes examined within this thesis.

One of the seminal publications within the field of diplomatic studies has been Garett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy* (1955), which traces the emergence of permanent, residential and 'modern' diplomacy from the political upheavals of fifteenth-century Italy to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.[12] In contrast to

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[9] Ibid., p. 2; and P. Sharp, 'For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations', *International Studies Review*, 1 (1999), pp. 33-57; idem, *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge, 2009).
[10] K.W. Schweizer and M.J. Schumann, 'The Revitalization of Diplomatic History: Renewed Reflections', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 19 (2008), pp. 149-186.
[11] Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 168-70.
[12] G. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London, 1955), p. 57.

previous research of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians, which was concerned with the actual developments of foreign policies, Mattingly's work focuses on the growth of early modern diplomatic institutions. Its purpose is to 'to know more of the growth of diplomatic institutions, of the uses they were designed for and the assumptions people made about them, and of the spirit which gave them life'.[13] By theorising upon the practical arrangements of diplomatic missions, including ceremonies, processions and immunities accorded to ambassadors, Mattingly's research highlights the developments within contemporary definitions of the office and duties of ambassadors, alongside the gradual regularisation of protocol that was to govern a state's dealings with another foreign ruler. The research contends that the creation of 'modern' or permanent diplomacy was the product of the Italian Renaissance, which, in turn, was responsible for the development of European diplomacy throughout the sixteenth century, though a fully-fledged modern system of diplomacy was only established following the Peace of Westphalia (1648).[14] In this, Mattingly follows an established orthodoxy that recognises Westphalia as a focal point in the inauguration of an international state-system.[15] Initial reception of Mattingly's research was one of commendation, especially as previous scholarship had tended to avoid the subject of the development of European diplomatic institutions before 1648.[16] With the advent of 'new' diplomatic history, however, many of Mattingly's conclusions and assertions have been challenged.

The focus of Mattingly's research is not so much on 'diplomacy' as rather the evolution of the state-system and the developing theories of sovereignty. Mattingly argues that Westphalia marked a focal point in the inauguration of an international state-system that paved the way for new concepts, such as

[13] Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy,* p. 11.
[14] Ibid., p. 55.
[15] Ibid., p. 178.
[16] A good example is D.J. Hill, *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, 3 vols (London, 1921).

territorial sovereignty and the authority of the state to control its borders.[17] Nonetheless, scholars of the 'new' diplomatic history have criticised and challenged Mattingly's chronological framework.[18] Tracey Sowerby, amongst others, points out the problems of Mattingly's neat narrative from the rise of the residential embassies in the fifteenth century to the emergence of new 'state-systems' in 1648.[19] Post-Westphalian peace treaties, as noted by Krasner, often violated the state-system, while the idea that a state was free from foreign intervention was not explicitly articulated until the end of the eighteenth century.[20] Sowerby concludes that Westphalia cannot mark a watershed if 'on the one hand, it merely developed pre-existing conditions' and if 'on the other, it did not articulate the states-system model that it was long believed to'.[21] Scholars, too, have questioned the extent of modernity of Mattingly's seemingly 'modern' diplomacy. Lucien Bély contends that the post-Westphalian world was still a society of princes, in which dynastic considerations of the monarchs often took precedence over the emerging bureaucratic mechanisms and state protocols.[22] The language of friendship used in royal letters and legal, diplomatic documents (including peace treaties) reveals a mental framework in which relationships continued to be conceived in terms of amities and enmities of princes.[23] Even the diplomatic practice of Mattingly's Italian city-states was tied to aristocratic life, in which, as noted by Daniela Frigo, the diplomat had more in

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[17] Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 178.

[18] D. Frigo, 'Introduction', in Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 1-24; R. Fubini, 'Diplomacy and Government in Italian City States of the Fifteenth Century (Florence and Venice)', in ibid., pp. 25-48; A. Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization,* 55 (2001), pp. 251-87.

[19] Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', *History Compass*, 14 (2016), pp. 442-3; Fubini, 'Diplomacy and Government in Italian City States', pp. 25-48.

[20] S.D. Krasner, 'Rethinking the Sovereign State Model', *Review of International Studies,* 27 (2001), pp. 18-24.

[21] Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', p. 443.

[22] L. Bély, *Les Relations Internationales en Europe: XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles* (Paris, 1992), pp. 3-25; idem, *La Société des Princes, XVIe–XVIIIe Siècles* (Paris, 1999).

[23] R. Lesaffer, 'Amicitia in Renaissance Peace and Alliance Treaties (1450-1530)', *Journal of the History of International Law*, 4 (2002), pp. 77-99.

common with the medieval *procurator* than a residential ambassador of the modern world.[24]

Since the publication of *Renaissance Diplomacy* in 1955, scholars of diplomatic history have considerably extended the field of their examination and moved beyond the concerns addressed by Mattingly's research. The most prominent development has been the expansion of the geographical spectrum explored by early modern diplomatic studies, which opposed Mattingly's apparent privileging of Western European states.[25] Daniel Goffman, for instance, suggests that Italian relations with the Ottomans might have shaped the development of residential embassies in fifteenth-century Italy and were influential in the creation of European diplomacy.[26] The limitation of the Eurocentric approach to the study of diplomatic history is best exemplified by M.S. Anderson's *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* (1993). While Anderson's chronological account of the developments of diplomacy in Europe encourages scholars to think about the long-term evolutionary growth of international relations, it omits any discussion of non-European modes of diplomacy. Anderson attributes the absence of such a narrative to the nature of pre-twentieth-century diplomacy, which, he argues, was European in its focus and concept, as well as a monopoly of power.[27] Regrettably, such a strictly traditional view of diplomacy diminishes the originality of Anderson's research, and highlights the problematic privileging of Western European states.

The Eurocentric approach of traditional studies of diplomatic history has had a profound impact on the study of pre-Petrine Muscovy, creating impeding

[24] Frigo, '"Small States" and Diplomacy' in Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy*, pp. 147-76.
[25] As an example see Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (eds), *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2013).
[26] D. Goffman, 'Negotiating with the Renaissance State', in V.H. Aksan and D. Goffman, *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 61-74.
[27] M.S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy, 1450-1919* (London, 1993), pp. 41-102.

assumptions that only in the last couple of years are beginning to be overturned by emerging research. The study of early modern Muscovite diplomacy continues to be dominated by the central question of if, and where, it fits within the early modern European state-system and mode of diplomatic practice. As summarised by Norman Davies, for more than 500 years 'the cardinal problem in defining Europe has centred on the inclusion or exclusion of [Muscovy]'.[28] Unlike England or France, Muscovy is often perceived as geopolitically isolated, economically impoverished, politically insignificant and despotic, while its diplomacy is traditionally classified as oriental, obscure and ritualistic.[29] By approaching Muscovite diplomacy from the perspective of the state-systems scholars, including Anderson, note that the diplomacy of Eastern Europe is of little scholarly interest as it lagged behind, while the perceived otherness of Muscovite diplomacy placed it into a position of a negligible outsider within the scope of European diplomacy.[30] Within this framework of reference, the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725) is credited with the introduction of a radical cultural revolution and a new political ethos modelled upon a Western European archetype.[31] Hence, the study of Muscovite diplomacy and foreign relations often begins with Peter the Great.[32] In his debut monograph, *Russia and Courtly Europe* (2016), Jan Hennings addresses the obstacles and limitations imposed by the Eurocentric perspective towards the study of early modern Muscovite

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[28] N. Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford, 1996), p. 10.

[29] See M.S. Anderson, 'English Views of Russia in the 17th Century', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 33 (1954), pp. 140-60; E.V. Anisimov, 'The Imperial Heritage of Peter the Great in the Foreign Policy of his Early Successors', in H. Ragsdale and V.N. Ponomarev (eds), *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 21-35; A.L. Khodarkovsky, *Russkoe Gosudarstvo v Sisteme Mezhdunarodnykh Otnoshenii Kontsa XV- nachala XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1980).

[30] Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, p. 55; A. Watson, 'Russia and the European States-System', in H. Bull and A. Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 61-74.

[31] H.M. Scott, 'Russia as a European Great Power', in R.P. Bartlett and J.M. Hartley (eds), *Russia in the Age of Enlightenment: Essays in Honour of Isabel de Madariaga* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 7-39; J. Black, 'Russia's Rise as a European Power, 1650-1750', *History Today,* 36 (1986), pp. 21-8.

[32] O.G. Agreeva, *Diplomaticheskii Tseremonial Imperatorskoi Rossii*. *XVIII vek* (Moscow, 2012); H.M. Scott, 'Diplomatic Culture in Old Regime Europe', in Scott and B. Simms (eds), *Cultures of Power in Europe During the Long Eighteenth Century: Essays in Honour of T.C.W. Blanning* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58-85.

diplomacy, though Hennings, too, is predominantly concerned with Petrine diplomacy. Hennings notes that by assessing Muscovite diplomacy from the perspective of modern state rationality, which attributes the label of a 'great' power based on economic and military capability, it is very convenient to contextualise Muscovy within the discourse of barbarism and avoid the question of its place and role within early modern foreign relations.[33] Even the diplomacy of Peter the Great is often labelled by scholars as being 'primitive' and 'incompatible' with that of his 'modern' European counterparts.[34] Hennings advocates that rather than asking the question of how and where Muscovy fits in into the European state-systems, scholars should instead seek its place within the early modern diplomacy of *type ancien*; Hennings approaches this question from the perspective of diplomatic ceremonial and the discourse of honour and rank.[35] In agreement with Henning's observations, this thesis aims to better understand the tsars' place in early modern international relations by exploring pre-Petrine Muscovite diplomacy through the mechanics and language of the diplomatic gift-exchange, using the Anglo-Muscovite example as a case study.

The attention scholars are giving to marginalised geographical areas, like Muscovy, are mirrored in the growing scholarly interest in the activities and networks of marginal diplomatic actors, including envoys, ambassadors, intelligence agents and translators. Catherine Fletcher's study of the career of Henry VIII's Italian ambassador, Gregorio Casali, for instance, encourages scholars to reflect upon the simulation, dissimulation, and even occasional manipulation of an ambassador's formal and private persona, his methods of collecting and dispersing information, the significance of his social networks and personal connections, and his appropriation of hospitality, splendour and gift-

[33] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe,* p. 33.
[34] E. Kobzareva, 'Vestfal'skaia Mirnaia Sistema i Rossiia', *Otechestvennaia Istoriia*, 4 (1999), p. 147.
[35] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, pp. 34-5.

giving in fulfilment of his duties.[36] Meanwhile, Levin's research on Spanish ambassadors addresses the interpersonal and linguistic skills of individual ambassadors and their ability to adapt to the social and cultural world of the courts and princes to which they were sent.[37] In addition, scholars have ventured into the study of different social types of diplomatic representatives, including merchants and clerics, as well as agents and spies.[38] The two edited collections by Marika Keblusek for example, offer informative case studies of agents amongst early modern diplomats, merchants and artists.[39] The central theme of the volumes is the emphasis that 'agency' was a function rather than a profession, as Keblusek contends that all early modern agents were double, triple or even quadruple agents by nature due to the multiple functions they were expected to perform whilst walking a fine line between the interests and, often conflicting, demands of their patrons.[40] In particular, Keblusek notes the importance of merchants, which she points out, should not only be appreciated in their role as traders, but also as cultural intermediaries and transmitters of news.[41] The Anglo-Muscovite relationship offers a great, if still rather unexplored, example of the centrality of Muscovy Company agents. The merchants' extensive knowledge of Muscovite politics, diplomatic customs and ceremonial ensured that they were often employed in either advisory or diplomatic capacity by the English Crown. Individuals like Anthony Jenkinson and John Merrick can be found advising Elizabeth and James not only on the course

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[36] C. Fletcher, *Our Man in Rome: Henry VIII and his Italian Ambassador* (London, 2012); eadem, *The Divorce of Henry VIII: The Untold Story from Inside the Vatican* (New York, 2012).
[37] See M.J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (New York, 2005).
[38] See Birkenholz, 'Merchant-Kings and Lords of the World', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, pp. 147-65; D.S. Gehring (ed.), *Diplomatic Intelligence on the Holy Roman Empire and Denmark during the Reigns of Elizabeth I and James VI: Three Treatises* (Cambridge, 2016).
[39] M. Keblusek and B. Noldus (eds), *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe* (Hilversum, 2006); M. Keblusek and B. Noldus (eds), *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2011).
[40] Keblusek, 'Introduction', in Keblusek and Noldus (eds), *Double Agents*, p. 7.
[41] Keblusek, 'Mercator Sapiens: Merchants as Cultural Entrepreneurs', in ibid. pp. 95-110.

of Anglo-Muscovite relations but on which gifts might be best received by the Tsars.[42] Although this thesis is not set to explore the role of Muscovy Company agents within the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic relationship, the numerous references to the agents and their actions within the exchange of gifts and letters emphasise their importance within the relationship, which merits future research.

Understanding diplomacy as a socio-political activity has brought further attention to the role of women, though the question of women's involvement in early modern diplomacy still poses a methodological problem. Women were rarely mentioned within the diplomatic correspondence (unless they were directly involved in foreign relations), though Catherine Fletcher speculates whether the anonymous informers mentioned by diplomats in their correspondence might have referred to wives, daughters and mistresses.[43] Still, the majority of research tends to investigate the role of royal women and those whose dynastic marriages were a matter of political concern.[44] Nonetheless, scholars have begun to address the role of women in diplomacy using the insights gained from gender studies, noting that although women were excluded from formal diplomacy, they were still able to informally participate in and contribute to the diplomatic processes.[45] Ambassadors' wives, mistresses, courtesans and female courtiers could act as intermediaries and informal facilitators of political businesses, and on some occasions, as shown by Nadine Akkerman, the ambassador and his wife acted as a diplomatic working couple.[46]

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[42] G.M. Phipps, *Sir John Merrick: English Merchant Diplomat in Seventeenth Century Russia* (Newtonville, MA, 1983).
[43] Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 97-102.
[44] J.G. Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies* (Sutton, 1992), pp. 94-152; N. Thomas, *The Medici Women: Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 124-63.
[45] See J. Daybell and S. Norrhem (eds), *Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400-1800* (London and New York, 2016), pp. 3-25.
[46] N. Akkerman, 'The Postmistress, The Diplomat, and a Black Chamber?: Alexandrine of Taxis, Sir Balthazar Gerbier and the Power of Postal Control', in R. Adams and R. Cox (eds), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 172-88; L.O. Santaliestra, 'Lady Anne Fanshawe,

While this thesis is not able to on the role of women in Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, it does (to an extent) address the question of gender, in this instance that of Queen Elizabeth and the potential influence it might have had upon the selection of gifts that were presented on behalf of the Queen. Unfortunately, due to the Muscovite tradition of forbidding royal women direct participation in international and domestic politics, exploring the role of the Tsarinas within the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange is impeded by several methodological obstacles, including the lack of source material.[47]

The scholarship of 'new' diplomatic history also demonstrates an increased interest in the study of symbolic communication, ritual, protocol and spatial hierarchies, following Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger's introduction of the concept of 'symbolic communication'.[48] Current research continues to explore the ways in which ceremony and rituals enabled sovereigns to negotiate international hierarchies.[49] Hennings, for instance, demonstrates how ambassadors' disputes over precedence became a means by which European and Muscovite rulers jostled for position in the international hierarchy of princely honour.[50] Meanwhile, the intricacies of royal audiences offer vital insights into the practice of court ceremony; who stood, or under certain circumstances sat, at what distance from the monarch? Who had to wait for whom and for how long? These were the means by which ambassadors represented the relative status and

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Ambassadress of England at the Court of Madrid (1664–1666)', in G. Sluga and C. James (eds), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500* (London, 2016), pp. 68–85.

[47] A notable exception appears to have been Feodor I's wife, Irina Godunova, who is mentioned several times by English ambassadors to have been present during the diplomatic audiences. Regrettably, no notable scholarly work to date has addressed Irina's political role in the reign of her husband, beyond a general biographical overview of her life: I.G. Solodkin, 'Tsaritsa Irina (Aleksandra) Fedorovna', *Voprosy Istorii*, 12 (2013), pp. 133-9.

[48] B. Stollberg-Rillinger, 'Zeremoniell, Ritual, Symbol, Neue Forschungen zur Symbolischen Kommunikation in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 27 (2000), pp. 389-405.

[49] W. Roosen, 'Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach', *Journal of Modern History*, 52 (1980), pp. 452-76.

[50] J. Hennings, 'The Failed Gift: Ceremony and Gift-Giving in Anglo-Russian Relations (1662-1664)', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, pp. 237-53.

power of their sovereigns, whilst the host nation appropriated ceremonies as demonstrations of its own magnificence.[51] In contrast, there has been less historical scholarship on the role of language, literature and translation within the diplomatic context. Tracey Sowerby notes that despite the role of diplomats as collectors, there is sparse scholarship on the ambassadors' role as bibliophiles and bibliographers.[52] Yet, the growing willingness of scholars to explore different types of literature (including travel narratives) from a historicist perspective has contributed to the emergence of several notable works over the past couple of years. This includes Felicity Stout's monograph on the ambassadorial experiences and writings of Giles Fletcher the Elder that explores the repercussions of theorising upon tyrannical governments through the image of Muscovy to entice parallels with Elizabethan England.[53] Additionally, there has been a renewed interest in travel literature and an expansion within translation studies, both of which have begun to incorporate a wider corpus of material (including diplomatic reports and correspondence) and apply a historicist approach to the study of literary texts.[54]

Most pertinently, scholars of diplomatic history have begun to address the material aspects of early modern embassies, and the research is gradually moving beyond the concerns of gifts and gift-giving. Alongside the focus on gifts, current research has brought attention to the materiality of diplomatic documents, the significance of architecture and furnishing of diplomatic spaces,

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[51] R. Anderson, 'Marginal Diplomatic Spaces During the Jacobean Era, 1603-25', in N. Rivere de Carles (ed.), *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power: The Making of Peace* (London, 2016), pp. 163-82.

[52] The exception to this is Sowerby's own article: '"All our books do be sent into other countreys and translated": Henrician Polemic in Its International Context', *English Historical Review,* 121 (2006), pp. 1271-99.

[53] F. J. Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth* (Manchester, 2015).

[54] This includes, but is by no means limited to, A. Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation: Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England* (Newark, NJ, 2008); D. Crey and C. Jowitt (eds), *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2012); M. Belle and B.M. Hosington (eds), *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2017).

as well as the diplomats' role as collectors and patrons of arts.[55] For example, the recent volume of essays edited by Harriet Rudolph notes that, although material culture was always an important component of premodern diplomacy, the multi-sensual nature of diplomatic communication still remains sparsely investigated by historians.[56] She observes that only a few monographs deal with material culture in its entirety. This includes Helen Jacobsen's *The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat* (2011), which explores not only the ways in which an embassy was set up, from the selection of appropriate accommodation to the symbolic representations of the Crown, but offers five case studies of English ambassadors and their role as consumers and commissioners of luxury commodities and art.[57] While the state of research on gifts is discussed at length below, it is worth noting that scholars have begun to pay greater attention to the variety of ways in which visual and material culture were integral to early modern diplomatic practice.[58] By expanding the focus onto the intellectual and material world of both European and non-European embassies, current scholarship is unearthing a more vivid picture of premodern diplomatic interactions.

2. Anglo-Muscovite Diplomacy

Scholarly research on Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy remains significantly restricted in its approach and methodology, selection of its source material and the scope

[55] H. Jacobsen, *Gilded Interiors: Parisian Luxury and the Influence of Rome, 1770-1790* (London, 2017); S. Thurley, 'Architecture and Diplomacy: Greenwich Palace under the Stuarts', *The Court Historian*, 11 (2006), pp. 125-33.

[56] H. Rudolph, 'Entangled Objects and Hybrid Practices? Towards a New Approach to the Cultural History of Diplomacy' in H. Rudolph and G. Metzig (eds), *Material Culture in Modern Diplomacy From the 15th to the 20th Century* (Berlin, 2016), p. 1; H. Rudolph, 'The Material Culture of Diplomacy. The Impact of Objects on the Dynamics of Habsburg-Ottoman Negotiations at the Sublime Porte (1530-1650)', in H. Rudolph, G. Barth-Scalmani and C. Steppan (eds), *Politische Kommunikation Wischen Imperien. Der Iplomatische Aktionsraum Südost- und Osteuropa* (Innsbruck, 2013), pp. 211-37.

[57] H. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power: The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat, 1660-1714* (Oxford, 2012).

[58] N. Um and L.R. Clark, 'Introduction: The Art of Embassy: Situating Objects and Images in the Early Modern Diplomatic Encounter', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 20 (2016), pp. 1-16.

of its subject matter. The majority of literature approaches the subject as either a socio-economic study of the composition and activities of the merchants of the English Muscovy Company or from the perspective of traditional diplomatic history that is concerned with the political and economic benefits (or lack thereof) that the two states derived from the interaction. The influence of the Rankean classification of states is also evident in the tendency of the scholarship to portray early modern Muscovy as barbaric and despotic, in contrast to the enlightened and sophisticated England.[59] Thus, failures within diplomatic negotiations or clashes between English and Muscovite officials and diplomatic representatives are frequently attributed to the political incompatibility and clash of cultures rather than asymmetric political interests. It should be noted that whilst Anglophone research has begun to incorporate the inter-disciplinary methodologies of 'new' diplomatic history, Russian scholarship remains principally traditional in its methodological approach.[60]

The commencement of scholarly interest in Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic interactions can be attributed to the research of eminent nineteenth-century academics including Edward Bond, Iosif (Joseph) Hamel and Yurii (George) Tolstoi, though interest in recording and publishing a historical narrative of diplomatic interactions between the two states can be found as early as the 1580s, most notably in Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations* (first published in 1589) and later in Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1625).[61]

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[59] In her article on Anglo-Muscovite correspondence, Anna Bertolet brings attention to the rude, vehement and 'medieval' letters of the Muscovites and the cultured letters of the English, as an example of Anglo-Muscovite incompatibility: A.R. Bertolet, 'The Tsar and the Queen: "You Speak a Language That I Understand Not"', in C. Beem (ed.), *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 101-23.

[60] Notable exceptions include L.A. Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia* (Moscow, 1988); idem, *Put' Posla: Russkii Posol'skii Obychai. Obikhod. Etiket. Tseremonial. Konets XV- Pervaia Polovina XVII vv.* (St. Petersburg, 2007); A.B. Kobak and O.L. Kuvaldina (eds), *Rossiia- Velikobritaniia: Piat' Vekov Kul'turnykh Sviazei* (St. Petersburg, 2015).

[61] J. Hamel (ed.), *England and Russia* (London, 1854); E.D. Morgan and C.H. Coote (eds), *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, 2 vols (London, 1886); R. Hakluyt, *PN*, 1; S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2. Additionally, see Russian publications: V.O. Kliuchevskii (ed.), *Skazania*

The principal aim of Bond's, Hamel's and Tolstoi's research was to advance knowledge of Anglo-Muscovite interactions by publishing scholarly editions of primary and archival material of voyages, travels, state documents and royal letters. As an example, Bond's *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (1856) comprises of two accounts, Jerome Horsey's *Travels* and Giles Fletcher's treatise *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, which were intended to provide the reader with 'a picture of the condition of Russia [Muscovy] at the close of the reign of Ivan [IV]'.[62] Meanwhile, Tolstoi's *The First Forty Years* (1875) assembles a collection of English and Muscovite royal correspondence from British and Russian archives and became a staple reference work for all subsequent research.[63] In contrast, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the research of Inna Lubimenko was no longer concerned with only producing anthologies of primary material but began to draw conclusions about the nature and purpose of the relationship from the perspective of both English and Muscovite rulers.[64] According to Lubimenko, relations between English and Muscovite sovereigns (notably Elizabeth and Ivan) led to no visible historical (or rather political) results, but the activities of English merchants were credited with contributing towards Muscovite political expansion and social development.[65]

For several decades Lubimenko remained the sole authority on the history of Anglo-Muscovite relations, though by the mid-twentieth century her conclusions encouraged subsequent scholars to approach the subject from the perspective of

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Inostrantsev o Moskovskom Gosudarstve (Moscow, 1866); S.M. Seredonin (ed.), *Izvestiia Anglichan o Rossii XVI veka* (Moscow, 1884). Transcriptions of diplomatic documents produced by the *Posol'skii Prikaz* relating to Anglo-Muscovite interactions can be found in *Sbornik,* ed. by K.N. Bestuzhev-Riumin, 38 (St. Petersburg, 1883).

[62] E.A. Bond (ed.), *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1856), p. ii.

[63] Y. Tolstoi (ed.), The *First Forty Years* (St. Petersburg, 1875).

[64] I.I. Lubimenko's research includes, but is by no means limited to: Lubimenko, 'Angliiskaia Torgovaia Kompaniia v Rossii v XVI veke', *Istoricheskoe Obozrenie*, 16 (1911), pp. 1-23; eadem, 'Letters Illustrating the Relations of England and Russia in the Seventeenth Century', *The English Historical Review,* 32 (1917), pp. 91-103.

[65] Lubimenko, 'The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars', *The American Historical Review* 19 (1914), p. 542.

English mercantile activities rather than diplomatic embassies. The most notable of such research is T.S. Willan's *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555* and *The Early History of the Russian Company* (1956).[66] The first, as described by D.C. Coleman, was 'not about Russia [Muscovy] and it is only to a limited extent about Anglo-Russian commercial relations'.[67] In *The Muscovy Merchants* Willan, a professor of economic history at the University of Manchester, was interested in tracing the origins, connections and activities of the founding members of the Muscovy Company rather than examine Anglo-Muscovite trade. His subsequent book, *The Early History of the Russian Company*, however, provides not only a comprehensive portrayal of the Company's activities in both England and Muscovy, but also discusses its role as a diplomatic agent between the two states.[68] Within two years of Willan's monograph, M.S. Anderson offered his own portrayal of Anglo-Muscovite interaction from the vantage point of diplomatic history, though the first part of the book is dedicated to the discussion of English perceptions of the Muscovites.[69] Unsurprisingly, four-fifths of Anderson's book is concerned with eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while the discussion of pre-Petrine Anglo-Muscovite relations is limited to the examination of commercial activities since Muscovy was, as Anderson argues, 'too remote to be of real political importance to England'.[70]

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s the study of Anglo-Muscovite interaction was driven by American scholars, as the result of the Cold War fascinations with and fears of Russia. Henry Huttenbach and S.H. Baron were instrumental in augmenting the previous anthologies of nineteenth-century historians, identifying new archival material (principally held in the British archives), amending the earlier

[66] T.S. Willan, *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555* (Manchester, 1953); idem, *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553-1603* (Manchester, 1956).
[67] D.C. Coleman, 'Review of *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555* by T.S. Willan', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 32 (1954), p. 569.
[68] Willan, *The Early History of the Russia Company*, pp. 95-120.
[69] M.S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553-1815* (London, 1958).
[70] Ibid., p. 30.

misidentification of documents and offering a more comprehensive picture of individual English embassies based on the examination of the new source material.[71] Additionally, there was and continues to be an increased interest in examining the perceptions and images of Muscovy and its people as expressed by, but not limited to, European travel literature. This includes publications of several edited volumes of travel accounts, including those of Lloyd Berry, Robert Crummey, Marshal Poe and Daryl Palmer, but is best exemplified by the lifelong effort of Anthony Cross, whose latest book, *In the Lands of the Romanovs* (2014), introduces no less than 1243 texts on European perceptions of Muscovy (mostly by Englishmen) from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.[72] Notably, in his article on early modern travel literature, C. J. Halperin warns historians not to forget to put subjective generalisations of travellers into a broader context and realise that while early modern European travellers described Muscovy as different from their own nations, ultimately they were projecting the perceptions and problems of their own states onto the Muscovite reality.[73] This theme is dealt with at length by Felicity Stout in her research on the writings of Giles Fletcher and the ways in which Fletcher wrote about Muscovy but was actually projecting his concerns about the Elizabethan

[71] Henry Huttenbach's research on the identification of new archival material relating to Elizabeth's relations with Ivan is the finest example of this development: H.R. Huttenbach, 'New Archival Material on the Anglo-Russian Treaty of Queen Elizabeth and Tsar Ivan IV', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 49 (1971), pp. 535-49; idem, 'The Search for and Discovery of New Archival Materials for Ambassador Jenkinson's Mission to Muscovy in 1571-72: Four Letters by Queen Elizabeth I to Tsar Ivan IV', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 6 (1972), pp. 416-36; idem, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy. Reconstructed from Unpublished Sources', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 9 (1975), pp. 179-203; S.H. Baron, 'A Guide to Published and Unpublished Documents on Anglo-Russian Relations in the Sixteenth Century in British Archives', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 11 (1977), pp. 354-87; J.M. Hartley, *Guide to Documents and Manuscripts in the United Kingdom Relating to Russia and the Soviet Union* (London, 1987).

[72] This includes works such as L.E. Berry ad R.O. Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyages* (Madison, WI, 1968); F. Wilson, *Muscovy: Russia Through Foreign Eyes, 1553-1900* (London, 1970); A. Cross (ed.), *Russia Under Western Eyes, 1517-1825* (London, 1971); idem, *In the Lands of the Romanovs. An Annotated Bibliography of First-Hand English-Language Accounts of the Russian Empire, 1613-1917* (Cambridge, 2014); M. Poe (ed.), *Foreign Descriptions of Muscovy: An Analytic Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources* (Columbus, OH, 1995); idem, *A People Born to Slavery: Russia in the Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476-1748* (New York and London, 2000).

[73] C.J. Halperin, 'Sixteenth-Century Travel Accounts to Muscovy: A Methodological Excursus', *The Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 6 (1975), pp. 110-1.

Commonwealth.[74] While the strength of approaching Anglo-Muscovite interactions through travel writing lies in its broad scope, at times scholars tend to homogenise Western European accounts as all deriving from a similar framework of reference based on the Aristotelian definition of despotism. The writings of early modern Europeans also often reinforce and perpetuate the image of Muscovy as 'a slave-state where despotic superstition ruled'.[75]

By the last decade of the twentieth century, the focus of emerging research, including Maria Unkovskaya's doctoral thesis, shifted onto the role of international politics and its influence upon Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy.[76] Unkovskaya, in particular, emphasises the wider context of Muscovite foreign policy in her examination of Anglo-Muscovite relations in the period of 1580 to 1696.[77] Her thesis also incorporates source material from the Russian Archives, which have previously been unavailable to British and American historians, thereby filling a substantial gap in the literature. Similarly, Maija Jansson's and Nikolai Rogozhin's edited account of the 1613 embassy of Alexis Ivanovich Ziuzin to London contextualises the visit within broader English and Muscovite international and political issues.[78] More recently, the joint research of Dukes, Herd and Kotilaine produced an insightful volume that explores the political, economic and military aspects of the relations between the early Stuarts and the

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[74] Stout, *Exploring Russia*, p.147-88. There is a substantial historiography that explores the portrayal of Muscovy within contemporary European literary works, most notably, L.E. Berry, 'Richard Hakluyt and Turberville's Poems on Russia', *Bibliographical Society of America*, 61 (1967), pp. 350-1; D.W. Palmer, *Writing Russia in the Age of Shakespeare* (Aldershot, 2004).

[75] S.H. Baron, 'European Images of Muscovy', *History Today*, 36 (1986), pp. 17-22. Notably, the 36th volume of *History Today* had a five-article series on 'Russia and the West', including L. Hughes' article on the influence of Western European ideas on Muscovite architecture: L. Hughes, 'The West Comes to Russian Architecture', *History Today, 36* (1986), pp. 27-34.

[76] See S.H. Baron, 'Fletcher's Mission to Moscow and the Anthony Marsh affair', *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte,* 46 (1991), pp. 107-30.

[77] M.V. Unkovskaya, 'Anglo-Russian Diplomatic Relations, 1580-1696' (unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1992).

[78] M. Jansson and N. Rogozhin (eds), *England and the North: the Russian Embassy of 1613-14* (Philadelphia, PA, 1994).

Romanovs, a relationship which, unlike that of Elizabeth and Ivan, remains greatly understudied.[79]

Despite the substantial developments within the field of 'new' diplomatic history, in the last eight years the most important research to emerge within the study of early modern Muscovite diplomatic interaction with Europe, including its relations with England, is the previously mentioned *Russia and Courtly Europe* by Jan Hennings.[80] In addressing the question of Muscovite integration into the European state-system and mode of diplomacy, Hennings overturns previous assumptions that the integration began only in the eighteenth century, and instead notes that its foundations were created by the ambitions of Alexis Romanov (1645-76) and later reformed by his son Peter the Great.[81] Hennings examines the administrative evolution of the Muscovite *Posol'skii Prikaz* (Ambassadorial Chancellery) under Alexis and Peter, and dismisses the suggestion that Muscovite diplomacy was handicapped by its ignorance of European languages, showing that from the mid-seventeenth century there were at least eighty-four translators and 185 interpreters working in the *Prikaz*.[82] The central theme of the monograph, however, is the study of Muscovite ceremony and protocol. Building on the methodology of the 'Münster School', which applies the insights of anthropology to the historicist study of rituals and symbols, Hennings argues that diplomacy evolved within a 'transcultural political space of a shared pool of ceremonial norms', into which Muscovy was gradually

[79] P. Dukes, G.P. Herd and J. Kotilaine (eds), *Stuarts and Romanovs: The Rise and Fall of a Special Relationship* (Dundee, 2009). In similarity to the imbalance discussed above, there is a huge disproportion between the amount of research that examines international relations between Elizabeth I and Ivan the Terrible and that which looks at the subsequent periods. The preference does not appear to have been the result of the availability of surviving source material, as arguably the amount of documents relating to Anglo-Muscovite interaction post-Ivan's reign is higher than that of the first forty years. Possibly Ivan's charismatic character, as well as the significance of the 'discovery' of Muscovy for the English state, might serve as explanations.
[80] Less prominent research that deals with Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy in a more minimalist fashion includes the aforementioned studies by Rayne Allinson, Maija Jansson and Felicity Stout.
[81] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, pp. 69-111.
[82] Ibid., p. 76.

integrated during the period under study.[83] He discourages historians from approaching the subject of early modern diplomacy from the perspective of rival national traditions and instead contends that diplomacy should be understood as a continuous evolution of interactions between royal courts. Although Hennings' monograph offers an invaluable scholarly contribution to the study of Muscovite diplomatic interaction, chronologically the research tends to gravitate towards the reign of Peter the Great, while the discussion of Alexis' reign is openly intended to serve as a teleological precursor for the discussion of Peter's reforms. As a result, there still remain significant lacunae in the study of the Muscovite diplomacy and interactions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This thesis posits that, rather than initiating a radical transformation of traditional practices, the foundations of the Petrine reforms were laid by a crucially important – and habitually overlooked – transitional period that subtly blended the old and the new. In other words, it is the reigns of pre-Petrine Tsars, especially that of Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov, that should be investigated for evidence of the development of Muscovy's singular, yet integrated, diplomatic practice in relation to European diplomacy. In the meantime, Muscovy's interactions with England provide a fertile ground for such an examination.

3. Gifts and Gift-exchange

Over the past hundred years a significant number of sociological and anthropological studies have explored the concept and practice of giving and exchanging gifts within the human society. Until recently, it was assumed that the study of gifts was best left to cultural and social anthropologists rather than historians, though in the last two decades a substantial amount of scholars have begun to incorporate an examination of gifts and gift-giving into the history of

[83] Ibid., p. 247.

diplomacy, material culture, gender and cross-cultural interactions.[84] The scope of emerging research ranges from the study of protocols and codes of the gift-exchange in diplomatic settings to the meaning of hospitality and charity, as well as the role of gifts in patron-client relations and the transmissions of objects and ideas across cultural boundaries.[85] The following discussion is an overview of the published material relating to the subject of gift-giving in early modern diplomacy; it examines the influence of anthropological research, and the applicability of its methodology and insights to the historicist study of gifts in diplomatic history.

Almost every publication concerned with the study of gifts engages with the work of the eminent French sociologist Marcel Mauss and his study of the foundation of social theories of reciprocity and gift-exchange as presented in his 1925 essay, *Essai sur le don*.[86] The essay examines the ways in which a reciprocal exchange of objects between groups constructed individual and collective relationships between humans in 'archaic' societies.[87] Mauss contends that the reciprocal exchange is centred on the obligations to give, to receive and to reciprocate, though he notes that this practice operated not only between individuals but collectively, as the 'gift' pervades all aspects of the human society. Based on these assumptions, Mauss argues that the foundations of human society were based on the collective, rather than individual, exchange practices. Furthermore, Mauss' concept of 'gift-exchange' was distinct from an exchange of everyday material objects or commodities, since the latter

[84] For an excellent overview of published material on gifts in diplomacy see G. Walton, 'Ambassadorial Gifts: An Overview of Published Material', *Court Historian*, 14 (2009), pp. 189-98.
[85] C. Bischoff, 'Complicated Exchanges: the Handling of Authorised and Unauthorised Gifts', *Court Historian*, 14 (2009), pp. 133-48; G. c and M.A. Boitsov (eds), *Na Iazyke Darov: Pravila Simvolicheskoi Kommunikatsii v Evrope, 1000-1700 gg.* (Moscow, 2016).
[86] The essay was originally published in the *L'Année Sociologique* in 1925 and then republished in 1950. It was subsequently translated into English in 1954, though this thesis uses the 1990 translation by W.D. Hall: M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London, 1990).
[87] Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 25-7.

constructed no social or emotional bonds between the giver and the receiver.[88] Notably, later anthropological interpretations challenged Mauss' assumptions and proposed a blurred rhetorical and substantive boundary between these two forms of exchange. Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen questioned whether the all-embracing category of the 'gift' is a useful framework, and advocated an examination of gifts through the terms in which they were named, registered and presented.[89] Often the label applied to a gift, rather than the gift itself, distinguished between proper and illicit gifts. Groebner, for instance, argued that the emergence of the term *miet* in fourteenth-century Germany was 'the key term for forbidden gifts to officials'.[90] In his essay, Mauss observes that gifts or rather the 'spirit' of the gift (in other words, its intention) had to appear disinterested and free, but at the same time this freedom was deceptive as each gift inevitably created an expectation of reciprocity. Hence, the real purpose of the 'gift' was to embody both of these aspects simultaneously.[91] Despite the apparent duplicitous nature of gifts, Mauss saw the gift-exchange as, for the most part, a series of discontinuous acts of generosity. For Mauss, gifts were given to attain moral ends.[92] Successive anthropological research challenged Mauss' conclusions and offered alternative methodological frameworks. Claude Lévi-Strauss, amongst others, critiques Mauss' 'phenomenological' approach and argues that it was the exchange, as a constructed object, that was the phenomenon and not individual operations into which it was broken down by the society.[93] The cycle of reciprocity was,

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[88] Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 48.

[89] V. Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts: Presents and Politics at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. P.E. Selwyn (Philadelphia, PA, 2002); G. Algazi, 'Doing Things with Gifts', in G. Algazi, V. Groebner and B. Jussen (eds), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen, 2003), pp. 129-40; B. Jussen, 'Religious Discourses of the Gift in the Middle Ages: Semantic Evidences (Second to Twelfth Centuries)', in Algazi et al., *Negotiating the Gift*, p. 173-92.

[90] V. Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, pp. 71-2.

[91] Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 41.

[92] Mauss's view on the circulation of gifts have been compared by Natalie Zemon Davis to the image of the Three Graces: N. Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 18-21.

[93] C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. C. Jacobson and B. Grundfest Schoepf (New York, 1963), pp. 3-15.

therefore, the unconscious principle of an obligation to give, to receive and give in return, and the gift presupposed the counter-gift.

In his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972), Pierre Bourdieu pursues a different perspective to that of Mauss' moral gift-giving by emphasising the presence of self-deception within the exchange, alongside its function to conceal self-interest.[94] In other words, Bourdieu notes that gifts enabled the giver to achieve supremacy over the receiver by keeping them indebted through the favour they were granted in the form of a gift. This is specifically pertinent to Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital (which consists of prestige and renown). He argues that great aristocratic families engaged in conspicuous displays of political power and economic potential, including gift-giving, to accumulate symbolic capital that could then be converted into economic capital. In Bourdieu's case study of Kabylia (Algeria) the accumulation of symbolic capital enabled great families to call upon additional labour at busy times of the year in an exchange for certain services.[95] This exchange, however, was 'intrinsically equivocal, ambiguous' and took place in disguise posing as voluntary assistance.[96] To some extent, Bourdieu's idea of symbolic capital is applicable to the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange. The sovereigns of both states engaged in competitive displays of political power and economic wealth (often expressed through diplomatic gifts) to bolster their international prestige and renown. Disguised within the language of friendship, the English rulers and Muscovite Tsars would then attempt to transform the accumulated symbolic capital into economic or political profit by requesting munitions or charters of mercantile privileges. Yet, unlike Bourdieu's example of patron-client relations, the transformation of 'symbolic capital' within the Anglo-Muscovite context was not as successful.

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[94] P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, 1977), p. 5.
[95] Ibid., p. 179.
[96] Ibid., p. 180.

The insights of the anthropological study of reciprocity and exchange remain influential not only within the field of anthropology but have over the past two decades been applied to the historicist study of gifts and gift-giving. Some scholars have been influenced by the anthropological concept of an apparent fluidity of gift registers, and argue that precision in understanding the context of exchanges is vital.[97] Such an approach does, to some extent, devalue the importance of contemporary social norms, and suggests that gifts were mere tools to be manipulated according to individual interests. In her ethnographic study of giving in sixteenth-century France, Natalie Zemon Davis emphasises the importance of some fixity of meaning. Davis defines the 'gift mode' or 'register' as reference points for contemporaries engaged in giving.[98] The gifts were 'linked together by the categories, and words used to describe them and by virtues and values they were thought to express to the giver and arouse in the recipient'.[99] Felicity Heal also observes that the early modern English gift-exchange was founded upon a 'shared language' and 'a repertoire of gift strategies', whereby traditions and accepted public perceptions determined the nature, quality and quantity of presented gifts.[100] Within an asymmetrical or cross-cultural diplomatic setting, scholars have begun to question the notion of commensurability of gifts, which implies a shared meaning and value of gifts amongst the participants.[101]

The influence of 'new' diplomatic history further stimulates research on the material aspects of early modern diplomacy, in which the study of diplomatic gifts is prominent. Traditionally, the establishment of residential embassies and the regularisation of the diplomatic process were thought to render ostentatious

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[97] G. Algazi, 'Introduction', in Algazi et al., *Negotiating the Gift*, pp. 9-27.
[98] Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, pp. 22-3.
[99] Ibid., p. 22.
[100] Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, pp. 3-30.
[101] G. Riello, '"With Great Pomp and Magnificence"', in Biedermann et al. (eds), *Global Gifts*, pp. 235-65.

displays of gifts less necessary. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century treatises on diplomacy, as shown by Heal, rarely discourse about the nature of gifts.[102] Nevertheless, the early modern world remained a society of princes where personal monarchy required individual expressions of identity, honour and reputation. The royal gift remained the preferred method to convey and transmit these themes and ideas across geographical boundaries. The aims of successful diplomacy were often reinforced by a strategic and competitive exchange of impressive material objects; gifts could be used to promote a sovereign's international image, wealth or magnificence. In her research on gifts of exotic animals and birds, Heal demonstrates how such gifts, rarely given in isolation, became an essential component of the royal self-presentation of the Stuart Kings.[103] Exotic animals and birds asserted royal power, and showcased the geographic range of a ruler's diplomatic network.

In spite of the apparent prominence of gifts within early modern diplomatic interactions, few monographs address the exchange in its entirety; the majority of studies discuss gifts within a broader study of a specific diplomatic relationship or as individual case studies within an edited volume. Heal's recent monograph on early English gift-giving devotes a chapter to the discussion of diplomatic gifts, as does Catherine Fletcher's monograph on diplomatic developments in Renaissance Rome.[104] Meanwhile, the volume edited by Biedermann, Gerritsen and Riello moves beyond Europe and offers ten case studies of exchanges of objects and art in Eurasian political and diplomatic context.[105] Collectively, the research emphasises the role of visual and material

[102] Heal, 'Presenting Noble Beasts', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, p. 188.
[103] Ibid., pp. 189-90.
[104] Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, pp. 149-79; and see eadem, 'Royal Gifts and Gift-Exchange in Sixteenth-Century Anglo-Scottish Politics', in S. Boardman and J. Goodare (eds), *Kings, Lords and Men in Scotland and Britain, 1300-1625: Essays in Honour of Jenny Wormald* (Edinburgh, 2014), pp. 283-300; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 145-67.
[105] Biedermann et al. (eds), *Global Gifts*; also see Part III in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy in Early Modern World*, pp. 185-253.

goods in various diplomatic contexts, while the reconstruction of a biographical narrative of individual gifts highlights their role as reminders and representations of important occasions in the life of a specific dynasty or state.[106] Christina Brauner's research on the exchange of gifts between European trading companies and African rulers, demonstrates how the materiality of exchanged gifts influenced the process of adaptation between the participants.[107] Brauner shows that the gifts of European trading companies conceptualised intercultural diplomacy and, to an extent, integrated the African rulers into European concepts of kingship. For early modern rulers, the display of gifts was an important marker of domestic and international standing and prestige. Birkhenholz's study of Dutch gifts to Shah Abbas II and Aurangzeb points out that the reception of foreign envoys and diplomatic gifts was deliberately appointed to coincide with important dates in the domestic ritual calendar.[108] In Moscow, the reception of English ambassadors was likewise an important, public affair. The ambassadors were led in a procession through the city, accompanied with drums and trumpets, while at the audience with the Tsar each gift was brought in one by one with the Muscovite officials making a solemn announcement of every item that was presented.[109] The royal court was thus a theatre and the presentation of gifts a visual performance, acted out by the ambassador to transmit the intended message of his sovereign.

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[106] The notion that objects have their own biographies was first proposed by Arjun Appadurai. A. Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 3-63; and see J. Ferguson, 'Cultural Exchange: New Developments in the Anthropology of Commodities', *Cultural Anthropology*, 3 (1988), pp. 488-513.

[107] C. Brauner, 'Connecting Things: Trading Companies and Diplomatic Gift-Giving on the Gold and Slave Coasts in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 20 (2016), pp. 402-28.

[108] Birkenholz, 'Merchant-Kings and Lords of the World', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, pp. 150-2.

[109] Prior to the presentation of gifts to the Tsar, these objects were displayed in the antechamber so that foreign diplomats, high-ranking court officials and noblemen could examine and evaluate them: I.A. Zagorodnaia, *Posol'skie Dary Russkim Tsariam* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 187, 190.

A prominent feature of current research on gift-giving is the expansion of the geographical scope of the study beyond European exceptionalism, a notion driven, in part, by the scarcity of global history studies that focus on early modern diplomacy.[110] With the exception of a few studies, the bulk of literature on Anglo-Muscovite gifts approaches the subject from the methodological perspective of material culture.[111] Most of the research, including that of Olga Dmitrieva, Natalia Abramova and Guy Walton, is published in conjunction with major museum exhibitions and focuses on the surviving examples of English gifts of silver-gilt plate, guns and carriages preserved at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow.[112] The gifts feature in various publications created by the Armoury museum itself, including inventory catalogues of the museum's holdings and short monographs focusing on specific objects or exhibits.[113] In general, the research offers an excellent descriptive overview of each surviving object, alongside an explanation of its symbolism, decorative motifs, dating, craftsmanship and a short narrative of its history. Although it often situates the objects and the exhibition within a broader historical context, there is no sustained examination of the mechanics of gift-exchange or the exact role of these objects in contemporary Anglo-Muscovite relations. Thus, Dmitrieva's *Treasures of the Royal Courts* (2013) provides a chapter on Anglo-Muscovite relations, alongside the discussion of Tudor heraldry, merchant-class portraiture and furnishings.[114] Meanwhile, in his analysis of the 1604 carriage, sent by James I as a gift to Tsar Boris Godunov, E. Kogut attributes the selection of this

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[110] A notable exception is S. Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

[111] The exceptions include Hennings' and Jansson's articles on Anglo-Muscovite gifts of the late seventeenth-century. See M. Jansson, 'Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9 (2005), pp. 348-70; Hennings, 'The Failed Gift', in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy*, pp. 237-53.

[112] The most notable of which are: B. Shifman and G. Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars: 1500-1700* (New York, 2001); Dmitrieva and Abramova (eds), *Britannia & Muscovy*.

[113] N.E. Abramova, *The English Silver of the 16th-20th Centuries* (Moscow, 2014); L.P. Kirillova, *Carriages of the 16th-18th Centuries* (Moscow, 2006); I.A. Iablonskaia, *English Firearms of the 17th-19th Centuries* (Moscow 2006).

[114] O. Dmitrieva and T. Murdoch (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars* (London, 2013).

unique gift to its suitability as a gift from one monarch to another, as well as the carriage's practical implication; Godunov suffered from gout and could have used the carriage as an alternative means of transportation.[115] Julian Munby too made only a brief reference to the imagery of the coach's carved wooden panels and its evocation of shared Christian ideals between Moscow and London.[116] Neither of the publications discusses at length the apparent interconnection between the gift and the aims and outcomes of the embassy. An important connection between gifts and the aims of the English and Muscovite state has thus been overlooked, and the resulting conclusion undermines the political function of gifts.

Furthermore, while approaching gifts from a perspective of material culture can offer valuable insights, scholars should exercise caution when examining objects and artefacts for historical and cultural meaning. Objects are often separated from their historical contexts to provide coherence to exhibitions and galleries and can fall victim to the contemporary choice of what we wish to display.[117] Physical evidence is often ambiguous; many of the diplomatic gifts do not survive in their physical form, either due to natural degradation or destruction. To this effect, if many objects do not survive, or can only be reconstructed from a visual reference, to what extent can scholars make justifiable assumptions about their use or meaning? Similarly, while complementary evidence of written and visual sources allows scholars to establish the existence and financial value of an object, they frequently do not reveal its contemporary personal, ideological

[115] E.V. Kogut, *Angliiskaia Kareta Tsaria Borisa Godunova* (Moscow, 2015), p. 12.
[116] Julian Munby, 'The Moscow Coach: A Rich Chariot, One Parcell of the Great Present', in Dmitrieva and Murdoch (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Court*, p. 165.
[117] The 2013 'Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars' exhibition at the V&A in London provides a useful case-study. While focusing on the golden age of relations between England and Muscovy, it juxtaposed English gifts of silver-gilt plate (on loan from the Kremlin Armoury) with a variety of other objects (such as armour, swords, jewellery and heraldic beasts on loan from the Tower of London and other repositories), which had no direct connection to Anglo-Muscovite relations but were intended to re-create the splendour of Elizabethan and Stuart courtly life. 'Exhibition: Treasures of the Royal Court', http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/treasures-of-the-royal-courts/ [accessed 15 November 2017].

or political significance.[118] Equally, if contemporaries did not self-consciously recognise the meaning of an object and did not record it, scholars are likely to miss an important piece of information. The issue of our own response to, and relationship with, historical artefacts is another important question to consider. Bearing in mind these methodological impediments, this thesis proposes to go beyond the conventional physical examination of the surviving English diplomatic gifts sent to the Tsars. By examining both the surviving and the recorded gifts through the framework of intentionality-transmission-reception, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of their multi-layered role and purpose.

4. Royal Letters

Most of the academic scholarship on premodern diplomacy addresses the activities of ambassadors, envoys and agents, and overlooks the extent to which these activities were empowered by royal letters. The exclusion of royal letters as a subject matter is often justified on the basis that direct communication between monarchs was made redundant by the appointment of ambassadors, especially following the introduction of residential embassies.[119] Rayne Allinson, however, argues that the introduction of residential embassies essentially increased the exchange of royal correspondence, since the ambassador's commission had to be continually extended and his credentials reaffirmed.[120] Within the Anglo-Muscovite context, the importance of royal letters was even greater, as the lack of either Muscovite or English resident embassies in London and Moscow respectively meant that letters remained the principal medium of communication between the sovereigns.

[118] These are some of the questions that were likewise posed by Richard Grassby in 'Material Culture and Cultural History', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35 (2005), pp. 591-603.
[119] C.H. Carter, *The Western European Powers, 1500-1700* (London, 1971), p. 114.
[120] R. Allinson, 'A Monarchy of Letters: The Role of Royal Correspondence in English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I' (unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2009), p. 12.

The study of royal letters likewise overlooks the materiality of these documents in their original forms. While early modern senders were principally concerned with the transmission of a message from one person to another through words and chose letters as the most efficient way to achieve this, Joe Williams points out that letters could have other significant functions. A letter could serve as a record of a transaction or as a means for the cementing of social bonds, in which case the physical existence of the letter was more important than its textual content.[121] Research on the materiality of manuscripts and letters continues to gain interest among scholars of manuscript studies and the history of the book, as well as historians of gender and material culture.[122] The research of James Daybell, for example, has been significant in elucidating the importance of a wide range of material characteristics of letters that are obscured by modern printed editions and academic studies that focus on these documents' semantic contents rather than physical features.[123] Applying diverse bibliographical techniques, including codicology, palaeography, sigillography and diplomatics, Daybell explores the materiality of early modern letters and enriches our understanding of their 'social materiality' (the cultural practices and contexts, within which the letters were produced, disseminated and consumed).[124] By examining letters as both objects and texts, scholars have been able to shed light not only on the developments of early modern epistolary protocol and practices, but postal conditions, female literacy and the role of letter-writing in everyday life.[125] For instance, Gary Schneider's research analyses letters to

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[121] J. Williams, 'Letter Writing, Materiality, and Gifts in Late Antiquity: Some Perspective on Material Culture', *Journal of Late Antiquity*, 7 (2014), p. 351.

[122] D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 13-7; H. Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1992); P. Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

[123] J. Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practises of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 1-29.

[124] Ibid., p. 230. See J. Daybell, 'Introduction', in Daybell and J. Hinds (eds), *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730* (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 2.

[125] See N. Akkerman, 'Enigmatic Cultures of Cryptology', in J. Daybell and A. Gordon (eds), *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia, PA, 2016), pp. 69-84; J. Daybell and A. Gordon (eds), *Women, Letters and the Rhetoric of Gender and Agency in Early Modern Britain, 1540-1690*

delineate the meaning of the public and the private, as well as explore the uses of epistolary rhetoric, and Mel Evans uses letters to trace the relationships between royal documents and linguistic change in Elizabethan England.[126] Recent research has further shown that a letter's layout, script, space, watermarks, seals and handwriting offer valuable insights into early modern epistolary conventions. As an example, the colour of the ink and the availability of blank space can be examined to determine the status of the writer and of the intended recipient.[127] In the case of royal diplomatic letters, these documents were naturally linked to gift-giving, reciprocal obligations and social exchanges. Examining epistolary practices and protocols is, therefore, fundamental to understanding early modern systems of communication. Nevertheless, while bibliographical techniques are beginning to be used by scholars, little has been written on the materiality of royal diplomatic letters, especially those exchanged between England and Muscovy.

The most comprehensive collection of edited and translated letters exchanged between Elizabeth and Ivan IV, Feodor I and Boris Godunov appeared in Yurii Tolstoi's *First Forty Years of Intercourse between England and Russia* (1875); additional transcriptions of Anglo-Muscovite letters appeared in the published collections of E.A. Bond (1856), K.N. Bestuzhev-Riumin (1883), and E.D Morgan and C.H. Coote (1886).[128] In the early twentieth century, the research of Inna Lubimenko recognised the unique significance of Anglo-Muscovite letters as a source material for the study of commercial and political relations between the

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(London and New York, 2016); R.S. Ahrendt and D.C. van der Linden, 'The Postmasters' Piggy Bank: Experiencing the Accidental Archive', *French Historical Studies*, 40 (2017), pp. 189-213.

[126] G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity. Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark, NJ, 2005), p. 19; M. Evans, '"By the queen": Collaborative Authorship in Scribal Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth I', in Daybell and Gordon (eds), *Women, Letters and the Rhetoric of Gender,* pp. 35-54.

[127] J. Gibson, 'Significant Space in Manuscript Letters', *The Seventeenth Century*, 12 (1997), pp. 1-10.

[128] See notes 62 and 63 on page 47.

two royal courts.[129] Although in 1915 Lubimenko had called for an updated edition of Tolstoi's collection no such publication has been undertaken to date, and current scholarship continues to rely heavily on its original edition.[130]

In *Shakespeare's Letters*, Alan Stewart noted that the material evidence of correspondence 'force[s] us to consider the letter not as text but as an object', though to date, royal Anglo-Muscovite correspondence has only sparingly benefited from these methodological developments.[131] Allinson notes that often research on women and letter-writing, in particular, excludes the letters of queens on the basis that their education makes them an 'exceptional' case.[132] Allinson's own research on the diplomatic correspondence of Elizabeth I, published in *A Monarchy of Letters* (2012), was the first full-length monograph dedicated to the examination of Elizabethan royal letters (including a chapter on the exchange of letters between Elizabeth and Ivan IV) and the ways in which epistolary culture played an important role in the making of foreign policy.[133] In her case study of Anglo-Muscovite letters, Allinson principally relies on edited collections and contemporary drafts and translations of these documents; the absence of a *de-visu* examination of the original manuscripts confines the analysis to the textual content of the letter and omits a sustained discussion of

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[129] I. Lubimenko, 'The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars', pp. 525-42; eadem, 'Letters Illustrating the Relations of England and Russia in the Seventeenth Century', *The English Historical Review,* 32 (1917), pp. 91-103; eadem, 'The Correspondence of the First Stuarts with the First Romanovs', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 4 (1918), pp. 77-91.

[130] I. Lubimenko, 'A Suggestion for the Publication of the Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars', *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1915), p. 115. In the 1960s and 70s, Henry Huttenbach published several articles, which identified the existence of additional source material relating to Anglo-Muscovite correspondence in British archives. Huttenbach also amended the dating of several letters given by Tolstoi and Lubimenko. See note 72 on page 48.

[131] A. Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford, 2008), p. 66.

[132] Allinson specifically applies this critique to James Daybell (ed.), *Early Modern Women's Letter-Writing* (Basingstoke, 2001); more recently the research of Carlo Bajetta and Angela Andreani have focused on the work of the Elizabethan secretariat and the mechanics behind the production of official documents and letters; Bajetta has specifically focused on the neglected Italian missives: C.M. Bajetta, G. Coatalen and J. Gibson (eds), *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric and Politics* (Basingstoke, 2014), C.M. Bajetta (ed.), *Elizabeth I's Italian Letters* (New York, 2017); A. Andreani, *The Elizabethan Secretariat and the Signet Office: The Production of State Papers, 1590-96* (London, 2017).

[133] Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, pp. 111-130.

its decorative and material attributes. Moreover, most of the scholarly research on Anglo-Muscovite letters centres on the correspondence of Elizabeth and Ivan IV, while that of Elizabeth and Ivan's successors, as well as that of James and Michael Romanov, is overlooked.[134] A notable exception is Maija Jansson's recent monograph on the decorative art within the royal Stuart letters sent to Muscovy in the seventeenth century. Jansson explores the physical aspects of James' and Charles' royal letters but specifically focuses on the developments of the decorative motifs and patterns within the letter's borders.[135] The aim is to identify and chart the artistic influences that inspired royal limners, printers and embellishers rather than draw connections between decoration and diplomacy.[136] While the monograph offers a valuable continuum for the study of English letter-production at the Stuart court, its contribution towards our understanding of the interplay of materiality and diplomacy is handicapped by a lack of sustained discussion of each letter and its diplomatic context. Thus, the examination of royal English and Muscovite correspondence requires a methodological re-assessment in order to discover the full potential and purpose of royal letters within the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic interaction.

In summary, as is apparent from the literature discussed above, pre-Petrine Muscovite diplomacy remains a subject matter that requires a reassessment. It offers a unique case study that could greatly enrich our current understanding of the mechanics of early modern diplomatic interactions. Unlike the Islamic Eastern sovereignties, its Christian heritage meant that it was not as discordant from Europe as Turkey or Persia, though simultaneously contemporary Europeans still emphasised its apparent cultural and political disparity. Thus, this thesis uses a versatile body of primary material to create a new perspective on

[134] An exception to this rule is the article by A.N. Sakharov, 'Peripiska Elizavety Angliiskoi s Borisom Godunovym', *OSP*, 11 (1965), pp. 49-68.
[135] Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy*, pp. 3-13.
[136] Ibid., pp. 55-68.

the complexity of Muscovite diplomacy and its relations with England, beyond the conventional portrayal of the 'East-West' divide.

Chapter 2

Muscovite Tsars and Diplomacy: Historical Background

While academic scholarship often portrays early modern Muscovy as a geo-politically isolated state, the records of the Muscovite Ambassadorial Chancellery suggest that from the beginning of the sixteenth century Moscow was gradually becoming a hive of diplomatic activity that continued to increase and develop over the following centuries. From the south, the Muscovite Tsar received envoys from the Crimean and Nogai Tatars, as well as the Ottoman Sultan, while the northern maritime route facilitated relations with England, and later with the Dutch.[1] The Eastern trade routes were used by merchants and ambassadors of the Persian Shahs and Georgian Princes, alongside the representatives of the Astrakhan and Kazan khans before their annexation into Muscovite dominions in 1556 and 1552 respectively.[2] Meanwhile, the Western frontier brought the Muscovites into diplomatic contact with their quarrelsome neighbours Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, and was used by Papal and Imperial envoys.[3] Increasing diplomatic interactions between the Tsars and the rulers of other foreign lands stimulated the development of Muscovite protocols and ceremonies that were used to convey specific political messages and intentions in relation to the political context of each diplomatic relationship. In other words, every aspect of the Muscovite diplomatic ceremony was carefully defined and performed according to precedent and the importance of the visiting embassy within Muscovite foreign policy. The quantity and quality of provisions and the choice of accommodation accorded to the visiting diplomats, alongside the place and

[1] Ambassadorial Books (*knigi)* relating to these interactions can be found in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA) in Moscow. Diplomatic documents relating to the Muscovite interaction with Crimea can be found in fond 123, while Russo-Ottoman and Russo-Dutch relations are addressed in fonds 89 and 50 respectively.

[2] Documents relating to Muscovite relations with Persia and Georgia can be similarly found in fonds 77 and 110 respectively.

[3] For Muscovite relations with Poland-Lithuania and Sweden see fonds 79 and 96; see fonds 78 and 44 for documents relating to Muscovite diplomatic interaction with the Papacy and the Hapsburgs.

ceremony of the audience, the clothing of the servants, the choice of plate and even the size and colour of the seal used on Muscovite royal letters were all signs of Muscovite political intentions. In this regard, the selection of gifts and counter-gifts was no exception, especially as gifts or *pominki* (tokens of remembrance) were a key component of Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial.

This chapter provides a historical background of Muscovite diplomacy, its protocols and ceremony during the reigns of Tsars Ivan IV (r. 1547-84), Feodor I (r. 1584-98), Boris Godunov (r. 1598-1605), and Michael Romanov (r. 1613-45). In particular, it explores the influence of the concerns and aspirations of individual Tsars on the ways in which direct encounters with foreign diplomats were regulated, altered and developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ivan IV, for instance, tended to act impetuously in his encounters with foreign diplomats. On one occasion, he received a gift of a horse from the Polish embassy but ordered the animal to be killed in front of the ambassador after the diplomat had remarked that Ivan's counter-gifts were too paltry.[4] In contrast, Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov, who were both elected to the Tsardom, were more pragmatic in their approach to diplomacy. As the arrival of foreign ambassadors signalled recognition of their status as Tsars, each visit was subjected to a strictly regulated programme of diplomatic protocol, whereby every ceremony was imbued with symbols pertaining to the magnificence and authority of the new ruling dynasty. During the famine years of 1601-05, for example, the Ambassadorial *pristav* (clerk) was ordered to ensure that the entire route used for the public procession of ambassadors in various Muscovite cities was to be devoid of beggars, the sick and the dying.[5] Foreign diplomats were to be shown a prosperous and powerful state ruled by a magnificent ruler rather than the reality of Muscovite socio-economic difficulties and political

[4] G.O. Karpov (ed.), *Sbornik,* 71 (St. Petersburg, 1892), pp. 785-6.
[5] 'Pamiat' Pristavam, G.O. Elizarovu i M. Solovtsevu [dated 21 April 1604]', in S.A. Belokurov (ed.), *Snosheniia Rossii s Kavkazom, 1578-1613* (Moscow, 1889), p. 419.

strife. As this chapter demonstrates, rather than remaining stagnant until the reforms of Peter the Great, Muscovite diplomatic practice gradually evolved over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in part as a response to the increased direct interaction between Muscovy and various sovereignties, all of which required careful administration.

1. The Rurikid Legacy: Diplomatic Practice in the Reign of Ivan IV, 1547-84

Whereas previously the Grand Princes of Moscow frequently maintained relations only with the Golden Horde and neighbouring territories, including Livonia, Novgorod and Pskov, by the reign of Ivan IV Muscovite diplomatic horizons had broadened and new diplomatic relationships were created as shown above. In his study of sixteenth-century Muscovite diplomacy, Leonid Iuzefovich contended that Muscovite break from the yoke of Golden Horde in the reign of Ivan III (r. 1464-1505) was followed by an introduction of a new ideology of princely rule. The Muscovite rulers began to present themselves as the only legitimate heirs to the Great Princes of Kievan Rus', as well as the principal representatives of the Orthodox faith, and these political aspirations required a creation of new rituals, symbols and ceremonies that would highlight and bolster their new status.[6] The change in Muscovite political culture and its development by Ivan III's successors has encouraged scholars to explore its origins and influences, though no consensus has yet been reached. While this chapter does intend to address such questions, it is worth noting that scholars principally attribute the nature of Muscovite political culture to various factors of influence that served as both forces of progress and/or determent. This includes the influence of earlier Kievan institutions, the Byzantine Empire, the Golden Horde and early interactions with

[6] L.A. Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia* (Moscow, 1988), p. 9.

Western Europe.[7] Ultimately, representation and recognition of their status was the principal concern of all Muscovite sovereigns. While Ivan III cemented his status as the Grand Prince of all Rus', his grandson Ivan IV elevated the rank of Muscovite rulers and sought international acknowledgement as the Tsar of 'all the Russias'.[8] Diplomacy offered a convenient means of acquiring the desired recognition. The arrival of foreign ambassadors into Moscow in itself was seen as an act of acceptance, though some states like Poland and Sweden recognised the sovereignty of Muscovite rulers but refused to acknowledge their status as 'Tsars', and frequently reminded the Muscovites of their role as tributaries of the Golden Horde.[9] In return, the Muscovites had refused to recognise the status of elected Polish and Swedish Kings. The arrival of foreign embassies was likewise used to showcase the extent of Muscovite political and trading networks (and in doing so elevating the prestige of the Muscovite ruler). The creation of elaborate diplomatic ceremonies served to emphasise the Tsar's magnificence and authority, and impress foreign diplomats in the hope that they would report to their sovereigns about the splendour of the Muscovite royal court. In turn, closer political connections with other sovereigns, including possible marriage alliances, would have fulfilled the Muscovite desire to be recognised as equals to the other prominent sovereigns of the early modern world.

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[7] An excellent synthesis of the historiography that deals with the question of the origins of Muscovite political culture can be found in D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 1-13. Some of the key publications that explore these themes include: S.F. Platonov, *Lektsii Po Russkoi Istorii*, 1 (St. Petersburg, 1899); N. Trubetskoi, *Nasledie Chingiskhana. Vzgliad na Russkuiu Istoriiu ne s Zapada a s Vostoka* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 3-9; S.M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii i Drevneishikh Vremen*, 2 (Moscow, 1963); F.J. Thomason, 'The Nature of the Reception of Christian Byzantine Culture in Russia in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries and Its Implications for Russian Culture', *Slavica Gandensia*, 5 (1978), pp. 107-39; A. Yakov, *The Origins of Aristocracy: Ivan the Terrible in Russian History* (Berkley, CA, 1981), pp. 1-18.

[8] S. Bogatyrev, 'Reinventing the Russian Monarchy in the 1550s: Ivan the Terrible, the Dynasty, and the Church', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 85 (2007), pp. 292-3. The title of 'Tsar' derived from the Latin word *Caesar* and was intended to mean 'Emperor' in the medieval sense of the word, a ruler with the same rank as the Holy Roman Emperor, though Western European diplomats equated it with that of the 'King'.

[9] L.A. Iuzefovich, *Put' Posla: Russkii Posol'skii Obychai. Obikhod. Etiket. Tseremonial. Konets XV-Pervaia Polovina XVII vv.* (St. Petersburg, 2007), pp. 14-5, 18.

While increasing diplomatic interactions were expected to bolster the prestige of the Muscovite rulers, they required management and maintenance. At the onset of the emerging Muscovite diplomacy in the reign of Ivan III, diplomatic matters were overseen personally by the Tsar and his boyar council, while his diplomatic correspondence was managed by the Keeper of the Royal Seal.[10] Practical arrangements, such as accommodation, victuals and entertainment provided to foreign ambassadors, were delegated to individual *d'yaks* (secretaries) of various court chancelleries, while foreigners in the Tsar's service (mostly Italians and Greeks) were entrusted with the role of Muscovite diplomatic representatives.[11] By the reign of Vasilii III (r. 1505-33), the employment of foreigners decreased as diplomatic missions attained a more distinct Muscovite character. Every 'great' embassy was headed by a *boyar* (noble) with an entourage of up to 200 people, depending on the importance of the embassy. The entourage consisted of various individuals including secretaries, translators, interpreters, merchants, soldiers and even trumpeters.[12] The development of Muscovite diplomatic practice intensified during the reign of Ivan IV, partly in response to Ivan's extensive political ambitions. As well as proclaiming himself 'Tsar', Ivan pursued an expansionist foreign policy, annexing the aforementioned Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, and undertaking military campaigns to conquer territories in the West and South, igniting conflicts with Sweden, Poland-Lithuania and the Ottomans.[13] In addition, Ivan fostered diplomatic relations with Western European states, notably England, that were later built upon by his successors.

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[10] Muscovite tradition forbade the Tsars from putting their own hand to the letter, as letter-writing was considered an act of labour and below the dignity of the Tsar: A. Possevino, *The Moscovia of Antonio Possevino*, *S.J.,* trans. and ed. by H.F. Graham, 2 (Pittsburgh, PA, 1977), p. 12.

[11] R.M. Croskey, *Muscovite Diplomatic Practice in the Reign of Ivan III* (New York, 1987), pp. 1-11, 79-85.

[12] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, pp. 12-3.

[13] As noted by Ruslan Skrynnikov, at Ivan's death in 1584, the Muscovite state encompassed the Caspian Sea to the southwest and Siberia to the east: R.G. Skrynnikov, *Ivan Groznyi* (Moscow, 1975), p. 199.

In practical terms, the increase of Muscovite relations with various sovereignties multiplied the workload of Muscovite officials and led to the creation of a designated chancellery that supervised diplomatic matters from 1549. The *Posol'skii Prikaz* (Ambassadorial Chancellery) oversaw the reception and dispatch of foreign and Muscovite diplomatic representatives, administered royal diplomatic correspondence and conducted negotiations on behalf of the Tsar.[14] It reflected the growing centralisation of Ivan's dominions and became one of the most prestigious chancelleries in the Muscovite state. Moreover, whereas previously rituals and ceremonies were regulated through an oral transmission of established customs and traditions, the chancellery was instrumental in creating a permanent written record of diplomatic encounters that set precedent for future interactions. The visits and negotiations of various embassies were recorded within designated Ambassadorial *knigi* (books), whereby each book represented a compilation of documents relating to Muscovite diplomatic interaction with a specific sovereignty.[15] The books comprise copies of the sets of instructions given to Muscovite ambassadors (*nakazy*), diplomatic reports of Muscovite envoys (*stateinye spiski*), as well as instructions sent to local boyars and officials tasked with supervising the journey of foreign ambassadors. Additionally, the *knigi* would contain a summary of the accommodation and victuals provided to each visiting embassy, copies and translations of royal letters and brief summaries of foreign affairs gathered at the time of each embassy. The intention of the books was to create a permanent record of Muscovite interactions with a specific sovereignty that could be drawn upon for future reference, though by the seventeenth century the records of the *tsarskii*

[14] For a classic, but still influential, study of the Ambassadorial Chancellery, see S.A. Belokurov, *O Posol'skom Prikaze* (Moscow, 1906).
[15] N.M. Rogozhin, *Posol'skie Knigi Rossii Kontsa XV-nachala XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1994).

arkhiv (royal archive) were merged with those of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* to the extent that the latter had become the central archive of the Muscovite state.[16]

The *knigi* remain an excellent, if still under-examined, source material for the study of early modern Muscovite diplomatic interactions, especially as they record encounters as they happened in practice rather than the ideal relations that were prescribed by Muscovite ceremonial. The *knigi* frequently mention instances of clashes over ceremony between foreign ambassadors and Muscovite officials and provide detailed explanations for any deviation from the ceremonial norm. One such instance relates to the fact that all foreign ambassadors in Ivan IV's reign were expected to make their public entrance into Moscow on horseback, whereby the horses were given to the ambassador from the royal stables as a mark of the Tsar's hospitality.[17] In principle, ambassadors were not permitted to reject the horse they were offered, as to do so would belittle the honour of the Tsar. In 1583, however, the English ambassador Sir Jerome Bowes refused the horse he was provided, arguing that the steeds of the Muscovite officials were of better quality.[18] As a mark of protest Bowes proceeded to the Kremlin Palace on foot. Unsurprisingly, Bowes' actions angered Muscovite officials. While the rejection of the horse dishonoured Ivan's gesture of hospitality, the Muscovite officials feared that the slow pace of the walking ambassadorial procession would undermine Ivan's royal status as the Tsar would be obliged to await Bowes' arrival. This was not the only protest and disregard Bowes showed of Muscovite diplomatic protocols. He voiced further complaints regarding the Muscovite provision of victuals (another gesture of the Tsar's hospitality), arguing that the provision of 'chicken and ram' rather than veal did

[16] S.O. Shmidt (ed.), *Opisi Tsarskogo Arkhiva XVI veka i Arkhiva Posol'skogo Prikaza 1614 goda* (Moscow, 1960), p. 6.
[17] Possevino, *The Moscovia of Antonio Possevino*, p. 17.
[18] J. Horsey, 'Travels', in L.E. Berry and R.O. Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 302.

not do justice to his position as the ambassador of the Queen of England.[19] Notably, later in Feodor I's reign some ambassadors were permitted to use a carriage, often due to complaints of gout and ill-health, but the diplomats were still required to alight and ride a horse for the last leg of the journey.[20] As source material, the Ambassadorial *knigi* help to balance the assumptions about Muscovite diplomatic practice that were reported by foreign diplomats, who were more likely to record aspects that appeared bizarre and unfamiliar rather than comment on shared practices and ceremonies.

The principal concern of Ivan IV was to acquire international recognition of his status as 'Tsar' and be regarded as an equal to the greatest sovereigns of the early modern period. Hence, every aspect of Muscovite diplomatic ceremony was intended to emphasise his authority and magnificence, and protect and preserve his royal honour. Firstly, the Muscovites considered that it was more honourable for the Tsar to receive an ambassador rather than dispatch one.[21] By responding to rather than initiating diplomatic contact, the Muscovites believed that the Tsar was not putting himself in a position of a supplicant and retained a political advantage. All of the Muscovite embassies to London, for example, were dispatched only after the visit of an English embassy. The only exception to this rule was the dispatch of messengers announcing the accession of a new Tsar. In addition, emphasis was placed on the physical surroundings of the audience hall and the Tsar's ceremonial clothing to ensure that both presented a suitable reflection of Ivan's status. In the early years of his reign, Ivan IV followed the practice of his predecessors by receiving foreign diplomats in the *stolovoi izbe brusianoi* (Lingonberry Dining Chamber) named after the lingonberry beams that decorated the room.[22] Gradually, over the course of Ivan's reign diplomatic

[19] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 82.
[20] K.N. Bestuzhev-Riumin (ed.), *Sbornik*, 38 (St. Petersburg, 1883), pp. 393, 395-6.
[21] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 82.
[22] Ibid., pp. 97-8.

audiences were moved to the more opulent Garnet or Golden Chamber, as its decoration was deemed more appropriate for the purpose of impressing foreign visitors.

If both Ivan III and Vasilii III would often greet ambassadors dressed in the 'lesser' robes of state and with an 'uncovered' head, throughout Ivan IV's reign there was a gradual regulation of the clothing and regalia the Tsar was required to wear at such occasions.[23] Ivan understood the importance of the theatrical element of diplomatic audiences and would often use clothing and regalia to convey a specific political message. In 1567, amidst tense political relations with Lithuania, Ivan greeted its envoys dressed in full military armour to show that Muscovy was prepared for war.[24] In more amiable diplomatic contexts, Ivan often appeared dressed in robes of golden cloth, embellished with precious jewels, while on his chest he wore a large gold crucifix and golden chains.[25] Richard Chancellor noted that, during his audience with Ivan in 1553, the Tsar was 'apparelled with a robe of silver and with […] a diadem on his head'.[26] Reportedly, by 1580s the ceremonial robe became so heavy that both Feodor I and Boris Godunov, who were known to suffer from ill-health, could barely support its weight. Ambassadors were, therefore, ordered to abbreviate their speeches to speed up the duration of the audience, as changing the ceremonial robe to a lighter garment was not permitted, as it risked decreasing the visual splendour of the garment.[27]

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[23] S. Bogatyrev, 'Shapka Monomakha i Shlem Naslednika. Reprezentasiia Vlasti i Dinasticheskaia Politika pri Vasilii III i Ivane Groznom', *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*, 1 (2011), pp. 171-200; idem, 'Does size matter? The Results of the Discussion About Ceremonial Headgear', *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*, 1 (2015), pp. 82-9.
[24] Karpov (ed.), *Sbornik*, 71, p. 555.
[25] Horsey, 'Travels', p. 273.
[26] R. Chancellor, 'The First Voyage to Russia [1553]', in Berry and Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 26.
[27] 'Vypiska iz Inostrannoi Knigi o Starine Russkoi', *Vestnik Evropy*, 63 (1820), p. 202; 'About the "lesser" robes of state', RGADA, Moscow, fond 79, opis' 10, f. 296v.

Alongside the royal apparel, importance was accorded to the Tsar's regalia. One of such items was the pastoral staff with a T-shaped pommel that traditionally symbolised Muscovite sovereignty. These objects were always made from precious materials; Ivan III was known to have staffs made from walrus tusks, whale teeth and Indian ebony.[28] The royal staff of Ivan's grandson, Ivan IV, was allegedly made out of a unicorn's horn.[29] In Muscovy, the magical beast was regarded as a token of supreme royal authority due to its association with impressive strength and courage. Possession of a staff made from such a magical creature fitted well with Ivan's agenda of bolstering his authority. By the 1570s, the staff lost its central importance and was replaced with a sceptre, possibly due to a Western European influence, though Ivan IV's sceptre was also allegedly made out of a unicorn horn.[30] By the reign of Boris Godunov in the late sixteenth century, the Tsar greeted foreign envoys whilst sitting on his throne with the sceptre in his left hand and a golden orb with a cross (also referred to as the 'golden apple' in the Ambassadorial *knigi)* in his right hand. The introduction of the orb was likely another Western European influence. In 1604, the envoys of Emperor Rudolf II presented Godunov with an orb and a sceptre, both of which were later incorporated into the royal Muscovite regalia.[31] As the orb was reportedly heavy (the 1604 orb now kept at the Kremlin Armoury Museum weights 3kg/6.6 lbs) a special pyramid-shaped tower was placed next to the Tsar upon which the orb was displayed. The last component of Ivan's state regalia was the Crown, the most important symbol of royal power. Whilst greeting foreign diplomats Ivan was likely to wear either the Cap of Monomakh, the oldest Muscovite Crown that, according to legend, was given as a gift from

[28] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 105.
[29] I. Timofeev, *Vremenik Ivana Timofeeva*, ed. O.A. Derzhavina (Moscow, 1951), pp. 10, 19.
[30] In 1575 an Imperial ambassador mentioned that the staff was no longer held by the Tsar but was instead given to the Tsarevich, while the Tsar held a sceptre: D. von Buchau, *Nachalo i Vozvyshenie Moskovii*, trans. I.A. Tikhomirov (Moscow, 1877), p. 29.
[31] The objects are currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow: G. Walton, 'Diplomatic and Ambassadorial Gifts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in B. Shifman, and G. Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars: 1500-1700* (New York, 2001), p. 85.

the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomachos, or the 'Kazan Crown', created in 1553 to immortalise the glorious victory over the Khanate.[32] In instances of political tension, as in the 1567 example mentioned above, the Tsar was likely to wear a 'state helmet' (an ericho-cap styled helmet decorated with precious jewels), though the earliest surviving example of such an object dates from the 1600s.[33] The regalia and the apparel chosen by the Tsar to greet diplomatic representatives was an extension of Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial, in which even clothing was imbued with political messages.

Another example of a Muscovite ceremony that was concerned with the protection of Ivan's honour and status related to the obligation of foreign ambassadors to alight from their horses first, followed by Muscovite officials, upon reaching the Kremlin Palace.[34] By dismounting before the Muscovite officials, the diplomats were expected to symbolise their position as petitioners to the Tsar. Notably, the distance at which the ambassador was permitted to dismount was another political gesture that signalled the importance of the embassy within Muscovite foreign policy.[35] Nevertheless, the obligatory dismount was often a bone of contention between the ambassadors and the officials, as both refused to compromise the honour of their sovereign by dismounting first. The Imperial ambassador, Sigismund von Herberstein was very proud to report that in 1517 he was able to trick the Muscovite officials into dismounting before he did.[36] The contention over the dismount demonstrates that Muscovite diplomatic ceremonial was not as dissimilar from its European counterpart as is alleged by some scholars, since the dispute was the result of the fear of both sides of belittling the honour of their sovereign. The apparent

[32] I.A. Bobrovnitskaia, *Regalii Rossiskih Gosudarei* (Moscow, 2004), p. 10.
[33] See, 'Shlem "Shapka Epikhonskaia"', https://www.kreml.ru/exhibitions/exhibitions-abroad/shankhay-sokrovishchnitsa-russkikh-samoderzhtsev/ [accessed 13 March 2018].
[34] A.G. Kudriavtseva, 'Ambassadorial Ceremony at the Tsar's Court', in Shifman and Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars*, pp.49-50.
[35] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, pp. 70-1.
[36] S. von Herberstein, *Notes Upon Russia,* trans. and ed. R.H. Major, 2 (London, 1852), p. 113.

protection and preservation of the Tsar's honour were further evident in other aspects of Muscovite diplomatic practice. Foreign envoys and ambassadors were not permitted to leave their assigned *dvor* (residence) until after their first audience with the Tsar, though in some instances ambassadors were kept isolated if Ivan was receiving an embassy from a rival nation.[37] The Muscovites believed that, as the purpose of the diplomats' visits was to meet with the Tsar, he should be the one accorded the honour of the first visit.

Another notable feature of Ivan's diplomatic practice was the fact that interactions with individual embassies were often defined by the Tsar's political aspirations rather than solely by precedent. The refusal of Poland-Lithuania to recognise Ivan's status as Tsar meant that no sovereign gifts and counter-gifts were sent to Poland, and the Polish ambassadors were forced to dismount at the furthest distance from the designated audience chamber in comparison to other diplomats.[38] After the onset of the Livonian War in 1558, Swedish diplomatic representatives were likewise granted accommodation furthest away from the Kremlin Palace and there was no exchange of sovereign gifts.[39] The envoys of the Crimean and Nogai Khans, unlike European diplomats, were never permitted to sit down during the royal audience, to show that the status of the Khans was below that of the Tsar. Interestingly, Tatar Princes, who were often vassals of the Muscovite Tsar, were required to attend the audiences between the Tsar and Islamic diplomatic representatives, whereby the Princes' presence was aimed to demonstrate the dependence of their power upon Muscovite favour. Occasionally, the Princes attended the audiences of European diplomats. In 1586 at the audience of a Polish ambassador, Feodor I was accompanied by three

[37] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh*, pp. 76, 80.
[38] It should be noted, that the Polish ambassadors themselves participated in an exchange of gifts with the Tsar. The refusal of Poland to recognise the Tsar's title was mentioned by contemporary ambassadors including Giles Fletcher: G. Fletcher, 'Of the Russe Commonwealth', in Berry and Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 132.
[39] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 51.

Tatar Princes.[40] In the mid-seventeenth century, the image of Tatar dependence upon the Tsar was intensified through a new ceremony, which required the Princes to stand next to the Tsar and support his elbows. In comparison, Muscovite interactions with Western European ambassadors varied and were dependent upon contemporary political context. In the case of English ambassadors, while Jenkinson reported the honour he was accorded by Ivan in 1566, Thomas Randolph complained that 'from the first of his arryvall at Mosco' he was 'so straightlie kept w[i]th in his howse' and received such treatment from the Muscovite officials as 'worse cowld not have byn sh[o]wed' to an enemy.[41]

Generally, political messages and expressions of Ivan's diplomatic ambitions manifested themselves at various stages during the embassy's visit, from the size of the Muscovite entourage sent to greet the ambassador at the Muscovite frontier to whether ambassadors were offered a cup of mead by the Tsar upon their departure. Although each of these ceremonies and symbols offers an intriguing insight into the mechanism of Rurikid diplomatic practice and political ideology, its study is beyond the scope of this chapter, the purpose of which is to provide a historical overview of the gradual evolution of Muscovite diplomatic practice under Ivan and his successors. While the diplomatic negotiations themselves were conducted behind the closed doors of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, public ceremonies and audiences played an important role in bolstering Ivan's authority and power both domestically and, most importantly, upon the international stage. Although the Muscovite Tsar was not yet a major player in European geopolitical affairs, the establishment of diplomatic ceremonies and rituals that emphasised his magnificence and authority to foreign diplomats was a clear indication of Muscovite ambitions.

[40] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 90.
[41] 'The great cawses of offences given to [Thomas Randolph, 1568]', BL, Lansdowne MS 10, f. 130r.

2. Muscovite Diplomacy in the Reigns of Feodor I (1584-98) and Boris Godunov (1598-1605)

Whereas Ivan's reign was dedicated to the cultivation of his royal image and attainment of recognition, Muscovite political ambitions were initially compromised by the accession of his son Feodor I in 1584. Contemporaries described Feodor as weak-willed, sickly of health and diffident of temperament.[42] The English ambassador Giles Fletcher referred to Feodor as simple, superstitious and hardly capable of formulating policy, while the papal nuncio Antonio Possevino reported that Feodor's mental competence bordered upon idiocy and insanity.[43] The new Tsar preferred to spend time in pious contemplation and pilgrimages to monasteries rather than advancing the political ambitions of his father. Moreover, until the death of Ivan's eldest son and heir Ivan Ivanovich in 1581, Feodor was never considered as a potential candidate for the throne. His marriage to Irina Godunova produced no living children, intensifying political concerns regarding the future of Muscovite succession.[44]

The real power of governing Muscovy was entrusted into the hands of regents. The early months of Feodor's reign were marked by a political struggle of different boyar factions for political supremacy, especially as the relatives of Feodor's wife, the Godunovs, were excluded from Ivan's will that set out the regency council.[45] By November 1584, the Muscovite ambassador to the Holy

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[42] For an overview of Feodor's role as Tsar see: D.M. Voloikhin, *Tsar' Feodor Ivanovich* (Moscow, 2011); L.E. Morozova, *Dva Tsaria: Feodor i Boris. Kanun Smutnogo Vremeni* (Moscow, 2006).

[43] Fletcher, 'Of Russe Commonwealth', pp. 152-3; Possevino, *Moscovia*, p. xxiv.

[44] Reportedly, in the last years of his life Ivan was considering attaining a divorce for Feodor from Irina based on her assumed infertility, but the Tsarevich had refused to comply with the demands of his father: R.G. Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, trans. and ed. by H.F. Graham (Gulf Breeze, FL, 1982), pp. 9-10.

[45] In 1584, the Imperial envoy, Nicholas Warkocz, reported that he was able to acquire information regarding the regency council appointed by Ivan's will, which did not include Boris Godunov:

Roman Emperor referred to Feodor's brother-in-law Boris Godunov as the 'ruler of the land', implying that Godunov had become a *de facto* ruler of Muscovy, while in 1585 the Muscovite envoy to Poland informed the Poles that the administration of the whole country was overseen by two people, Boris Godunov and the head of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, Andrei Shchelkalov.[46] Despite their initial exclusion from Ivan's appointed regency council, both men were able to draw upon their political resourcefulness to secure their positions. In May 1584 Godunov obtained the rank of equerry (one of the most prestigious Muscovite court positions equivalent to the English title of the Master of the Horse), even though he lacked sufficient patent of nobility to hold such a position.[47] Shortly thereafter there were at least five members of the Godunov family in the Duma. For the next twenty years until his death, Godunov became a central figure in Muscovite government.

The internal political strife for power had an effect on Muscovite diplomacy, since each faction favoured a different foreign policy. Godunov supported the development of Anglo-Muscovite commercial relations; Shchelkalov called for the elimination of trading privileges for foreign (and especially English) merchants.[48] The latter also envisioned closer diplomatic relations with the Imperial Court. In 1593 Shchelkalov was involved in secret negotiations with the Hapsburgs for a potential marriage between Feodor's daughter Feodosiia and a Hapsburg Prince. As Muscovite tradition prevented women from ruling in their own right, it was hoped that Feodosiia and her Hapsburg husband would jointly ascend to the Muscovite throne following Feodor's death.[49] Unfortunately, Feodosiia died in

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Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, p. 10. See S.F. Platonov, *Ocherki po Istorii Smuty v Moskovskom Gosudarstve XVI-XVII vv.* (Moscow, 5th edn., 1995), p. 134.

[46] Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, p. 20.

[47] A.A. Pavlov, 'Fedor Ivanovich and Boris Godunov (1584-1605), in M. Perrie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Russia*, 1 (Cambridge, 2006), p. 266.

[48] 'Andrei Yakovlevich Shchelkalov (d. 1598)', in A.A. Polovtsov et al. (eds), *Russian Bibliographical Dictionary (*hereafter *RBS*), 24 (St. Petersburg, 1912), pp. 38-46.

[49] Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, p. 67.

1594, while the discovery of the negotiations resulted in Shchelkalov's downfall, strengthening Godunov's hold on political power. Aspirations to create a dynastic alliance between Muscovy and the Holy Roman Empire were not exclusive to Shchelkalov's schemes. Previously, in 1585 when Feodor I was seriously ill, reports surfaced of a secret mission dispatched by Godunov to Vienna that proposed a potential marriage between Feodor's wife, Tsarina Irina, and a Hapsburg Prince, intended to place them both upon the Muscovite throne in the event of Feodor's death.[50] Likewise, following his own election to the Muscovite throne in 1598, Boris Godunov dispatched envoys to Austria to propose marriages between his children and the scions of the Imperial royal family. None of these proposals was successful: despite their desire to be seen as equals, the Muscovite Tsars were of little political significance to the Imperial court.

Although Feodor I was not as charismatic and capable a ruler as his father, it was still important to protect and increase the prestige of the Muscovite sovereign, especially amidst growing Muscovite desires to create alliances with European sovereigns. One of the methods through which the Muscovite government aimed to strengthen the prestige of its Tsar was by restoring the territories Ivan the Terrible had been forced to cede to John III of Sweden in 1580, including the city of Narva.[51] Narva was a port city that provided access to the Baltic Sea, which was of crucial importance for Muscovite aspirations to develop maritime trade with Western Europe. The Muscovite army, led by Boris Godunov, besieged Narva in 1591 but rather than storm the city, Godunov chose to hold diplomatic negotiations with the Swedes.[52] While negotiations secured the return of Ivangorod to the Muscovites, Narva still remained under Swedish control. In retaliation, the Swedish approached various Crimean Khans and the

[50] Ibid., p. 21.
[51] R.I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State, and Society in North-eastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 23-43.
[52] V.I. Buganov (ed.), *Razriadnaia Kniga, 1475-1598 gg.* (Moscow, 1966), p. 427.

Ottomans with a proposed joint attack on Muscovy. The coalition reportedly created an army of 100,000 soldiers, though the Tatars were defeated by Godunov on 4 July 1591 after an unidentified nocturnal commotion caused panic and chaos within the Tatar army prompting its soldiers to flee.[53] The Tatar defeat doomed Swedish aspirations to initiate a siege of Novgorod and Pskov, and in 1595 Sweden ratified a 'perpetual' peace treaty with Muscovy. Notably, the Muscovites had only agreed to the truce as Godunov had overestimated the potential of a joint Polish-Swedish offensive against Muscovy. Although the truce brought no political or economic benefit to the Muscovites, Godunov used the glory of these victories to bolster his own status as a national hero, though contemporaries maliciously noted that he was 'clumsy in battle' and 'unskilled in bearing arms'.[54] Godunov's eastern and southern foreign policy was much more successful; the Tatar defeat of 1591 paved the way for the expansion of Muscovite dominions, establishing the cities of Voronezh (1585), Elets (1592) and cementing the Muscovite conquest of Siberia.[55]

Unfortunately, little has been written about the diplomatic ceremonial of either Feodor's or Godunov's reigns, but the encounters mentioned within the Ambassadorial *knigi* offer some sense of the changes that were applied to the diplomatic rituals established by Ivan IV. Whereas Ivan and his predecessors were known to receive embassies not only in Moscow but likewise in their various palaces at Mozhaisk, Staritsa and Aleksandrova Sloboda, in Feodor's reign all diplomatic audiences were to be conducted in the Kremlin in the aforementioned Golden Chamber. The practice was retained in the reign of Boris Godunov. The shift was initially a practical response to the changes in government, since the administration of Muscovite foreign affairs was no longer

[53] Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, pp. 48-9.
[54] 'Pamiatniki Drevnei Russkoi Pismennosti, Otnosiashchiesia k Smutnomu Vremeni', in V.I. Golovin (ed.), *Russkaia Istoricheskaia Biblioteka*, 13 (St. Petersburg, 1892), p. 1283.
[55] Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, p. 50.

personally overseen by the Tsar as it had been under Ivan. It enabled Feodor's regents to focus on transforming Moscow and the Palace into a political showplace as a means of influencing the perceptions of both visiting diplomats and the Muscovite populace. Thus, in 1598, the arriving Imperial messenger was requested by the *Posol'skii Prikaz* to announce himself as an ambassador from the Holy Roman Emperor, as a means of bolstering the status of the newly-elected Boris Godunov. Elevated to the status of an ambassador, the messenger's public entrance into Moscow was transformed into a lavish procession, in which the servants of the *prikaz* were dressed in German attire and carried magnificent gifts, specially loaned by the Muscovite royal treasury for the occasion, to create the illusion of a grand Imperial embassy.[56] Emphasis was also placed on regulating the form and address of diplomatic correspondence. One area of contention was the appearance of the Tsar's title in foreign correspondence. As shown in Chapter 7, the Muscovite government was keen to ensure that all royal letters addressed to the Tsar included the 'big title', listing all of the cities and counties under Muscovite control. An omission or an abbreviation of the title was increasingly regarded as a deliberate slight and an expression of political support to Muscovite enemies. Bearing in mind the Russo-Swedish/Polish military conflict over their Baltic territories, an omission of a contested city or region implied that the author of the letter did not recognise Muscovite sovereignty over that specific region, which the Muscovites took as a sign of enmity. The abbreviation of the title within the Anglo-Muscovite context offers a clear demonstration of the importance of the title to the Muscovites and the potential diplomatic repercussions its abbreviation could have upon an amicable conduct of diplomatic relations.

[56] M. Shile, *Donesenie o Poezdke v Moskvu Mikhaila Shile v 1598 g*., trans. and ed. A.N. Shemiakin, 2 (Moscow, 1875), pp. 4-5.

Consolidating the status of the Muscovite ruler upon an international stage was always an important objective of the Rurikid foreign policy, but its importance intensified upon the death of the last member of the Rurikid dynasty. Feodor I died in 1598 without a living heir, and, after an expiry of a forty-day period of mourning, the Assembly of the Land convened and elected Boris Godunov as Tsar.[57] Godunov was solemnly crowned on 1 September 1598. Although traditional scholarship had always portrayed Godunov as a scheming usurper and orchestrator of every misfortune faced by the Muscovites on the cusp of the seventeenth century, Ruslan Skrynnikov's post-revisionist examination of Godunov's life has been influential in refuting previous claims and highlighting the achievements of Godunov's reign.[58] Unlike the Romanovs, who would ascend the Muscovite throne in 1613, Godunov could not claim a special blood relationship with the previous Rurikid dynasty, while his opponents spread rumours that Godunov had been responsible for the death of Tsarevich Dmitrii, Feodor's younger half-brother, in 1591.[59] Hence, the most pressing concern of Godunov's reign was to gain popularity, prestige and recognition of the legitimacy of his status as Tsar both domestically and internationally, as well as to secure the future of his dynasty through the marriages of his children. Domestically, in the first years of his reign, opposition to the Godunovs amongst prominent Muscovite boyar families was suppressed through repression, exile, imprisonment, execution and public disgrace, though ultimately Godunov failed

[57] Ruslan Skrynnikov notes that Russian historiography has frequently portrayed Godunov as an unlawful usurper, though Skrynnikov's post-revisionist view of Godunov's reign has concluded that he was lawfully elected: Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, p. 80.

[58] Godunov was accused of not only murdering Tsarevich Dmitrii, but of murdering his niece Tsarevna Feodosia and his sister Irina as a means of elevating his position to that of the Tsar. This hypothesis was first put forward by one of the revisionist historians of Godunov's administration, A.I. Shpakov, *Gosudarstvo i Tserkov' v ikh Vzaimnykh Otnosheniiakh v Moskovskom Godusartve* (Odessa, 1912), pp. 56-60.

[59] Tsarevich Dmitrii died in May 1591 in mysterious circumstances at Uglich. The conclusion of a royal inquiry was that the boy had died of a self-inflicted knife wound during an epileptic fit: S.F. Platonov, *Boris Godunov* (St. Petersburg, 1921), pp. 96-7; V.K. Klein, *Uglichskoe Sledstvennoe Delo o Smerti Tsarevicha Dmitriia* (Moscow, 1913).

to eliminate all of his opponents.[60] Meanwhile, in terms of foreign policy, Godunov preferred to maintain peaceful relations with Muscovy's traditionally troublesome neighbours Poland, Sweden, Crimea and the Ottoman Empire. The Tsar similarly sought to negotiate dynastic marriages between his children, Feodor Borisovich and Kseniya Borisovna, and the offspring of European royalty, as means of strengthening the Godunov dynasty with potential foreign political and military support, though none of his negotiations was successful.[61] Furthermore, Godunov hoped to expand trade and cultural exchange with Western Europe and granted mercantile concessions to various European merchants, including the Dutch and the Germans.[62]

Godunov's attempts to cultivate diplomatic relations with Western Europe resulted in an increased arrival of diplomatic representatives into Moscow, and in order to impress the visitors the new Tsar commenced a programme of transforming the Muscovite capital into a showplace. Amongst the architectural improvements introduced in Godunov's reign was a new aqueduct that supplied the city with water, an old dilapidated bridge over the Neglinnaia River was restructured, and the houses and shops destroyed in the Moscow Fire of 1571 were rebuilt in stone.[63] New objects of splendour were added to the Golden Chamber, in which Godunov received foreign ambassadors. This included a magnificent golden throne decorated with turquoise, rubies and tourmalines, which Godunov received as a gift from the Persian Shah, as well as the aforementioned bejewelled orb and sceptre received as a gift from Rudolph II.[64] Meanwhile, the regalia and apparel previously worn by Ivan whilst greeting

[60] Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov,* pp. 107-10.
[61] See N.E. Evans, 'The Anglo-Russian Royal Marriage Negotiations of 1600-03', *The Slavonic and East European Review,* 61 (1983), pp. 364-5.
[62] The impact of Godunov's mercantile expansion on the positon of English mercantile activities and Anglo-Muscovite relations are discussed in Chapter 6.
[63] Skrynnikov, *Boris Godunov*, p. 113.
[64] M. Bakhmeteva (ed.), *Moskovskaia Oruzheinaia Palata* (Moscow, 1860), pp. 57-8; the throne is currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow. For a visual representation see http://www.armoryhall.ru/phshow.html?photo=pic-54-001 [accessed 13 March 2018].

diplomats, including a bejewelled golden robe of state, became an essential component of Godunov's stately attire. The juxtaposition of new and old royal objects created a visual reference of dynastic continuity, and emphasised personal networks and connections that Godunov was able to establish with other rulers. An image of magnificence and splendour was not limited to the description of the Tsar's court, for diplomats remarked upon the lavish reception they were given by the Muscovite officials. Even during the years of famine in 1600-03, the ambassadorial processions were taken through the streets lined with a richly attired populace to maintain an image of a wealthy nation under the rule of a new and prosperous dynasty. The fact that the *pristav* was instructed to remove undesired persons from the routes, and equip local boyars and their families with instructions and sometimes with designated apparel they were expected to wear for the occasion, was kept away from the prying eyes of visiting diplomats.

In spite of the efforts of Godunov's government to maintain an illusion of wealth and prosperity, Godunov's adversaries were all too eager to portray Muscovite socio-economic problems (including famine) as a divine punishment for Godunov's usurpation of the Muscovite throne. The appearance of a new claimant, who styled himself as Tsarevich Dmitrii Ivanovich (also referred to as 'False Dmitrii') caused further political turmoil. Dissatisfied with Godunov's rule and plagued by famine, the populace of Muscovy's southern frontier supported the new claimant, while Dmitrii gained military support from the Don Cossacks, the Polish Crown and Godunov's political enemies.[65] The growing threat of invasion and revolt had a profound impact on the health of the Tsar, and in April 1605 Boris Godunov died of an apoplectic stroke. Although Godunov's fifteen-year-old son ascended the throne, styled as Feodor II, within two months Feodor

[65] C. Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty* (University Park, PA, 2001), pp. 123-37.

was assassinated and Dmitrii (styled as Dmitrii I) was raised to the Muscovite throne by the means of a military campaign and popular uprising.[66] Dmitrii's reign came to an abrupt end in May 1606, when he was assassinated and Vasilii Shuiskii (styled as Vasilii IV) was crowned as Tsar.[67] Shuiskii's reign was likewise troubled and brief. Following the collapse of state authority in Muscovy in 1610 and the ensuing chaos, the sixteen-year-old Michael Romanov was elected to the Muscovite throne in 1613, bringing an end to the Civil War.[68] The period of Muscovite history between the end of the Rurikid dynasty in 1598 and the establishment of the Romanovs in 1613, referred to as the 'Time of Troubles' (*Smutnoe Vremia*), was characterised by political discord, economic collapse and foreign intervention. The carefully cultivated image of the Muscovite Tsar as a prosperous and magnificent ruler, created by Ivan III and cemented by Ivan IV, was essentially destroyed, and it was up to the new Romanov dynasty to recover it.

3. Muscovite Diplomacy in the Reign of Michael I (1613-45)

Scholars note that the principal reasoning behind the election of Michael Romanov as Tsar was his insignificance, or rather his lack of personal ambitions that would ensure that the new Tsar would be nothing more than a puppet controlled by the boyars.[69] To an extent, such assumptions were correct. During the first years of his reign, the Tsar's mother, Kseniya Shestova (who was forced to take the veil, alongside her husband, by Godunov) exerted great influence upon her son and strategically placed her relatives in all the influential government posts. Upon the release of Michael's father from Polish captivity in 1619, Feodor Romanov (hereafter referred to as Patriarch Filaret) was elevated

[66] Dunning, *Russia's First Civil War*, pp. 181-200.
[67] Ibid., pp. 201-38.
[68] Ibid., pp. 443-60.
[69] Ibid., pp. 302-03.

to the Patriarchy of Moscow and removed his wife and her relatives from the court to become a *de facto* ruler of Muscovy until his death in 1633.[70] While the real power of governing Muscovy was in the hands of Michael's parents, it was still important to emphasise and bolster Michael's claim as the rightful heir to the Rurikid legacy, especially as Filaret himself was unable to take up the throne due to his monastic status. Although Michael was the grandson of Nikita Romanovich Zakharyin-Yuriev, the brother of Ivan IV's first wife Anastasia, the Romanov claim to the Rurikid legacy was nearly as tentative as that of previously deposed Tsars, including the Godunovs and Shuiskii.[71] The establishment of the Romanovs as the legitimate heirs to the Rurikid dynasty, and thereby the rightful claimants to the Muscovite throne, was one of the principal aims of Michael's reign, alongside the initial concerns regarding the expulsion of Swedish and Polish armies from Muscovite territories. Diplomacy once again offered a convenient means to attain not only the recognition of Michael's status as Tsar but to acquire financial and military aid and political support against its troublesome western neighbours.

Similarly to Boris Godunov, the diplomatic practice of Michael's reign is sparsely studied by scholars, and it is argued that it was not until the reign of Michael's son, Alexis I (r. 1645-76) that the Muscovite diplomacy experienced any significant growth.[72] The Ambassadorial *knigi* of the period suggest that, while a near peak of Muscovite diplomatic developments would not occur until the end of the seventeenth century, Michael's reign was fundamental in setting some of the foundations that were later built upon by his successors, just as the foundations of Ivan III's diplomacy were improved by Ivan IV. Most noticeably,

[70] A.A. Polovtsov, 'Filaret (v miru Feodor Nikitich Romanov) [1553-1633]', *RBD*, 21 (St. Petersburg, 1901), pp. 94-103.
[71] V. Korsakova, 'Nikita Romanovich Zakharyin-Yuriev [1552-86]', *RBD*, 17 (St. Petersburg, 1918), pp. 42-50.
[72] M.A. Alpatov, 'Chto znal Posol'skii prikaz o Zapadnoi Evrope vo vtoroi polovine XVII v.', in idem., *Istoriia i Istoriki. Istoriografia vseobshchei istorii* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 89-129.

ambassadorial audiences became more extravagant, while the Tsar's presence became more regulated. Every action and word attained a specific meaning and it could be argued that the Tsar's presence at diplomatic audiences became symbolic rather than political, especially as negotiations were overseen by the ambassadorial *pristav*. The audience itself resembled a carefully orchestrated performance, in which both the Tsar and the diplomats were assigned rigid designated roles. Whereas Ivan III frequently greeted diplomats whilst rising from his throne and walking towards them, under the Romanovs the Tsar was to remain seated and motionless, and frequently silent, through the duration of the audience.[73]

To underscore the greater status of the Tsar, diplomats were forbidden to address the Tsar directly and all communication, including the presentation of sovereign letters, was to be conducted by the Chancellor who assumed the role of the Tsar's mouthpiece for the duration of the audience. The introduction of such changes was intended to create and maintain a symbolic distance between the Tsar and the diplomats. In practice, diplomats could resort to trickery or a refusal to comply with prescribed Muscovite rituals, for instance by refusing to hand over their sovereign letters to anyone but the Tsar. The resulting clashes between the diplomats and the *pristav* are often used by scholars as evidence of the cultural incompatibility between Muscovy and its diplomatic partners. Rather than demonstrating incompatibility, such instances are more useful if regarded as examples of shared values and understandings; both the *pristav* and the diplomats were clearly aware of the implications their actions and gestures could have upon the symbolic representation of their sovereign's honour. Due to the fear of belittling that honour they strove to accentuate the magnificence of their monarch through their actions. By refusing to hand their sovereign letters to anyone but the Tsar, the ambassadors were effectively demonstrating to the

[73] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 118.

Muscovites that their sovereigns were Michael's equals rather than supplicants. As proxy representatives of their sovereigns, the diplomats expected to be accorded the same honour as would have been shown to their sovereigns if they were to be physically present at the audience. A similar defence of the Tsar's honour was undertaken by Muscovite ambassadors during their embassies to foreign courts, whereby the Muscovites would often refuse to partake in elements of diplomatic ceremonial that they felt would belittle the honour of the Tsar. On one such occasion in 1617, Michael's ambassadors voiced their displeasure at the rank and the number of noblemen sent by James I to greet them, which they felt demeaned their sovereign's honour.[74] The protection of a monarch's honour was, therefore, a common concern for Muscovite officials and foreign diplomats.

Alongside the emphasis on Michael's status as Tsar, it was important to create a visual representation of political continuity despite the change of dynasty, as well as demonstrate that, despite the devastating effects of the Time of Troubles, Michael's court was just as prosperous and magnificent as that of his predecessors. Michael's throne was made from an old oriental chair that had previously belonged to Ivan the Terrible, but in contrast to Ivan's ivory throne, that of the Romanovs was decorated with thirteen kilograms (29 pounds) of gold, gemstones and pearls for its ornamentation.[75] Additions were made to Michael's stately regalia, including a new Crown decorated with 177 precious stones and pearls, a golden carving chain (given as a gift by the Dutch) and a golden chain that included an inscription of the Tsar's 'big title' with the list of the towns and principalities of the Muscovite state.[76] The acquisition and commission of new regalia were continued by Alexis I, and in the 1650s Alexis

[74] Phipps, *Sir John Merrick*, p. 138.
[75] The throne is currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow; for a visual representation see http://www.armoryhall.ru/phshow.html?photo=pic-54-003 [accessed 7th March 2018].
[76] See http://www.armoryhall.ru/55_v50_russia_regalii_collection.html [accessed 7th March 2018].

was presented with a new 'grand set' of regalia (consisting of a sceptre, orb and barmas) alongside a 'diamond' throne crafted by Persian and Ottoman masters.[77] Further expressions of dynastic continuity were created through the production of the books of royal titles (*Tsarskii Titularnik*) produced by the *Posol'skii Prikaz*.[78] The books consisted of an ornate collection of secular portraits of contemporary Muscovite Tsars, European and Islamic rulers. Their intention was to narrate the history of the Tsars' diplomatic relations with other monarchs, as well as present a historiographical work that emphasised the continuation of the Rurikid legacy by the Romanov dynasty and their place among the great rulers of the early modern world.

Another prominent feature of Michael's reign was the increasing importance and complexity of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* within the conduct of Muscovite diplomacy. Alongside its role in organising the dispatch and reception of diplomatic embassies, by the seventeenth century, it had become the central archive of the Muscovite state and was responsible for the acquisition of news and information about European affairs. The *Vesti-Kuranty*, a set of handwritten bulletins, were read to the Tsar and his inner circle, and provided an overview of contemporary foreign affairs.[79] The *prikaz* began to employ a greater number of specialists whose expertise was essential to diplomatic conduct. Firstly, this included interpreters and translators, who covered a range of thirty various languages from English to Wallachian.[80] Additionally, the *prikaz* was responsible for the employment of gold scribes (*pistsy*) who were responsible for decorating royal

[77] Shifman, and Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars*, p. 18; the regalia can be seen on the posthumous portrait of the Tsar produced in the 1670s, currently on public display at the Kremlin Museum. For a visual representation see http://www.armoryhall.ru/55_v50_russia_regalii_collection.html [accessed 7th March 2018].

[78] For the production of manuscripts in the chancellery see I.M. Kudriavtsev, '"Izdatel'skaia" Deiatel'nost Posol'skogo Prikaza (k Istorii Russkoi Rukopisnoi Knigi vo Vtoroi Polovine XVII veka)', *Kniga: Issledovaniia i Materialy*, 8 (1963), pp. 179-224; I.M. Eskina (ed.) *Tsarskii Tutularnik* (Moscow, 2007).

[79] See S.I. Kotkov (ed.), *Vesti-Kuranty, 1600-1639* (Moscow, 1972).

[80] A.V. Beliakov, 'Sluzhashchie Posol'skogo Prikaza Vtorioi Treti XVII veka' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 2002), pp. 105-9; 148-54.

letters, artists, icon-painters, jewellers, *pristavy* (a category of guards), musicians and even actors.[81] Alongside the employment of such individuals, the *prikaz* had increased the regularisation of its records regarding Muscovite interactions with foreign sovereignties. Firstly, the production and compilation of the Ambassadorial *knigi* increased, partly in response to the growing Muscovite diplomatic interaction and creation of new diplomatic relationships. There was likewise an introduction of new records, including the *knigi* of expenditure and receipts.[82] The former recorded the amounts of victuals and provisions given out by the *prikaz* to visiting ambassadors as a mark of Michael's hospitality, and noted the quantity and value of diplomatic gifts given to foreign ambassadors upon departure or sent to foreign courts alongside Muscovite embassies. In contrast, the receipts recorded the types and value of gifts brought by ambassadors as gifts to the Tsars. The objective of such records was to establish a more regularised system of assessing how much honour was accorded to Muscovite ambassadors abroad in comparison to the honour accorded to foreign ambassadors in Moscow. In practical terms, this meant that, as an example, the *prikaz* was able to use the records of the arriving gifts to calculate the value of reciprocal gifts that the Muscovites were expected to give in order to avoid appearing miserly and thereby belittling the Tsar's honour. The assessment was not regulated by set criteria, as although the arriving gifts were assessed by their weight, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the value of Muscovite gifts of reciprocity could fluctuate depending on the importance of the embassy within Muscovite foreign policy. On special occasions, Muscovite gifts could even depart from the staple sovereign gifts of furs. Ultimately, the growing machinery of the Muscovite diplomatic protocol began to produce a multitude of various documents that could be converted into a repository of

[81] Ibid., pp. 172-83.
[82] These can be found in RGADA, Moscow, fonds 144-9 and 198-335.

rituals and ceremonies to be used for future consultation when diplomatic occasions had to be organised on the basis of past precedents.

On a final note, it is important to discuss the Romanov concerns relating to the dynastic succession, especially bearing in mind the potentiality of political strife that could result if Michael was to die without an heir. It was thus imperative that the Romanov Tsar was to be married promptly. In order to raise the dignity of the new dynasty, Michael's father, Filaret, sought to negotiate a marriage with a daughter of a European sovereign, and dispatched embassies to Denmark and Sweden in search of a royal bride. The Danish refused to receive the envoy, and the Swedish King would only consider the offer if the bride was permitted to retain her religion.[83] Instead, the Romanovs were forced to seek a Muscovite bride. Prior to Filaret's arrival in 1619, Michael had been engaged to Maria Khlopova, but the young woman was declared to be an incurable invalid and banished to Siberia. Upon Maria's re-examination, it was discovered that her reported ill-health was the product of sabotage by a rival family. Although the girl was compensated, it was established that Michael should instead marry Maria Dolgorukaya in 1624. The new Tsarina died within a year of her marriage, instigating rumours that she had been poisoned by rival court factions. In 1626, Michael was remarried to Eudoxia Streshneva, but despite producing ten children, the couple only had one surviving male heir, Alexis (b. 1629).[84] In the last years of Michael's reign, the Muscovite government returned to the question of elevating the dignity of the Romanov dynasty by establishing matrimonial alliances with European royal houses. In 1642, Michael sent an embassy to Christian IV of Denmark proposing a marriage between his eldest daughter, Tsarevna Irina, and Christian's son Prince Valdemar.[85] After prolonged negotiations, it was agreed that Valdemar would be sent to Moscow but only

[83] R. Nisbet Bain, *The First Romanovs, 1613-1725* (New York, 1905), p. 49.
[84] Ibid., pp. 49-50.
[85] A good analysis of the affair can be found in E.I. Filina, '"Delo" Korolevicha Val'demara', in M.N. Belov (ed.), *Rossiiskaia Gosudarstvennoct',* 1 (Kostroma, 1993), pp. 46-9.

upon a promise that the Prince would not be forced to renounce his Lutheran faith.[86] Upon his arrival in 1644 Valdemar was subjected to countless meetings with the Tsar and Patriarch Joseph of Moscow both of whom informed the Prince that he would not be able to marry Irina until his conversion to the Orthodox faith. Valdemar's refusal to convert and Michael's obstinate refusal to allow the Prince to return to Denmark resulted in a stalemate, whereby the Prince was effectively detained under guard for the duration of twelve months until Michael's death.[87] In 1645, the Muscovite throne passed to his sixteen-year-old son Alexis, who under the influence of his tutor (and later brother-in-law) Boris Morozov, continued to develop Muscovite diplomatic practice. [88]

Although European diplomats often perceived Muscovite diplomacy as rigid and conservative, this chapter has showed that it was not stagnant but continued to develop over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The developments, however, were not spontaneous and required a significant amount of time before any alteration became regarded as a precedent (*starina*) and thereby implemented into practice. After all, Muscovite diplomatic practice evolved and altered alongside the progression of its diplomatic ambitions. Each direct encounter with a specific sovereignty offered an opportunity to learn about each other's practices and expectations, whilst attaining recognition of status and dignity. While all of this knowledge was not necessarily added to the existing diplomatic practice, there were certain elements that the Muscovites borrowed and incorporated, including the replacement of the royal staff with a sceptre. The commencement of diplomatic relations by Ivan III and the cultivation of foreign relations by his successors (especially Ivan IV) paved the way for the gradual recognition of Muscovy as a great power by other European states in the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, the Tsars' protection of their monarchic honour

[86] Filina, '"Delo"', p. 46.
[87] Ibid., p. 48.
[88] J. Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 69-111.

and commitment to competitive ceremonial displays of sovereign status emphasised that diplomacy evolved within a mutual space of shared ceremonial norms. As demonstrated in subsequent chapters, the Tsars' participation in an exchange of gifts and royal letters was a reflection of their desire to attain an acknowledged position within the early modern European system of precedence.

Chapter 3

Anglo-Muscovite Relations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Scholarship on Anglo-Muscovite relations in the sixteenth and seventieth centuries commonly begins with the narration of the English search for the north-east passage and the accidental English 'discovery' of Muscovy in 1553.[1] For some historians, the proceeding discussion focuses on the development of English commercial activities and the growth of the Muscovy Company; others emphasise the political and cultural incompatibility between the two states, alongside instances of ceremonial clash and conflicts between English ambassadors and Muscovite officials.[2] Prominently, the scholarship highlights the unequal and unilateral nature of Anglo-Muscovite relations that was likely the product of the disparity in their respective political agendas. While the Tsars sought to consolidate their friendship with the English Crown through the ratification of a political offensive and defensive alliance, the interests of the English were principally mercantile.[3] Anderson, for instance, notes that Muscovy was 'too remote to be of real political importance' to the English Crown, and Felicity Stout suggests that tension was generated by the *ad hoc* nature of English embassies, which were only dispatched to negate any potential threat to the commercial success of English merchants.[4] Less attention has been accorded

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[1] The narrative first appeared in Hakluyt, *PN* (1st edn., London, 1598), and featured prominently in the works of nineteenth-century historians such as V.O. Klyuchevskii's *Skazania Inostrantsev o Moskovskom Gosudarstve* (Moscow, 1866) and J. Hamel's *England and Russia* (London, 1854). It commonly appears in more recent scholarship, including K. Mayers, *North-East Passage to Muscovy* (Sutton, 2005) and Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth*, pp. 15-58.

[2] For the discussion of English mercantile affairs in Muscovy see: T.S. Willan, *The Early History of the Russia Company, 1553-1603* (Manchester, 1956), as well as S.H. Baron, 'Ivan the Terrible, Giles Fletcher and the Muscovite Merchantry: A Reconsideration', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 56 (1978), pp. 563-85; idem., 'Osip Nepea and the Opening of Anglo-Russian Commercial Relations', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 11 (1978), pp. 42-63. A discussion of Anglo-Muscovite political relations can be found in M.V. Unkovskaya, 'Anglo-Russian Diplomatic Relations, 1580-1696' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1992).

[3] See Ivan to Elizabeth, dated November 1567, in which the Tsar insists that Elizabeth join him against the Poles: BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332 r-v.

[4] M.S. Anderson, *Britain's Discovery of Russia, 1553-1815* (London, 1958), p. 30; Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth*, pp. 24-34.

to the examination of the ways in which political aspirations and interests of both monarchies contributed towards a creation of a plausible and functional diplomatic relationship. Despite the apparent differences that lie not only in the disparity of Anglo-Muscovite political agenda but even within the conduct of diplomacy itself, England remained Muscovy's principal Western European ally and commercial partner for almost a century.

Furthermore, although the Anglo-Muscovite relationship was certainly asymmetrical, it was not as unilateral as emphasised by previous scholarship, since neither state was able to achieve their diplomatic ambitions. While scholars often point out the failure of the Muscovite Tsars to conclude a political alliance with England, the success of the English Company in its pursuit of mercantile interests is overstated.[5] The fact that the scope and generosity of the Tsar's charter of trading privileges (*zhalovannaia gramota*) were dependent upon the extent of English political concessions remains underestimated. For instance, the potential disbandment of the Company in the 1620s has been attributed to the internal mismanagement of its agents, while no sufficient acknowledgement has been given to the impact of the decrease in the Tsar's royal favour and the consequent curtailment of English trading privileges.[6] As a result, the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic relationship is frequently presented as being commercially beneficial to England but politically disappointing to the Muscovites. Yet such a conclusion is misleading, especially as the aspirations of both the English Company and the Muscovite government were too ambitious. The conclusion of an Anglo-Muscovite political alliance was as unlikely as the continuity of English monopoly over trade in Muscovy, and both governments were aware of this.

[5] I.I. Lubimenko, 'Torgovye Snoshenia Rossii s Angliei pri Pervykh Romanovykh', *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniia*, 66 (1916), pp. 137-90; M.S. Arel, 'Masters in Their Own House: The Russian Merchant Elite and Complaints against the English in the First-Half of the Seventeenth Century', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 77 (1999), pp. 401-47.
[6] Phipps, *Sir John Merrick*, pp. 170-2.

Instead, as discussed in this chapter, the relationship concentrated on extracting as much political and economic concessions as was possible.

This chapter traces the trajectory of Anglo-Muscovite relations by focusing on the political, mercantile, dynastic and individual aspirations of English sovereigns and Muscovite Tsars. Rather than offer a chronological narrative of individual embassies, it explores the short and long-term aims and motivations of both monarchies, and discusses whether a potential dependence of each state upon the other, in fulfilment of these aspirations, encouraged the two governments to search for ways to circumvent their cultural and political differences in pursuit of mutual interests. The English Crown, for instance, was willing to grant inconsequential political concessions to the Muscovite Tsar to strengthen the outward appearance of a cordial diplomatic relationship as a means of protecting its trading privileges.[7] Likewise, despite the frustration of the Tsars with the irresolution of the English Crown in matters of foreign policy, trading privileges were often renewed to retain the possibility of further negotiation.[8] By exploring the Anglo-Muscovite relationship from the perspective of royal aims and motivations, the chapter addresses the reasons why both England and Muscovy endured a long-lasting functional diplomatic relationship amidst their disparities. Subsequent chapters tackle the question of how circumvention was attempted through the practice of giving and receiving gifts.

Toward the end, this chapter contextualises Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy within the bigger picture of English and Muscovite relations with northern Europe, especially Poland-Lithuania and Sweden. While England was predominantly a mercantile partner and an imaginary political and military ally for Muscovy, both

[7] See Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 18 May 1570, in which the Queen promised to receive the Tsar hospitably in case he should be driven from his dominions: BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 341r-v.
[8] For instance, see 'A note of Speche that themperor of Russia vsed vnto [Daniel Sylvester], 29 November 1576': BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 353r.

Poland and Sweden were its perpetual troublesome neighbours, geopolitical rivals and occasional military adversaries. To this effect, the state of Muscovite relations with both countries was a prominent feature within Anglo-Muscovite negations, whether as a factor of influence for Ivan IV's proposed covert import of arms and non-precious metals, or the requests of Michael's ambassadors for English military and financial support.[9]

1. Trade

The principal English interest in the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic relations with Muscovy was trade. Since the early decades of the sixteenth century, the English Crown had been urged by merchant-adventurers to sanction an exploration of new trade routes and discovery of potential markets. In his petition to Henry VIII, the Bristol merchant Robert Thorne noted that 'out of Spaine they haue discouered all the Indies and Seas Occidentall, and out of Portingall all the Indies and Seas Orientall', so that 'now rest to be discouered the sayd North parts, the which it seemeth [...], is onely [the English] charge and duety'.[10] Thorne advised his countrymen to find alternative routes to the 'Indies' and 'spiceries' by the north-east or the north-west route, both of which would enable England to reach the goal much sooner than the south-east and south-west routes used by their Iberian rivals.[11] In addition to acquiring prestige and renown in the eyes of other Christian princes, the discovery of these passages would have helped to revive the declining English woollen cloth trade and open up new commercial opportunities, including access to the 'world of golde, precious stones, balmes, spices, and other things that

[9] A Message to Elizabeth from Ivan delivered by Anthony Jenkinson, BLOU, Ashmolean MS 1729, f. 14r-v; Ambassadorial Report of Aleksei Ziuzin (1613), RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 48.
[10] R. Thorne, ' A Declaration of the Indies', in R. Hakluyt, *Divers voyages touching the discouerie of America, and the Llands Adiacent vnto the same* (2nd edn., London, 1582), sig. B2; also in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 213.
[11] Hakluyt, *Divers Voyages,* 1, sig. B2^{v}-B3^{r}.

[the English] esteeme most'.[12] As a direct response to Throne's petition, John Rut's expedition of 1527 set out to search for a north-west passage, while that of Chancellor and Willoughby in 1553 departed to the north-east. Rut's voyage did not bear any commercial results; despite the exploration of the coasts of Newfoundland and Chesapeake Bay, the English explorers did not find any suitable opportunities for the establishment of new trade networks.[13] The north-eastern voyage, on the other hand, commenced a mercantile partnership with Muscovy.[14]

At the onset of Anglo-Muscovite trading relations, Ivan IV permitted English merchants to 'send vnto vs your ships and vessels, when and as often as they may haue passage' with 'all kinds of wares', and offered the merchants a 'free Marte [market] with all free liberties through [his] whole dominions with all kinde of wares, to come and goe at their pleasure, without any let, damage or impediment'.[15] Following his return to England in 1554, Chancellor and his investors were granted a new royal Charter by Queen Mary I (r. 1553-8), which established the English Muscovy Company, the first English joint-stock company that would supervise Anglo-Muscovite trade.[16] English imports into Muscovy included non-precious metals like copper, iron and lead, munitions and arms for the army, and jewels, rich silks, velvets and damasks for the Tsar's court, as well as cloth, pewter and paper.[17] The Muscovite exports consisted of cordage, naval supplies, hemp, tallow and furs.[18] Wretts-Smith had even remarked that 'the [English] fleet that defeated the Spanish Armada [in 1588] was largely

[12] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 214.
[13] See J.A. Williamson, *The Voyages of the Cabots and the English Discovery of North America under Henry VII and Henry VIII* (London, 1929), pp. 102-8; E.G.R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography, 1485-1583* (London, 1930), pp. 11-2.
[14] C. Adams, 'The newe Nauigation and discouerie of the kingdome of Moscouvia […] in the yeere 1553', in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 243-6.
[15] 'Copie of the Duke of Moscouie and Emperour of Russia his letters [1554]', in Ibid., p. 255.
[16] 'The Charter of the Marchants of Russia, graunted vpon the discouerie of the saide Countrey, by King Philip and Queene Marie [1555]', in Ibid., pp. 268-72.
[17] E.A. Bond (ed.), *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1856), pp. ix-xii.
[18] Ibid., p. x.

rigged with [Muscovite] cordage and cables'.[19] Furthermore, the Company took advantage of the established Muscovite trade with Eastern rulers and purchased jewels, spices and silks that were later exported to England.[20]

Although Anna Bertolet's description of the commencement of Anglo-Muscovite relations as an 'accident' or an 'error' is rather misleading, for England was certainly aware of the existence of the Muscovite state prior to their 1553 voyage, it is important to remember that the establishment of Anglo-Muscovite trade was not the principal aim of Chancellor's expedition.[21] The Company retained its interest in continuing the search for a north-eastern passage, especially during the first two decades of Anglo-Muscovite relations. In 1558, it commissioned its agent Anthony Jenkinson to search for a trading passage to China, and in 1561 Jenkinson was dispatched on another mission to establish a trade route to Persia.[22] Further voyages were undertaken by Company agents throughout the 1560s. In 1568 the Company was even able to procure a charter of trading privileges from the Shah Tahmasp I.[23] The consolidation of Anglo-Persian trade presented several challenges. Firstly, the trade route was dangerous. The 1568 mission led by Thomas Banister and Geoffrey Ducket was forced to surrender its goods to marauders, and although the Company was able to recover their goods with the assistance of the Muscovite government, Edward Bond estimated that the expedition suffered a loss of £30,000 to 40,000.[24] Most importantly, English trade with Persia was dependent upon Muscovite letters of

[19] M. Wretts-Smith, 'The English in Russia during the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1920), p. 95. In 1587, more than a quarter of the Navy's expenses was for rope brought from the Muscovy Company and in the same year another £63,000 worth of cordage was ordered from the Company: TNA, SP 12/217, f. 72r.
[20] J.T. Kotilaine, *Russia's Foreign Trade and Economic Expansion in the Seventeenth-Century* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 56-60, 451-60.
[21] A.R. Bertolet, 'The Tsar and the Queen: "You Speak a Language That I Understand Not"', in C. Beem (ed.), *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 101.
[22] 'The voyage of M. Anthony Ienkinson […] to Boghar, 1558', in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 1, pp. 324-42; 'The voyage of M. Anthony Ienkinson […] into Persia, 1561', in Ibid., pp. 343-52.
[23] Ibid., pp. 352-3.
[24] Bond notes that no further exploration for the north-eastern passage was undertaken by the Company until 1579: Bond, *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, p. vii.

safe passage. The letters permitted English merchants and explorers to travel across Muscovy, as travel, especially that of foreigners, was strictly regulated by the government. They also offered Muscovite political and military support to the merchants in their dealings with neighbouring princes and rulers.[25] Ivan was content to comply with English requests for such letters, most likely in the hope of securing a favourable reception to his political propositions from Elizabeth I.[26] His successors, however, frequently vetoed the matter and explained that no letters of safe passage could be granted due to the political instability of the region and the frequent in-fighting between the Tatars.[27] The Company's grand aspiration to oversee Anglo-Persian trade was thus curbed, but it stationed its agents in the Muscovite cities of Astrakhan and Kazan, both of which were central market hubs for the Muscovite trade with the East. Meanwhile, English merchants continued to cultivate Anglo-Safavid relations, most notably the Sherley brothers who were invited by Shah Abbas I in 1597 to modernise the Safavid army.[28] Robert Sherley was later dispatched on a diplomatic mission to James I in 1608.

In the second decade of the seventeenth century, negotiations for the establishment of the English trade routes to Persia and China were intensified. The Muscovy Company intended to expand and diversify their commercial activities and markets to negate the financial losses incurred during the Time of Troubles (1598-1613). The English embassy of 1617 petitioned Michael Romanov for the right to search for iron ores, mine 'alabaster stone', grow its own flax, acquire a monopoly over exports of tarr, so 'noe tare should bee transported ovte of the land [Muscovy] by any butt by them', and obtain letters

[25] For example, see clause 7 in 'A note of the proceeding of M. Anthonie Ienkinson [1571-2]', BL, Lansdowne MS 100, f. 122v; also in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 409.
[26] For example, see clause 2 in the 1569 *gramota* obtained by the embassy of Thomas Randolph: BL, Lansdowne MS 11, f. 50v.
[27] For example, see Feodor's *gramota* of 1586: TNA, SP 91/1, fos 55r-8r.
[28] See A. Sherley, *Sir Anthony Sherley His Relation of His Travels into Persia* (London, 1613).

of safe passage to continue the exploration of a north-eastern trade route to Persia and China.[29] The Muscovite government, however, was not prepared to consent without obtaining tangible political, financial and military support from James, especially as similar petitions for letters of safe passage were also made by the Dutch merchants. The Muscovites proposed to 'grant to the Kings Majestie of England his desire of his Merchants trading into Persia with such stronge priviliges which shall bee for ever unremovable', once an Anglo-Muscovite alliance was ratified.[30] Similarly to Elizabeth, James chose to circumvent the alliance with a politically-neutral expression of 'brotherly love and friendship', which the Muscovites deemed insufficient.[31]

The consequences of James' political neutrality were evident in Michael's new *gramota* of 1620, which confirmed the Company's right to trade within Muscovy without paying customs but did not include any letters of safe passage.[32] To grant the letters to England under its existing trading privileges, which included exemptions from customs, taxes and tolls, without obtaining concessions in the form of money and/or soldiers was of no advantage to the Tsar. As a desperate measure, in 1623 the Company attempted to coerce the Muscovite government into an agreement and dispatched the newly-appointed resident English representative with a signed treaty proposal that promised the kind of a political and military commitment for which the Muscovites had been unsuccessfully lobbying for almost a century.[33] Unfortunately, the ruse was not successful. Christopher Cocks' letter of credence omitted any reference to his commission to arrange a military agreement, and he did not present any sovereign gifts to the Tsar, all of which raised Muscovite suspicions as to whether Cocks was actually

[29] 'Speech of [Muscovite] Ambassadors to the King [4 February 1618]', TNA, SP 91/2, f. 43r-v.
[30] Ibid., f. 42r-v.
[31] The last Proposal of Muscovite Ambassadors, dated 15 April 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 60r-v.
[32] Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, pp. 802-4.
[33] Cocks to Lord Chancellor [of Muscovy], dated May 24 1624, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 103r.

authorised to conduct such matters.[34] In August 1624 Cocks returned to London to inform the King about the state of the negotiations. His return surprised the King, the Privy Council and the Company who had expected the agent to remain in Muscovy for several years. Cocks' departure from Muscovy marked the end of English negotiations for letters of safe passage and the Company was forced to accept the futility of its ambitions.[35] The original aim of Chancellor's voyage of 1553, to establish a north-eastern trade, remained unfulfilled.

Although the maintenance of Anglo-Muscovite trade might not have been the principal objective of Chancellor's voyage, it was nevertheless of great economic and commercial importance to English merchant-adventurers. While the significance of trade and the importance of individual Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* (mercantile charters) is addressed in Chapter 6, it is important to outline the benefits of the Anglo-Muscovite trade for both states, especially as the bulk of English embassies sent to Moscow focused on mercantile matters. All but three of the English ambassadors were likewise agents of the Company.[36] Stout has even rightfully argued that the *ad hoc* English embassies to Moscow were only dispatched to mediate tensions which threatened the position of the Company or to petition the Tsar for additional grants of rights and privileges.[37] Commerce was, therefore, the key preoccupation of English diplomacy. The first royally-endorsed embassy of Anthony Jenkinson in 1566-7 was instructed to attain permission for English merchants to trade in the cities of Kazan and Astrakhan.[38] Subsequent embassies of Thomas Randolph (1568-9), Jenkinson (1571-2) and Sir Jerome Bowes (1583-4) were likewise concerned with either

[34] James to Michael, dated 30 May 1623, RGADA, Moscow, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 34.
[35] Michael to James, dated 1 June 1624, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 13r.
[36] For the list of English Ambassadors to Moscow see G.M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 221-7.
[37] Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth*, pp. 25-6.
[38] Instructions for Anthony Jenkinson sent to Russia, dated April 1566, TNA, SP 70/147, fos 269r-270r.

the renewal or expansion of English trading rights and privileges.[39] The central importance of the *gramota* within Anglo-Muscovite relations is best exemplified by the Company's petition of 1604. It urged the Privy Council not to delay in sending a royal ambassador to Moscow to formally announce James' accession, as otherwise the mercantile 'privileges are like to be taken from vs [the English] or at least suspended vntill an Ambasado[r] be sent from his Ma[jes]tie to the Empero[r] to treat for the renewynge and confirming of the same priviledges'.[40]

On some occasions, to protect the interests of its merchants the Crown was forced to mediate disputes between the Company and the Muscovite officials, most notably during the Marsh affair discussed in Chapter 6. Another excellent example of this was the introduction of an obligatory customs duty in 1584 that was to be paid by all foreign merchants. As an acknowledgement of the long-standing friendship between his father, Ivan IV, and Elizabeth, Feodor I's government exempted the English merchants from paying half of the duty. In a letter of 1585, the Muscovites informed Elizabeth that the Tsar 'graced and tended [the English] people above all other nations' and 'take butt half that custome', whereas the merchants of France, Spain, Turkey and Persia were expected to pay the 'wholie custome'.[41] The obligation to pay the duty (even if just the half) was not only a financial inconvenience for the Company but a more significant indication of the loss of their privileged status and royal favour, especially as previously the English were the only foreign merchants exempt from paying all manner of taxes and duties. Without the exemption, the privileges of the Company equated those of other rival merchants and indicated that there was no longer a 'special' friendship between England and Muscovy. In

[39] See Instructions for Sir Thomas Randolph sent to the Emperor of Russia, June 1568, TNA, SP 70/98, fos 130r-31v.
[40] The Muscovites perceived the *gramota* to be a form of a trading agreement concluded between the Tsar and his English counterpart. Hence, upon the death of either of the respective parties the existing *gramota* became void and a new mercantile agreement had to be negotiated: Petition of the Muscovy Company to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 9 May 1604, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 194r.
[41] Copy of Feodor's letter to Elizabeth, dated 1 September 7094 [1585], TNA, SP 91/1, f. 50v.

response, the Company petitioned Elizabeth to mediate the matter through an extensive exchange of royal correspondence.[42] It supplied English ambassadors with a variety of lavish gifts to be presented to Feodor and his court on behalf of the Queen and the Company, including lions, bulls and mastiffs, as well as the customary silver-gilt plate.[43] Additionally, the Company's agents cultivated friendships with Feodor's officials, while the Tsar's brother-in-law and a *de facto* ruler of Muscovy, Boris Godunov, became the recipient of Elizabeth's royal letters and gifts.[44] Although undocumented, it is quite likely that the Company engaged in distributing gifts and 'bribes' to other Muscovite officials and boyars to smooth out the process of bureaucracy. Ultimately, the English strategy paid off, and by 1589 the English merchants were once again exempt from all manner of duties, taxes and tolls.[45]

The prioritisation of mercantile affairs over political princely matters by the English Crown was not only repeatedly pointed out by Ivan IV, but can be clearly seen from English interactions with the Muscovites during the Time of Troubles. Although the English mercantile movement for the period of 1605-13 remains undocumented, the Company and the Crown remained uninvolved in Muscovite political upheaval, took no sides and recognised the accession of each new ruler as a means of obtaining a confirmation of their mercantile privileges. In 1605, it was decided that John Merrick, acting as a representative of the Company, would attend an audience with Dmitrii I and publicly acknowledge his accession, calling the new Tsar, 'the right noble Prince Demetry Evanow[i]ch, the indubitate Sonne of the ould Empero[r]'.[46] Shortly after, the English Crown followed the

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[42] See Y. Tolstoi (ed.), *The First Forty Years* (St. Petersburg, 1875), pp. 243-441.
[43] J. Horsey, 'Travels', in L. Berry and R. Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyages* (Madison, WI, 1968), pp. 321-4.
[44] In a letter dated July 1589, Godunov informed Elizabeth that he 'durst not accept [her] gracious presents…but render thanks to you [Elizabeth], great lady, and your presents were brought to me': Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, p. 363.
[45] Ibid., pp. 359-62.
[46] Merrick to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 11 January 1605/06, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 211r.

Company's lead and congratulated Dmitrii upon his accession.[47] In exchange, the Tsar confirmed the rights and privileges of English merchants and permitted the Company to revive its previous exploration for the north-eastern passage.[48] Similarly, following Dmitrii's assassination in 1606, the Crown recognised the subsequent claimant Vasilii Ivanovich Shuiskii as the rightful Tsar of Muscovy and withdrew its previous support for Dmitrii's legitimacy, by referring to him as the 'False Dmitrii'.[49] In response, Shuiskii granted a new *gramota* to the English, the contents of which were identical to that of Dmitrii.[50] Following Shuiskii's deposition in 1610 the Company agents claimed that the people of the northern parts of Muscovy desired 'to cast themselves into [English] hands', and that an establishment of an English Protectorate in Muscovy would be of great economic and political benefit to James I.[51] The proponents of the idea argued that the Protectorate would offer economic benefits; it would safeguard Muscovite supplies and markets, including the ports of Archangel and St. Nicholas, and enable the English to obstruct Dutch trade.[52] Detractors questioned whether the Muscovites would agree to this proposition and noted the practical difficulties, including the cost of transporting soldiers.[53] The proponents, meanwhile, assured the Crown that the Muscovites would 'put into the English companies handes there [in Moscow], so much treasure and commodities, as will defray the charge of the Arming and transporting the number of men that they desire'.[54] Thus, in April 1613, the Crown dispatched two envoys to scout out the situation. The envoys were given a carefully worded proposal to the Muscovite boyars, which made no reference to the idea of an English protectorate; instead it

[47] James to Dmitrii, dated July 1605, TNA, SP 104/164, f. 67r-v.
[48] Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, pp. 759-61.
[49] James to Shuiskii, dated 1606, TNA, SP 104/164, f. 68r-v.
[50] 'Vasilii Shuiskii to James, dated May 1606', in HMC *Salisbury*, ed. R.A. Roberts, 19 (London, 1883), p. 143.
[51] J. More to R. Winwood, dated 6 February 1613, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 229r-230r.
[52] Ibid., f. 230r.
[53] Memorandum of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 14 April 1613, BL, Lansdowne MS 141, f. 142r.
[54] More to Winwood, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 230r.

> signifi[ed] that they [the envoys] were sent from the Kings Ma[jes]tie of England about the setting of a peacable trade for his Subiects in those Countries, and procuring some priviledges for the better manageing of their affaires.[55]

The proposal was never enacted. Upon arriving into Muscovy on 8 June 1613 the envoys were informed that Michael Romanov had been elected as Tsar.[56]

English mercantile aspirations during the reign of Michael Romanov have already been discussed at some length above, though it should be briefly noted that in 1628 a final *gramota* was issued to a group of English merchants, headed by Sir John Merrick, to trade in Muscovy under the conditions that the Muscovy Company had previously enjoyed.[57] Michael died in 1645; Charles I was beheaded in January 1649; and in September 1649, as a retribution for the King's execution Michael's son, Alexis, abrogated the 1628 *gramota* and expelled English merchants from his dominions, thus ending trade between the two states. Despite several English appeals to Alexis for the reinstatement of English mercantile privileges, the Muscovy Company never regained its former position. English mercantile interests were also gradually shifting to the more lucrative markets of the New World, and its trade with Muscovy was no longer on the diplomatic agenda.

Unlike the English, the Muscovites showed no indication that they were interested in establishing trading posts in London, and, instead, we content to conduct trade through the Muscovy Company. The Muscovites likewise lacked necessary maritime transportation to take an advantage of the opportunity.[58] The only documented reference to a potential establishment of Muscovite trade in England appeared in the seventeenth century when the Muscovites requested James to grant the same trading rights to Muscovite merchants as Michael had

[55] Sir Thomas Smith to Viscount Rochester, dated 28 August 1613, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 240r.
[56] Ibid., f. 240r.
[57] Grant of Privileges to the Muscovy Company, dated 12 June 1628, TNA, SP 91/2, fos 139r-145r.
[58] Kotilaine, *Russia's Foreign Trade*, pp. 1-13.

given to the English.[59] Rather than a serious proposition, this was simply a reflection of Muscovite aspiration to be recognised as an equal partner in the Anglo-Muscovite relationship; the probability of Muscovite mercantile elite establishing a permanent trading route to London was highly unlikely. Yet, the lack of commercial ambitions on the part of the Muscovites did not mean that the Tsar took no interest in the conduct of Anglo-Muscovite trade.

Commercially, the relationship offered a new European market for the sale and export of Muscovite commodities amidst the steady decline of Muscovite trade with the Hanse merchants. It likewise facilitated imports of Western European goods and technology, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, alongside the arrival of skilled English craftsmen, engineers, artisans, apothecaries and physicians.[60] Ivan IV used the Anglo-Muscovite commercial relationship to improve his army and fortifications. In November 1567, he requested Elizabeth to send 'out of England all kinde of Artillerie [and] thinges necessarie for warre', which was to be 'doone in secrett'.[61] Likewise in 1580, the Tsar was 'in som[e] want of powder, salt-peter, lead and brimston[e], and knew not howe to be furnished therof, the Narv[a] shutt up, but owt of England'.[62] According to Ivan's messenger, Elizabeth had sent the necessary commodities to Moscow in 'thirteen talle shipps' to the value of £9,000.[63] In general, the reports of English diplomats frequently referred to the centrality of Anglo-Muscovite trade for the supply of ordnance and metals necessary for Ivan's campaigns.[64] Ivan's requests were often expressed as a precondition for the renewal of English mercantile privileges. By fulfilling Ivan's requests the English Crown risked offending the

[59] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 25r-v.
[60] Ivan to Elizabeth I, dated September 1567, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers, 155/59, fos 1r-2v.
[61] Ivan's message to Elizabeth as related by Jenkinson, November 1567, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332v. The copy of this manuscript in the Bodleian Library mentions the phrase 'doone in secrett': BLOU, Ashmolean MS 1729, f. 14r-v.
[62] J. Horsey, 'A Relacion or Memorial extracted owt of Sir Jerome Horsey His Travells', in Bond, *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 185.
[63] Horsey, 'Travels', in, *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 298.
[64] 'The Summe of [Giles Fletcher's] Negotiation', dated 1589, BL, Lansdowne MS 60, f. 158r.

Baltic littoral states, some of which were English trading partners, but vetoing the Tsar's demands also jeopardised the success of the Company's commercial activities. Muscovite requests also conflicted with Elizabeth's adamant assertion that Anglo-Muscovite trade did not incorporate an exchange of strategic, military or naval goods and that England was a neutral party in Muscovite military conflicts. The English imports of arms were, therefore, often kept off the official record.[65] In general, while the Muscovite Tsar might not have had aspirations to create trading posts in London, he was still able to derive benefits from Anglo-Muscovite trade.

2. The Anglo-Muscovite Alliance

Muscovite interests in maintaining a diplomatic relationship with England were predominantly political. The formal recognition of relations between the two princely courts, through the exchange of royal embassies, letters and gifts, bolstered the honour of the Tsars both domestically and internationally. For Ivan IV, a relationship with England offered an opportunity to acquire a new political and military ally against his troublesome neighbours; while for Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov diplomatic relations with the English Crown strengthened the recognition of their legitimacy as Tsars. Unsurprisingly, negotiations for a conclusion of a political alliance between the two states were a prominent, if unwelcome, feature of Anglo-Muscovite relations. The main challenge to Muscovite aspirations was its peripheral role in the scheme of English foreign policy. Despite their shared anti-Catholic sentiment, the English Crown was reluctant to become involved in Muscovite geopolitical affairs.

[65] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 11 September 1567, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332r-v; H. Huttenbach, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy: Reconstructed from Unpublished Sources', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 9 (1975), p. 193.

Both Elizabeth and James favoured a stance of political neutrality and official non-commitment. Ivan IV, however, 'considered the connection with England not in the least as an international affair, but as a matter personally concerning [Queen] Elizabeth and himself'.[66] Even during his temporary abdication in 1576, the Tsar insisted that foreign ambassadors should continue to confer only with him. For Ivan, a political alliance with Elizabeth would not only have formalised Anglo-Muscovite relations but, more importantly, provided Muscovy with military and political support during a period of increased conflicts with the Crimean Tatars, Sweden and Poland-Lithuania.[67] As evident from the reports of English ambassadors, the Tsar was prepared to limit and deny trading privileges if Elizabeth refused to ratify his proposed offensive and defensive alliance. In 1570 Ivan proposed a creation of a 'frendly and sisterlie league' between the two states.[68] The 'league' would have obliged Muscovite and English 'forces to withstand and offend all such as shalbe comm[o]n enemies to [them] both, and to defend both [Elizabeth's and Ivan's] princely honours'.[69] The success of the proposal was of such great importance to Ivan that the request was written down in a letter rather than conveyed orally by the ambassador.[70] Although this risked a public exposure of Ivan's plans, the letter obliged Elizabeth to respond in writing, creating a permanent record that the Muscovites could refer to. While the English Crown had no intention to ratify such a proposal, a direct rejection would have jeopardised the mercantile rights and privileges of the Muscovy Company, which were dependent upon the personal favour of the Tsar. As a

[66] Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, pp. xxiv, 171-3.

[67] In May 1571, the Tatar horde of Khan Devlet I Giray raided Moscow, setting fires to its suburbs that escalated into a conflagration. One contemporary noted that the city (and the Tsar's palace) burnt down in less than six hours and caused the deaths of 10,000-80,000 people: H. von Staden, *The Land and Government of Muscovy: A Sixteenth Century Account*, ed. and trans. T. Esper (Stanford, CA, 1967), p. 47.

[68] Grigorii Savin to William Cecil, dated 6 May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 335r. Ivan also sent a 'secret' letter to Elizabeth within which he asked the Queen to provide asylum in England for him and his family should the Tsar be forced to leave Muscovy: Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 20 June 1569, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 316r.

[69] A translation of the instructions of Muscovite ambassador, 20 June 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, fos 7r-8v.

[70] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 20 June 1569, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 316r-317r.

compromise Elizabeth agreed to accept Ivan's 'offer of the good will', but only 'as neare as we maie' and 'so farre fourth' as the treaties held by her, and other Christian rulers, 'maie p[er]mitt'.[71] In other words, Elizabeth's reply confirmed her intentions to continue a cordial relationship with Muscovy but did not sanction a military alliance that Ivan was expecting. Moreover, the wording of the reply rendered the terms of the alliance completely innocuous. Ivan's reception was one of anger and disappointment. He revoked the Company's privileges and questioned whether it was Elizabeth or the merchants who ruled over England.[72]

As an immediate response to the revocation, the Company petitioned the Crown to mediate the matter and advocated the dispatch of Anthony Jenkinson in the capacity of a royal ambassador. Jenkinson's charismatic personality and previous experience of negotiating with Ivan rendered the ambassador the perfect man for the job. Eventually, Jenkinson's emabssy succeeded in persuading Ivan that the failed negotiations of 1569 resulted out of a linguistic miscommunication, as either Ivan's ambassador 'did vntruly enforme' Elizabeth of Ivan's expectations or 'for want of a good Interpretor' matters were 'not well vnderstood'.[73] In the end, Jenkinson's mediation resulted in procuring a promise from Ivan not break friendship with Elizabeth 'without good, and [j]ust cause', to restore the trading privileges of the Company and to set aside the matter of the Anglo-Muscovite alliance.[74] The English Crown was thus able to deflect the matter of the 'league' without incurring considerable obstacles to the expansion of their commercial interests. The aspiration to ratify a political alliance with England, however, was not completely abandoned by Ivan.

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[71] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 18 May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 345r-6r; 341r-v.
[72] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 24 October 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 347r- 348v.
[73] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 404.
[74] Ibid., p. 409. Despite these assurances, in 1573 Ivan detained the Company's goods at Novgorod and Vologda on suspicion that English troops had recently aided Sweden against Muscovy; Elizabeth claimed that these were Scottish and not English troops: Elizabeth's Instructions to Sylvester, May 1575, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 394r-v.

In 1574, the Tsar attributed the failure of the second political proposal for an alliance to Elizabeth's 'maidenly state', and instructed her to 'pounder upon that subject and do that business by which you may increase our amity towards you'.[75] In 1576, he called English negotiations as 'vneffectuall as the others' and threatened to transfer English trading privileges to the Germans and the Venetians.[76] In the face of Ivan's arbitrary acts of displeasure towards the Company, Elizabeth remained conciliatory, though the Queen was faced with an unenviable situation. The Company urged the Crown to retain a cordial relationship with Ivan by agreeing to the proposed political treaty; but the Privy Council was adamant that England was to avoid entanglement in Muscovite geopolitical affairs.

Despite the fact that the question of the political alliance had dominated Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy for the previous fourteen years, by 1583 the matter still remained unresolved and the Company's trading rights continued to depend upon Ivan's whim. Ivan's ambition to ratify a political alliance with England, however, was often made out of political necessity. Although in 1577, the Tsar interpreted the death of the English envoy Daniel Sylvester as a divine sign against the pursuit of an Anglo-Muscovite alliance (the envoy was reportedly struck by lightning whilst delivering an English draft proposal), the defeat of the Muscovite armies in the Baltic intensified Ivan's need to acquire a military ally. The loss of the city of Narva to Sweden in 1583 likewise restricted the scope of English commercial activities; access to the Baltic Sea was lost and all Anglo-Muscovite trade had to be imported through the port of St. Nicholas in the North. To offset the financial implication of these developments, the Company intended to acquire a new *gramota* that would renew and secure an English monopoly over all European imports into Muscovy, whereby the English would

[75] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 20 August 1574, in Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years,* pp. 155, 157-58.
[76] A note of speech held by Ivan to Daniel Sylvester, 29 January 1576, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, f. 22v.

become the only Western European nation allowed to sell their goods across Muscovite cities. To attain this, the Company required Ivan's favour, and, sensing an advantageous change in diplomatic negotiations, the Tsar resumed the negotiations for the formation of an offensive and defensive league against Poland. On this occasion, Ivan intended to further strengthen the friendship between the two monarchies through a dynastic marriage.[77] At first, the Tsar proposed to marry Elizabeth, but upon the advice of his English physician, Dr Atkins, Ivan was persuaded to request an English 'princess' (noblewoman) of royal blood.[78] Atkins offered Lady Mary Hastings as a suggestion.[79] The English Crown once more found itself in an unwelcome diplomatic situation. Although Ivan's ambassador, Feodor Pisemskii, was permitted to see the chosen bride and acquire her portrait for the Tsar, the Queen instructed her ambassador to Moscow to inform Ivan that Mary had 'fallen into such an indisposit[i]on of health, as there is small or no hope she will eu[er] recover'.[80] The ambassador was to 'vse all the best p[er]swasions you can to disswade [Ivan] from that purpose'. Fortunately, shortly after the arrival of Elizabeth's ambassador into Moscow, Ivan 'fell sicke of a surfet, and so died'.[81] The government of Ivan's successor, Feodor I, had no intentions to pursue a political alliance with England, and subsequent diplomatic relations continued to focus solely on matters of trade.

The negotiations for an offensive and defensive league between England and Muscovy resumed in 1613, as the foremost concern of the Romanovs was to

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[77] At the time Ivan was married to his seventh wife, Maria Nagaya (m. 1580/1), but as Elizabeth was informed by Ivan's ambassador, the Tsar would set aside Maria in favour of the English bride: 'Stateinyi Spisok F.A. Pisemskogo', in D.S. Likhachev (ed.), *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov XVI-XVII vv.: Stateinye Zapiski* (Moscow, 1954), p. 150.
[78] 'Stateinyi Spisok F.A. Pisemskogo', p. 149.
[79] Lady Mary Hastings (c. 1552-1589?) was the daughter of the 2nd earl of Huntingdon, and as both of her parents were descendants of the English royal family, Mary was thus a cousin to the Queen and a fitting match for Ivan's ambitions.
[80] Instructions to Sir Jerome Bowes, dated May 1583, TNA, SP 91/1, f.7v.
[81] R. Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 462.

secure their power and authority against the military incursions of Polish and Swedish armies. In 1614, Michael's ambassadors informed James of the 'moste iniuryous dealinge of the Kinges of [P]olland [and] Sweden', and requested assistance in the form of 'monyes & other provision of warre'.[82] In 1617, the Muscovites asked for a loan of 100,000 roubles and proposed to make a league with England against Poland.[83] Once again the Company petitioned the Crown to agree to the requests. While the Crown understood the implications of rejecting Michael's requests, there was no money in the royal treasury to send to Michael in 1614, though English ambassadors were instructed to persuade Michael that a loan was being discussed by Parliament and the absence of money was only a temporary delay.[84] Nonetheless, even when the furnishing of the loan was taken up only 20,000 roubles out of the promised 100,000 were sent to Moscow in 1618.[85]

In similarity to Elizabeth's replies to Ivan's proposals, James avoided the matter of a direct alliance and proposed to honour the 'league of amity' established by his predecessor. In the first instance, James offered to act as a mediator between Michael and Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. James' diplomatic representative was 'to intercede betwixt them [Muscovy and Sweden] to conclude such a peace betwixt them as may binde uppe all their former dissentions in amity and love'.[86] Notably, the Dutch had also offered to act as mediators in exchange for a *gramota* of mercantile privileges, with the same rights and exemptions as had been previously granted to the English. The Dutch representative had presented a gift of '[£] 2,000' and promised to furnish Michael with 'what moneys and munyc[i]on shalbe required in these his present

[82] Speech of Russian Ambassador to James, 1613, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 242r.
[83] Mikhail to James, dated June 1620, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 69r-v.
[84] Merrick to Ralph Winwood, dated 29 January 1615, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 7r.
[85] Ambassadorial Report of the Embassy of Sir Dudley Digges (July-October 1618), RGADA, fond 35, opis'1, d. 72.
[86] Sir John Merrick's Commission, dated 18 June 1614, TNA, C76/217, mm. 18, 19.

wantes'.[87] English and Dutch role in the mediation of Muscovite-Swedish peace talks is examined at length later in the chapter, though it should be noted that, despite the successful resolution in 1617, the Company's expectations of Muscovite rewards were unrealised. Meanwhile, the 1617 and 1621 Muscovite embassies continued to centre on the question of a political alliance between the two states, but the English Crown would only give Michael a series of treaty proposals that could serve as the basis for a future league but simultaneously prevented any real political involvement on James' part. This included proposals such as, 'if any warrs shall happen, [James and Michael] shall indevor to laye downe the same by waye of mediac[i]on and friends', and 'they shall not attempt nor consent to anything preiudiciall to the one or the other, whether by waie of advice and Counsell, or by ayding their enemy with men, treasure or munyc[i]on'.[88] The proposals altered little in the existing Anglo-Muscovite relationship, but created an impression that the matter of the 'league' was being seriously considered by the English.

Eventually in 1623, after the departure of another unsuccessful Muscovite embassy, that was only able to secure a small quantity of gunpowder, munitions and a loan of £2,000 but no political alliance, the Muscovites abandoned the proposition.[89] The English stance of political and military non-commitment was reiterated the King's letter of 1622, which explained that James would sign no military alliance with any foreign monarch but was willing to preserve 'as strict and correspondant Amitie with your Ma[jes]tie [Michael], as hath been betweene [our] Progenitors'.[90] By 1625, the Muscovite aspiration to conclude a political alliance with England remained just as unfulfilled as the Company's objective to establish a north-eastern passage to Persia. Yet, the conclusion of a political

[87] Merrick to Ralph Winwood, 7 August 1614, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 1r.
[88] TNA, SP 103/61, f. 26r; RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7.
[89] Ambassadorial Report of Isaak Pogozhev (17 June 1621- 8 September 1622), RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 82.
[90] James to Michael, dated 1 June 1622, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 31.

alliance between Muscovy and England was an unrealistic aspiration. While Ivan might not have recognised the futility of his proposals at the beginning of the relationship, by 1580s (and definitely by 1617), the Tsars would have certainly been aware that a political alliance with England was very unlikely. On the contrary, by constantly pursuing the matter and emphasising its direct correlation to the security of English trading privileges, the Muscovites used it as a haggling tool to extract as many concessions from the English Crown as was possible. Although England remained politically neutral in Muscovite foreign affairs, the Crown informally assisted Muscovite military efforts through the modernisation of its army, imports of munitions and raw materials necessary for the production of arms and weapons, and the dispatch of skilled engineers, mercenaries and craftsmen, as well as diplomatic mediation.

3. Dynastic Aspirations

Whereas Ivan and Michael sought a political alliance with England predominantly as a means of attaining military and financial support against their troublesome neighbours, for Boris Godunov diplomatic relations with England bolstered the recognition of his legitimacy as Tsar. Rather than focus on the pursuit of a military alliance, Godunov intended to secure his position through dynastic marriages between his children and members of European royal families. In this regard, England was at a disadvantage. Elizabeth had no children of her own to offer as potential marriage candidates, and the Queen was unlikely to promote a marriage with any of her extended kin as this could present an unwelcome challenge to the English succession. The Company's expectations that Godunov's accession would secure new trading privileges for English merchants was, by 1599, also replaced with a despondency and concerns that developments in

Muscovite marriage negotiations threatened the established English position.[91] Although these fears were often exaggerated, there was a real concern that a potential marriage between Godunov's daughter Ksenia and a Swedish or a Habsburg prince would jeopardise the future of English trade in Muscovy. In this regard, once Elizabeth's ambassador Sir Richard Lee proposed a potential Anglo-Muscovite marriage between Godunov's son and an English noblewoman, without the Queen's consent, the Company urged Elizabeth to maintain the ruse.[92]

Sir Richard Lee's embassy of 1600 was originally instructed to determine the status of a projected marriage between Godunov's daughter and a Habsburg prince, advance the mercantile affairs of the Company and deny allegations of English military assistance to the Ottoman Sultan.[93] The ambassador's mediation failed to obtain any new trading concessions for English merchants, and, instead, Lee proposed to find a suitable English bride for Godunov's son Feodor Borisovich.[94] The offer of marriage was unlikely to have been suggested by either the Company or the English Crown and was possibly of Lee's own making. Lee's instructions advised the ambassador to persuade Godunov that England could better supply Muscovy's need than the Germans, 'who bring him at second hand the things that leave from us so as thereby their sale must needes be dearer'.[95] It is possible that this proposition might have influenced the ambassador to offer his own interpretation of why Godunov should favour the English. Additionally, Lee's proposed Anglo-Muscovite marriage could have been

[91] In his capacity as regent, Godunov has previously protected English mercantile interests in the reign of Feodor I and was responsible for the restoration of some of their former privileges, including the restoration of English exemption from paying custom duty, in 1589: 'The Summe of [Giles Fletcher's] Negotiation', 1589, BL, Lansdowne MS 60, f. 158r.
[92] N.E. Evans, 'The Anglo-Russian Royal Marriage Negotiations of 1600-03', *The Slavonic and East European Review,* 61 (1983), pp. 364-5.
[93] 'Francis Cherry and John Merrick to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 19 September 1601' in HMC *Salisbury*, ed. R. A. Roberts, 11 (London, 1906), p. 393.
[94] Instructions to Sir Richard Lee, May 1600, TNA, SP 91/1, fos. 133r-34r; also, see Muscovite report of Lee's embassy preserved at RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 33.
[95] Cited in Evans, 'The Anglo-Russian Royal Marriage Negotiations', p. 369.

used to demonstrate to Godunov that England could match, or even surpass, the offer made by the Austrians. Lee's proposal, however, created another political dilemma for the English Crown. Unknown to Lee, the negotiations for a Muscovite-Austrian marriage had collapsed and the English proposal was welcomed by Godunov, who instructed the ambassador to procure the names of the noblewomen Elizabeth had in mind.[96] In the meantime, the confirmation of English trading privileges was to be suspended until the arrival of Elizabeth's reply.

In her letter, Elizabeth explained to Godunov that Lee's proposal referred to 'one of the daughters and heirs of our cousin the earl of Derby', however, as Godunov's son was 'not above 13 years of age, which is almost 5 years under that lady's age', Elizabeth now believed that match to be unsuitable.[97] The Queen's letter was to conclude with her regret at not being able to find another appropriate candidate in England and to 'think in our h[e]art to hold you [Godunov] no longer in expectation'.[98] The Company, however, advised the Crown that such a reply was in 'noe way correspondent to the Ambassadors [Lee's] promise'.[99] Instead, it was suggested to 'make offer of some others [,] although but somewhat alyed vnto her hignes it would accompl[ish] the matter and geave some satisfact[i]on or at least avoid a great part of the dislike w[hi]ch otherwyse wilbe taken'.[100] The Company advised to add names of other noblewomen, who like Anne Stanley, 'would not be accepted and yet the offer

[96] Elizabeth to Boris (with notes of the Tsar's letters and Ambassador's speeches), dated 1601, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 159r-v.
[97] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated 11 September 1601, in HMC *Salisbury*, ed. R.A. Roberts, 11, pp. 387-8. As Anne was born in 1580 and Feodor Borisovich in 1589, this would have made Anne nine rather than five years older than Feodor in 1600. Moreover, due to proximity of her relation to Elizabeth, Anne was for some time seen as a possible heiress to the English throne: V.J. Wilkie, '"Such Daughters and Such a Mother": The Countess of Derby and her Three Daughters, 1560-1647' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, Riverside, 2009), pp. 73-4.
[98] A copy of a draft corrected by Cecil, endorsed 1 June 1600, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 35r-36v.
[99] Merrick to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 15 September 1601, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 158r.
[100] Ibid., f. 158r.

[would] geave good content'.[101] Godunov would be persuaded that no suitable candidate of 'royall blood' could be found and presented with the lineage of English noble families to emphasise the hindrance.[102] The negotiations for an Anglo-Muscovite match would thus be ended, but the English assistance in the matter would encourage Godunov to respond favourably to the Company's petitions for a new mercantile *gramota*.

At first, it seemed that the Crown would once again be able to exonerate itself from unwelcomed diplomatic negotiations, especially as the Muscovites responded positively to the proposition.[103] Unfortunately, upon hearing rumours of new marriage negotiations between the Muscovites and the Danes, the Company reversed its previous decision and urged Elizabeth to renew the offer of an English bride. In a letter of 1602, Elizabeth once again informed Godunov that there has been found

> a young lady, being apure mayden, noble discended by father [and] mother, adorned w[i]th graces [and] extraordenary g[i]fts of nature, of convenient years betwene [11] and [12], of whom we are resolved to make offer.[104]

The English contingency plan, however, backfired. Ksenia's Danish suitor had died shortly after arriving in Moscow, and the proposed Anglo-Muscovite marriage between Feodor and an English noblewoman remained the only offer. The failed Muscovite negotiations with other European monarchies meant that England remained Muscovy's principal trading partner, and the Company's position was no longer in immediate danger of being supplanted by its European rivals. Thus, there was no longer a need to continue the negotiations for a potential Anglo-Muscovite marriage. The Crown advised Godunov that as he aimed to match his son only with 'the daughter of a king or a duke and not with

[101] 'Francis Cherry and John Merrick to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 19 September 1601', in HMC *Salisbury*, 11, p. 393.
[102] Instructions for Mr Merrick, dated 1602, TNA, SP 91/1, fos. 177r-178r.
[103] Godunov to Elizabeth, dated June 1602, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 173r.
[104] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated 5 October 1602, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 187r.

any ordinary noble man's daughter', and as no such candidate could be found in England, negotiations for the proposed Anglo-Muscovite marriage should be terminated.[105] The Muscovites agreed and the matter no longer featured within the diplomatic agenda for the remainder of Elizabeth's reign. No similar proposition was ever discussed between Godunov and James.

4. Anglo-Muscovite Diplomacy in Broader Diplomatic Context

On a final note, this section contextualises Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy within the broader background of English and Muscovite relations with north-eastern Europe. The importance of this acknowledgement lies in the fact that Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy did not operate in isolation and royal embassies would often address bigger geopolitical issues. As an example, the Muscovite embassy of 1600 was expected to gather news about the political priorities and relationships of the English state, as well as obtain an explanation as to whether England was providing military assistance to the Ottoman Sultan.[106] Similarly, the state of military conflicts between Muscovy, Poland and Sweden was frequently the reason behind the Muscovite proposal for an Anglo-Muscovite political alliance. The aim of this section is not to provide an examination of individual diplomatic relationships between England, Muscovy and the above-mentioned states, but rather to highlight and examine instances in which Anglo-Muscovite relations were directly affected by the broader geopolitical context.

Both Poland-Lithuania and Sweden were Muscovy's perpetual troublesome neighbours and occasional military adversaries; the most notable of such conflicts were the Livonian War (1553-1583), the Polish-Muscovite conflict

[105] Boris Godunov to Elizabeth, dated February 1603, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 5r.
[106] Ambassadorial Report of Grigorii Mikulin, 15 May 1600-14 July 1601, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 31.

(1605-18) and the Ingrian War (1610-17).[107] The gradual decline of the Livonian Order and the Hanseatic League in the second half of the sixteenth century offered an opportunity to Ivan IV to fill the political vacuum and establish a Muscovite foothold on the Baltic Sea. Despite the initial military success of the Tsar (the Muscovites captured the port-city of Narva, as well as a major trading city of Polotsk), the Muscovite position in the Baltic deteriorated in the late 1560s and 1570s against the varying military coalitions of Poland-Lithuania, Sweden and Denmark-Norway.[108] Amidst this geopolitical context, Ivan's ambassadors approached Elizabeth I with the Tsar's proposal for the creation of an Anglo-Muscovite alliance in 1569, which has been discussed earlier in the chapter.[109] The request conflicted with Elizabeth's adamant assertion that England was a neutral party in the Livonian War.[110] In her letter to Ivan, Elizabeth noted that she had allowed her merchants to export certain goods which she did not allow to be exported to other princes, which could be a possible reference to the unofficial imports of arms and munitions.[111] By 1580, amidst Elizabeth's continuous refusal to ratify the Anglo-Muscovite alliance, Ivan's campaign in Livonia was losing its impetus and culminated in the loss of Narva, Ivangorod, Jama and Koporye to Sweden.[112] Additionally, Muscovy was recovering from the aftermath of its military skirmishes with the Crimean Tatars, one of which resulted in the burning of the city of Moscow in 1571, alongside a series of droughts, epidemics and the political disruption of the *oprichnina* (a state policy introduced by Ivan that included mass repressions, public executions

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[107] R.I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State, and Society in North-Eastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 1-22; 74-101.
[108] Ibid., pp. 23-43.
[109] Savin to W. Cecil, dated 6 May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 335r.
[110] W. Child, 'England's Contacts with Poland-Lithuania in the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries', in R. Unger (ed.), *Britain and Poland-Lithuania: Contact and Comparison from the Middle Ages to 1795* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 19-38.
[111] E.D. Morgan and C.H. Coote (eds), *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, 2 (London, 1886), pp. 297-8; Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, p. 119.
[112] R.O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy, 1304-1613* (London and New York, 1987), pp. 143-78.

and the confiscation of land from Muscovite aristocrats).[113] In 1582, the Tsar was forced to seek peace with Poland-Lithuania and ceded the cities of Dorpat and Polotsk to the Commonwealth.[114] A year later, Ivan concluded peace with John III of Sweden, the terms of which dictated that the cities of Narva and Ivangorod would remain under Swedish control, though as mentioned in Chapter 2, Muscovite-Swedish contention for Narva would resume in 1590.[115] Although Ivan ceded all of his Livonian acquisitions to his geopolitical rivals, he continued to pursue the matter of the Anglo-Muscovite alliance until his death in 1584, most likely in the hope of attaining England as a military ally and reclaim the lost Livonian territories.

Similarly to Ivan, Michael Romanov had sought to establish an Anglo-Muscovite alliance to secure munitions, non-precious metals, money and men to assist in the campaigns against the Polish and Swedish incursions into Muscovite territories in 1613.[116] While the English Crown rejected the proposed alliance, James offered to act as a mediator between Michael and Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.[117] Notably, the English Crown had fulfilled a similar role on several occasions. In 1590, the mediation of the English ambassador at Istanbul achieved a successful resolution to the ongoing conflict between Poland and the Ottomans.[118] Later in 1621, Sigismund III requested James I to intervene on behalf of Poland with the Ottoman Sultan; on this occasion, English diplomatic mediation had no effect.[119] Beginning Muscovite-Swedish mediation was more challenging than the English had expected, as neither Sweden nor Muscovy was eager to commence the negotiations. During an audience with Gustavus in July

[113] A. Pavlov and M. Perrie, *Ivan the Terrible* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 107-18.
[114] See V.V. Boguslavskii and E.I. Kuksina, 'Iam-Zapol'skii Dogovor', in *Slavianskaia Entsiklopediia. Kievskaia Rus'- Moskoviia*, ed. V.V. Boguslavskii, 2 (Moscow, 2001), pp. 749-816.
[115] Frost, *The Northern Wars*, p. 44.
[116] Proposals of Muscovite Ambassadors, dated 5 January 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, fos 42r-43v.
[117] James to Michael, dated 10 April 1616, TNA, SP 91/2, fos 23r-24r.
[118] 'Elizabeth to Murad III, dated 30 January 1592', in *CSPV*, ed. H.F. Brown, 9 (London, 1897), p. 20.
[119] P. Rutkowski, 'Poland and Britain Against the Ottoman Turks: Jerzy Ossoliński's Embassy to King James I in 1621', in Unger (ed.), *Britain and Poland-Lithuania*, pp. 183-96.

1615, the English ambassador, Sir John Merrick, was told by the King that 'to lose his expense and opportunity upon so small hope of peace, were to betray his cause'.[120] The ambassador himself doubted the possibility of peace, since Swedish 'demandes will be unreasonable, the commissioners will make a demand of the whole country of [Muscovy]', and both states would 'demand such a s[u]m of money to restore againe [the] cytteys and holdes which the King at present holdeath of the Greak Duke that neyther he nor the whole state of [Muscovy] cannot perfome nor any reason to y[i]eld to yt'.[121] Michael had likewise refused to commence peace negotiations until Sweden ended the siege of the Muscovite city of Pskov and blamed Gustavus for the failure of the peace talks. Instead, the Tsar urged James to promise military support to the Muscovites against the Swedes if the mediation failed.[122]

The peace talks finally began in December 1615, but negotiations were taken up with arguments over diplomatic status, ceremony and procedure. The Muscovites were dissatisfied with the choice of Swedish delegates, all of which were former military commanders; they were also annoyed at the Swedish abbreviation of the Tsar's titles, which was deemed to be a deliberate marker of Muscovy's territorial loss and military inferiority.[123] The negotiations were also complicated by the Anglo-Dutch rivalry. The Dutch delegates frequently complained that James' representative was haughty, did not welcome their presence and carried himself as if his status was above theirs.[124] They also accused Merrick of favouring Muscovite interests above those of the Swedish Crown. Fortunately for the English, by 1616 the Dutch found the constant Muscovite rejection of Swedish proposals exasperating, and seeing no possible

[120] Beecher to Ralph Winwood, dated 23 July 1615, TNA, SP 91/2, fos 11r-12r.
[121] Merrick to Ralph Winwood, dated December 1615, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 19r-v.
[122] N.N. Bantysh- Kamensky, *Obzor Vneshnikh Snoshenii Rossii s Derzhavami Inistrannymi,* 1 (Moscow, 1894), p. 102.
[123] 'Postanovleniia otnositelno titulov…', in A.Kh. Bek (ed.), *Sbornik*, 24 (St Petersburg, 1878), pp. 55-6.
[124] 'Pis'ma Niderlandskikh Upolnomochennykh k Tsariu', in ibid., pp. 336-4; 396-99; 400-03.

peaceful resolution to the affair, withdrew from the negotiations leaving Merrick as the sole mediator.[125]

In February 1617, after more than two years of negotiations, Merrick had successfully mediated peace between the Tsar and the King of Sweden.[126] The resulting treaty offered Sweden the greatest territorial gain (including the province of Ingria previously ceded to the Muscovites in the 1590s), which further isolated Muscovy from access to the Baltic Sea, though the city of Novgorod was returned to the Muscovites. Both states confirmed that neither party 'would aide the Pole'.[127] While the peace treaty was the best practical solution to end the Muscovite-Swedish conflict, it was not one preferred by the Muscovites, who had anticipated the failure of the negotiations to become a means of putting pressure upon James for the provision of English military assistance. The Muscovites felt that the loss of territories under the terms of the treaty would make the new Romanov regime appear weak to their geopolitical rivals. This might explain why the Muscovites had refused the English offer to conduct similar peace negotiations with Poland and instead urged James to provide money, guns and soldiers.[128]

Overall, the English mediation of Muscovite-Swedish peace cost the Company a considerable sum of money, which included Merrick's provision, as well as gifts and bribes to the Muscovite delegates. Although Merrick received a ceremonial welcome from the Tsar and was rewarded with rich gifts, including furs, silk robes, a goblet set with precious stones and a gold chain with Michael's portrait, the Muscovites refused to give the Company new and exclusive trading rights

[125] 'Pismo Niderlandskikh Upolnomochennykh k Tsariu', dated 1616, in ibid., pp. 489-93.
[126] Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, pp. 802-4.
[127] Ibid., p. 269.
[128] Ambassadorial Report of Aleksei Ziuzin (1613), RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 35, 48; also TNA, SP 91/2, f. 5r.

and privileges.[129] The peace negotiations of 1617 also remain the only example of direct English participation in Muscovite geopolitical affairs.

Thus, over the course of Elizabeth's and James' reigns, English relations with Muscovy were defined by asymmetrical political interests. On the one hand, the ambitions of English merchant-adventurers to establish new commercial networks and find a north-eastern passage to the mercantile wealth of the East meant that trade, and in particular the attainment and expansion of rights and exemptions granted by the Muscovite *gramota* became the linchpin of English diplomacy. In contrast, while the Muscovites were able to benefit from the import of Western European commodities and innovations, the pinnacle of Muscovite ambitions was a conclusion of a political alliance between the English sovereign and the Tsar. Alongside the provision of military and political support against its geopolitical rivals, such an alliance would have bolstered the international recognition of the Muscovite ruler as an equal to the sovereigns of European states. This recognition was of uppermost significance to the Muscovite state, considering the gradual process begun by the Rurikids to elevate their status from that of Grand Dukes to Tsars. For the Godunov and Romanov governments, the recognition acquired an additional purpose of emphasising the legitimacy of their accession.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the disparity of political and economic ambitions manifested itself in the frequent tussles between the representatives of both states. The dependence of both parties upon continued Anglo-Muscovite amity, however, contributed towards the continuity of a functional diplomatic relationship. The dependence of English commercial activities upon the personal favour of the Tsar forced the English Crown to

[129] The gift does not seem to have survived and is only mentioned by John Chamberlain in a letter to Sir Dudley Carlton, TNA, SP 14/94, fos 50v-51r; 'Will of Sir John Merrick [dated 1 February 1639]', TNA, PROB 11/179, f. 172r.

create at least an outward appearance of considering the matter of an alliance. Similarly, despite threats of revocations, the English merchants were able to retain their exclusive trading rights due to the Tsars' interests in retaining England as an ally. Most importantly, for the Muscovites, the relationship with England marked the beginning of the gradual integration of the Muscovite Tsar into the European 'society of princes'. The subsequent increase in the cultivation of Muscovite foreign relations paved the way for the gradual recognition of Muscovy as an active participant in European affairs, though it was not until the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that Muscovy was accorded the honour of being seen as a political ally.

Chapter 4

Royal English and Muscovite Gifts I:

Elizabeth I and the Muscovite Tsars, c. 1566-1603

In 1568 the English ambassador Thomas Randolph was instructed to present to Tsar Ivan IV a gift of a silver-gilt cup, 'curiously wrought, with verses graven in it'.[1] Randolph was advised to 'recommend [the cup] for the rarity of [its] fashion', and inform Ivan that Elizabeth had personally commissioned the gift for 'for the newness of the device than for the value', as it was 'the first that ever was made […] of that manner'.[2] This is the only direct reference to a diplomatic gift sent on behalf of the English sovereign to the Tsar within the surviving corpus of English diplomatic material. As an isolated example, the gift could create a false assumption that there was no extensive exchange of gifts between the two monarchies. Such a perception, however, is misleading. Using a versatile body of archival material, including the Muscovite Ambassadorial *knigi* and *dela* (books and records), alongside the examination of English diplomatic gifts of silver-gilt plate, currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow, this chapter explores the gift-exchange between Elizabeth, Ivan IV, Feodor I and Boris Godunov.

By examining the exchange within the framework of intention, transmission and reception, this chapter demonstrates the existence of an active exchange of material commodities between the two royal courts, from staple gifts of sable furs and silver-gilt plate to exclusive gifts of clocks, beds and Turkish carpets. It highlights the role and place of gifts in the protocols of emergent state relations between Muscovy and England, and conducts a comparative research into these two very different cultures, offering a unique perspective on the capacity of both

[1] T. Randolph, 'A Mission to Muscovy', in L. Berry and R. Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers* (Madison, WI, 1968), p. 69.
[2] Ibid., p. 69; also see TNA, SP 70/98, f. 131r-v.

states to interpret each other with a view to developing a mutually beneficial foreign policy and commercial relations.

In selecting a gift to be dispatched to Moscow, Muscovite rigid adherence to precedent had to be considered, alongside potential cultural misunderstandings. Size was an important factor as the Muscovites assessed gifts according to their weight rather than craftsmanship, and gifts were subjected to a rigid judgement against a criterion of expected norms, traditions and customs. If a gift was deemed deficient it was seen as a deliberate act of dishonour and enmity directed against the Tsar. Silver-gilt plate, therefore, presented an appealing gift option.[3] Standing cups were not the only examples of exquisite English plate commissioned and sent to Muscovy as a diplomatic gift. Basins, salt cellars, livery pots, flagons, candlesticks and even tubs were selected as gifts. Silver plate was a familiar component of the Elizabethan (and later Stuart) gift-giving repertoire and could be recycled or re-gifted.[4] Although none of the surviving Elizabethan gifts to the Tsars can be conclusively identified as a recycled gift, there is a high probability that such practice was undertaken. The Warwick cup presented by James I to Mikhail Romanov in 1617 (discussed in Chapter 5) is a good example.[5] Furthermore, gold and silver plate was admired by the Muscovites and their ceremonial traditions interpreted a visual display of an abundance of such objects as a mark of a monarch's magnificence. The Golden Chamber, where the Tsars conducted audiences with foreign envoys, had a 'cupboard' upon which were placed traditional Muscovite gold and silver vessels, such as the *kovsh* and the *bratina*, alongside European cups, basins, ewers, salt-

[3] In Muscovy, gold plate was considered to be a symbol of its owner's noble/royal status. As gold plate was deemed more valuable than silver plate, the latter was gilded to imitate gold. Moreover, the prominence of plate within English gift-giving meant that an abundance of these objects was often conveniently available for dispatch to Moscow.

[4] Silver-gilt plate can be frequently found within the exchange of gifts between the English sovereigns and their courtiers, especially during the New Year gift-exchange: J. A. Lawson (ed.), *The Elizabethan New Year's Gift-exchange, 1559-1603* (Oxford, 2013).

[5] The Warwick Cup was previously given to James by one of his courtiers: C. Oman, *The English Silver at the Kremlin*, *1557-1663* (London, 1961), p. 75.

cellars and candlesticks. Anthony Jenkinson recalled that the buffet was 'most sumptuous and rich', whilst the objects on display had 'towers, and Dragon heads' and 'castles on bungs, richly and artificially made'.[6] Gifts of plate also had a practical application and were often used for the Tsar's table. English ewers, for instance, were used to hold rosewater that the Tsars would use to wash their hands, after they had been kissed by a foreign diplomat. The ornate washbasins used for this purpose were likewise most likely sent as gifts from European rulers.[7]

English royal gifts were not restricted to plate. Wine, sugar, gold coins, wild beasts and birds, unset precious stones, silk fabrics, velvet cloths, musical instruments, firearms, armour, carriages, furniture and even clocks were all presented to the Tsars. The Muscovite court reciprocated with gifts of expensive furs, fabrics, falcons and occasional additions of Persian bows and daggers. The gifts selected by the Muscovites were determined by precedent, though increasingly they became reflective of the importance of individual rulers and states within Muscovite foreign policy. The most prominent Muscovite gift was sable fur. It held an important symbolic role in Muscovite ceremonial, as the animal was believed to represent luck and wealth, and was also used as currency.[8] Both English and Muscovite diplomatic gifts shadowed the arrival of all embassies, occupied a place of honour within Muscovite processions and ceremonies, and incited admiration from contemporary observers. As objects associated with royal representation, they contributed to the transmission of the messages and aspirations of their royal commissioners. Within a cross-cultural setting of Anglo-Muscovite relations, gifts were also vital elements of non-verbal

[6] The antechamber likewise displayed larger example of European gilt silver gifts, such as barrels, tubs and buckets: Anthony Jenkinson, 'A Voyage to Russia in 1557', in Berry et al. (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 54.
[7] Gifts of English ewers, basins and tubs are a common feature within the records of the Muscovite *Posol'skie Knigi*: RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 4, fos 231r-2v.
[8] L.A. Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia* (Moscow, 1988), p. 47.

communication and enunciated mutually accepted ideas of power, magnificence, wealth, sovereignty and friendship, but also more specific messages relating to the diplomatic aims of each state. These are some of the central themes addressed within this chapter through the examination of the gifts exchanged between Elizabeth and the Muscovite Tsars between 1566 and 1603.

1. Elizabeth and Ivan, 1566-1584

The reception of foreign ambassadors was overseen by the *pristav* of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, the Muscovite Ambassadorial Chancellery established in 1549.[9] Upon arrival into Kholmogory, located southeast of Archangel, the English entourage began an arduous overland journey to the Old English Court in Moscow, which served as the Company's centre of operations and the residence of English ambassadors. On the day of the audience, ambassadors took part in a procession through the city accompanied by drums and trumpets, whilst each item of the embassy's gifts was carried separately by members of the ambassadorial entourage and Muscovite guards for the admiration of foreign visitors and Muscovite subjects. During the procession of Sir Jerome Bowes in 1583, for instance,

> the streets were filled with people, and a thousand Gunners attired in yellow and blue Garments set in rankes by the Captaines on Horsebacke with bright Harquebuses in their hands from the Ambassadours doore to the Emperours Palace.[10]

At the first audience foreign ambassadors were expected to present their letters of credence, deliver a salutation and formally offer their gifts to the Tsar, whereby each item was announced individually for public appreciation. Prior to

[9] J. Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 69-76.
[10] 'Extracts ovt of Sir Ierome Horseys Observations', in Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimage, or Relations of the World* (London, 1626), p. 983.

the presentation, the gifts were displayed in the antechamber of the Kremlin Palace for the admiration of Muscovite high-ranking officials, courtiers and noblemen.

The main function of English diplomatic gifts was to affirm the friendship between the two royal courts. The gifts accompanying Anthony Jenkinson (the first royally-appointed Elizabethan envoy to Moscow) in 1566, for instance, held an important role in neutralising any disharmony between Elizabeth and Ivan arising from the Barberini affair.[11] In 1564, posing as a private traveller wishing to visit Muscovy to recover personal debts, Raffaello Barberini procured a letter of introduction from the Queen. Under these fraudulent circumstances Barberini, in truth an undercover agent for Amsterdam merchants, obtained an audience with Ivan and secured mercantile privileges for the Dutch to trade at the new Muscovite port of Narva.[12] This development posed a serious threat to the aspirations of the Muscovy Company, which urged Elizabeth to send an envoy to Moscow to mediate the matter. Jenkinson was instructed to secure Barberini's expulsion, persuade Ivan to revoke the privileges granted to the Dutch and attain a reaffirmation of the rights and exemptions held by the Muscovy Company.[13] No record has survived of the gifts that Jenkinson presented to Ivan in 1566, though the Company's remembrance of 1561 reveals that Jenkinson was previously advised to 'appoint some such presents for the Emperour, and

[11] Elizabeth to Ivan, 20 April 1566, BL, Royal MS 13, B.i, fos 160v-1r. For an overview of the affair see: J. Hamel, *England and Russia* (London, 1854), pp. 170-6; E.D. Morgan and C.H. Coote (eds), *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia*, 2, pp. 183-6.
[12] Privileges obtained by Barberini, undated [1565], TNA, SP 91/1, f. 254r-v.
[13] 'The voyage of M. Anthony Ienkinson into Russia the third time, Anno 1566', in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, pp. 372-88.

his sonne, either wine, cloth of golde, scarlet, or plate'.[14] It is thus possible to assume that Jenkinson's gifts of 1566 would have consisted of similar objects.

In the first instance, the inclusion of sovereign gifts added legitimacy and royal recognition of the diplomatic relationship between the two states. Whereas previously Ivan's relations with England were maintained through the negotiations with merchant representatives, the 1566 mission introduced a more formal and personal mode of interaction between the two monarchs. Jenkinson was instructed to act as both a representative of the Crown and an agent of the Company, while subsequent English diplomats were referred to as the Queen's 'Special Ambassadors'.[15] As a royal representative, the Muscovites would have expected Jenkinson to arrive with gifts (*pominki*) for the Tsar. Silver-gilt plate and expensive fabrics were favoured as gifts due to their opulence and ease of transportation, but also due to the fact that similar objects formed a part of the Company's high-quality exports. In Tudor England, the use of cloth of gold was reserved to royalty and the upper echelons of nobility, while scarlet was a type of fine and expensive woollen cloth.[16] Meanwhile, a fully silver-gilt object was visually indistinguishable from one made of solid gold. These beautiful objects would have embodied the status of their giver, and in the role of a 'sovereign' gift reminded Ivan of the prestige that he gained from his friendship with the Queen of England. It could even be suggested, that an inexplicit message conveyed by Jenkinson's gifts was that whereas mercantile relations with England also facilitated a diplomatic relationship with the English Queen, the Dutch merchants were unable to offer a similar royal connection.

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[14] 'A remembrance giuen by […] the Gouernours of the [Muscovy Company], May 1561', Ibid., 1, p. 341. On previous occasions in 1556 and 1558, Jenkinson's gifts likewise consisted of plate, cloth, pearls, sapphires and 'other costly things': E.A. Jones, *The Old English Plate of the Emperor of Russia* (London, 1909), p. xix.

[15] G.M. Bell, *A Handlist of Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688* (London, 1990), pp. 221-7.

[16] M. Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Ashgate, 2009), p. 172.

Ivan, for instance, wasted no time in capitalising upon the new mode of diplomatic relations with the English Crown. The Tsar's letter, delivered by Jenkinson to Elizabeth, mentions several requests to send to Muscovy a master architect who could 'make castells [,] townes [,] and palaces', as well as a 'doctor, and a potycary [apothecary], and other masters [s]uche as are coming to Seke ought gold and Silver'.[17] In her reply, Elizabeth agreed to dispatch the artisans with 'good grace and special favor', but hoped that Ivan would 'concede and fully […] confirm' the mercantile privileges he had promised to grant to the Company.[18] Further correspondence between the two monarchs reveals that by September 1567 the Company's *gramota* was confirmed and Jenkinson's mission was effectively completed, though the Dutch retained their mercantile privileges.[19] Ivan notified Elizabeth that his friendship towards the Queen had 'encreassed' and invited the Queen to send her 'greater messenger' (a courtly ambassador) to secure the 'good friendship and everlasting love' between the two states.[20]

It is important to recognise that for the Muscovites the value of English diplomatic gifts often centred less on their individual monetary worth, and more on what these gifts represented and from whom they had been given. This does not, however, mean that the monetary value of a gift (as determined by its weight) was insignificant. In the aforementioned example of a silver-gilt cup, presented by Thomas Randolph in 1568, the ambassador was advised to recommend the gift 'for the newnes of the devise, than for the value', and emphasise that it was 'the firste that ev[er] was made in these p[ar]tes of that

[17] Ivan to Elizabeth, 16 September 1566, BL, Harley MS 296, f. 194r.
[18] Elizabeth to Ivan, 18 May 1567, BL, Royal MS 13, B.i, fos 190r-1r; also see BLOU, Clarendon MS 35.
[19] Ivan to Elizabeth, 11 September 1567, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332r-v; also see H. Huttenbach, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy. Reconstructed from Unpublished Sources', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 9 (1975), Appendix D (i), p. 201-2.
[20] Ibid., f. 332v.

manner'.[21] The cup was thus presented as the most exquisite example of contemporary Elizabethan silverwork, chosen by the Queen as a token of her esteemed friendship for the Tsar. The tone of the instructions also suggests a possible English concern about the impact and suitability of the cup as Elizabeth's royal gift. As far as the Muscovites were aware Randolph fulfilled the role of Elizabeth's 'greater messenger', a higher diplomatic representative who, unlike Jenkinson, was not a lowly merchant.[22] This meant that the gifts presented by Randolph had to outmatch, whether by craftsmanship or size, those previously presented by the agents of the Company. Unfortunately, neither the cup nor a record of its value or weight has survived. Moreover, a comparison between objects presented by English merchant-diplomats and courtly-ambassadors is hampered by the fact that the majority of surviving English plate at the Kremlin Armoury cannot be attributed to a specific embassy. Yet, the fact that Randolph was instructed to draw attention away from the cup's value (and possibly its weight) does suggest that the gift might not have been as impressive as the Crown wished the Muscovites to believe.

Often surviving diplomatic documents do not have any direct information relating to how gifts were received by the Tsars, including the silver cup of 1568. Randolph, however, bitterly complained of his treatment whilst in Moscow, including his house arrest, the interception, translation and misconstrued interpretation of his private correspondence by illicit English merchants, and subsequent accusations of treason by the Muscovite government.[23] This might suggest that the reception of Randolph's cup was unfavourable and that the ambassador's praise of the gift's beauty failed to persuade the Muscovites. Yet,

[21] Instructions for T. Randolph, dated 1569, TNA, SP 70/98, f. 131r-v.
[22] Randolph was presented as a gentleman of the royal privy chamber: J. Lock, 'Randolph, Thomas (1525/6-1590), *ODNB*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23122 [accessed 10 May 2018].
[23] 'The great cawses of offences given to [Thomas Randolph, 1568]', BL, Lansdowne MS 10, f. 130r.

it is important to remember that Ivan did not reject the gift nor made any reference to its unsuitability within his correspondence. Instead, Randolph's alleged mistreatment was the product of asymmetrical political interests of the monarchs. Whereas Ivan expected the ambassador to conclude the matter of a 'league' between the two states, Randolph was to thank Ivan for his 'frendly wrytings', give a verbal assurance 'without giuing occasion to enter into any special treaties or capitulac[i]on of any suche legue as is called offensiue and defensiue', and to procure mercantile privileges for the Company.[24] The latter was the 'speciall cause' of Randolph's embassy.

Eventually, the successful conclusion of Randolph's embassy suggests that the cup, despite the concerns about its value, was accepted by the Muscovites and fulfilled its role as a token of Elizabeth's friendship. At the conclusion of the embassy, Ivan agreed to give the Company a new mercantile charter and provide its agents with letters of safe passage to continue the exploration of the eastern and southern trade routes.[25] The favourable conclusion to Randolph's embassy, however, was a product of circumstances rather than skilful English mediation. In the context of Muscovite conflict with the Ottomans (1568-1570), the benefits of English imports of lead, iron, gunpowder and arrival of engineers, to aid Ivan's war efforts, outweighed any personal insult the Tsar might have felt by Elizabeth's silence over his proposed military alliance.[26] Moreover, the new *gramota* granted Ivan further political leverage over the direction of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy. The addition of letters of safe passage to Persia was exceptionally important to the aspirations of the Company and could be used to lobby future political concessions from Elizabeth. Moreover, if Randolph's embassy succeeded in pacifying Ivan's anger, its effects were short-lived. Upon

[24] TNA, SP 70/98, f. 130.
[25] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 378-82 (1569); also BL, Lansdowne MS 11, fos 50r-54v.
[26] For the overview of the Russo-Turkish War of 1568-1570, see N.A. Shefov, *Bitvy Rossii* (Moscow, 2002), pp. 698-700.

the conclusion of peace with the Ottomans in 1570 the Company's privileges were suspended and the matter of the 'league' was once again at the forefront of diplomatic agenda.

The second embassy of Anthony Jenkinson in June 1571 is another example in which political circumstances and the skills of the ambassador were the determining factors for the successful conclusion of the ambassadorial visit rather than diplomatic gifts. On this occasion, Jenkinson was to recoup the Company's privileges by satisfying Ivan without giving occasion to enter into any special treaties. In short, Jenkinson, like Randolph, was to 'accomplish in word […] what wanted in writing'.[27] The English gifts, according to Edward Jones, were a pair of silver-gilt candlesticks and two standing pots presented on behalf of the Queen, and a silver-gilt basin, ewer and a 'looking glass' (most likely Venetian) given on behalf of the Company and the ambassador himself.[28] On this occasion, although the royal gifts were not restricted to a single item, they do not appear to have been either 'special' or very opulent. The most interesting item, the mirror, was actually presented by Jenkinson himself and the object might have been intended to act as an example of a luxury commodity that the Company could supply to the Muscovite royal court if Ivan agreed to restore their mercantile rights.

Initially Jenkinson's arrival to Muscovy was unwelcome. He was prohibited from journeying to Moscow for seven months and was subsequently threatened by Ivan to have his head cut off for 'promises not performed'.[29] At the audience with Ivan, however, Jenkinson succeeded in persuading the Tsar that he had 'declare[d] both secretly and truely vnto the Queenes Maiestie her selfe, word

[27] A note of the proceeding of M. Anthonie Ienkinson [1571-2]', BL, Lansdowne MS 100, f. 112r; also in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 402.
[28] Jones, *The Old English Plate of the Emperor of Russia*, p. xix.
[29] This referred to Jenkinson's role in relating to Elizabeth Ivan's message about the proposed 'league' between the two states: Hakluyt, *PN*, part 2, p. 403.

for word, as thou Lord diddest commaund mee', and that the lack of progress in the matter of a 'league' was due to a linguistic miscommunication rather than a deliberate ploy by the Company to misdirect the course of diplomatic relations.[30] The fact that Jenkinson was granted an audience, would also imply that the English gifts mentioned above were accepted by the Muscovites, and, can once again be credited with fulfilling their role as tokens of Elizabeth's friendship. By the conclusion of the embassy, Ivan agreed to 'put away, and forget all' displeasure towards the English merchants and 'restore them their privileges and liberties'.[31]

The successful outcome of Jenkinson's embassy was not influenced directly by the gifts of plate and mirrors, the purpose of which was predominantly ceremonial, though for the Muscovites the act of giving gifts was an important step towards commencing diplomatic negotiations. An absence of gifts, for instance, was perceived as an expression of enmity or lack of friendship. Hence, while the gifts of 1517 fulfilled the ceremonial expectation of affirming Anglo-Muscovite friendship, it was up to Jenkinson to use the contemporary political context, including the sack of Moscow by the Tatars in 1571 and Ivan's new campaign in Livonia, to remind the Tsar of the informal assistance English merchants had given to the Muscovites (including importing military commodities and burning Polish ships) – a task that Jenkinson fulfilled successfully.

For the majority of the gift-exchange, Ivan was the recipient and the respondent. Muscovite reciprocation was expressed through material gifts of expensive furs, a traditional gift signifying a successful conclusion of a foreign ambassadorial visit, and an intangible gift of mercantile privileges, which

[30] Hakluyt, *PN,* 1, part 2, pp. 404-5.
[31] Ibid., p. 406.

granted various mercantile rights and exemptions. The gifts presented by Muscovite ambassadors to Elizabeth in London were interlinked with Ivan's aspirations and were potent reminders of his wealth, magnificence and dispensation of favours. Furs of sables, black foxes and ermines evoked the mercantile wealth of Ivan's kingdom; gerfalcons and haws were valuable birds of prey used for royal pastimes, such as hunting, and later additions of Persian silks, carpets and bows, symbolised the mercantile wealth of Muscovite trading networks. Most of these gifts, however, were perishable and have not survived.[32]

In contrast to numerous Elizabethan embassies and missions to Moscow, only two Muscovite ambassadors were dispatched by Ivan to London during Elizabeth's reign. Although this could be interpreted as an expression of disinterest on the part of the Tsar, it is important to remember that Muscovy had no maritime transportation to carry the ambassadors to London, while an overland route was dangerous due to constant hostilities between Ivan and his western and southern neighbours. The ships of the Muscovy Company, which transported both English and Muscovite ambassadors between London and Moscow, were primarily intended to convey merchandise rather than envoys and were unable to accommodate the large suites of ambassadorial entourage as demanded by Muscovite custom.[33] The financial costs of transporting and maintaining Muscovite ambassadors in London was entrusted to the Muscovy Company and the uncertainty of the Company's position, due to frequent

[32] No detailed inventory of sixteenth-century diplomatic gifts received from the Muscovite Tsars has been preserved in British archives beyond fragmented references in diplomatic documents. The majority of references to Muscovite gifts are derived from Muscovite Ambassadorial Reports (*stateinye spiski*) incorporated into the *Posol'skie Knigi* held at RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1.
[33] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, pp. 12-3.

revocations of their rights by Ivan, made visits of Muscovite ambassadors a financial and a political inconvenience.[34]

The principal Muscovite diplomatic gift of the sixteenth century was sable fur. The gifts of Andrei Grigor'evich Savin in 1569 were a timber (forty) sable pelts and a pair of sable pelts of exceptional quality. The subsequent ambassador Feodor Andreevich Pisemskii presented gifts of two timbers of sables (eighty furs) and two pairs of sables of exceptional quality in 1582.[35] Notably, the gifts of Ivan's first ambassador, Osip Grigor'evich Nepeia to Queen Mary I in 1557 included several types of furs, hawks, gerfalcons, geese and live sables.[36] These gifts were reportedly plundered by Scots, after the ship bearing the diplomat to London was shipwrecked. Fur, especially sable, was a prized commodity and a frequent and traditional diplomatic gift employed by the Muscovite Tsars. The most popular export of fur from Muscovy was that of the beaver, valued at 2 roubles per pelt, which was used for making hats, followed by that of ermine, valued at 0.05-0.2 roubles.[37] The relatively cheap price of ermine was reflective of the fact that, unlike in Western Europe, it had no royal associations for the Muscovite royal court. In contrast, sable furs and black fox pelts were the most expensive. The most high-quality sable furs, such as those sent as gifts to the English sovereigns, were valued at 16.25 roubles per pelt, while black foxes

[34] For instance, in 1621 the Company declared themselves incapacitated by the extraordinary charges of the Ambassadors to and from Muscovy: Sir Thomas Smith to Sir Albert Morton, 25 October 1621, TNA, SP 14/123, f. 81r.

[35] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 22; also see Fedor Pisemskii, 'Stateinyi Spisok F.A. Pisemskogo', in D.S. Likhachev (ed.), *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov XVI-XVII vv.: Stateinye Zapiski* (Moscow, 1954), p. 116.

[36] The supposed gifts lost in the shipwreck, as mentioned in Hakluyt included: 'sixe timber of Sables rich in in colour and haire [,] twentie entire Sables exceeding beautifull with teeth, eares and clawes [,] foure liuing Sables with chaines and collars [,] thirtie Lusarnes large and beautifull [,] sixe large and great skinnes very rich and rare, worne onely by the Empe|rour for woorthinesse [,] a large and faire white Ierfawcon for the wilde Swanne, Crane, Goose, and other great Fowles, together with a drumme of siluer, the hoopes gilt, vsed for a lure to call the sayd Hawke': Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 289.

[37] Notably, the beaver often cost more than the pelt of a bear: R. Hellie, *The Economy and Material Culture of Russia, 1600-1725* (Chicago, IL. and London, 1999), pp. 55-6.

were valued at 3-4 roubles per pelt.[38] The importance of sable furs is further highlighted by the fact that even if a pelt had been damaged by the trapping, the animal's belly fur was still sold, though at about 10% of the price of a complete pelt.[39] To safeguard the function of sable furs as the Tsar's royal gifts, proclamations were issued to prohibit its sale by anyone but the Tsar's treasury merchants.[40] Possibly, as objects traditionally and symbolically identified with royal Muscovite gift-giving, furs added legitimacy and royal authority to the embassy. There is, however, a possibility that the sable pelts mentioned within the Muscovite ambassadorial reports were not the only gifts presented by Savin and Pisemskii on behalf of the Tsar. Additional gifts might have been retained for display in the antechamber, which would explain their omission from the ambassadorial reports which only described the presentation of gifts during the royal audience.[41] Yet, no reference to these additional gifts can be found within contemporary documents.

The limitation of the 1569 and 1582 gifts to sable furs is better understood within the context of the embassies. Both Savin's and Pisemski's embassies can be regarded as blunt reminders to Elizabeth to fulfil her promises of reciprocity for the favours Ivan had granted to her merchants. The purpose of Savin's embassy was to conclude an offensive and defensive treaty, to be written in Russian, which the Queen was expected to sign and ratify with an oath in return for mercantile privileges secured by the English embassy of 1569.[42] Pisemskii was likewise dispatched to England to conclude an alliance with Elizabeth against Poland and its Catholic supporters, as well as inquire of English foreign affairs

[38] Hellie, *The Economy and Material Culture of Russia*, pp. 58-62.
[39] Ibid., p. 67.
[40] R.H. Fisher, *The Russian Fur Trade, 1550-1700* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1943), pp. 71-93.
[41] Similarly, English diplomatic documents only mention gifts of silver-gilt plate that were presented on behalf of the Queen, but often these royal gifts were supplemented by additional gifts presented on behalf of the Company and the ambassador himself as revealed by the *Posol'skie Knigi*.
[42] 'A request of the Russian Ambassador [Savin]', dated 6 May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 335r.

and procure ammunitions, weapons, armour, metal and craftsmen for Ivan's war effort.[43] His 'secret instructions' commanded the ambassador to conclude private negotiations with Elizabeth regarding a potential marriage between Ivan and an English noblewoman, Lady Mary Hastings.[44] The sable furs, therefore, had a similar purpose to that of Elizabeth's gifts of plate – to expresses Ivan's intentions to maintain Anglo-Muscovite friendship and to signal the commencement of diplomatic negotiations of each embassy. The furs also had a specific message for the English state, as they indirectly symbolised the mercantile benefits the Company had enjoyed under Ivan's favour and generosity.

The early Anglo-Muscovite gifts exchanged by Elizabeth and Ivan are characterised by a repeated exchange of familiar objects (silver-gilt plate and sable furs) and a noticeable lack of any extraordinary gifts. The gifts followed established precedents and there is no apparent departure from staple objects, unlike the later exchanges. This suggests that the gifts were not yet used to create a specific visual rhetoric intended to influence the course of Anglo-Muscovite interactions. As apparent in the examples above, the principal intention of the gifts was to comply with Muscovite diplomatic ceremony, embody the expressions of royal friendship and signal the commencement of diplomatic negotiations.

2. Diplomatic Discord: Elizabeth and Feodor, 1584-1594

Ivan's death in 1584 instigated a new obstacle for English ambitions. The Tsar's exclusive favour shown to the English over the course of thirty years fuelled the rise of anti-English sentiment amongst the prominent members of the Muscovite

[43] Instructions of Muscovite Ambassadors , dated 1582, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 4r-v.
[44] Pisemskii, 'Stateinyi Spisok', in Likhachev (ed.), *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov,* pp. 100-55.

government. Possibly, as a direct result of increased anti-English hostility, Elizabeth's sovereign gifts became more lavish, and consisted of dogs, bulls and furniture, as well as silver-gilt plate. The exchange of gifts between Elizabeth I and Ivan's successor, Feodor I, is an insightful case study of the close interconnection between diplomatic gift-giving, foreign policy and internal court politics. The gift-exchange between the two states fluctuated according to circumstances, firstly as a rejection of English gifts amidst *boyar* hostility, and secondly as an increase in quantity and quality of Muscovite gifts to the English as a reflection of Boris Godunov's influence and improvement of Anglo-Muscovite relations. The diplomatic aims of the English state, meanwhile, continued to focus interchangeably, on restoring, confirming and expanding the previous rights and exemptions granted to the Company. There were no Muscovite embassies sent to London by Feodor, but reciprocal Muscovite gifts can be gleaned through references to departure gifts, which were given to departing English ambassadors to be delivered to Elizabeth.[45] Precisely what Feodor had expected to gain from friendship with Elizabeth is unclear. The correspondence of the two monarchs shifted from negotiations for an Anglo-Muscovite alliance to matters of commerce and the alleged misbehaviour of English merchants and English ambassadors, namely Sir Jerome Bowes and Jerome Horsey.[46] Following Boris Godunov's political rise within Feodor's court in 1588, the Tsar's letters were accompanied by those of Godunov to the Queen.[47] The main theme of Godunov's correspondence emphasised the mutual benefits of the Anglo-Muscovite relationship and set precedent for Elizabeth's later acknowledgement of Godunov as Feodor's successor.

[45] Horsey, 'Travels', in Berry and Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 338.
[46] The diplomatic correspondence between Elizabeth and Feodor I is discussed in Chapter 7.
[47] The absence of royal English embassies to Muscovy between 1588 and 1598 was the result of a relative stability of Anglo-Muscovite mercantile relations; the rights and exemption granted to the Company merchants in 1588 were not under constant threat of revocation, unlike in Ivan's reign.

Whereas the majority of English diplomatic gifts presented to Muscovite Tsars were accepted, there were two instances of rejected gifts. In 1584, Elizabeth's gifts of silver-gilt plate, initially presented by Sir Jerome Bowes to Ivan in 1582, were 'returned vnto [the ambassador]', apart from a gift of a crossbow that was kept by the Tsar.[48] The precise nature of which type of plate was given is unclear, although Jerome Horsey mentions 'thirty men liveried in stammel cloaks', each of whom carried an item of silver-gilt plate.[49] The Company's remembrance also mentions a silver-gilt basin and ewer that were sent as a gift to Moscow.[50] On the one hand, the rejection and return of Elizabeth's diplomatic gifts was reflective of the anti-English sentiment of Feodor's regents, especially that of Andrei Shchelkalov, and the commendation of several *boyars* to no longer favour the merchants of the English Queen above those of other European sovereigns.[51] This is also suggested by the refusal of the Muscovite government to reaffirm the previous rights and privileges enjoyed by the Muscovy Company.[52] The hostility and treatment of Elizabeth's royal ambassadors could further affirm this notion. Bowes, for instances, complained about the dishonour shown to him by the Muscovites, including being forced to sit by the lower end of the table with a 'companie of meane gentlemen' and having his 'rapie[r] and dagger' taken away from him.[53] He was also threatened to be torn to pieces and thrown over the wall. Similarly, in 1588, Elizabeth informed Feodor that her ambassador (Giles Fletcher) was 'greatlie abused', his 'letters and messadg[e] was demaunded from him and [he] could not be

[48] Letter from Sir Jerome Bowes, dated 12 August 1584, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 22r.
[49] Horsey, 'Travels', p. 338.
[50] A Remembrance for the Muscovy Company, dated 1584, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 36r.
[51] According to Sir Jerome Bowes, the main proponents of anti-English sentiment were Feodor's uncle (and regent) Nikita Romanovich Zakharyin-Yuriev (c. 1522-1586) and the head of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, Andrei Yakovlevich Shchelkalov, who 'were Emperors in there owne recknynge': TNA, SP 91/1, f. 22r.
[52] According to Feodor's letter 'it were not meet to give to your merchants such letters because your subjects the merchants heretofore living in our dominions did many unbeseeming things': BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 337r-338v.
[53] Sir Jerome Bowes' Remembrance from Moscow, dated 1584, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 24v-25r.

p[er]myted vnto [Foedor's] presence in the space of half aye[er].[54] This interpretation of the rejection of English gifts in 1584, however, oversimplifies the complexity of Muscovite ceremonial traditions and the internal political struggle within Feodor's court during the first years of his reign. A more realistic interpretation of the rejected gifts should be attributed to the unfavourable conclusion of Bowes' embassy (and perhaps, the temperament of the ambassador himself).

The purpose of Sir Jerome Bowes' 1583 embassy was to procure an expansion and reaffirmation of English trade privileges, which had been, yet again, suspended by Ivan due to Elizabeth's continuous silence over the matter of the Anglo-Muscovite 'league'. Upon Ivan's death negotiations for a renewal of the *gramota* were suspended, and whilst the merchants were permitted to trade in Muscovy, they no longer retained their monopoly or their exemption from paying customs. Evidently, Bowes' embassy failed to secure 'the grant of what [he] came for'.[55] The unsuccessful conclusion of the embassy was reflected in Feodor's return of the gifts. Firstly, the return could have symbolised an unfinished diplomatic negotiation. The gifts were presented and accepted by Ivan, yet his death rendered negotiations incomplete and ceremonial tradition would have demanded the gifts to be returned to avoid accusations of unfulfilled promises. As these gifts were not intended for Feodor, negotiations for mercantile privileges with the new Tsar could only commence once Elizabeth has sent a new embassy, which would have acknowledged Feodor's succession and brought gifts specifically intended for the new Tsar. The Muscovite intentions to 'retain Elizabeth's friendship like [Feodor's] father did', and the inclusion of reciprocal gifts to be conveyed to Elizabeth, refute the notion that Feodor's government intended to terminate friendship between the English and Muscovite

[54] Elizabeth to Feodor, dated 4 August 1590, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 64r.
[55] TNA, SP 91/1, f. 25v.

royal courts.[56] Firstly, the Muscovites did not return all of the gifts sent by Elizabeth to Ivan, but returned only the silver-gilt plate, which by 1584 had become synonymous with royal English gift-giving. For instance, a crossbow was retained and reciprocated with '[three] tymbers [120] of [sable] skynnes'.[57] Bowes claimed that these were 'badd things [and] they were g[o]od nott', yet this evaluation was less likely a reflection of the furs' quality than Bowes' disappointment at his failed commission.[58] These reciprocal gifts of furs were intended to signify to the Queen the Muscovite intent to maintain royal friendship, which would have likely echoed the contents of Feodor's accompanying letter. Unfortunately, Feodor's intentions were misconstrued as Bowes decided to 'rydd [himself] of' Feodor's letter and reciprocal gifts.[59] Instead, upon his return to London Bowes presented Elizabeth with his own more exclusive gift of 'an Elke or Loshe, the Red deere of the [Muscovite] countrey, and also a brace of Raine deare, Buck and Doe', which in 'her Ma[j]esties presence drew a sled and a man vpon it'.[60] The ambassador's arrival into London without a confirmed *gramota* or Feodor's letters, with tales of his ill-treatment, would have certainly projected an image of a hostile and anti-English Muscovite court. The resulting misinterpretation of Feodor's intentions and subsequent English anxiety to restore amiable relations explains the extraordinary lavishness and variety of subsequent royal gifts sent to Feodor in 1586.

The subsequent English ambassador, Jerome Horsey, was dispatched to Moscow with a multitude of royal gifts to congratulate Feodor upon his accession, to

[56] TNA, SP 91/1, f. 25v.
[57] Ibid., f. 22r.
[58] Ibid., f. 22r.
[59] Bowes justified his actions by declaring to the Privy Council that he was 'well assured that the Sonne of the late Emperor was not made privy to the contents [of the letter]', and that Bowes returned the letter 'back agayne to these two vntrewe Subiectes [Nikita Romanovich and Andrei Shchelkalov]': TNA, SP 91/1, f. 22r.
[60] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 463.

attend the Tsar's coronation and to arrange a new trading agreement (*gramota*) for the Muscovy Company.[61] Unfortunately, Horsey's instructions provide no reference to any of the gifts the ambassador was expected to present to Feodor. The only mention of the gifts appears in Horsey's own memoirs, written sometime after his return to England in 1591 to vindicate himself from previous accusations of the Muscovy Company.[62] The account should, therefore, be treated with caution. The ambassador recalls that the gifts of 1586 embassy consisted of 'lions, bulls, dogs, gilt halberds, pistols, pieces, armour, wines, store of drugs of all sorts, organs, virginals, musicians, scarlets, pearl chains [and] plate of curious making'.[63] The centrepiece of these gifts was a 'goodly white bull, all spotted over with black natural dapple, his crop or gorge hanging down to his knees before him, gilt false horns, collar of green velvet studded and red rope', which was made to 'kneel down before the emperor [Feodor] and empress [Irina]'. The animal was accompanied by 'twelve goodly large mastiff dogs led with twelve men, decked with roses [and] collars'.[64] The dogs, and assumingly the bull, were left before the palace for the admiration of the crowd, which Horsey estimated to be above 5,000 people.[65]

The choice of animals as a royal gift is interesting, especially as previous gifts sent by Elizabeth to Ivan were restricted to silver-gilt plate. In contrast to plate, animals could evoke the mutually accepted ideas of royal power and representation, as well as shared pastimes. Usually, exotic animals, such as lions, elephants, rhinoceros and many species of birds of prey were exchanged

[61] BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 375r-376r.
[62] The work was published in 1621; see R. Croskey 'The Composition of Sir Jerome Horsey's "Travels"', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 26 (1978), pp. 362-75.
[63] Horsey, 'Travels', in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 321.
[64] Horsey, 'Travels', p. 324.
[65] Ibid., p. 324.

between royal courts for the expansion of a monarch's menagerie.[66] The selected animals were often symbolic of heraldry and royal power and were, therefore, a suitable diplomatic gift. Within the Anglo-Muscovite gift-giving context, such gifts are not frequent. Amongst Mary Tudor's gifts to Ivan in 1557 were two lions, and James sent antelopes and an Indian parrot to Michael in 1620.[67] Horsey's account provides the only example of animals, both exotic and English, being given by Elizabeth to the Muscovite Tsar as a diplomatic gift.

The English mastiffs, mentioned by Horsey, were frequently used in popular English pastimes of bear-baiting bull-baiting, and dog fighting, as well as for hunting and guarding, and the gifts could have been intended to introduce the breed into Muscovy.[68] The inclusion of the white bull is more peculiar. Bulls were believed to be a symbol of fertility and the gift might have conveyed Elizabeth's well-wishes for Feodor's reign, and marriage, to be bountiful. Moreover, prior to his departure to Moscow, Horsey had 'presumed to tell the Queene that order was given him from the Emperesse to move her Ma[jes]tie for the sendinge over of a midwief into [Muscovy]'.[69] Elizabeth might have drawn the wrong conclusion from this message and assumed that Irina was expecting a child. The bull could therefore have been a congratulatory gift to the royal couple, alongside Elizabeth's commendation and a dispatch of a midwife.[70] Yet, considering the lack of surviving children Feodor and Irina had produced since their marriage in 1575, the arrival of the midwife, and to a lesser extent the presentation of the

[66] See F. Heal, 'Presenting Noble Beasts: Gifts of Animals in Tudor and Stuart Diplomacy' in T. Sowerby and J. Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, c. 1410-1800* (New York, 2017), pp. 187-203.
[67] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 289.
[68] See E. Griffin, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 59-73, 114-140; eadem, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain since 1066* (New Haven and London, 2007).
[69] Muscovy Company to Boris Godunov, dated 1587, BL, Lansdowne MS 53, f. 39v.
[70] Elizabeth to Irina, dated 24 March 1586, in Tolstoi, *First Forty Years*, p. 284.

bull, was an instance of a serious error in diplomatic judgement.[71] Notably, the midwife, reportedly on Horsey's orders, was kept at Vologda for a space of a whole year and was never taken to Moscow to see Irina.[72]

Another important aspect of Horsey's 1586 embassy was the inclusion of royal gifts to Feodor's brother-in-law Boris Godunov. The gifts consisted of 'jewels, chains, pearls, plate, gilt armour, halberds, pistols and white and red scarlet velvet', as well as 'virginals, all gilt and enameled'.[73] Firstly, the gifts could have acknowledged the bond of friendship between Godunov and Horsey, as the ambassador claimed to have been personally known by Godunov and to have undertaken missions to Livonia on the *boyar's* behest.[74] Alternatively, the inclusion of the gifts might imply an English recognition of Godunov's increasing influence within Feodor's court, especially as Elizabeth had also written letters directly to Godunov. Muscovite epistolary etiquette demanded that correspondence was to be undertaken only by persons of equal rank and Godunov's correspondence with the Queen elevated him to the status of a *de facto* regent of Muscovy.[75] The gifts, and the Queen's letters, demonstrate a pragmatic English recognition of Godunov's elevation and the potential benefits that could be gained from the acquisition of Godunov's support. English gifts presented to Boris Godunov were not limited to a single instance of 1586. In his letter, dated July 1589, Godunov expressed his gratitude to Elizabeth for the

[71] The exact dating of Feodor's marriage is debatable due to scarcity and confusion of sources. Some historians have assumed that Feodor married in 1580, yet others have argued that a piece of embroidery made by Irina in 1574/5 indicated that she was already Feodor's wife; this chapter favours the earlier dating as marrying in her early twenties would have made Irina too old according to Muscovite custom. Feodor and Irina only had one child, a daughter Feodosia Feodorovna (1592-1594): A. A. Zimin, 'Sostav Boiarskoi Dumy v XV-XVI Vekakh', *Arkheograficheskii Ezhegodnik za 1957 g.*, 1 (1958), p. 78.
[72] 'A discourse', BL, Lansdowne MS 112, fos 136r-137v; also C. Borough to Governors of the Muscovy Company, dated November 1587, BL, Lansdowne MS 52, fos 102r-103v.
[73] Horsey 'Travels', in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, pp. 325-6.
[74] Ibid., pp. 315-7.
[75] A letter from Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated 14 January 1591, congratulated Godunov on his sister's delivery of a daughter: RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 11, f. 1r-v; a second letter from Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, also dated 14 January 1591, expressed Elizabeth's gratitude to Godunov for his protection of English mercantile interests: RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 12, f. 1r-v.

gifts she had sent him, but informed the Queen that he 'durst not accepte these presents', as Feodor had refused to accept the gifts Elizabeth had sent him, and Godunov was expected to do the same.[76] The benefits of the English initiative to present Godunov with letters and gifts became apparent following Feodor's death in 1598 and Godunov's accession to the Muscovite throne. Instead of inventing strategies to secure the support of the new Tsar, the English ambassadors were able to invoke the lasting friendship between Elizabeth and Godunov as the basis for a continuation of the Tsar's friendship and favour towards the English.

If Horsey was lucky to escape the implications of Elizabeth's commendation and dispatch of a midwife in 1586, his successor, Dr Giles Fletcher, was less fortunate. The royal English letters presented by Fletcher in 1588 requested the return of the midwife back to London.[77] The Muscovite royal court, however, claimed ignorance of the matter. Upon hearing of Horsey's presumption, Godunov strongly complained to Elizabeth, noting that his sister had been 'greatlye dishonoured by suche a surmise [e]specially in respecte of the unfitness of the messenger to be used in suche a request'.[78] Fletcher's subsequent report to the Queen and the Privy Council regarding the 'midwife episode' revealed that Horsey had misinterpreted the instruction given by Irina's brother, Boris Godunov, 'to procure owt of England, not a midwife, but soom Doctoritza that had skill in woomens matters'.[79] The report implied that Irina was unable to fulfil her duty of producing an heir and the incident brought a personal matter concerning the Tsarina onto an international diplomatic stage. Fletcher's inquiries about the midwife might have also contributed to the ill-treatment the ambassador was accorded by the Muscovites during his embassy.

[76] Boris Godunov to Elizabeth, dated July 1591, in Tolstoi, *First Forty Years*, p. 363
[77] 'A discourse on the troubles caused by Jerome Horsey [1588-1591]', BL, Lansdowne MS 112, f. 137r.
[78] Ibid., f. 136v.
[79] TNA, SP 91/1, fos 74r-75v.

It has been argued that the alleged mistreatment of Giles Fletcher, and delay of his audience with Feodor, was the result of the contemporary political context rather than the influence of the midwife episode or the anti-English hostility of Feodor's court. The English embassy of 1588 coincided with the visit of Jeremias II Tranos, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the arrival of envoys from the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II.[80] Both of these embassies were concerned with political rather than mercantile matters and would have been given preference over the English embassy. Maria Unkovaskaya, however, argues that Fletcher's mission was concerned with establishing Muscovite neutrality in Anglo-Spanish conflict rather than the mercantile affairs of the Company.[81] She notes that at the time the Pope was attempting, and initially succeeding, in persuading the Muscovites to join the forces of Spain, Rome and the Holy Roman Empire against the Ottomans. Felicity Stout points out that Fletcher acknowledged the Spanish and Papal threat at the Muscovite court, and that the ambassador attributed it as one of the reasons for his mistreatment.[82] Yet Stout, in agreement with the argument of this thesis, emphasises that the sources relating to Fletcher's missions show that the ambassador's principal commission was concerned with the mercantile affairs of the Company rather than an attempt to dissuade the Muscovites from an alliance with Catholic states.[83] Moreover, the formation of a league between the Muscovites and Spain was further damped by the news of the English victory over the Spanish Armada.

If Fletcher's alleged mistreatment can be attributed to the political context of his embassy, then the return of Elizabeth's gifts of 1588 could have been the result of a cross-cultural misunderstanding. The precise nature of Fletcher's gifts is unclear. The only reference to these gifts is given in a letter from Boris Godunov,

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[80] M.V., Unkovskaya, 'Anglo-Russian Diplomatic Relations, 1580-1696 (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1992), pp. 136-7.
[81] Ibid., pp. 132-40.
[82] Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth*, p. 72.
[83] Fletcher's Report [1589], BL, Lansdowne MS 52, fos 104v-105r.

which describes the gift as 'pieces of gold', with 'a half piece of gold', 'a quarter piece of gold', and 'a piece of gold of the size of a farthing'.[84] The gifts could have been either gold sovereign coins or gold medals. It is rather unlikely that Elizabeth would have selected coins as gifts to Feodor, since, as Godunov rightly notes, 'such presents heretofore have not been used between you, great princes', due to its negative association with commerce and merchants.[85] The Muscovites regarded money as the lowest of accepted gifts exchanged between sovereigns, but only if money was presented alongside other objects. Ivan, for instance, was known to have received and accepted a gold statue of a camel to which were attached baskets filled with coins.[86] In contrast, if money was presented as an isolated gift, it was rejected. The rejection was attributed to the Muscovite association of money with *zhalovannie*, a term applied to Muscovite gifts given to foreign ambassadors. In Muscovite tradition, gifts of money were given only to the supplicants, or those deemed to be of lower political rank. An alternative interpretation of Godunov's description is that the objects could have been commemorative medals, bearing the Queen's portrait, which the Muscovites mistook for English coins. The inclusion of medals might have intended, in similarity to a later gift of a cup with a stone on which the likeness of the Queen had been carved, to emphasise the royal identity of the gift's sender.[87] Gifts of medals were also commonly given to family and political allies as tokens of fraternity, and its presentation to Feodor was likely intended to emphasise the bond of friendship and love between the two monarchs. It is not known whether Fletcher was instructed to explain to the Tsar the nature of the gift, but ultimately the Muscovites mistook the medals for coins. Muscovite ceremonial required the gifts to be weighted to determine their value, and in this

[84] Boris Godunov to Queen Elizabeth, dated July 1589, in Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, p. 363.
[85] Ibid., p. 363.
[86] Iuzefovich, *Kak v Posol'skikh Obychaiakh Vedetsia*, p. 50.
[87] T.G. Goldberg, 'Iz Posol'skikh Darov XVI-XVII vekov: Angliyskoe Serebro', in in S.K. Bogoiavlenskii and G.A. Novitskii (eds), *Gosudarstvennaia Oruzheinaia Palata Moskovskogo Kremlia: Sbornik Nauchnykh Trudov po Materialam Gosudarstvennoi Oruzheinoi Palaty* (Moscow, 1954), p. 442.

instance, Feodor is reported to have exclaimed that the weight of the coins was only suitable as a pay to the most lowest-ranked guardsman.[88] The gifts were deemed unacceptable and were returned to the English ambassador.

In her subsequent letters Elizabeth acknowledged that the gift was 'not comendable nor agreable', and sent whilst England was 'in the most bussyest tyme of [the] wars w[i]th the Spaniards'.[89] The statement itself does not confirm whether the gifts were coins or medals, but the fact that Godunov only mentions three or four pieces of gold favours the latter. Furthermore, Elizabeth's statement that the gift was not 'so base but smale valewe', and 'hath and doth pase betwene princes when love and frendshipe remayneth', resonated with the notion of giving medals as tokens of commemoration to the closest of friends.[90] Thereby, although the Queen's gifts diverged from the usual gifts of silver-gilt plate, possibly as a result of a diverting of funds to the war effort, the medals were expected to remind the Tsar of the continuous friendship between the two states. To further illustrate the cross-cultural misunderstanding of Fletcher's gifts, Feodor's letters to the Queen remained adamant that the gift of the medals were 'not such as they should be'.[91] The gift of medals was seen as a deliberate insult, and Feodor informed Elizabeth that when he would send his ambassador to London he will 'lykewyse abate of' his gifts.[92] In other words, the Muscovites ambassador would be dispatched without any gifts. This would also explain Elizabeth's vehement anger at Muscovite public rejection of her gifts. If the gifts were indeed medals intended to symbolise the strong friendship between the two states, the rejection of the gifts (and thus, Elizabeth's friendship) would have been a serious slight to the Queen's honour. Elizabeth's

[88] Goldberg, 'Iz Posol'skikh Darov', p. 443.
[89] Elizabeth to Feodor, dated 4 August 1590, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 64r.
[90] Ibid., f. 64r. In Elizabethan England cameos featuring miniatures of the Queen were given as gifts to Elizabeth's favoured courtiers and advisors: D. Scarisbrick, *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery* (London, 1995), pp. 35-9.
[91] Feodor to Elizabeth, dated July 1591, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 83r.
[92] Ibid., f. 83r.

letter, dated July 1590, suggests that this was the case. Elizabeth accused Feodor of 'not respectinge the brotherly love yo[ur] highnes professed vnto [our] ma[jesty]', and noted that if Feodor had ever 'at any tyme sente vnto [our] higness the tenth p[ar]t of the valew' of Elizabeth's gifts, she would have 'excepted thowse (not in respect of the thinge it self) but of the excelency from whome yt was presented'.[93] Elizabeth's message reinforces the ideas that in determining the contemporary value of a diplomatic gift, attention needs to be paid to its symbolic and representative role and not only to its monetary value and physical appearance. The final point which favours the theory of a cultural misunderstanding is the outcome of Fletcher's embassy, which was the most favourable since Randolph's embassy of 1569. Although the Company's rights and privileges were reduced (they were expected to pay half-custom duty and their trade was restricted to the port of St. Nicholas in Archangel), the Company's debts were remitted and the care of the Company's affairs was entrusted to Boris Godunov, who was more favourable to the English than his hostile predecessor Andrei Shchelkalov.[94] The rights and privileges gained from the 1589 *gramota* remained unchallenged by the Muscovites for the duration of Feodor's reign and revealed a degree of stability and continuity of amicable relations between the two states.[95]

Reflective of his disinterest in the Anglo-Muscovite alliance, Feodor, unlike his father, did not send a Muscovite embassy to London, but Muscovite reciprocity can be gleaned through scattered references to Feodor's departure gifts. Firstly, the granting of a new *gramota* in 1586 and 1589 demonstrated continuity in the

[93] Elizabeth to Feodor, dated 1590, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 64r.
[94] For the privileges attained by Fletcher, see Hakluyt, *PN,* 1, part 2, pp. 473-4.
[95] Ibid., f. 64v. With the exception of Jerome Horsey's second embassy in 1590-91, which was instructed to express Elizabeth's gratitude for the privileges Feodor had granted to the Company, there were no other English royal embassies until Francis Cherry's commission of 1598. In 1590 Horsey, however, was not granted an audience but imprisoned and expelled from Muscovy due to the personal animosity he had acquired amongst Feodor's principal councillors: 'A discourse on the troubles caused by Jerome Horsey [1588-1591]', BL, Lansdowne MS 112, f. 136-37r.

appropriation of *gramoty* as the Tsar's intangible gift to the English state. Secondly, tangible Muscovite departure gifts are mentioned by Horsey and in a letter of Boris Godunov. It should also be noted that in both of these instances the gifts were presented on two special occasions. Departing gifts given to a visiting ambassador, following his last audience with the monarch, were a significant component of early modern diplomatic ceremonial, especially for the Muscovite royal court. If royal gifts marked the beginning of an ambassadorial visit, the departure gifts concluded it. Hence, if the arriving ambassadorial gifts became those of instigation, the departing gifts assumed the role of reciprocity. The gifts accompanying Horsey's returning embassy of 1587 were presented following Feodor's coronation. The gifts consisted of

> four pieces of Persian cloth of gold and two whole pieces of cloth of silver of curious works; a large rich cloth of state of white arras, the representation of the sun shining in his full splendancy, gold and silver beams interwrought with most orient colours, silks, silver and gold, the thread slicked fast, to illustrate the beauty thereof; a fair large Turkey carpet; four black very rich timbers of sables; six white well grown spotted lucerns; two [*shuby*] or gowns of white ermines.[96]

The ambassador noted that the Queen had even 'sweat by taking pains to handle the canopy of cloth of gold, especially the rich sables and furs', whilst the gifts of 'two white gerfalcons, a last of jerkins, and a last of slight falcons and two goshawks' were entrusted into the care of Elizabeth's favourite courtiers, George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, and Sir Henry Lee.[97] It is hard to explain why Feodor's gifts were so lavish, in comparison to those of his father, as no complementary evidence has survived to support or refute Horsey's claims. The gifts can, however, be compared to another example of Feodor's gifts to Elizabeth, dispatched with the English messenger Thomas Lynde in 1592. The gifts were presented on the occasion of the birth of Feodor's daughter Feodosia Feodorovna and consisted of 'one timber of sables worth 900 marks, two pairs of

[96] Horsey, 'Travels', in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 338.
[97] Horsey, 'Travels', p. 338.

sables worth 16 *li*, [and] two lysernis worth 11 *li*'.[98] The letter also mentions the 'Embasadors one present', which included 'two timbers [eighty] of sables worth 160 *li*, three pairs of fine sables worth 37 *li*, two lynx or 'lysernis' furs worth 9 *li* and two hawks and gerfalcons'. The gifts of fur are more consistent with expected Muscovite norms and previous examples of Ivan's gifts to Elizabeth. To an extent the reciprocal gifts given to Horsey and Lynde do not deviate from expectations. Both occasions featured gifts of furs and hawks – objects closely associated with royal Muscovite gifts. Furs represented Muscovite mercantile wealth and hawks and falcons held royal connotations. The addition of Persian cloths and Turkish carpets was customary for later embassies of Michael Romanov, and in 1586 these gifts could have served as a reminder to the English merchants of the revocation of their letters of safe passage into the East as a mark of Feodor's disfavour. Although no reference survives regarding the departure gifts given to Giles Fletcher in 1589, it is possible to assume that despite the rejection of Fletcher's gifts of medals, it is unlikely that the ambassador was sent back to England empty-handed, especially considering the successful conclusion of his visit.

Initially, the examination of Elizabeth's gift-exchange with Feodor might suggest that Anglo-Muscovite relations were experiencing a serious crisis and that a cessation of diplomatic relations was inevitable amidst an internal political struggle within Feodor's court. A closer inspection, however, reveals that whilst the privileges of the Muscovy Company were curtailed, the new Tsar was desirous to retain the friendship with the English Queen as established by his father. Gift-giving continued to represent royal friendship despite instances of cultural misunderstanding and certain transgressions of English ambassadors, resulting in misinterpretations, rejections and returns of gifts. Furthermore, Feodor's reign initiated a more significant obstacle to the mercantile aspirations

[98] Boris Godunov to Elizabeth, dated Jan 1592, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, f. 26v.

of the Muscovy Company. Increased contact with diplomatic representatives of other European houses jeopardised English monopoly on Muscovite markets and the English faced increasing competition from Dutch, Venetian and German merchants. By 1584 the merchants of the Company were obliged to pay half of the customs duties and Feodor's letters admonished Elizabeth for restricting the right to trade in Muscovy to members of the Muscovy Company rather than all English merchants.[99] Diplomatic negotiations regarding potential alliances with Catholic powers, including the Holy Roman Empire and Spain, also raised concerns in relation to its effect upon English foreign policy bearing in mind the Anglo-Spanish war of 1585-1604. Possibly, amidst these developments it was felt that isolated gifts of silver-gilt plate were insufficient to retain Muscovite interest (especially as, unlike Ivan, Feodor showed no interest in a conclusion of an Anglo-Muscovite alliance) and additional gifts of exotic animals, rich cloths, weapons and armours were added to bolster England's status. As a precursor of the matters that would dominate Elizabethan embassies between 1598 and 1603, the Muscovites began to request Elizabeth to send a written confirmation denying English provision of assistance to Muscovite enemies, in this instance the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire.[100]

3. A New Dynasty I: Boris Godunov and Elizabeth I, 1598-1603

[99] According to Feodor, Elizabeth should: 'Give order that all people of your kingdom may be permitted to come and to have liberty of trade, and let them not be forbidden on account of the give, six or ten persons, who have been used for a long time to come into our realm, and order that there should be no occasion thereby to surpress the trade of those merchants. There is no such order in any kingdom that merchants should be enforced to trade, so that some should have the liberty to trade and other should be deprived of it. And if it should happen for the future that some of your people may trade, and other shall be restrained from trade it would appear that your for love for our ma[jes]ty is not perfect. Do not make prohibition in your kingdom for merchants of your kingdom willing to come with warres into our realm, and order not to restrain merchants of all other kingdoms, but let them be permitted to come without hinderance into our realm, that brotherly love may not be transgressed bewixt us and you, our loving sister': TNA, SP 91/1, fos 59v-60r.

[100] For example, see Godunov to Elizabeth, dated December 1598, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 112r-v.

In 1598 Francis Cherry, a member of the Muscovy Company, was dispatched to Moscow as a Special Ambassador bearing gifts of fourteen livery pots, precious stones, pearls, jewellery, sets of ewers and basin and a standing cup adorned with Elizabeth's portrait.[101] Feodor, however, had died before Cherry reached Moscow and a new Tsar, Boris Godunov, had been elected by the Zemsky Sobor. Despite arriving into Moscow on 3 June 1598, Cherry was not granted a formal audience with the new Tsar until Godunov's coronation at the beginning of the Muscovite New Year (1 September).[102] Unlike his predecessor, Godunov had been a committed supporter of the Company's affairs in Muscovy, had protected English interests against rival councillors during the 1580s and was referred to by Muscovite boyars as the English 'well-wisher'. Godunov's accession, therefore, was expected to benefit the Company, which had hoped to evoke Godunov's continued friendship with Elizabeth as the basis for future favours. Cherry, for instance, remarked that Godunov had 'willed [Cherry] to assure her Majesty that the slanderous reports [of English support to Poland] had no credytt with him', which implied a favourable disposition to English requests for a new confirmed *gramota*.[103] It is unclear whether the gifts Cherry presented to Godunov were different from the gifts originally selected to be presented to Feodor. Original gifts could have been bolstered with additional gifts of expensive commodities to convey a great degree of honour and elation at Godunov's accession. For example, the cup adorned with Elizabeth's portrait echoed Elizabeth's previous gifts of medals to Feodor in 1588. Objects bearing a monarch's portrait were frequently presented to individuals close to the royal person (favoured courtiers, principal ministers, family members); within a diplomatic context, the cup could have been chosen to reiterate the close friendship between the English Queen and the Muscovite Tsar. In the long term, however, the Company's hopes for exclusive future favours were unrealised.

[101] Goldberg, 'Iz Posol'skikh Darov', p. 442.
[102] Cherry to W. Cecil, dated 20 July 1598, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 110r.
[103] Instructions to Francis Cherry, 7 April 1598, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 105r-v.

Godunov was unwilling to sacrifice Muscovite commercial interests for the benefits of the English state and increasing Muscovite contacts with European diplomatic representatives decreased the priority of English affairs within Godunov's foreign policy. Hence, neither the English monopoly nor the letters of safe passage to trade with Persia were restored, although the Company was once again exempt from customs duties paid by other foreigners.[104]

Whereas Francis Cherry's commission of congratulating Godunov upon accession was the product of circumstances, official congratulations on behalf of the Queen were entrusted to the embassy of Sir Richard Lee in 1600.[105] Reference to the gifts presented by Lee to Godunov can only be found within a memoir of a contemporary Dutch merchant-diplomat, Isaac Massa.[106] The Dutchman noted gifts of 'a bed of fine work made most beautifully', accompanied by 'many cups and chalices filled with precious items and incense, and marvellous cloths most richly woven', for which the embassy was given rich sable furs upon Lee's departure.[107] The reciprocal gifts for the Queen consisted of four timbers (160) of sable furs and one black fox, whilst Lee was given two timbers (eighty) of sables and one black fox pelt; one timber of sable and one timber of ermine furs were presented to the English ambassadorial retinue.[108] The choice of a bed as a gift is curious, though considering James I's later gifts of chairs upholstered with velvet and decorated with golden thread as a gift to the Patriarch of Moscow in 1620, Lee's bed is not a singular instance of furniture gifts.[109] Although no detailed description of the given gift survives, it is possible to suppose that the bed was most likely a four-poster with elaborate wooden carvings and

[104] Privileges granted by Emperor of Russia to English Merchants, December 1598, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 118r-9v.
[105] Instructions to Sir Richard Lee, May 1600, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 133r-34r.
[106] I. Massa, A *Short History*, trans. and ed. A. Morozov (Moscow, 1937), p. 59.
[107] Ibid., p. 59.
[108] The arrival of the embassy of Sir Richard Lee to Boris Godunov, 30 May 1600-May 1601, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 33, f. 128r.
[109] The arrival of the embassy of Sir John Merrick, July 1620 to July 1621', RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, fos 170v-171r.

embroidered hangings, as was the Elizabethan fashion. As well as being an item of luxury, beds were symbolic of royal authority, whilst the bedchamber was regarded as a social space. In Western European courts the bedchamber was often used to receive courtiers, whereby the bed represented a monarch's throne. Beds were also centrepieces in events of great public significance, including royal births and deaths. Perhaps, as beds were representative of procreation (and therefore dynastic continuity) the bed conveyed English recognition of Godunov's accession as the continuity of the Rurikid dynasty. Alternatively, within the context of the possible marriage of Godunov's daughter to Maximillian III, the bed could also be added to her future bridal trousseau. Lee's embassy remained in Moscow for ten months and was well received and respected. An English agent reported that Lee's 'carriage here in her Majesty's affairs has been such as that in these parts our country has gotten great honour thereby'.[110] The ambassador, however, failed to acquire additional privileges for the English merchants and had further complicated diplomatic negotiations by making a vague promise of obtaining suitable marriage matches for Godunov's son and heir amongst the daughters of the English nobility. As discussed in Chapter 3, the renewal of privileges was suspended until Godunov had received Elizabeth's answer listing proposed marriage candidates.[111]

At the same time as Elizabeth had sent Lee to Moscow, Godunov also dispatched his own ambassador Grigorii Ivanovich Mikulin to London with gifts of a timber of sable furs and two pairs of sable furs of exceptional quality.[112] The Queen

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[110] P.W. Hasbler, 'Sir Richard Lee (1548-1608)', *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1558-1603 Online Edition*, http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/lee-richard-1548-1608#biography [accessed 22 April 2015].

[111] Memorandum of Cherry and Merrick, dated 1601, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 179r-v.

[112] Ambassadorial Report of Grigorii Mikulin, 15 May 1600-14 July 1601, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 31.
Amongst the gifts to Elizabeth's councillors, Mikulin presented Sir Edward Hoby (1560-1617) with gifts of an 'ermine coat with damask lace and gold loops, black fox hat, Crimean bow [and] twenty Cherkasky arrows': Mikulin, 'Stateinyi Spisok G.I. Mikulina', in Likhachev (ed.), *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov,* p. 167.

reciprocated with departure gifts of 'six silver-gilt standing cups: one large cup with a cover, three modest-sized cups with covers, two cups without a cover; two round silver flasks, a silver tub and a silver wash-basin'.[113] Mikulin's secretary, Ivan Zinov'ev, received a silver-gilt standing cup. The embassy reflected broader Muscovite aspirations to integrate into European political affairs and Mikulin was to inquire about the political priorities and relationships of European states. For example, what was the nature of Anglo-Ottoman relations? Would England support the Sultan in the Ottoman aggression against Austria? What was the English stance on the Polish-Swedish war? Likewise, the ambassador was to procure from Elizabeth a written explanation for why English ships were aiding Muscovites enemies, in this instance the Poles, and to express the Tsar's desire to invite foreign doctors and craftsmen into Muscovy.[114]

In contrast to the gifts of sable furs received by Elizabeth, Imperial envoys, for instance, were given more extravagant gifts to convey to the Emperor and his brother. Under Godunov's regency in 1593, for instance, Emperor Rudolf II was given gifts of a Persian scimitar and a pair of engraved vambraces of Damascus steel decorated with turquoises; his brother Archduke Maximillian was presented with a gift of an archery ring set in gold and decorated with eighteen rubies and a dagger of Damascus steel engraved with 122 small turquoises and twenty small rubies.[115] The difference in gifts is a good indicator of the political and diplomatic interests of the new Muscovite dynasty. To secure his position as Tsar of Muscovy, Godunov attempted to negotiate the marriage of his children to members of European dynasties, to create dynastic alliances and secure foreign military protection against boyar detractors.

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[113] Ibid., pp. 203-04.
[114] Ibid., p. 55.
[115] N. Varkoch, 'Description of the Journey to Moscow of Nicholas Varkoch, the Imperial Ambassador, from 22 July 1593', trans. A. Shemiakin, *Chteniia Imperatorskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiiskikh*, 4 (St. Petersburg, 1874), p. 25.

Although Lee had offered to find a suitable English bride for Godunov's son, the Tsar's ambition to match his son with a daughter of a king or a duke meant that the English were unable to compete with their European counterparts. The Company, for instance, feared that their exalted mercantile privileges would be revoked in favour of other European merchants, if any of the negotiated Muscovite marriage matches were to succeed.[116] Furthermore, English mercantile dominance in Muscovy was also threatened by the increasing commercial relationship between Muscovy and the Dutch Republic, whose merchants were permitted to trade in Archangel since 1584.[117] Dutch diplomatic gifts were similar to those of Elizabeth (gilt silver plate, cloth, hunting guns and flintlock pistols), whilst friendship with the Republic offered the Muscovites an access to modern weaponry and recruitment of arms experts. The principal aspiration of the Dutch merchants was to supplant England as Muscovy's foremost commercial partner, and to secure a grant of identical mercantile privileges as those granted to the Muscovy Company. The competition between the English and Dutch merchants extended to the selection of diplomatic gifts presented to the Muscovite Tsar, especially as the staple gift of both states was silver-gilt plate.[118] It was likely also responsible for the continuous increase in quantity and variety of English diplomatic gifts to the Tsars since 1586. English diplomatic gifts sent to Muscovy likewise faced competition from other European states. In 1605, for instance, Rudolf II sent royal regalia (a crown, sceptre and orb) as gifts to Godunov, thereby symbolically conferring and confirming

[116] Richard Barne to Sir Robert Cecil, 1602, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 183r-84v. Furthermore, within English proposals for a suitable husband for Godunov's daughter Ksenia, the sons of the earl of Hereford and Huntingdon (who had the strongest royal claim) were omitted, as John Merrick informed the Muscovites that Elizabeth 'had forborne the nomination of them for some causes best knowne to her selfe', suggesting that the scheme was a ploy to protect English mercantile interests by dissuading the Tsar from negotiation with Austria and Denmark: BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, fos 38r-40v.

[117] A. Ohberg, 'Russia and the World Market in the Seventeenth Century', *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 3 (1955), pp. 123-62.

[118] Examples of Dutch gifts of silver-gilt plate are currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow. Also, see Shifman and Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars*, pp. 251-65.

Godunov's accession.[119] Meanwhile, a gift of a Hussar saddle and four Hungarian (or Turkish) horses was presented on behalf of Sigismund III, the King of Poland in 1600, to congratulate the new Tsar and convey intentions to establish cordial relations between the two states.[120] Thus, Muscovite preoccupation with the expansion of their diplomatic networks might explain why despite Godunov's promise to favour English merchants above the merchants of other European sovereigns, the rights and privileges of the Muscovy Company remained unaltered since Feodor's *gramota* of 1586. Godunov's suspicions regarding the nature of English relations with the Ottoman Sultan likewise became an area of contention. As revealed by the instructions of Merrick's embassy of 1601, the Muscovites were to be assured that Anglo-Ottoman relations were driven by mercantile rather than princely interests.[121]

Overall, Elizabeth's exchange of gifts with the Muscovite Tsars merged a variety of objects with living animals, though the predominant gift choice of the English Crown was silver-gilt plate. Its opulence fulfilled the obligation to display royal splendour, since precious metals like silver were a key component of royal magnificence, while its extensive decoration in the form of magical beasts, birds and dynastic motifs emphasised the status of its sender. Meanwhile, Muscovite gifts of furs adhered to precedent, though gradually the choice of Muscovite gifts was diversified as seen with the increasing addition of Eastern commodities. Considering the divergence of political and diplomatic interests between the two states, the need to maintain amity and equilibrium was a key concern of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy. Gifts formed an essential component within the personalisation of an abstract relationship of friendship between the rulers of different kingdoms. Although gifts did not convert enemies into friends, they did

[119] Mentioned in G. Walton, 'Diplomatic and Ambassadorial Gifts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Shifman and Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars, 1500-1700*, p. 76.
[120] RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2 part 1, d. 139, f. 46r.
[121] TNA, SP 91/1, f. 177r-v.

aid the progression of diplomatic negotiations. As the examples above have shown English and Muscovite gifts were not simply national commodities exchanged out of necessity, but carefully selected objects intended to assist diplomatic negotiations, secure favour, act as tokens of goodwill and most importantly compel the recipient to reciprocate (whether in the form of similar material objects or intangible gifts). The gift-giving practice thus became a fundamental modality of royal interaction between England and Muscovy.

Chapter 5

Royal English and Muscovite Diplomatic Gifts II:

James I and the Muscovite Tsars, 1604-23.

Drawing upon the unpublished Muscovite Ambassadorial Books of receipt and expenditure, held at RGADA in Moscow, this chapter continues the reassessment of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange.[1] It examines the intentions, ways of transmission and reception of gifts exchanged between James, Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov, in the period of 1604 to 1623. In doing so, the chapter emphasises that the prominence of the staple Stuart gifts of silver plate, and Muscovite gifts of sable furs, did not denote a lack of progression within the exchange. Instead, it demonstrates an intentional choice by both governments to use these objects as a visual embodiment of the continuity of Anglo-Muscovite friendship amidst several dynastic changes in both states. In contrast, the presence of 'extraordinary' gifts signalled a change in intentions, and these instances need to be studied more closely, as shown below. Additionally, the chapter briefly compares the Stuart-Romanov gifts to the Elizabethan-Rurikid gifts to identify patterns of change and continuity. In the same manner, the final section of this chapter explores the gifts the Muscovites received from other European rulers.[2]

Queen Elizabeth's death on 24 March 1603 brought an end to the exchange of gifts between the Tudors and the Muscovites, and paved the way for a new

[1] The Muscovite Ambassadorial Books of receipt and expenditure represent an unpublished and unexplored collection of manuscripts produced by the *Posol'skii Prikaz* that are an invaluable source of information for the study of Muscovite diplomacy, ceremony and gift-giving, as well as seventeenth-century jewellery, plate, costume, arms and textiles. See RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, dela 144-336.

[2] For examples of the surviving seventeenth-century gifts the Muscovites received from other European sovereigns (including England, Denmark, Sweden, Poland-Lithuania and Austria), see B. Shifman and G. Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars, 1500-1700: Treasures from the Kremlin* (New York, 2001), pp. 167-305. The surviving objects are on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow.

diplomatic relationship between the Stuarts and the Tsars. Despite the change of dynasty, the core principle of the Stuart-Godunov, and later Stuart-Romanov, interaction was to emulate the 'fraternal loving communication of the previous Great Sovereign [Muscovite] Tsars with… Queen Elizabeth'.[3] The diplomatic objectives and aspirations of the Stuart-Muscovite relations remained mercantile, and centred on the renewal and expansion of trading rights and exemptions for the merchants of the English Muscovy Company. The sense of continuity was likewise maintained through the choice of gifts. Silver-gilt plate, luxury textiles and unset precious stones remained the prominent English gift choice. Stuart dynastic motifs, particularly the thistle, appeared alongside the Tudor rose, while some of James' gifts were actually Elizabethan commissions. This does not imply that all of James' gifts to the Muscovites were identical to those previously sent by Elizabeth, and, on occasion, Stuart royal gifts consisted of new and exclusive objects. Among the new additions to Stuart gift-giving were carabines, pistols and hunting guns.[4] Although the purpose of these weapons was largely ceremonial, they embodied the military and masculine ideal of kingship shared by James and the Tsars in a way that Elizabeth's gifts, being those of a woman, were not able to. The guns and their role within the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange are discussed at length later in the chapter, though it should be noted that in spite of the incorporation of weapons as gifts, James adhered to the Elizabethan policy of political non-commitment. At the onset of diplomatic relations with the Muscovites, he informed Boris Godunov that 'out of Christian Charity [James] is naturally inclyned to live peaceably w[it]h all Princes'.[5]

[3] Ambassadorial Report of Aleksei Ziuzin, dated 1613, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 3, fos 1r-2r.
[4] E.A. Iablonskaia, *English Firearms of the XVII-the Early XIX Centuries* (2nd edn., Moscow, 2006), pp. 9-37.
[5] Smith's Instructions, dated 1604, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 201r.

The continuation of royal friendship with the King of England remained of great importance to the Muscovite state. In 1614, Michael Romanov's government pursued a renewed effort to conclude a political alliance with England as a means of bolstering domestic and international recognition of Michael's status as Tsar.[6] The alliance would have also provided the new government with the necessary military and financial aid to secure its political position in the immediate aftermath of the Time of Troubles. To safeguard the continuity of Anglo-Muscovite amity, the Romanovs intensified the extravagance of their diplomatic gifts by merging familiar elements of traditional Muscovite gift-giving, such as sable furs, with rich gifts of damask cloth, falconry trapping and ornate weapons of Persian and Ottoman origin.[7] The inclusion of Eastern commodities could have reflected the effort of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* to compensate for the paucity of what the Muscovites could offer in terms of luxury material goods. In other words, the visual appeal of opulent Eastern goods was likely to impress the English King and entice a potentially favourable reception to the proposals of Michael's ambassadors. A more probable explanation, which is addressed fully later in the chapter, relates to the Stuart-Romanov negotiations for the exchange of a monopoly over the Persian trade and the provision of English military and financial assistance. The incorporation of Eastern goods enabled the Muscovites to create a potent visual reference to the material wealth of the Eastern trade, and serve as a reminder to the English merchants that the supervision of the Persian trade could be given to the Company if James would agree to support Muscovy in its conflicts with Sweden and Poland-Lithuania. Evidently, the royal aspirations and ambitions of the Tsar did not only dominate the political agenda of Anglo-Muscovite interaction, but had a significant effect upon the choice of diplomatic gifts. A similar connection between gifts and diplomatic aims is apparent in the gifts of the English Crown.

[6] Muscovite Ambassadorial Report of Alexis Ziuzin, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 3; d. 48.
[7] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 37r.

1. English Gifts to Boris Godunov

According to the Ambassadorial Book of 1604, among the gifts presented by Sir Thomas Smith, on behalf of King James and the Muscovy Company, to Boris Godunov in June of that year were several items of silver-gilt plate (including a washbasin, several standing cups and a salt-cellar), a crystal cup and several pieces of rich satin, wool and velvet.[8] A silver-gilt cup decorated with apples, a salt-cellar, several pieces of English cloth and a pair of flintlock pistols were given to Godunov's son and heir, Feodor.[9] Smith's embassy, the first to be sent by James to Moscow, formally announced the Stuart accession to the throne of England and conveyed James' offer to continue the friendship with Muscovy as established by Elizabeth. The choice of gifts, plate and cloth, recalled those previously presented by Elizabethan ambassadors and reinforced James' message of dynastic continuance. Continuity was also evident in the aims of Smith's embassy. Commercial interests still dominated the English agenda and the ambassador was instructed to use 'all the meanes [he] can to advance the trade of the Company, and to procure them all conditions of safety and proffitt'.[10] At a minimum, Smith was expected to acquire a formal confirmation of the renewed trading rights and privileges for the English merchants, including exemption from taxes and duties. The accession of the Stuarts, it appears, did little to alter either the choice of gifts or the political agenda of Anglo-Muscovite relations.

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[8] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 43, fos 143r-46r. Sir Thomas Smith (sometimes styled as Smythe, c. 1558-1625), was a London merchant, who by 1600 was appointed the governor of the Muscovy and Levant Companies, as well as the first governor of the East India Company: B. Morgan, 'Smythe [Smith], Sir Thomas', *ODNB*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25908?rskey=ywPrLm&result=1 [accessed 12 January 2018].

[9] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 43, fos 232r-233r.

[10] Smith's Instructions, dated 1604, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 199r.

Alongside mercantile affairs, Smith's instructions briefly addressed the matter of Muscovite concerns regarding the nature of Anglo-Ottoman relations. Although explanations had already been offered by Elizabeth's ambassadors, Smith was advised to acquaint himself with the matter 'because it is the manner of the Russ […] to enter into repitition of thinges, w[hi]ch have been formerly […] answeared'.[11] The ambassador was to reassure Godunov that English relations with the Sultan were entirely mercantile, and that the Crown sent their ambassadors to Istanbul in the same manner as other Christian princes, including the King of France and the Republic of Venice, 'all w[hi]ch for cause of entercourse and traffique'.[12] To reinforce James' preference for a peaceful foreign policy, the Muscovites were to be informed of the King's decision to cease conflict with Spain.[13] At the same time, Smith was expected to uphold the reputation and authority of the Stuart dynasty and let the Muscovites know that 'there is hardly any Prince, or State w[hi]ch hath not sent [James] solemne Embassages, w[i]th offers of greatest frendshippe'.[14] To embody James' offer of friendship, alongside the gifts of plate and cloth, Smith's embassy brought a 'greate present' – a richly upholstered carriage (Fig. 1) that was to become a piece of visual rhetoric designed to shape inter-princely relations between James and the Tsar.[15]

The carriage's carved wooden panels emphasised the shared Christian heritage of both states. This included a depiction of Saint George slaying the dragon as the saint was of great importance to both Muscovy and England.[16] Allusions to

[11] TNA, SP 91/1, f. 199v.
[12] Ibid., f. 199v.
[13] Ibid., f. 200r-v.
[14] Ibid., f. 202r.
[15] *Sir Thomas Smithes Voiage and Entertainment in Russia* (London, 1605), sig. E3^{r}-4^{v}. The English carriage of 1604 is currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow.
[16] In England, St. George was the patron saint of the state and the protector of the royal family. In Muscovy George (Yurii) was the patron saint of the twelfth-century founder of the city of Moscow (Yurii Dolgorukii) and was considered to be the patron saint of the city, though officially the saint's

royal Anglo-Muscovite friendship were conveyed through the inclusion of dynastic heraldic beasts and the coat of arms of both states, while carved panels depicting hunting scenes of lions, boars, bears and leopards evoked mutual royal interests and popular pastimes.[17] The front and back panels of the carriage featured distinct imagery that appeared to honour the glory and reputation of the Muscovite Tsar and evoke a sense of anti-Islamic sentiment.

The back carved wooden panel of the carriage depicts a battle (Fig. 2) between a 'Christian' and a 'Muslim' army, the latter identified by a standard with an image of a crescent, as well as the attire (turbans) and weapons (scimitars) of the soldiers. Julian Munby's analysis of the panel suggested a potential portrayal of either Ivan IV's victory over the Tatars of Kazan in 1552 or Boris Godunov's defeat of Khan Kazy-Goray in 1591, though it should be noted that the Tatars were often supported by the Ottoman Sultan.[18] While both options are plausible possibilities, the iconography itself provides little evidence. Firstly, the 'Christian' army cannot be certainly identified as that of the Muscovites. Its soldiers carry a standard with an image of the sun rather than the Muscovite double-headed eagle, while the armour of its King is reminiscent of Western European rather than Muscovite military attire. Similarly, the supposed 'Tatar' army is indistinguishable from other contemporary portrayals of the 'Turk'. Moreover, it is unlikely that English artisans commissioned to carve the panels would have been familiar with either of the suggested battles or the contemporary armour and weapons of the Muscovite and Tatar army. In this way, the image was likely an exemplification of the conflict between Christian and Islamic rulers based on stereotypical images known to contemporary audience. The image encouraged

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patronage was recognised only in 1730, whereby the image of the mounted soldier was established as that of St George.

[17] The hunters on the panels are shown in both European and Eastern dress; for illustrations, see E.V. Kogut, *Angliiskaia Kareta Tsaria Borisa Godunova* (Moscow, 2015), pp. 21-22.

[18] Julian Munby, 'The Moscow Coach: A Rich Chariot, One Parcell of the Great Present', in O. Dmitrieva and T. Murdoch (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Courts* (London, 2013), p. 165.

the viewer to create their own interpretation of which of the battles (either past or allegorical) the wooden panel was intended to represent. In 1604, Godunov was likely to interpret the depiction as a representation of his own victory of 1591. In contrast, later Muscovite Tsars (who viewed Godunov as a usurper) would have favoured an interpretation of Ivan's victories.

The overall message of the panel centred on the military might of the Christian/Muscovite army, a notion that is reinforced by imagery of the front panel (Fig. 3), which shows a victory parade. It could be conjected that the intention was to present the Muscovites as the defenders of Christianity. In doing so, the decoration of the carriage would have appealed to Godunov, especially bearing in mind the Tsar's ambition to attain recognition and respect from fellow rulers. It would have reminded the Tsar of the shared Christian heritage of the two states, as the English sovereigns likewise styled themselves as the defenders of the Faith. The focus on shared religious heritage of the two states would have diverted Muscovite attention away from the more troubling matter of English amity with the Ottomans. Correspondingly, there is no indication in Smith's instructions to suggest that the battle scene was a covert message of a proposed joint Anglo-Muscovite venture against the Ottomans, though this did not prevent the Muscovites from misinterpreting James' intentions. On the contrary, Smith was commanded to explicitly emphasise the King's preference for peace.[19] The chosen subject matter of the carriage's panels has encouraged scholars to speculate whether the gift might have originally been an Elizabethan commission, especially as the matter of Anglo-Ottoman friendship dominated the political agenda in the period of 1600-03.[20] The emphasis on shared Anglo-Muscovite heritage and the inclusion of the battle

[19] Smith's Instructions, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 199r-v.
[20] There are other examples of comparable carriages being sent as Elizabeth's diplomatic gifts. In 1599, the Queen sent a carriage to Safiye Sultan, the mother of Mehmed III: L.P. Peirce, *Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 1993), p. 228.

scene between the Muscovites and the Tatars (the 'Tatar' soldiers might have even represented the Ottomans) would have persuaded Godunov that England had more in common with Muscovy than the Ottomans. For this reason, the ambassadors would have likely reassured Godunov that England would not aid the Ottomans against the Tsar.[21] Elizabeth died before the carriage could be sent to Godunov, and as implied in Smith's instructions, the Anglo-Ottoman matter was no longer a diplomatic priority in the Stuart-Godunov interaction. The carriage, nonetheless, remained a convenient gift to be sent to Moscow.

The decoration of the carriage's front wooden panel (Fig. 3) offered an excellent opportunity to flatter and honour the Muscovite Tsar. This panel shows a victory parade. In this instance, the victorious army is certainty that of the Muscovites as symbolised by the presence of the double-headed eagle standard.[22] There is additionally a smaller standard with an image of a lion, possibly representing England. The victorious Prince, seated in a golden chariot, is dressed in the armour of ancient Roman Emperors and the Muscovite standard carried in front of the Prince strongly suggests that image is intended to represent the Tsar. The imperial attire of the depicted figure was likely a reference to the English custom of referring to the Tsar as the 'Emperor' of Muscovy.[23] For the Muscovites, the image would have symbolised a literal recognition of the Tsar's title as being equal to that of the Roman Emperor. The panel and its representation of the Tsar as a glorious victor would have appealed to Godunov's political ambitions.

[21] In practice, English covert trade of arms with the Ottomans was analogous to that conducted with the Muscovites: G. Ágoston, 'Merces Prohibitae: The Anglo-Ottoman Trade in War Materials and the Dependence Theory', *Oriente-Moderno*, 20 (2001), pp. 177-92.

[22] The adaptation of the double-headed eagle was introduced by Ivan III in the 1490s and reflected Ivan's ambitions to elevate the status of the Grand Dukes of Muscovy to that of Kings and Emperors. See G. Alef, 'The Adoption of the Muscovite Two-Headed Eagle: A Discordant View', *Speculum,* 41 (1966), pp. 1-21.

[23] The Russian word *tsar* derived from the Latin word *Caesar*, and was intended to mean 'Emperor' in the medieval sense of the term. It signified a ruler of the same rank as the Roman Emperor, who held the title by the approval of a supreme ecclesiastical official (either the Pope or the Patriarch). In practice, European rulers equated it to that of the 'King', though English royal correspondence maintained the courtesy of addressing the Tsar as the 'Emperor' of Muscovy: see Chapter 7.

Interestingly, there are two soldiers whose armour distinguishes them from the 'Muscovite' army. The first holds a standard with an image of a lion and the second carries what appears to be a hand cannon. It is possible that these two figures were intended to represent England, and perhaps symbolise the assistance the English Crown rendered to the Muscovites, in the form of mercenary soldiers and ordnance, throughout the previous fifty-one years of Anglo-Muscovite interaction. The carved panel presents England and Muscovy as brothers-in-arms, though in practice the English Crown continuously rejected Muscovite proposals for a military alliance. Here, the panel embodies a specific narrative of Anglo-Muscovite relations that the Crown intended to present to Godunov; one that focused on their shared heritage and continued friendship rather than the divergence of their diplomatic aims, political interests and foreign policy.

As a gift, the carriage itself was very valuable. Its size, richly upholstered interior and gilt wooden carvings intensified the projection of opulence and magnificence of the English royal court. It represented James as a generous and powerful sovereign, while its acceptance by Godunov marked the continuity of Anglo-Muscovite friendship and improved Smith's chances of attaining additional mercantile privileges for the Company. Smith noted that upon his arrival he was greeted by a procession of 'diverse dukes and noblemen and at least 5000 men on horseback', and was given lodgings in 'the fairest house in all the Musco'.[24] James' message of amity was also 'lovingly' accepted by Godunov who promised to remain the Kings' 'loving brother' for the duration of his life.[25] The inclusion of Muscovite heraldry and arms within the decoration of the carriage implied that it was commissioned specifically as a gift to the Tsar (unlike the silver cups and basins which frequently bore no such decoration), accentuating the continuity of

[24] Smith to Cecil, dated 25 February 1604/05, in HMC *Salisbury*, ed. M.S. Guiseppi, 17 (London, 1938), p. 69.
[25] Ibid., p. 69.

a 'special' relationship between England and Muscovy. At the time few European royal houses owned such vehicles, and it was the first of its kind to be used by the Muscovite Tsar as a mode of ceremonial transport.[26]

In summary, the aims of Smith's 1604 embassy were to elicit a new *gramota* of mercantile privileges for the Muscovy Company, propose and confirm the continuance of royal Anglo-Muscovite friendship, and remove any lingering suspicions regarding the nature of Anglo-Ottoman relations. The transmission and success of these aims were reliant upon Smith's conduct and negotiations, though the ambassador could refer to various elements of the carriage's decorative iconography to emphasise individual points. The Muscovite reception of the 1604 gifts was one of appreciation. The English carriage was used for royal ceremonial 'entrances' and 'exits' from Moscow for the duration of the seventeenth century. The early Romanov Tsars, Michael and Alexis, used the carriage to greet visiting ambassadors.[27] Muscovite satisfaction with the English gifts was expressed through the reciprocal Muscovite gifts of furs that were given to Smith at the farewell audience in 1605. These included seven timbers or 280 sable furs and one black fox pelt for James, three timbers or 120 furs for the English ambassador and one timber or 40 furs and one black fox pelt for the ambassadorial retinue.[28] Politically, the decorative iconography of the carriage worked even better than the English Crown would have liked. It had sufficiently raised Godunov's hopes that James was proposing a creation of an alliance with Muscovy, to the extent that the Tsar had promised to send his own ambassadors to London to continue the negotiations.[29] Godunov implied that upon the conclusion of future negotiations with James, the Tsar would grant new privileges to the Company merchants. In the meantime, the Company's right to

[26] Kogut, *Angliiskaia Kareta*, p. 12.
[27] I.P. Kirilova, *Carriages of the XVI-XVII Centuries* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 38-43.
[28] RGADA, fond 35 opis' 1, d. 43, fos 235r-7v.
[29] TNA, SP 91/1, fos 207v-9r.

trade freely in Muscovy, alongside their exemption from taxes and duties, was renewed.[30]

The English gifts of 1604 represent a transitional period between the end of the Elizabethan approach to diplomatic interaction with the Muscovites and the beginning of that of the Stuarts. Hence, there is no sense of change in either English diplomatic aims or gifts, despite the accession of a new dynasty. The embassy was concerned with the renewal of the 1598 privileges, it addressed lingering issues of Elizabethan foreign policy, and its central gift of a carriage was an Elizabethan commission.[31] The Muscovites expressed their appreciation through generous gifts of furs, but only concentrated upon the aspects of Smith's requests and explanations that agreed with Muscovite diplomatic aspirations. Yet, the selection of the carriage as a gift to the Muscovites was significant. It remains one of the few gifts sent to Moscow, either by Elizabeth or James, which can be conclusively identified as a commission designed to tackle a specific diplomatic issue. While there is no surviving record that shows how much the carriage had cost to commission, based on its size, lavish decoration and novelty, it was likely one of the most expensive gifts sent to Moscow. It was, however, not the only carriage sent by an English sovereign as a gift to the Muscovite Tsar. In 1664, a large carriage 'covered with leather and painted with double-headed eagles in gold' was sent by Charles II to Aleksei Mikhailovich.[32] There are records suggesting that another carriage was commissioned, though never sent, by either James or the Muscovy Company in 1625 as a congratulatory gift to Michael Romanov upon his upcoming second marriage.[33] Unfortunately, the brevity of Stuart-Godunov relations (Godunov died in 1605 and his son was assassinated six months later) does not offer a useful

[30] A copy of the *gramota* is included in Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, pp. 802-4.
[31] TNA, SP 91/1, fos 196r-98r.
[32] Kirilova, *Carriages of the XVI-XVII Centuries*, pp. 25-7.
[33] Philippa Glanville, '"The Goldsmiths and the Court": Silver in London, 1600-65', in O. Dmitrieva and N. Abramova (eds), *Britannia & Muscovy* (London, 2006), p. 46.

opportunity to compare the gifts of 1604 to potential English or Muscovite gifts that might have been subsequently exchanged by James and Godunov. In contrast, the gift-exchange between James and Michael Romanov present a better case study for a closer analysis of the developments in English and Muscovite diplomatic gift-giving.

2. The Romanov Gifts

Unlike the Rurikids, the Romanov government was more proactive in exchanging embassies with the English Crown. In ten years of diplomatic interaction between James and Michael Romanov, three Muscovite embassies were dispatched to London, in comparison to Ivan IV's two embassies over a thirty year period.[34] The frequency of embassies and the availability of Muscovite records of gifts that were presented to, and given by, the Tsars provide an excellent opportunity for a more in-depth study of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange. The foremost concern of the Romanov government following Michael's election in 1613 was the acquisition of military and financial aid against the Swedish and Polish invasion. Coincidentally, the arrival of two English envoys shortly after Michael's election placed the English Crown among the first nations to whom the Muscovites turned for assistance.[35] In October 1613, Michael's ambassadors presented James with eighty sable furs and a pelt of black fox, while requesting aid in form of 'treasures, money and gold, and goods and all sorts of artillery supplies, as much as will be possible'.[36] Two pairs of sable furs and one black fox pelt were given to Queen Anne and Prince Charles. Michael's gifts of furs and pelts were indistinguishable from those previously given by either Boris Godunov or Ivan IV, and followed an established Muscovite gift-giving custom, which was likely intentional. By 1613, sable furs had become

[34] See Bell, *A Handlist*, pp. 221-7.
[35] Sir Thomas Smith to Viscount Rochester, dated 28 August 1613, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 240r.
[36] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 3, f. 135r.

synonymous with Muscovy and were seen as the exclusive royal gift given on behalf of the Tsar. Their status as a royal gift was protected by official proclamations that prohibited the sale and export of high-quality furs by either Muscovite or foreign merchants.[37] The gift of furs was, therefore, representative of Michael's new status as Tsar. By selecting the familiar object of royal Muscovite gift-giving tradition, the Romanovs were projecting a sense of dynastic continuity and emphasised their claim as the rightful heirs to the Rurikid legacy. Even Michael's offer to 'allow English merchants and traders to go to trade by way of [Muscovy] to Persia and Bukhara and to other states to the east' recalled the mercantile grants and offers of Ivan IV.[38] The Romanov gifts of furs conformed to the familiar pattern of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange, whereby the furs were representative of the state's mercantile wealth; a theme that was bolstered by Michael's offer to grant additional mercantile rights and privileges to the English merchants. Yet, by 1613, the furs acquired a supplementary role as symbols of dynastic continuity and Romanov legitimacy.

The English reception of Michael's gifts was characterised by the recognisable English practice of 'negative' reciprocity, in which the Crown aimed to procure from Michael a confirmation of English mercantile privileges, whilst avoiding any political and military entanglement in Muscovite affairs. Michael's ambassadors were 'royally feasted and entertained by His Majestie at Court with indifferent good presents at leave taking', and departed only with three pieces of ordnance and an offer from James to lead Russo-Swedish peace negotiations.[39] Moreover, even the grants of these insignificant concessions were driven by the constant

[37] In 1621, it was decreed that Muscovite merchants were no longer permitted to sell Persian hunting birds or high-quality sable, fox, ermine and squirrel furs as doing so would devalue the royal gifts given by the Tsar: J. Kotilaine, *Russia's Foreign Trade and Economic Expansion in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, 2005), p. 453.
[38] Michael's letter to Ziuzin, dated July 1614, in M. Jansson and N.M. Rogozhin (eds), *England and the North: The Russian Embassy of 1613-1614* (Philadelphia, PA, 1994), p. 142.
[39] E. Waldegrave to W. Trumbull, dated 17 June 1614, HMC *Downshire*, ed. A.B. Hinds, 4 (London, 1940), p. 431.

petitions of the Muscovy Company, which feared that a rejection of Michael's requests would provide 'the hollander' with an opportunity to 'make large offers, to obtaine privileges to expell vs [the English], and make England and all Christendome beholdinge to them for Materialls for shipping and those conntrie Comodities'.[40] The Crown was encouraged to assure the Muscovite ambassadors that, while the English were unable to offer financial assistance to Michael in 1613, this was but a temporary delay and a favourable outcome was inevitable.[41] Whereas previously the Muscovite Tsars were content to accept such paltry concessions in an expectation that their *gramota* of mercantile privileges would gradually evolve into reciprocal English grants of political and military assistance, the Romanovs pursued a different policy. Michael, unlike Ivan, would only exchange additional mercantile privileges for a direct English military intervention and/or a monetary loan. To this effect, Michael's *gramota* of 1614 confirmed the existing arrangement of the Company's duty-free trade, but noted that new grants (including the desired monopoly over the trade with Persia) would depend on James' response to Muscovite requests.[42]

Following the partial success of the 1613 embassy (eventually, English mediation resulted in the conclusion of peace between Muscovy and Sweden), the Muscovite embassy of 1617 represented a second attempt by the Romanovs to secure military and monetary aid from England, on this occasion against Poland-Lithuania. Although the diplomatic aims of the 1617 Muscovite embassy were in certain aspects identical to those of 1613, the gifts presented by the Muscovite ambassadors bear a notable difference. In addition to familiar gifts of sable furs (ten timbers or 400 furs were presented to James) and three gowns, Michael's gifts included a

[40] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 58r-v.
[41] TNA, SP 103/61, fos 20r-3r.
[42] A copy of the *gramota* is printed in A.S. Miliukin, *Priezd Inostrantsev v Moskovskoe Godusadrstvo* (St. Petersburg, 1909), pp. 270-5.

> rich dagger besett with stones [,] Persian knife & sheath sett w[i]th stones [,] Persian saddlecloath [,] Persian kettle drum of siluer [,] Persian bowe [,] 3 peeces of persian damask of silk & gould [,] 2 liveinge sabulls [and birds of prey] and furniture double for all the hawkes of Crimsen Saten imbroydered with pearle [and] Tartar glove to carry the hawkes.[43]

According to a contemporary English observer, the rich sable furs were 'estimated by those that are skilfull at better then 6,000 *li*, though some talk of much more'.[44] Meanwhile, Queen Anne and Prince Charles were presented with several timbers of sable furs, black fox pelts and gowns of ermine.[45]

On the one hand, the addition of new and exclusive Persian commodities can be attributed to the urgent need of the Muscovites to secure political and military support against the advancing army of Poland-Lithuania.[46] The latter sought to depose Michael and place a Polish prince, Władysław Vasa, onto the Muscovite throne. By selecting objects that were more lavish than the customary Muscovite sable furs, the gifts of the 1617 embassy accentuated Michael's expression of 'brotherly love' towards James in an expectation of a more favourable English reception. The existence of a 'special' relationship between the two courts was further emphasised by Michael's ambassadors, who informed the King that the Tsar would grant 'vnto the English m[er]chants […] a neve privelige vnder a great seale of gould such as the like in former time […] neuer hath been given to the English m[er]chants'.[47] Considering the failure of the previous embassy to obtain a monetary loan and military assistance against Sweden, the Muscovites could have incorporated Persian commodities as a reminder of the material benefits that could be derived from the Eastern trading routes. The addition of Persian commodities was thus a clever diplomatic ploy, intent on enticing the English Crown to respond favourably to Muscovite proposals. Moreover, as the embassy followed the conclusion of peace between Muscovy and Sweden, within

[43] Gifts to King James from the Muscovite Tsar, dated November 1617, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 37r.
[44] John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carlton, dated 15 November 1617, TNA, SP 14/94, fos 50v-51r.
[45] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 37r.
[46] Michael to James, dated June 1620, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 69r-v.
[47] Proposals of Muscovite Ambassadors, 5 January 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 43v.

which James played the central role of a mediator, the lavish gifts given by the Muscovite ambassadors could have represented Michael's acknowledgement of English assistance. The inclusion of such luxury commodities would have asserted the royal magnificence of the new Romanov dynasty and showcased the geographical range of their trading and diplomatic networks.

Regrettably, neither the gifts themselves nor the diplomatic instructions of the Muscovite ambassadors offer any conclusive evidence that would determine which of the aforementioned intentions was solely responsible for the incorporation of luxury Persian objects into the Romanov gifts of 1617. Instead, the inclusion of such objects was likely the result of Muscovite intentions to address all of the concerns above, though objects of Persian origin had previously featured among the gifts of the Rurikid Tsars. As mentioned in Chapter 4, in 1587 gifts of Persian cloth and a Turkish carpet were given to Queen Elizabeth on behalf of Feodor I, though this remains the only direct reference to such gifts until 1617.[48] Once again, the addition could have been a deliberate attempt to present a sense of dynastic continuity. Individually, each of the Persian gifts was likely selected to represent a specific theme. Damask cloth was a luxury commodity, and as one of the main Persian exports could have represented trade. The Tatar glove decorated with pearls was likely a hunting glove and was a practical necessity for handling the falcons and hawks sent to London alongside the Persian objects. The daggers and the bow evoke a more military meaning that requires closer examination.

The examples of preserved Persian and Ottoman weapons and armour, sent as diplomatic gifts to the Muscovite Tsars, which are currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow, provide an excellent reference point as for how Michael's gifts of 1617 might have looked. Surviving examples of Persian

[48] Horsey, 'Travels', in Berry and Crummey (eds), *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 338.

diplomatic gifts can further reveal the object's contemporary value and purpose. Persian ceremonial horse trappings, such as the saddle cloth presented to James, were highly valued in Muscovy as an essential decorative element for royal processions.[49] They were commonly used by the Muscovite royal family and the senior-ranked boyars. Weapons of Persian and Ottoman origins (including daggers, bows, sheaths and maces) were often components of the Tsar's 'Grand Attire'.[50] The weapons formed part of the Tsar's ceremonial dress and complemented the military regalia of the Muscovite ruler. They were frequently characterised by their hilts and sheaths that were fashioned out of gold and silver and decorated with precious stones. The dagger, including that presented to James, was especially important, as it was invariably a part of the Tsar's campaign or military uniform.[51] It is possible that Michael's Persian gifts to James were recycled presents, received by the Tsar from the Persian merchant Mohamed Qasim, who had visited Muscovy as an envoy of Shah Abbas I in 1617.[52]

The Kremlin Armoury possesses one of the daggers that were presented by Qasim to Michael. Its hilt and sheath are covered in gold and the latter is decorated with turquoise, rubies and pearls.[53] The dagger bears a resemblance to the description of the knife and sheath presented to James in 1617 and could have previously been amongst the gifts presented by the Persian envoy, possibly one of a pair. The choice of the Persian daggers, bow and knives as a gift to James could have been made by the Muscovites out of convenience as much as intention. The coincidental availability of these beautiful Persian commodities

[49] Shifman and Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars*, pp. 184-7.
[50] Ibid., p. 184.
[51] The dagger hung from the belt or the sash girdling the long narrow tunic the Tsar wore under his chain-mail shirt or an armour breastplate: *Gifts to the Tsars*, pp. 189, 193, 198-99.
[52] E.A. Iablonskaia, 'Proizvedeniia Oruzheinogo Iskusstva Irana i Turtsii XVI-XVII vekov', in I.A. Bobrovnitskaia (ed.), *Gosudarstvennaia Oruzheinaia Palata Moskovskogo Kremlia* (Moscow, 1988), pp. 202-20.
[53] Throughout the seventeenth century the dagger was kept in the Tsar's Master Chamber together with other objects of the Tsar's Grand Attire: RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, d. 141, f. 34r.

might have encouraged the Muscovites to add the items as a means of bolstering the customary gift of furs, as well as remind the English Crown of the extensive and lucrative Muscovite trading network. On the other hand, although no conclusive evidence can be found to prove the theory of Qasim presenting Michael with a pair of daggers, one of which was then re-gifted by Michael to James (beyond the connection mentioned above), the possibility of such an action taking place is relatively plausible. By giving one of the daggers to James and retaining the other, Michael would have accentuated the visual rhetoric of a close friendship and brotherhood between the two sovereigns. The idea of a 'brotherhood of princes' was reiterated by Michael's ambassadors, who informed James that Queen Elizabeth had never received such ostentatious presents.[54] This was clearly a deliberate appeal to James' vanity.

The Muscovite gifts of 1617 incorporated another important type of a gift, one that Felicity Heal describes as the 'cornerstones of monarchical identity'.[55] Alongside the falconry equipment (the kettle drum and the glove), the Muscovites brought two sables, several falcons, a white gerfalcon and two goshawks.[56] The birds and the sables fit well with the theme of 1617 gifts to merge traditional with the novel. Sables and hawks had previously featured in Muscovite gift-giving, through selective breeding and expansion of trading contacts changed the quality of the birds and animals that were often offered as gifts. In 1556 the Muscovite ambassador intended to present several sables to Queen Mary, but the animals perished in a shipwreck alongside the Muscovite gifts of furs and gowns.[57] Despite the popular assumption that birds of prey were sent by Ivan to Elizabeth, neither of Ivan's ambassadors brought such gifts with

[54] TNA, SP 14/94, f. 51r.
[55] F. Heal, 'Presenting Noble Beasts: Gifts of Animals in Tudor and Stuart Diplomacy' in Sowerby and Hennings (eds), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World*, p. 190.
[56] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 37r.
[57] 'A discourse of the honourable receiuing into England of the first Ambassador from the Emperor of Russia [1556]', in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, p. 289.

them, though Jerome Horsey mentions gifts of hawks to Queen Elizabeth from Feodor I in 1587.[58] Heal notes that horses and hawks, in particular, were the currency of the early modern European gift-exchange.[59] James I, for instance, often received and gave horses, hawks and exotic animals as diplomatic gifts.[60] The preference of princes to select sentient gifts can be attributed to the gift's ability to enact the status of their giver much more vividly than an innate object. The presentation of animals could be dramatized, as seen with the English gift of a white bull presented in 1586 that was made to kneel before the Tsar.[61] James was likewise known to have been an avid hunter and to have a passion for animals. The King showed interest in restocking the royal menagerie at the Tower of London and had even sent three Indian parrots and an antelope as gifts to Michael in 1620.[62]

In the right political context, whereby both the giver and the recipient were invested in the exchange, gifts of animals, birds and ornate weapons were hard to trump. In the case of 1617, the significant divergence of political interests between James and Michael rendered the gifts somewhat ineffective. The initial reception of the gifts by the English Crown was one of appreciation and admiration. According to one contemporary, James 'was very much pleased, and the more when he vnderstoode [that] Q[ueen] Elizabeth never had such a present thence'.[63] Muscovite requests for the acquisition of English military and financial assistance, on the other hand, were received with less enthusiasm. While the Crown recognised Michael's new status as Tsar, this stemmed from practical considerations and mirrored English acknowledgement of previous

[58] Horsey, 'Travels', in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, pp. 338-9.
[59] Heal, 'Presenting Noble Beats', p. 190.
[60] As James VI of Scotland upon reaching his majority, the King reciprocated the French gifts of horses with hawks: ibid., p. 192.
[61] Horsey, 'Travels', in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom*, p. 321.
[62] The Report Concerning the Embassy of Sir John Merrick, 1620-21, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, f. 170v.
[63] TNA, SP 14/94, f. 51r.

claimants, including Dmitrii I and Vasilii Shuiskii during their short-lived tenures. In resemblance to Elizabethan foreign policy, James was not inclined to conclude a military coalition with such a geopolitically distant and not quite politically secure government. Instead, the King offered to act as a mediator between the Tsar and his Polish counterpart.[64] In terms of the requested loan, the English royal treasury did not have the necessary monetary resources to send a loan to Michael, and it was implausible that Parliament would grant funds to a venture that might result in an acquisition of mercantile privileges for a private joint-stock Company; the government itself derived no direct financial benefit from Anglo-Muscovite trade.[65] Yet, both the Crown and the Company had concluded that some form of aid had to be given to Michael, as a means of protecting English commercial interests. The only practical solution was to the request the merchants to furnish the loan, though despite the joint efforts of the Muscovy and the East India Companies, the former struggled to raise their half of the money.[66] By the end of the negotiations in 1618, the ambassadors were informed that, on this occasion, the English Crown would sign no military alliance with Michael against Poland. In the interim, the requested loan of 100,000 roubles would be dispatched alongside an English ambassador, though the loan amounted to around 40,000 roubles with the remaining 60,000 made up in English goods and cloth.[67]

Upon arriving into Archangel in April 1618, the English ambassador Sir Dudley Digges had heard that Moscow was besieged by Polish troops, and concluding the journey to be unsafe the ambassador dispatched his secretary (Thomas Leake) and his nephew (Thomas Finch) under the auspices of the English embassy to deliver 20,000 roubles, alongside letters from James which dictated

[64] James to Michael, dated 30 September 1616, RGADA fond 35, opis' 2, d. 24; James to Patriarch Filaret, dated 24 June 1620, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 28.
[65] Merrick to Ralph Winwood, dated 29 January 1615, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 7r.
[66] Reasons for Lending Money to the Emperor of Russia, dated March 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 58r-v.
[67] James to Michael, dated 31 May 1618, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 27.

the terms.[68] By September, rather than await the outcome of Leake's and Finch's mission, Digges decided to withdraw from Archangel with the remainder of the loan.[69] The ambassador ordered English ships to fire broadside upon departure, allegedly against Polish soldiers, though several shots went straight through some Muscovite houses. Digges attributed his conduct to the fact that crossing Muscovite territories occupied by Polish soldiers with the rest of the money risked an interception, and he deemed remaining in Archangel to await the return of Leake's mission too dangerous.[70] The ambassador's unexpected departure, the absence of the full loan and the missed opportunity to negotiate the alliance with England disappointed the Muscovites and dampened Anglo-Muscovite relations. It provided the Dutch merchants with a renewed argument against the English trading monopoly. A Dutch agent was jubilant upon the news that 'as highly as the English were regarded before, so now they are despised'. He noted that:

> finally the Princes of Moscow will realise the truth about trade with England, from which the tsar had derived no benefit in the course of fifty years, whereas a significant sum has accrued annually from the customs duty paid by the Dutch. Now they will realise who has better served [Muscovy]'s interests throughout the world. The [Muscovites] will not tolerate that nobody has offered the Muscovite state an insult such as the English have offered, not even the Turks in the course of all their wars against [Muscovy]. Never have they been so insulted.[71]

Furthermore, nearly three months before Leake and Finch were permitted to have an audience with Michael to deliver the fraction of the loan, the Muscovites had concluded peace with Poland and were no longer in urgent need of English assistance. Nevertheless, Michael accepted the loan of 20,000 roubles and sent five timbers (200) of sable furs to James.[72] Leake and Finch were presented with a timber of furs each. The Company's plan to exchange the loan for a monopoly over the route to Persia, however, was not as successful as was expected.

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[68] Digges to George Villiers, Marquess of Buckingham, dated 31 July 1618, BLOU, Tanner MS 74, fos 121r-22r.
[69] Chamberlain to Carleton, dated 14 October 1618, TNA, SP 104/103, fos 40r-41v.
[70] Digges to George Villiers, BLOU, Tanner MS 74, f. 121r-v.
[71] I. Massa, *Short History,* trans. and ed. G.E. Orchard (Toronto, 1982), pp. 186-8.
[72] Ambassadorial Receipt Books, 1618-19, RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, d. 335, fos 47r-48v.

The gifts of Michael's final embassy sent to London 1621 were comparable to those presented by previous embassies and consisted of objects like sable and ermine furs, fox pelts and a Turkish bow and arrows.[73] Alongside the gifts from the Tsar, James was given presents on behalf of Michael's father, Patriarch Filaret (who had been released from Polish captivity in 1619), including a 'rare' cup.[74] The embassy was sent to clarify the position of the English Crown on the matter of the Anglo-Muscovite alliance, after the English embassy of 1620 (discussed below) had sufficiently raised Muscovite hopes. As such, it marked the final Muscovite attempt to negotiate an alliance between the two states. It was expected to get additional satisfaction from the Crown for the alleged treasonous acts committed by Sir Arthur Aston, who had left the Muscovite royal army and enlisted with the Poles.[75] In contrast to the reception of the 1617 embassy, the arrival of the Muscovite ambassador in 1621 dismayed both the Crown and the Company, especially as it has been previously agreed to cease an exchange of royal ambassadors with the Muscovites. Despite the financial burden, the Company had no choice but to provide Michael's ambassador with food, lodging, entertainment and gifts (including a gilt bowl worth twenty pounds) as accorded to previous Muscovite ambassadors.[76] The Crown had found the persistence of the Muscovites in pursuing the matter of the alliance exasperating and rather than delay its response (as had been done previously), the embassy of 1621 was given a firm refusal of Michael's proposals within the two months of its arrival.[77] To reduce the impact of the Crown's refusal and ensure the continuity of amiable relations between the two states, a variety of silver-gilt bowls of various sizes, and a set of a basin and ewer, were selected from the King's Cupboard of Estate (reimbursed by the Company) as gifts to

[73] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 82.
[74] J. Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James I*, 4 (London, 1828), pp. 762; 765-6.
[75] Michael to James, dated 7 May 1621, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 72r.
[76] Nichols, *The Progresses*, 4, p. 762.
[77] Lords' Response to the Emperor's ambassador, dated 1622, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 87r ; James to Michael, dated 1 June 1622, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 30.

Michael and the Patriarch. Fifteen such objects were sent on behalf of James and eight on behalf of Prince Charles.[78] The Muscovite ambassadorial retinue was presented with two silver-gilt bowls, a fine piece of scarlet wrapped in taffeta and several other pieces of fine cloth in different colours.[79] While the Muscovite embassy of 1621 was not able to acquire the desired alliance, it did not depart completely empty-handed. The Muscovites were given a quantity of gunpowder, munitions and a gift of £2,000.[80] The Crown had given an order to apprehend Aston and forbid him to 'ever hereafter serve the King of Poland', though within three days of the departure of the Muscovite embassy Aston was released.[81]

In general, there is a sense of a change in the ways the Romanovs begun to use gifts as a means of advancing their diplomatic objectives. Previously, the Tsars relied exclusively on gifts of furs and were content to engage in an asymmetrical exchange of intangible favours with the English Crown, whereby England expanded its commercial activities and the Tsars were left with empty political promises. The Romanov government, however, pursued a policy of a symmetrical exchange, that is to say, an exchange of trading rights for concrete political and military concessions. Its choice of new gifts, either Persian commodities or hawks, were not only presented as an expression of friendship and self-representation, but reflected the matters that dominated the diplomatic agenda or highlighted the shared interests and pastimes of both sovereigns. The addition of Persian damask became a visual reference to the potential mercantile benefit England could gain an access to if the Crown agreed to Michael's requests. Simultaneously, increasing competition between English and Dutch

[78] Nichols, *The Progresses*, 4, p. 766.
[79] Ibid., p. 765.
[80] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 87.
[81] Moreover, within the next two months Aston was back in the service of the King of Poland and within the year he was hiring English soldiers for the Polish army: B. Morgan, 'Aston, Sir Arthur (1590/93-1649), *ODNB,* http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-823 [accessed 12 January 2018].

merchants for mercantile dominance in Muscovy improved the bargaining position of the Muscovite Tsar. Instead of granting mercantile rights and privileges on a first-come, first-served basis, the Muscovites encouraged both states to compete for mercantile access. While, ultimately, the Romanov strategy was unsuccessful in attaining an alliance with either England or Holland, Michael's diplomatic gift-giving provides an important example of the gradual development of Muscovite diplomatic practice.

3. Stuart Gifts

Whereas Muscovite embassies initiated political negotiations, James' ambassadors, principally Sir John Merrick, were dispatched to Moscow to deliver the King's replies to the Tsar's proposals, but present them in a way which would not cause any permanent damage to Anglo-Muscovite friendship.[82] Furthermore, in his dual capacity as both James' ambassador and the principal agent of the Muscovy Company, Merrick sought to procure new mercantile rights and privileges for the Company, including the request to be granted a monopoly over the export of tar.[83] The principal gifts of Stuart embassies remained silver-gilt plate and textiles. In 1614, James' gifts to Michael consisted of eleven gilt silver standing cups, a set of a basin and ewer, one pair of livery pots, a brazier, a silver tub on a stand, a silver-gilt salt cellar, a pair of gilt candlesticks and various pieces of high-quality cloth.[84] The diplomatic gifts of Merrick's 1620 embassy incorporated stately objects made of semi-precious metals, including a crystal salt-cellar and a 'crystal vessel' in a silver mount, as well as silver-gilt

[82] Merrick to Sir Ralph Winwood, dated 7 August 1614, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 1r. Sir John Merrick (c. 1559-1638) was an agent, later governor, of the Muscovy Company and on several occasions served in the capacity of a royal English ambassador. For an overview of Merrick's diplomatic career, see G.M. Phipps, *Sir John Merrick: English Merchant Diplomat in Seventeenth Century Russia* (Newtonville, MA, 1983).
[83] TNA, SP 91/2, f. 68r; fos 42r-43v.
[84] The arrival of English Ambassador Sir Ivan Ul'ianov [John Merrick] in September 1614, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 4, fos 49r-53v.

plate and textiles.[85] Textiles, especially English wool and cloth, remained the principal commodity imported by English merchants. Meanwhile, by the seventeenth century, plate had become as synonymous with royal English gift-giving as had the sable fur with that of the Muscovites. Gifts of plate were likewise high-quality works of arts that had good aspects for the Muscovite market.[86]

Amongst James' gifts to Michael one can find evidence of recycled gifts of plate. One such gift was a standing cup, known as the 'Warwick' cup (Fig. 4), currently on public display at the Kremlin Armoury Museum in Moscow, which was presented to Michael in 1620. Charles Oman has suggested that the cup was likely presented to James by one of his courtiers, Fulke Greville, during the king's visit to Coventry and Warwick in September 1617.[87] The cup features the coat of arms of the city of Warwick and according to contemporary documents, during his visit to Coventry the King was presented with a gold standing cup filled with coins.[88] Oman believes that a similar cup might have been presented to James upon his arrival at Warwick. Between September 1617 and 1620, the 'Warwick' cup was likely stored in the royal Cupboard of Estate and then sent to Michael as a diplomatic gift. The Muscovite records show no evidence that Michael was aware of the cup's history, and the gift was accepted into the royal treasury.[89] Other possible examples of recycled English gifts were the silver sculptures of a lion, a unicorn and an ostrich that were likewise given to Michael in 1620.[90] Sculptures, such as the ones mentioned above, rarely appear in English gift-giving and are more common amongst the gifts of Continental

[85] The arrival of English Ambassador Sir John Merrick in June 1620, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, f. 169r-v.
[86] Zagorodnaia, 'Russian Foreign Relations and Diplomacy', p. 23.
[87] C. Oman, *The English Silver at the Kremlin*, *1557-1663* (London, 1961), p. 75.
[88] Oman, *The English Silver at the Kremlin*, p. 76.
[89] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, f. 169r.
[90] The sculptures are not amongst the collection of English gifts preserved at the Armoury.

European rulers. This could suggest that the sculptures might have been received as a gift by James and then re-gifted to the Tsar.

To begin with, the English practice of re-gifting objects was a reflection of a practical need to standardise and decrease expenditure on the commission and selection of diplomatic gifts.[91] The Muscovy Company, which had financed the commissions (and acquisitions) of royal English gifts to Muscovy, had, by 1620s, declared itself 'disabled, by the extraordinary charges of the Ambassadors to and from [Muscovy]'.[92] It is possible that the aforementioned gifts could have been provided by the Crown as a means of relieving the financial burden of the Company. Alternatively, the Company could have purchased the said gifts from James, similar to its later practice of buying silver plate from Charles I and sending it to Moscow.[93] Another important factor to consider is the potentiality that both the English gifts of 1620 and the previous Muscovite gifts of 1617 consisted of objects that were being re-gifted or recycled. Both the 'Warwick Cup' and Michael's Persian dagger were selected, or acquired, from amongst the sovereigns' own collections and treasuries, and perhaps the additions of objects from James' Cupboard of Estate in 1620 were intended to reciprocate the Muscovite gifts of 1617 that came from the Tsar's own Armoury. The English gifts of 1620 also included two Indian parrots and an antelope, whereas in 1617 the Muscovites brought sables, falcons and hawks.[94] The discourteous conduct of Dudley Digges' 1618 embassy, the gifts of which remain unknown, might have likewise been a factor of influence in the selection of the 1620 gifts, the total

[91] M. Jansson, 'Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9 (2005), pp. 348-50.
[92] Sir Thomas Smith to Sir Albert Morton, dated 25 October 1621, TNA, SP 14/123, f. 81r.
[93] The Armoury Museum has several pieces from the Cupboard of Estate of Charles I, which Charles Oman argues were sold to the Muscovy Company in 1629 and subsequently sent as gifts to Moscow: Oman, *The English Silver at the Kremlin*, p. 165.
[94] The parrots and the antelope could have represented English trading links with the Mughal Empire. For an overview of seventeenth-century English trade in India, see A. Farrington, *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia, 1600-1834* (London, 2002); J. Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (London, 2010).

value of which was over a thousand pounds.[95] Hence, it might have been deemed beneficial to select the most beautiful and appealing objects to be sent to as gifts to Moscow in order to honour the Tsar, reverse any ill-feeling created by Digges' conduct and protect the commercial interests of the Company. The most ornate of such objects were likely to have been kept in the royal Cupboard of Estate, which could explain the presence of recycled plate amongst James' gifts of 1620. More importantly, the gifts of 1620 marked the last time such objects formed part of the English sovereign gifts sent to Moscow until 1660.

Diplomatically, Merrick's embassy of 1620 marked a serious attempt on behalf of the Muscovy Company to restore its fortunes by persuading Michael to grant them a new *gramota* of mercantile privileges and a monopoly over the trade route with Persia under the duty-free trade conditions of their existing charter of privileges. The embassy reminded the Romanov government of England's central role in the Russo-Swedish peace negotiations and the provision of a loan delivered in 1618. As a means of increasing the probability of a favourable diplomatic outcome, the gifts of 1620 exceeded, at least in quantity and value, those offered by previous Stuart embassies. In addition to the aforementioned gifts of animal sculptures, Merrick brought five standing cups, two flagons, ewers, basins, velvet cloth, and upholstered wine-red chairs, as well as plate, English cloth, an Indian casket and a clock.[96] Similarly to the Muscovite gifts of 1617, the English gifts of 1620 merged the traditional with the novel. The Muscovites reciprocated with a generous offer of customary furs, including sending James 200 sable furs, a pair of sable furs of an exceptional quality and a pelt of a black fox, alongside four timbers (160) of sable furs and two black fox pelts from the Patriarch.[97] Merrick was rewarded with a 'tablet with portraits of the Tsar and his children', and a '*Kovsh* of silver double gilt, sett with stones', for

[95] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, f. 175r.
[96] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, fos 169v-171r; 173r-v.
[97] RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, fos 73r-4r.

his extensive mediation during the Russo-Swedish peace talks of 1614-17, but more generally for his extensive role as a longstanding mediator between Michael and James.[98] In terms of their diplomatic objectives, the English were given an ultimatum to the effect that the Romanovs would only grant the supervision of the Persian trade route in an exchange for a military alliance. Considering that the English Crown was unlikely to support such a proposition, the Company was forced to abandon the matter.

Although James continued to exchange correspondence with Michael and the Patriarch until the King's death in 1625, the royal English ambassador was replaced with a resident diplomatic representative, and the representative sent by the Company to Moscow in 1623 arrived without any gifts.[99] The incident caused significant diplomatic friction for the English Crown and the Company, which dispatched another agent in 1625 with a considerable quantity of gifts to rectify the conduct of its previous agent.[100] Gradually, the exchange of gifts and embassies between England and Muscovy became sporadic and diplomatic mediation was restricted to the occasional interchange of royal letters, though the Anglo-Muscovite relationship enjoyed a short-lived revival under Charles II.[101]

The principal question that arises from the examination of James' diplomatic gift-exchange with Michael Romanov is whether the English (and Muscovite) diplomatic gift-giving experienced instances of change and continuity when compared to that of Elizabeth and the Rurikids. On the surface, the dominance

[98] The tablet with the Tsar's portrait does not seem to have survived and is only mentioned by John Chamberlain in a letter to Sir Dudley Carlton, TNA, SP 14/94, fos 50v-51r. The silver *kovsh* (a traditional Muscovite drinking vessel shaped either as a boat or a water bird with a single handle) is mentioned in the 'Will of Sir John Merrick [dated 1 February 1639]', TNA, PROB 11/179, f. 172r.
[99] Michael to James, dated 1 June 1624, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 105r-107v.
[100] Amongst the gifts were two ceremonial muskets of Dutch origin: Ambassadorial Receipt Books, 1624-25, RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, d. 145, f. 34r.
[101] Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe*, pp. 112-59.

of English silver plate and textiles, as well as Muscovite gifts of sable furs, suggests a lack of change. A closer analysis reveals that the selection of gifts fluctuated according to diplomatic intentions. Previously absent objects, such as table sculptures or Persian weapons, were added to bolster the magnificence of presented gifts, while some gifts were commissioned with the intention to address a specific diplomatic matter, such as the 1604 coach. One example of a new element of English gift-giving was the inclusion of firearms. Although firearms and weapons had been previously brought as gifts to the Muscovites, often these gifts were not presented on behalf of the English monarch. The 1589 inventory of Boris Godunov mentioned a gift of an English heavy spear and ten 'English helmets inlaid with gold leaf on alternate facets', though no description of such gifts is found in the documents relating to the royal English embassies of the 1580s.[102] The weapons were likely presented as either personal gifts of the English ambassadors or the agents of the Company. Equally, in 1582 the visiting Muscovite ambassadors were offered a gift of two flintlock pistols, though these were not given by Elizabeth but by one of her male courtiers, Sir Christopher Hatton.[103] In contrast, James' ambassadors presented several gifts of firearms on behalf of the King, including two flintlock pistols in 1604 and a pair of hunting guns in 1620.[104] The main purpose of these gifts was ceremonial, as the guns could be publicly paraded as a testament to their owner's military prowess. Surviving examples of the English seventeenth-century firearms at the Kremlin Armoury Museum include pistols and hunting guns, decorated with ivory, engraved and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. One pair of such carabines features a decoration of Muscovite arms, the double-headed eagle wearing a triple crown with a unicorn, suggesting another gift commissioned specifically for the

[102] P.I. Savvaitov, *Opisanie Tsarskikh Utvarei, Odezhd, Oruzhiya, Ratnykh Dospekhov i Konskogo Pribora* (St. Petersburg, 1865), pp. 32, 35.
[103] Fedor Pisemskii, 'Stateinyi Spisok F.A. Pisemskogo', in D.S. Likhachev (ed.), *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov* (Moscow, 1954), p. 124.
[104] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 43, fos 141r-5v; RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 7, fos 169r-70r.

Muscovite Tsar.[105] The gifts of firearms showcased the high-quality technical and artistic skills of English gunsmiths, though occasionally James' gifts of firearms were of Dutch making. Notably, alongside the transmission of such objects as gifts, English and Dutch gunsmiths travelled to Moscow to teach their skills to Muscovite artificers. The Armoury possesses several examples of Moscow-made firearms constructed and designed according to English (and Dutch) influences.[106] Warfare was a common prerogative of early modern kingship, and the transmission of English firearms emphasised the shared military responsibilities of both James and the Muscovite Tsars in their capacity as male rulers of their respective states. After all, gifts of arms and weapons could express familiarity with a male ruler as only jewels could with a female.

The second theme that stems from the examination of Stuart-Godunov and Stuart-Romanov gift-exchange is the extent to which the English and Muscovite gifts were alike to those presented by (and to) other European nations. A brief overview of the diplomatic gifts preserved at the Kremlin Armoury Museum and the records of the Muscovite Ambassadorial Books shows that gold and silver plate was the most frequent European diplomatic gift, alongside unmounted gemstones which were another popular gift choice. The majority of James' gifts were, therefore, comparable to those presented by other European nations. The gifts from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth often consisted of silver and gold plate, horse trappings and saddles. This included a Hussar saddle presented by the Polish ambassadors to Boris Godunov in 1600.[107] A more unusual set of gifts was sent by the Holy Roman Emperor, which included a gift of the state regalia (crown, sceptre and orb) to Boris Godunov.[108] The gift implied an imperial recognition of Godunov's status as a ruler. Amongst the gifts of the Dutch

[105] Iablonskaia, *English Firearms,* pp. 70-1.
[106] Ibid., pp. 34-5.
[107] Ambassadorial Receipt Books, 1613-1614, RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, d. 139, f. 46r.
[108] G. Walton, 'Diplomatic and Ambassadorial Gifts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Shifman and Walton (eds), *Gifts to the Tsars*, p. 85.

Republic were carabines and pistols, as well as candlesticks, jugs, ewers, basins and flagons.[109] The gifts of the northern European states of Sweden, Denmark and Norway consisted of plate, including a fruit dish presented to Michael by Christian IV of Denmark in 1644.[110] Another gift was a red tablecloth with gold patterns made by Danish weavers and given as a gift to the Muscovite ambassadors during an embassy to Copenhagen in 1622.[111] Overall, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that European royal families either followed the gift-giving custom set by the English or chose such objects as gifts for their profitable aspects on the Muscovite market. What seems apparent is that the choice of gifts was dependent on the political context and the diplomatic objectives of individual embassies. The aforementioned Danish tablecloth was actually the product of royal Danish investment into a new silk-weaving workshop and showed the intention of Christian IV to send such work to Muscovy to encourage the Tsar to commission future orders. Unfortunately, no orders were forthcoming, and the production was closed in 1626.[112] The majority of Muscovite gifts to various European sovereigns were selected according to precedent and consisted of sable furs. Depending on the context of the embassy, and its importance within the Muscovite foreign policy or the political ambitions of individual Tsars, additional gifts of falcons, horses, luxury textiles and Persian or Turkish commodities could be added to bolster the Tsar's image of magnificence and wealth.[113]

In summary, the Stuart-Romanov gift-exchange merged staple gifts of silver plate and sable fur with occasional additions of new and opulent commodities, including Persian daggers and English firearms. The intention was to maintain a

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[109] Ambassadorial Receipt Books, 1629-30, RGADA, fond 396, opis'2, part 1, d. 149, fos 33r-34v.
[110] Ambassadorial Receipt Books, 1633-34, RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, d. 151, fos 154r-156r.
[111] M. Bencard and G.A. Markova, *Christian IV's Royal Plate and His Relations with Russia* (Rosenborg, 1988), pp. 27-32.
[112] Ibid., pp. 90-1.
[113] Ambassadorial Expenditure Books, RGADA, fond 396, opis' 2, part 1, d. 198-210.

sense of a continuous Anglo-Muscovite friendship amidst the dynastic changes in both states, but, at the same time, the inclusion or absence of unique objects was dependent upon the diplomatic aims and aspirations of individual embassies. As Thomas Hobbes noted in the *Leviathan*, 'to give great gifts to a man is to honour him; because it is buying of protection and acknowledging of power'.[114] When the man happens to be the Tsar of Muscovy and a distributor of trading monopolies, the necessity of acquiring and maintaining his goodwill becomes of great importance for the advancement of one's commercial interests. Amidst asymmetrical political interests, the presentation of gifts provided England and Muscovy with a ritualised means of reinforcing a bond of royal friendship between James and the Tsars. Whilst the Company had expected this friendship to manifest itself through grants of exclusive mercantile privileges, the Muscovites anticipated political and military support. In the end, neither the Company nor the Muscovites were able to fulfil their ambitions, though not without some serious effort. After all, gilt cups and sable furs were unlikely to stir the Crown or the Muscovites into satisfying each other's demands. Muscovy was of little political significance to England, and England, too, was beginning to lose its commercial importance to the Muscovites. By 1623 it had become apparent that the maintenance of an asymmetric Anglo-Muscovite relationship was no longer a priority for either state. The Romanov attention was fixed on Sweden, Poland and the Ottomans, while the English Crown focused on France, the Low Countries and Spain. Even mercantile interests of the two nations diverged, with England's expansion and colonies in the West and Muscovy's expansion to the south and the east. The Stuart-Romanov gift-exchange, meanwhile, remains a testament to the functionality of Anglo-Muscovite relations despite their apparent political and cultural incompatibility.

[114] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford, 1960), p. 58.

Fig. 1. The English Carriage of 1604, Kremlin Armoury Museum, Moscow

Fig. 2. . Detail of the Back Wooden Panel of the 1604 English Carriage (*Angliiskaia Kareta Tsaria Borisa Godunova*, ed. E.V. Kogut, pp. 16-7)

Fig. 3. Detail of Front Wooden Panel of the 1604 Carriage (*Angliiskaia Kareta Tsaria Borisa Godunova*, ed. E.V. Kogut, pp. 18-9)

Fig. 4. The 'Warwick Cup', 1617-18 (*The English Silver of the 16th- 20th Centuries*, ed. N.E. Abramova, pp. 95-6)

Chapter 6

Beyond the Material Gift: The Muscovite *Zhalovannaia Gramota*

Traditionally, the study of Anglo-Muscovite gifts has centred on the exchange of material objects, predominantly English silver-gilt plate and Muscovite sable furs. After all, diplomatic gifts are, in most cases, associated with a material object. Yet, Anglo-Muscovite gift-giving was not restricted to an exchange of opulent material commodities. For instance, hospitality could be interpreted as a gift. It was a natural and integral part of a royal and elite behaviour, an embodiment of the 'duty of generosity'.[1] In a diplomatic setting, hospitality could consist of a provision of diet, accommodation, gifts and entertainment for the visiting ambassador. English diplomats arriving into Moscow, for example, were presented with royal horses for the duration of their embassy.[2] Chapter 2 mentioned that English ambassadors were expected to make their public entrance into Moscow on horseback, but due to the nautical nature of English voyages, most of the ambassadors arrived without mounts. The Muscovites amalgamated the practical solution to this dilemma with a symbolic expression of hospitality by presenting (or 'gifting' as described in the *Posol'skie Knigi*) the diplomats with mares and steeds from the royal stables.[3]

Alongside hospitality, royal grants, favours, assurances, fulfilment of promises and even an exchange of news and political information, can all be classified as a 'gift'. Just as material gifts, these intangible components created social bonds

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[1] F. Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 2.

[2] A. Possevino, *The Moscovia of Antonio Possevino*, *S.J.,* trans. and ed. by H.F. Graham, 2 (Pittsburgh, PA, 1977), p. 17.

[3] The books, however, do not specify whether the horses were a permanent gift or given to the ambassadors only for the public entrance and exit from Moscow and then taken back to the royal stables. Also, in 1604 Sir Thomas Smith brought his own horse from England but was not permitted to use it and instead required to accept the horse sent on behalf of the Tsar: RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 43.

between the recipient and the giver and produced an expectation of reciprocity. As an example of such intangible gift, this chapter focuses on the Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* (pl. *gramoty*; a royal charter of mercantile privileges). While the generous privileges, conferred upon the English merchants by the Muscovite Tsar, were of great significance to the progression of English commercial activities, the *gramota* was given an important role within Muscovite gift-giving. Its role as a 'gift', however, remains unexplored.[4] As discussed in this chapter, the charter was both a Muscovite diplomatic haggling tool and an intangible royal gift designed to elicit reciprocation from the English Crown in the form of political benefits and concessions.

This chapter uses contemporary Muscovite transcriptions and English translations of the *gramoty* preserved in British and Russian archives, alongside edited English translations of the *gramoty* printed in the works of Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas.[5] Unfortunately, no original Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* given to the Muscovy Company has been identified to date, and most of the originals are assumed to have been destroyed during the Great Fire of London in 1666.[6] This chapter starts the investigation of the Muscovite *zhalovannaia gramota* by noting how individual charters, and the different rights

[4] The examination of the Muscovite *gramota* has been predominantly restricted to either the study of English commercial activities in Moscow or its relevance to the success and failure of English embassies in relation to their diplomatic objectives. This includes, but is not limited to, such prominent works as: I. Lubimenko, 'The Struggle of the Dutch with the English for the Russian Market in the Seventeenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 7 (1924), pp. 27-51; Willan, *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555* (Manchester, 1953); M.S. Arel, 'Masters in Their Own House: The Russian Merchant Elite and Complaints Against the English in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 77 (1999), pp. 401-47; K. Mayers, *North-East Passage to Muscovy: Stephen Borough and the First Tudor Explorations* (Sutton, 2005).
[5] Muscovite copies of six *gramoty* (dating from 1564-1621) are preserved at RGADA, fond 35, opis' 4; contemporary English translations can be found within the collections of the British Library (Cotton MSS, Nero B. series) and the National Archives (SP 91). Likewise, abridged English translations of the earliest Muscovite *gramoty* are published in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 265-7 (1555); p. 272 (1567); pp. 378-82 (1569); pp. 409-10 (1572); pp. 470-3 (1586); pp. 473-4 (1589). Abridged translations of seventeenth-century *gramoty* are published in Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, pp. 754-5 (1604); pp. 759-61 (1605/06), pp. 802-4 (1620).
[6] The earliest surviving minute book of the Company covers the period of 1666/7-1682: Guildhall Library, London, MS 11741/1.

it could grant, became essential for the progression of English commercial activities to the extent that gradually English mercantile interests became synonymous with Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy. Thereafter, it focuses on the function of the *gramota* as an intangible diplomatic gift. Exploring different factors, including assumed Muscovite dependence on English imports of non-precious metals and the employment of mercantile grants as markers of Muscovite dynastic continuity, it shows that the *gramota* was one of the most appropriate media of royal self-presentation, generosity and declaration of friendship. Driven by the cultivated ideas of sovereign honour and competitive displays of magnificence, the Muscovite Tsars aspired to present themselves as great sovereigns, and the generous privileges conferred by the *gramota* offered a convenient medium. Most importantly, the *gramota* was Muscovy's principal diplomatic bargaining tool. To demonstrate this, the discussion below compares the *gramoty* of Ivan IV and Michael Romanov. It argues that, though neither Ivan nor Michael was successful in concluding a politico-military alliance with England, the *gramota* assisted the Tsars in enticing the English Crown to concede some political and military assistance, often in the form of ordnance, money and informal political support. By recognising the *gramota* as a Muscovite intangible gift, this chapter emphasises the complexity of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange that was not defined solely by an exchange of material objects.

1. The *Gramota* in Anglo-Muscovite Diplomacy

The Muscovite *gramota* was the linchpin of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy since 1555 when Ivan IV endowed the merchants of the English Muscovy Company with the grant of a duty-free trade in Muscovite cities.[7] Whilst the distant northern kingdom was peripheral to the political aspirations of the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, the mercantile wealth of the Tsar's lands was of great interest

[7] An abridged English translation of this *gramota* is printed in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 265-7.

and commercial importance to English merchant-adventurers. The generous mercantile privileges, conferred upon the Company by Ivan's *gramota,* ensured that the commercial venture was financially profitable. Within the first two decades of Anglo-Muscovite relations, the membership of the Muscovy Company increased from 191 members to 400.[8] The Company sought to consolidate its presence by acquiring the rights to build 'factories', or warehouses in key Muscovite cities, including Kholmogory – a major northern market, Astrakhan and Kazan. Within a decade the English merchants created a trading system across Muscovy, centred on the use of its agents in major cities throughout the trading route between Moscow and the White Sea. Nevertheless, the success of English commercial activities was dependent upon the *gramota* and the royal favour of the Muscovite Tsar. Thus, the attainment and expansion of trading rights and exemptions was a central fixture of English ambassadorial missions.

The classification of the *gramota* as a manifestation of royal favour rather than a formal and ratified agreement between the two monarchies stems from the wording the Muscovites used to describe these grants – *zhalovannaia gramota*. The term applied to letters patent, issued by the Muscovite Tsars, to churches, monasteries, corporations, institutions or individuals legalising grants of titles, land holdings and tax exemptions, as well as specific rights and benefits. Essentially, these documents granted exclusive rights to institutions and individuals by the personal favour and grace of the sovereign. Physically, the Muscovite *gramota* resembled a Muscovite royal letter and was authorised by the attachment of the Great Seal. Michael's *gramota* of 1619 (Fig. 5), for example, which granted some lands to a court *d'yak* (secretary), bears a similarity to Michael's royal letters sent to James.[9] The only noticeable difference is that the *gramota* has a more opulent style of ornamentation, whereby all of

[8] Willan, *The Muscovy Merchants,* pp. 6, 41-7.
[9] The *gramota* of Michael Romanov to *d'yak* Kolachev, dated May 1619, http://portal.rusarchives.ru/smuta/09-kostromskoi-krai.shtml [accessed 27 December 2017].

the free space framing the text is filled with decoration. While the copy of the *gramota* attached at the end of this chapter (Fig. 5), is black and white, based on the photographs of Muscovite royal letters included at the end of Chapter 7, it can be assumed that all of the decorative elements, as well as portions of the text, would have been drawn with gold ink. The decoration of Michael's *gramoty* was not always as opulent as the one described above, while the *gramoty* of Michael's predecessors (just like royal letters) were often only sparsely decorated. In the example of a 1621 *gramota* (Fig. 6), the decoration is restricted to a decorated Cyrillic capital letter 'Б' (B), though the purpose of this *gramota* was to reaffirm the rights the recipient (described as a Muscovite 'Prince') had been previously given in 1613.[10] The difference in the ornamentation could imply that the decoration of each *gramota*, in similarity to gifts, was dependant on the importance of what was given and to whom, but it is worth noting that in general the letters and *gramoty* of the Rurikids were not as decorated as those of Godunov and the Romanovs. As shown in Chapter 7, Rurikid letters (and *gramoty*) only contained a portion of limned text and a decorated initial. Overall, the physical appearance of the *gramota* fitted well with the ideas of Muscovite self-representation and the aspirations of the Tsars to be seen as magnificent, royal and generous.

The English translations of the *gramota* interchangeably described these grants as either a 'letter of favour', 'imperiall letter of gratitude' or simply as a 'letter of privileges', but they consistently emphasised that the grants were a manifestation of the Tsar's singular royal favour to the English sovereign.[11] The longevity of the rights granted by the *gramota* was dependent on the continuity of friendship between individual Tsars and English sovereigns, though generally, the *gramota* had to be renewed upon the accession of each new Tsar. The

[10] Michael's *gramota*, dated 5 July 1621, given to *Kniaz'* I.N. Khovanskii, RGADA, fond 170, opis' 1, d. 136, f. 1r-v.
[11] For example, see the *gramota* of 1569 in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 378-82.

wording of the *gramota* accentuated the fact that a charter of privileges could only be granted if there was an undisputable declaration of friendship between the two monarchs. The *gramota* of 1620, for instance, declared that 'together with our deare Father [Patriarch Filaret]', Michael wished to 'ever to remayne in the strongest bonds of brotherly love and friendship' with James, and thus 'have graciously granted [to the English merchants] free leave to come with their shippes into our Kingdoms'.[12] Similarly, Feodor I's *gramota* of 1587 noted that it was 'for our Sister's sake, Queen Elizabeth', that the Tsar had 'gratified the […] English merchants' to trade in Muscovy.[13] The mercantile rights and benefits granted by the *gramota* were thereby reliant upon a continuity of royal friendship between the two monarchies.

The scope and generosity of each *gramota* were dependent on the political aspirations of individual Tsars. The substantial grants made by Ivan IV in the 1560s, for instance, reflected his ambition to exchange mercantile privileges for a political alliance with Elizabeth, as well as exploit the direct access to Western goods, skilled labour and technological knowledge.[14] In contrast, the gradual curtailment of mercantile benefits in the 1580s was the result of Muscovite disinterest in pursuing a political partnership, while the 1620s were characterised by the gradual decline of English mercantile dominance in Muscovy. The most coveted benefit enjoyed by the English merchants was the exemption from paying all kinds of taxes, tolls and customs duties. The exemption was first granted by Ivan in 1555 (revoked in 1558 upon Mary I's death) and confirmed only in 1569 following the diplomatic mediation of Elizabeth's ambassador Thomas Randolph. The *gramota* of 1569 permitted the Company 'free leaue to come to traffike in our kingdome [Muscovy]' and 'barter

[12] Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, p. 802.
[13] Feodor I's *gramota* to the English merchants, dated February 1586 [1587], TNA, SP 91/1, f. 55r.
[14] H. Huttenbach, 'Anthony Jenkinson's 1566 and 1567 Missions to Muscovy. Reconstructed from Unpublished Sources', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 9 (1975), pp. 179-203.

and bargaine freely all wares of sale, without custome'.[15] The exemption was perceived as a mark of the utmost favour, it distinguished the rights of the English merchants from those granted to other foreign, and native Muscovite, merchants. Despite the increasingly bitter petitions and complaints of the Muscovite mercantile elite against the privileges of the English (and later all foreign) merchants, the Muscovy Company retained its duty-free trade, albeit with minor interruptions, until the permanent revocation of the right in 1646.[16]

The exemption from taxation and customs duties was of great commercial and symbolic importance to the English merchants to the extent that the Company frequently petitioned the Crown to mediate with the Tsar any disputes arising between the merchants and Muscovite officials. The instructions of Sir Jerome Bowes' embassy of 1583 reveal that the ambassador was ordered to notify Ivan of the money that was extracted from the merchants by Muscovite officials, which was contrary to their privileges. The Company demanded a reimbursement of 1,000 roubles they had been forced to pay in 1580-81.[17] The introduction of an obligatory half-customs duty, to be paid by English merchants upon the accession of Feodor I in 1584, resulted in similar requests of the Company to Elizabeth I to mediate the matter with the Tsar in an attempt to restore the previous English exemption.[18] The obligation to pay was perceived as a financial inconvenience and a loss of the privileged status the English had formerly enjoyed. The merchants felt that without their exclusive exemptions, the mercantile privileges of the Company equated those of their foreign rivals, despite the fact that the latter were required to pay the full duty. In principle, the Muscovite grant of an exemption from paying taxes, tolls and duties was not always exclusive to the English and at various stages of the Anglo-Muscovite

[15] A copy of the 1569 *gramota*, in Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 378.
[16] Arel, 'Masters in Their Own House', pp. 401-10.
[17] The Instructions of Sir Jerome Bowes, dated 1583, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 10r.
[18] Feodor to Elizabeth, dated 1585, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 50r-51v.

relationship, similar exemptions (albeit not a complete exemption from full customs duty) can found amongst the *gramoty* given to Dutch, Swedish and even Persian merchants.[19] The major difference is that the English were the only foreigners to retain the exemption over the course of almost a century amidst several dynastic changes.

Additional privileges granted by the Muscovite *gramota* to the Muscovy Company included the right to hold rent-free 'factories' (warehouses), shops and houses in the city of Moscow, as well as within other Muscovite commercial centres, such as Kholmogory, Vologda and Yaroslavl. In 1567, for example, the Company was granted the privilege to relocate their warehouse into the vicinity of the Kremlin Palace.[20] In addition to physical proximity to royal power and protection, in practical terms, the relocation aided English agents in petitioning for redress of grievances. The Company was permitted to employ Muscovite house-servants, operate cordage works and heat houses in the summer; the latter was widely prohibited for fire safety.[21] Muscovite officials were not permitted to inspect the Company's bales and packages, and were obliged to assist the merchants in the retrieval of goods in cases of shipwrecks and robberies.[22] The merchants were permitted 'freely to keepe their own lawe', and 'none [were] to force [the Englishmen] to [Muscovite] lawe and faith against their wills', though if an Englishman desired to take a Muscovite wife, he was expected to convert to the Orthodox faith.[23] The *gramota* forbade English merchants to sell goods of other merchants as their own, employ Muscovite servants to sell English goods or

[19] There were some instances during which the Dutch merchants, in particular, were given identical privileges to those held by the English, though these instances were restricted to the Time of Troubles. In 1605, Dmitrii I gave both the Dutch and the English letters of safe passage into Persia for the establishment of trade with Persia and Eastern Princes: Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, part 2, pp. 759-61. Examples of Muscovite *gramoty* given to the Dutch merchants can be found in RGADA, fond 50, opis' 1, d. 1, fos 1r-7v; ibid., d. 5, fos 1r-4r.
[20] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 11 September 1567, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332r-v.
[21] English translation of Michael's *gramota* to the English merchants, dated 12 June 1628, TNA, SP 91/2, fos 142r-43r.
[22] A copy of Feodor's *gramota* to the English merchants, dated 1587, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 4, d. 5.
[23] A copy of Ivan's *gramota* to the English merchants, dated 1564, Ibid., opis' 4, d. 1.

grant them protection, and sell wares by yards, pounds and ounces rather than wholesale.[24] Most importantly, the last clause of the *gramota* specified that if English merchants wished to travel outside of the Tsar's domains, or return to England, they were required to attain a letter of safe passage or a letter of leave.[25] Upon the receipt of such letters, the English merchants were obliged to take with them the Tsar's 'treasure' (often furs) and 'sell, and barter it for such commodities as [the Muscovites] shall thinke fit and necessarie'.[26] The clause was intended to safeguard Muscovite control over its trade to the lucrative markets of eastern and southern rulers. By compelling English merchants to seek permission prior to departure, the Tsars created additional opportunities to further diplomatic mediation.

Alongside the exemption from customs, the Muscovy Company aspired to acquire a monopoly over trade in Muscovy, whereby England would become the only Western European state permitted to trade throughout the northern parts of the Tsar's lands. Similarly, all English interlopers, or those not affiliated with the Company, would be prohibited from trading in Muscovite cities. The aspiration was first acted upon in 1567, and the English envoy, Anthony Jenkinson, was instructed to procure additional privileges from Ivan as a reciprocal gesture of friendship for the technicians and skilled workers Elizabeth had sent to Muscovy on Ivan's behest.[27] The intention was to force Ivan to recognise the illegality of rival foreign merchants and English interlopers. For Ivan, Jenkinson's proposition offered an opportunity to readjust the diplomatic nature of Anglo-Muscovite relations. The Tsar promised to exclude foreign merchants from trading in Muscovite cities, with the exception of Archangel, if Elizabeth would agree to conduct all future negotiations on an ambassadorial

[24] A copy of Michael's *gramota* to the English merchants, dated 3 July 1617, Ibid., opis' 4, d. 6.
[25] RGADA fond 35, opis' 4, d. 6.
[26] Ibid., d. 6.
[27] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 18 May 1567, BL, Royal MS 13, B.i, fos 189v-90r; also BLOU, Clarendon MS 35.

level.[28] Elizabeth's acceptance would have enabled Ivan to bring political and dynastic concerns to the forefront of Anglo-Muscovite relations, which until that point were dominated by mercantile agenda. The Company advised the Queen to agree to the proposition and as a declaration of a renewed friendship Ivan issued a new *gramota* that commanded 'no othe[r] marchants English [interlopers], or other of what so ever country to come into our North parts and Dwina to traffike'.[29] The 1567 exchange of additional mercantile rights for political recognition is an excellent example of the Muscovites using the *gramota* as a bargaining tool. Although English monopoly over Muscovite trade was short-lived (the privilege was revoked in the 1570s during tense diplomatic negotiations regarding the matter of a political alliance against Poland), the Company was able to retain some form of mercantile dominance and influence over Muscovite trade.

During the reigns of Ivan's successors, the Company was able to acquire similar short-term privileges of having an exclusive access to trade in designated ports and cities. Predominantly, the attainment of these rights was achieved by petitioning Elizabeth or James to grant political concessions, often of little significance to the Crown but of relative importance to the Tsar, and present these to the Muscovites as declarations of English royal friendship. As an example, in 1602 Elizabeth agreed to maintain a ruse of a finding a suitable English bride for the son of Boris Godunov.[30] As a result, Sir John Merrick was able to report that 'the Russe Emperour and Counsell had determyned to seclude all straungers whatsoever [apart from the English] to enter into his lande any further than the waterside, there to make their traffick and return home

[28] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 16 September 1566, BL, Harley MS 296, f. 194r.
[29] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 11 September 1567, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332r-v.
[30] Draft, corrected by Robert Cecil, endorsed 1 June 1600, Hatfield House, Salisbury MS 80, f. 4r; a copy of the letter is preserved in BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 35r-36v.

agayne'.[31] As discussed at length below, the Muscovites were aware of the bargaining power of the *gramota* and used it appropriately, if not always effectively, to direct the course of Anglo-Muscovite political relations.

The protection of the Company's monopoly over Anglo-Muscovite trade was not aimed only at the exclusion of foreign competitors, but likewise against English merchants who conducted business privately. The mercantile privileges authorised by the *gramota* only applied to the individuals mentioned in the document, all of whom were affiliated with the Company.[32] This did not prevent rogue English merchants and privateers from hoodwinking Muscovite officials into believing that all English merchants trading in Muscovy were members of the Company.[33] Private trade was contrary to the joint-stock nature of the Company, whose members were only permitted to trade as a body.[34] It contradicted the Tudor political concept of a 'commonwealth', whereby all citizens had a duty to contribute to the public good, whilst pursuing their own affairs.[35] The Company, therefore, regarded private trade as illicit and a threat to the Company's reputation, especially as rogue merchants often borrowed money from the Muscovite royal treasury and boyars in its name. The matter of interlopers was not only relative to the protection of the Company's financial interests; all Englishmen in Muscovy, by virtue of their presence, were representatives of the English state and their monarch. Engagement in unlawful

[31] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated 1602, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 187r; SP 12/196, fos 139r-43r.
[32] The number of beneficiaries varied and was dependent on the active membership of the Company at any given point. The *gramota* of 1569, for example, listed 34 individuals, while that of 1586 listed only 7 individuals: Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 378, 470-1.
[33] As a result, the instructions of ambassadors often featured requests to extract specific individuals from Moscow. For instance see clause 12 of Jenkinson's account of 1571: BL, Lansdowne MS 100, f. 199v; also Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 407.
[34] Notably, while the commercial activities of the Company showed signs of decline throughout the seventeenth century, that of private English merchants trading at Narva continued to thrive: H. Zins, *England and the Baltic in the Elizabethan Era*, trans. H.C. Stevens (Manchester, 1972), pp. 41-50.
[35] F.J. Stout, *Exploring Russia in the Elizabethan Commonwealth* (Manchester, 2015), p. 32; W.R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720*, 2 (Cambridge, 1912), p. 36.

behaviour and criminal activities thus projected an unfavourable impression of England, and, in some instances, had wider diplomatic repercussions.

The Muscovites often refused to distinguish between Company merchants and private English traders. In 1587, for instance, the Muscovite government demanded a repayment of 23,553 roubles that it claimed was accrued by the Company through loans from the Muscovite royal treasury.[36] The Company argued that the debt was incurred by a rogue servant, Anthony Marsh, who had embezzled and transported goods appropriated from the Company to be sold privately in London, and the Company was thus not liable for the debt. The Muscovite government remained adamant and refused to renew the Company's *gramota* until the matter was addressed by the Queen.[37] Eventually, the mediation of Elizabeth's ambassador, Giles Fletcher, obtained a 'rebatement of eighteene thousand, one hundred fiftie and three marks of the sayd debt', and a confirmation of a new *gramota*.[38] Additionally, illicit activities and the misbehaviour of rogue English merchants could have unfavourable long-term political repercussions for the Company and the English Crown. This included increasing hostility and complaints from the Muscovite mercantile elite and boyars sympathetic to the anti-English cause. Throughout the 1580s, the head of the ambassadorial chancellery, for instance, advocated a termination of all mercantile privileges for foreign merchants, especially those granted to the English.[39] Unsurprisingly, the commissions of English ambassadors often featured requests for an expulsion of rogue Englishmen from Muscovy.[40]

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[36] Elizabeth to Feodor, dated 15 Jan 1589: Y. Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years* (St. Petersburg, 1875), pp. 298-312; Willan, *The Early History of the Russian Company,* pp. 196-9.

[37] The anti-English boyar faction at Feodor's court utilised the affair as an example of the abuses committed by the Englishmen in Muscovy and the dangers of favouring foreign merchants: S.H. Baron, 'Fletcher's Mission to Moscow and the Anthony Marsh Affair', *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte,* 46 (1991), pp. 107-30.

[38] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 474.

[39] Andrei Yakovlevich Shchelkalov (d. 1610/11) was the head of the *Posol'skii Prikaz* from 1570 until 1594 and supervised the visits of foreign ambassadors. Foreign diplomats, especially the English, often complained about Shchelkalov and his brother, Vasilii Yakovlevich, for their constant striving to

By the late sixteenth century, a series of incidents (like the Marsh affair above) provided foreign merchants, including the Dutch, with a persuasive argument as to why the English monopoly over Muscovite trade and exemption from taxation should be revoked. In 1603, the Dutch agent Isaac Massa noted that 'the tsar had derived no benefit in the course of fifty years [from Anglo-Muscovite trade], whereas a significant sum has accrued annually from the customs duty paid by the Dutch'.[41] Since the establishment of Russo-Dutch mercantile relations in the late sixteenth century, individual Dutch merchants were permitted to trade in Moscow, Archangel, Novgorod and Pskov, and keep rent-free houses and factories.[42] Unlike the Swedish, they were exempt from taking an oath of loyalty to the Tsar, but were still required to pay the full customs duty.[43] In general, the relations between the Muscovite Tsars and the Dutch government were predominantly commercial; there were no permanent Dutch representatives in Moscow or an exchange of ambassadors.[44] Although by the seventeenth century the Dutch became the main suppliers of ordnance for the Muscovites, and mediated Russo-Swedish peace talks alongside the English, there is no evidence to suggest that the Muscovite Tsars had ever considered establishing a political alliance with the Dutch Republic.[45]

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eliminate trading privileges for foreign merchants. This is best exemplified by Bowes' complaint of 1584: TNA, SP 91/1, fos 24r; 25r.

[40] A good example of this is Randolph's letter of 1569 which requested justice against several English offenders: BL, Lansdowne MS 10, f. 134r.

[41] Isaac Massa, *Short History*, ed. and trans. G.E. Orchard (Toronto, 1982), p. 186.

[42] RGADA, fond 50, opis' 1, d.1, fos 1-7v.

[43] Commercial relations between Muscovy and Sweden were often interrupted by military conflicts between the two monarchies, though Swedish merchants were granted a *gramota* in 1595 and 1618. The merchants were permitted to trade at Novgorod, Pskov and Moscow: I.P. Shaskol'skii, *Stolbovskii Mir 1617 g. Torgovye Otnosheniia Rossii so Shvedskim Gosudarstvom* (Moscow, 1967), pp. 80-104.

[44] 'Doneseniia Poslannikov Soedinennykh Niderlandov pri Russkom Dvore: Otchet Al'berta Burkha i Ioganna van Feltdriia o Posol'stve ikh v Rossiiu v 1630 i 1631 gg.', in *Sbornik*, 116 (St. Petersburg, 1902), pp. 319-22.

[45] T. Esper, 'Military Self-Sufficiency and Weapons Technology in Muscovite Russia', *Slavic Review 28* (1969), pp. 185-208.

The rights and benefits granted by the Muscovite *gramota* emphasise the importance of the documents to the progression of English commercial activities, but the use of the *gramota* as a diplomatic gift by the Muscovite Tsars requires a closer examination. The employment of the *gramota* as an intangible gift encourages the exploration of why the Tsars chose these documents as tools of diplomacy. Superficially, the generous grants conferred upon the English did not appear to favour the Muscovites, since the latter showed no interest in establishing trading posts in London.[46] The only reference to a potential establishment of Muscovite merchants in London appeared in the diplomatic negotiations of 1618, whereby the Muscovite ambassadors requested that they

> have free liberty [to] trade to buy [,] sell [and] barter their owne com[m]odeties [and] to make p[ro]visions as is need full for his Ma[jes]t[ies] vse of all manner of warlike munyc[i]on [and] other com[modities] what soever.[47]

Although the English Crown accepted the proposal, the Muscovites made no effort to pursue the matter, suggesting that the request was simply a reflection of their aspiration to recognition as an equal partner in Anglo-Muscovite relations. The probability of Muscovite mercantile elite establishing a trade route to London was exceptionally low. While scholars often point out the failure of the Muscovite Tsars to conclude a political alliance with England, the success of the English Company in its pursuit of mercantile interests is overstated.[48] The fact that the scope and generosity of the Tsar's charter of trading privileges (*zhalovannaia gramota*) were dependent upon the extent of English political concessions remains unexplored.

2. The *gramota* as an intangible gift: The *gramoty* of Ivan IV.

[46] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 18 May 1570, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 3, f. 1r.
[47] The requests of Muscovite Ambassadors, 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 25v.
[48] I.I. Lubimenko, 'Torgovye Snoshenia Rossii s Angliei pri Pervykh Romanovykh', *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniia*, 66 (1916), pp. 137-90; Arel, 'Masters in Their Own House', pp. 410-14.

The Muscovite *gramota* was presented in the guise of a free gift; apart from the practical clauses governing English mercantile activities in Muscovy, it did not allude to any specific preconditions the English Crown was required to fulfil to uphold its privileges.[49] This did not imply that the 'gift' was given unconditionally. Although it was presented at the conclusion of an ambassador's visit, the *gramota* did not mark the end-point of the exchange. Intangible gifts, just as material presents, obliged the recipient to respond. The Muscovites anticipated reciprocation to manifest in a formalisation of a political and military alliance between the two monarchies, yet the response of the English Crown, often a subtle rejection, fell short of these expectations.[50] Consequently, the inadequacies of English reciprocity were interpreted as an expression of enmity and naturally, the Muscovites responded with a revocation of their privileges.[51] The commercial fortunes of the Muscovy Company would thus be placed in jeopardy and its governors would petition the English Crown to restore cordial relations through diplomatic mediation. The Tsar would be presented with ostentatious material gifts (like those mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5), the English Crown would be forced to grant some political concessions and the privileges of the Company would be restored until subsequent political tensions, or a change of dynasty would bring the matter of recovering and renewing the privileges back to the forefront of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy.

The generous mercantile privileges granted by Ivan IV could have reflected his dependence upon England as Muscovy's main point of access to Western European commodities. Similarly, those of Michael could have hinted at the Muscovite need to acquire recognition of legitimacy, monetary loans and

[49] For example, see Michael I's *gramota* of 1617, RGDA, Moscow, fond. 35, opis' 4, d. 6.
[50] In a letter of 1567, Ivan proposed a formation of a 'perpetuall friendship and kyndred', whereby Elizabeth was to become 'friend to his [Ivan's] friends and enemy to his enemyes': BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, f. 6r-v.
[51] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 24 October 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 347r.

munitions.[52] Broadly, the *gramota* aided the Tsars in their ambitions to ascertain their royal status as being equal (or even greater) than those of other monarchs. It enabled the Muscovites to draw attention to the vast mercantile wealth of their lands, while its generous benefits embodied royal magnificence and generosity. Above all, in the guise of an intangible gift, the Muscovite *gramota* operated as a useful means of obliging the recipient to respond. Unlike Muscovite gifts of sable furs, the *gramota* had a better chance of eliciting a desired response from the English. In the absence of other factors that could have persuaded the English Crown to conclude an alliance with Muscovy, the *gramota* (and its centrality to English commercial interests) was the most effective 'gift' at Muscovite disposal.

The most extensive, and to some degree effective, use of the *gramota* as an intangible gift was undertaken by Ivan IV. In the thirty years of Ivan's diplomatic relations with England, the Tsar granted and affirmed at least six *gramoty*.[53] Negotiations for a seventh *gramota* remained inconclusive and were discontinued following the Tsar's sudden death.[54] In contrast to the *gramoty* of his successors, Ivan's charters offered the most generous and substantial benefits to the English merchants. As mentioned previously, this included the right to trade freely in major Muscovite trading markets, an exemption from taxations and duties, a monopoly over the import of European commodities and occasional letters of safe passage for English merchant-adventurers seeking to establish trade routes to the East.[55] The generosity of these grants was indicative of Ivan's interest in the development of a closer partnership between

[52] Proposals of Muscovite Ambassadors, 5 January 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 25r.
[53] Ivan's first *gramota* to the English merchants was granted in 1555. It was subsequently confirmed in 1558 upon Elizabeth's accession, but was then revoked and re-confirmed in 1564, 1567, 1569, 1572, 1576 and 1582.
[54] The Charter secured by the embassy of Sir Jerome Bowes was never ratified, as Ivan had died before the ambassador's departure; Ivan's successor Feodor I had refused to renew the privileges: TNA, SP 91/1, fos 24r; 25r.
[55] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 16 September 1566, BL, Harley MS 296, f. 194r.

the two states, one that was not only commercial but also political. Chapter 2 has already shown that Ivan's foreign policy was preoccupied with a continuous expansion of Muscovite territories, which inevitably embroiled the Tsar into military conflicts with his geopolitical neighbours. To sustain the impetus of Muscovite campaigns, Ivan required a continuous supply of non-precious metals like copper and lead (to make weapons), ordnance, munitions, siege equipment and skilled fortification engineers. It was important that the trade routes, through which these supplies would reach the Tsar, were not in danger of blockades or disruptions by Ivan's adversaries. In this regard, the English maritime trade route through the White Sea was one of the alternatives, even though the passage was not navigable for nearly half the year. Hence, upon granting new *gramoty* to the English, Ivan would often request reciprocal gifts in the form of imports of lead, tin, copper and bell-metal.

It could be argued that the gradual monopoly acquired by the English Muscovy Company over the imports of non-precious metals into Muscovy made Ivan dependent upon England, given the centrality of such metals to the manufacture of weapons.[56] Prior to the establishment of Anglo-Muscovite trade, the Muscovites were reliant upon hostile Baltic intermediaries, Livonia and the Hanse, as well as Poland-Lithuania, for access to Western European commodities. By 1554, the English maritime trade route created an alternative access point and England became Muscovy's chief importer of ordnance until the role was overtaken by the Dutch in the seventeenth century. In this context, it is tempting to interpret Ivan's generous privileges not as a powerful haggling tool that enabled the Tsar to direct the course of Anglo-Muscovite negotiations, but rather as a necessary prerequisite for retaining England as an ally and securing the imports. In other words, the exchange of mercantile privileges for occasional

[56] A.L. Khoroshkevich, *Russkoe Gosudarstvo v Sisteme Mezhdunardonykh Otnoshenii kontsa XV-nachala XVI vv.* (Moscow, 1980), pp. 38-9.

imports of some metal and ordnance was both asymmetrical and unfavourable to the Muscovites. The notion of English centrality to Muscovite expansionist foreign policy is rather exaggerated. If Ivan's military campaigns were truly dependent upon the English imports of weapons, munitions and metals, and the *gramota* was a precondition for safeguarding these imports, the Tsar would not have risked ending Anglo-Muscovite friendship by constantly revoking the *gramota* and threatening to transfer English mercantile privileges to other foreign merchants, as he did on several occasions. On the contrary, Ivan considered the *gramota* to be his gift rather than a precondition. Unlike material gifts, the permanence of an intangible gift was dependent solely on the goodwill of its giver. The *gramota* could thus be revoked and restored upon Ivan's whim and pleasure. Evidently, it was the Muscovy Company rather than the Tsar that played the role of a dependant in this diplomatic relationship.

In 1570, for instance, the Crown was advised by the Company to give a favourable reception to Ivan's ambassador in order to protect the English letters of safe passage into Persia that were obtained in 1569.[57] The Crown's failure to comply with the merchants' advice resulted in the revocation of all English trading privileges. In response, the Company doubled its efforts and petitioned the Crown to mediate the matter with a dispatch of a royal ambassador. As mentioned previously, the embassy obtained a new *gramota*, which restored the Company's former privileges, but Ivan was adamant that although,

> we doe now leaue of all those matters, and set them aside for the time, because our minde is nowe otherwise changed, but hereafter when occasion shall mooue vs to the like, wee will then talke of those matters againe.[58]

Within the next twelve years, Ivan revoked the English *gramota* at least four times, claiming that the tone of Elizabeth's replies to his military proposals contradicted the declarations of royal friendship conveyed by Elizabeth's

[57] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, pp. 378-82.
[58] Ibid., p. 408.

ambassadors. In 1576, for instance, following another English rejection of Ivan's military proposition, the Tsar revoked the 1572 *gramota* and exclaimed that Elizabeth was a 'straunger whoe is nothinge alyed vnto vs, [our] lande or crowne'.[59] The Company's commercial success was once more in jeopardy and its fortunes were reliant upon an intervention of another royal embassy. To prove that the English Crown was sincere in its expressions of friendship (and to persuade Ivan to restore the privileges), Elizabeth agreed to ratify some of Ivan's military proposals.[60] The treaty was never formally ratified, as the envoy instructed with delivering the draft to Ivan was struck by lightning before reaching Moscow. Interpreting the incident as a divine disapproval, Ivan set aside the matter of the alliance and restored the Company's privileges as a sign of goodwill.[61] Yet, within six years, the Company's privileges were once again revoked as Ivan resumed his pursuit of an alliance with Elizabeth. The Muscovite *gramota* was, therefore, not a precondition intended to protect a continuous supply of ordnance and metals. Used in the capacity of a royal 'gift' it was an active instrument of Muscovite diplomacy.

Moreover, as the commercial success of Company was reliant upon Ivan's favour, the English Crown was compelled to address Ivan's grievances and proposals. Within the mechanics of the gift-exchange, which obliged participants to give, receive and reciprocate, the Muscovite *gramota* compelled Elizabeth to respond with a similar, but not necessarily symmetrical, intangible gift. In the context of her relations with Ivan, the reciprocal gifts expected by the Muscovites were clearly defined by the Tsar. Unlike the exchange of material gifts, which in essence comprised of swapping lavish commodities, the exchange

[59] Ivan's speech to D. Sylvester, 29 November 1575, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, f. 22r.
[60] A draft of the treaty of alliance between Elizabeth and Ivan, TNA, SP 103/61, f. 1r-v.
[61] Unfortunately, there is a gap in the surviving records and royal letters from 1575 until 1581. The renewal of the *gramota* by Ivan in 1577 is suggested by the fact that no other envoys or ambassadors were dispatched to Moscow until 1583. There is a profound lack of any diplomatic material for this period, which might imply a period of relative stability in English mercantile activities.

of royal favours and grants was more complex. The reciprocation was complicated since Ivan's proposed exchange of mercantile privileges for a political alliance was incommensurable. The Muscovite *gramota* was of great importance to the Company, but Anglo-Muscovite trade was of little direct significance to the English Crown. In contrast, the repercussions of a potential Anglo-Muscovite alliance were more substantial for the Crown than the Company. In this context, Elizabeth was placed into a difficult position. On the one hand, the Company urged the Queen to consent (or at least to convey a favourable reception) to Ivan's political propositions. On the other, the Privy Council advised the Queen against direct involvement in peripheral Muscovite geopolitical affairs. As a clever diplomatic manoeuvre, Elizabeth created her own interpretations of Muscovite reciprocal expectations that both suited the political agenda of the English Crown and offered some political concessions to the Tsar as a means of keeping him content and protecting the privileges of the Company. In 1575, for example, Elizabeth explained to Ivan that the delay in the ratification of the proposed alliance was the result of the fact that the treaty 'must runne through the hands of so greate a number of [English] ministers as in no possibilitie they can be kept secret', as Ivan had desired.[62] In some instances, Elizabeth attributed her misunderstanding of Ivan's expectations to miscommunication.[63] By relying upon such strategies Elizabeth was able, for most of the time, to dissuade Ivan from interpreting the lack of progress in the negotiations for an Anglo-Muscovite alliance as evidence of Elizabeth's enmity or intent to nullify her friendship with the Tsar. Elizabeth was careful to assure Ivan that she wished to maintain the 'brotherly love' between the two monarchies.

Furthermore, while Elizabeth vetoed the matter of an Anglo-Muscovite treaty, she was prepared to accept certain Muscovite propositions that were deemed to

[62] Instructions to Daniel Sylvester, May 1575, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 349r-v; a copy of Sylvester's instructions can also be found in BL, Sloane MS 2442, f. 201r-v.
[63] Hakluyt, *PN*, 1, part 2, p. 404.

be innocuous to English foreign policy. Elizabeth agreed, for example, to Ivan's peculiar request for a political asylum in England, should the Tsar and his family be forced to flee Muscovy.[64] She further assured Ivan that, should he be forced to live in England, he would be permitted to retain his 'Christian religion in such sorte as it shall like him'.[65] The Queen did, however, refuse the reciprocal Muscovite offer to grant her political asylum in Moscow.[66] While Elizabeth was aware that Ivan's request for an asylum was not a Muscovite priority, it was the only political assistance England was willing to offer during the course of the Muscovite wars with Sweden and Poland, alongside the unofficial import of munitions and ordnance carried out by the Company.

Elizabeth's reciprocity demonstrates the incommensurability of non-tangible gifts within the Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy. After all, Muscovite aspirations to exchange mercantile privileges for a political alliance were unrealistic. It is possible that Ivan was aware of this, but persevered with the matter of the treaty as a means of procuring secondary benefits from the English Crown in recompense. To some extent, Ivan was able to acquire several desired political and military benefits from England without a ratified treaty. As mentioned previously, Elizabeth agreed to formalise Anglo-Muscovite interactions by conducting negotiations on an ambassadorial level, thereby recognising Ivan's status as a fellow sovereign. Elizabeth granted all of Ivan's requests for munitions, ordnance and dispatched engineers, physicians and apothecaries to Moscow.[67] Furthermore, in 1570 and 1576, the Crown had even prepared a draft treaty for an alliance between the two monarchies, though the treaty was never ratified.[68] By consenting to some of Ivan's propositions Elizabeth was able to

[64] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 18 May 1570, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 3, f. 1r.
[65] Ibid., f. 1r.
[66] Instructions to Sylvester, 1575, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 351v.
[67] E.A. Bond (ed.), *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1856), p. xlvi.
[68] A treaty of alliance between Queen Elizabeth and Ivan IV, dated May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, fos 345r-46v.

maintain a delicate balance of fulfilling her obligations to reciprocate, but without incurring unfavourable political consequences for the English Crown. Meanwhile, Ivan's *gramota* shows not so much his dependence upon England for the imports of ordnance and non-precious metals, but his ability to recognise the value of these privileges as a diplomatic bargaining tool.

Thus, the Muscovite *gramota* became a useful bargaining leverage of Ivan's diplomacy, as well as medium of his self-representation, one that portrayed the Tsar as a generous, magnificent and wealthy sovereign. As noted before, the *gramota* exempted English merchants from paying all manner of customs and taxes. Yet, the sum of money accumulated from the taxation of imports was an important source of Muscovite royal revenue, as Isaac Massa highlighted in 1603.[69] In the long term, the exemptions of the Muscovy Company resulted in a loss of a significant sum of revenue that the Muscovites were willing to overlook. Furthermore, the Company's requests for Ivan to forbid other European merchants from trading in Muscovy would have decreased the revenue the treasury received from the duties and taxes imposed upon the imports of foreign goods. The fact that the Company was able to enjoy a duty-free trade and a monopoly over European trade in Muscovy, albeit with some interruptions, for several decades suggests that the wealth of the Muscovite Tsar was so vast that he did not need to resort to the taxation of English merchants in order to fill his coffers. In truth, increasing complaints of Muscovite boyars and merchants against Ivan's great favour towards the English, alongside the general anti-English hostility of the Muscovite royal court upon Ivan's death, reveal a different story.[70] Yet, despite the unpopularity of Ivan's goodwill towards the English, the *gramoty* transformed the relatively geopolitically isolated Muscovite

[69] I. Massa, *Short History*, ed. and trans. G.E. Orchard (Toronto, 1982), p. 186.
[70] I. Lubimenko, 'The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth and the Russian Czars', *The American Historical Review*, 19 (1914), p. 536.

Tsar into a dispenser of lucrative mercantile privileges, ones which were highly valued and sought after by several major European states, including England.

3. The *gramota* as an intangible gift: The *gramoty* of Ivan's Successors.

Whereas Ivan used the *gramota* and its mercantile benefits as a means of consolidating his diplomatic relations with England, for the subsequent Godunov and Romanov Tsars, the *gramota* became a symbolic tool of enhancing their legitimacy and authority amidst a succession of dynastic changes. It alluded to previous commercial arrangements contrived by the Rurikids; a connection that accentuated Muscovite dynastic continuity. During the Time of Troubles, for example, successive claimants for the Muscovite throne sought to exchange the *gramota* for sovereign recognition of their legitimacy. To this effect, exclusive mercantile privileges were often granted to both English and Dutch merchants without extensive diplomatic mediation, as long as the English sovereign acknowledged the royal status of each claimant. The *gramota* (similarly to the sable furs mentioned in Chapter 5) was thus used to create a connection to the Rurikid Tsars. A confirmation of mercantile privileges granted by previous Muscovite Tsars allowed contenders to reinforce the sense of dynastic continuity and legitimacy of their claim. Meanwhile, the dependence of English commercial activities upon the royal favour of the Tsars ensured that the reception of the English Crown to the accession of each new Tsar was favourable.

The *gramota* granted by Ivan's successors continued to be presented at the conclusion of diplomatic mediation between the Tsars and the English ambassadors and was representative of Muscovite royal favour to the English merchants. The mercantile benefits granted by these *gramoty* were not as substantial as those previously granted by Ivan, and often required the English merchants to pay half of the customs duty. Other foreign merchants were no

longer excluded from trading in Muscovy, while the English requests for letters of safe passage into Persia and China were refused. In 1600, Boris Godunov assured the English ambassador that

> 'for [Elizabeth's] sake he would respect her Marchantes above the marchantes of all other nations that traded into his dominions. And what fauo[r] soeu[er] had byn showed them heretofore, his highnes promyseth for her Ma[jes]tes sake shalbe encreased many waies hereafter.[71]

The Tsar's *gramota*, however, did not introduce any new clauses or letters of safe passage. Likewise, in 1604 despite James' magnificent gift of a carriage, the English request for a letter of safe passage remained ignored by the Tsar.[72] The curtailment of English mercantile privileges by Ivan's successors shows a diplomatic context within which the Muscovites were no longer interested in participating in a relationship of negative reciprocity with the English Crown, whereby the English were granted their requests but those of the Muscovites remained unfulfilled. It reflected the changing nature of Muscovite foreign policy and the aspirations of Ivan's successors to increase diplomatic contact with other Western European sovereigns. In this regard, the *gramota* and its benefits remained an indispensable tool of Muscovite diplomacy. Promises of exclusive mercantile benefits were used to extract political and military concessions not only from the English Crown but also from other European sovereignties, whether it was a request for Dutch ordnance or negotiations for a potential marriage alliance with the Habsburgs. By modifying the exclusive mercantile privileges that the English had held since the reign of Ivan IV, Boris Godunov (and later the Romanovs) encouraged the new Stuart dynasty and its mercantile European rivals to compete for the acquisition of royal favour. Unlike Ivan, the majority of subsequent Muscovite Tsars did not seek to utilise the *gramota* as means of extracting English military and political concessions, which might explain the reduction in rights and benefits given to English merchants. It was not until the election of Michael Romanov as Tsar in 1613 that the discussion

[71] Report of Sir John Merrick, dated 1603, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, f. 40r.
[72] Boris Godunov to Sir Thomas Smith, TNA, SP 91/1, fos 209r-10v.

regarding an exchange of the *gramota* for reciprocal monetary and military benefits was once again brought to the forefront of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy.

4. The *gramota* as an intangible gift: The *gramoty* of Michael Romanov

In 1614 the *nakaz* (instructions) of the Muscovite ambassador Aleksei Ivanovich Ziuzin specified that if King James' advisors inquired of the newly-elected Michael Romanov's intentions regarding Anglo-Muscovite commercial relations, the ambassador was to assure the Privy Council that the Tsar would permit the English merchants to 'come to his states to the port and trade freely in all sorts of goods without tolls', as they had done previously.[73] Moreover, if James' response to Muscovite requests of 'money and gold, and goods, and all sorts of artillery', was favourable, as a reciprocal gesture of friendship, the Tsar would issue a new *gramota* which would 'allow English merchants and traders to go to trade by way of [Muscovy] to Persia and Bukhara and to other states to the east'.[74] The Tsar intended to use the *gramota* to urge James to aid the Muscovites not only out of the 'fraternal loving communication of the previous Great Sovereign Russian Tsars with … Queen Elizabeth', but for the potential mercantile benefits which would have derived from such an arrangement.[75] Michael's request for ordnance and non-precious metals echoed those of Ivan, as did the proposed exchange of mercantile privileges for reciprocal English political and monetary benefits.[76] It appears that in the aftermath of the Times of Trouble, Anglo-Muscovite relations were brought back to their starting point. Muscovy, faced with foreign aggression, was in need of military assistance, and the Muscovy Company hoped to use this situation to restore its previous

[73] Ambassadorial Book concerning Ziuzin's embassy of 1613, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 1, d. 3; see M. Jansson and N. Rogozhin (eds), *England the North: The Russian Embassy of 1613-1614* (Philadelphia, PA, 1994), pp. 71-123.
[74] Michael Romanov to Ziuzin, dated July 1614, in Ibid., p. 142.
[75] Ibid., p. 142.
[76] Ambassadorial Book concerning the arrival of an English messenger in 1601, RGADA, fond 35, opis'1, d. 35; Ambassadorial Book concerning Ziuzin's embassy, ibid., d. 48.

monopoly over the import of Western European commodities. Michael's Muscovy, though, was different from that of Ivan's. The cultivation of foreign relations with other European states by Feodor I and Boris Godunov meant that England was no longer the only European ally available to the Muscovites. Hence, the restoration of a 'special' relationship between the two states required more substantial reciprocal concessions than those that had been formerly offered by English sovereigns.

Chapter 3 briefly mentioned that the most important aspiration of the Muscovy Company was to continue the exploration for a north-eastern passage and expand its commercial markets beyond Muscovy. One of the objectives was to establish an overland trade route through Muscovy to Persia. An establishment of such a trade route would have allowed English merchants to bypass their chief competitors, the Ottomans, the Italians and the Spanish. A direct commercial alliance between England and Persia was unfavourable to the Muscovites, who had derived great profit from the Russo-Persian trade, alongside the Tsar's role as a commercial intermediary.[77] The grants of Muscovite letters of safe passage were, therefore, given only if the Muscovites were to derive great benefit from such an arrangement. As mentioned previously, Ivan had granted such privileges in an anticipation of a reciprocal gift in the form of a military treaty, but revoked the right once such gifts failed to materialise. In contrast, the early Romanov government understood the value of the trading routes for both English and Dutch merchants, and encouraged the two states to compete for Michael's favour. Both states competed to fulfil Muscovite requests, but only as far as the propositions agreed with their own political aims. One of such propositions was an exchange of mercantile privileges for a military alliance between James and Michael against Sweden, and after 1617, against Poland.

[77] J. Kotilaine, *Russia's Foreign Trade and Economic Expansion in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, 2005), p. 453.

In the seventeenth century, the Muscovite *gramota* attained an additional importance for the commercial survival of the Muscovy Company. By 1614, the Company faced a financial crisis, worsened by economic losses suffered during the Time of Troubles, its failure to compete with Dutch merchants, and most importantly, the inept management of its agents.[78] The acquisition of a monopoly over the trade route to Persia was of great importance, and the Company merchants petitioned James to respond favourably to Muscovite requests. In 1614, for instance, James proposed to act as a mediator in the Russo-Swedish peace talks as a means of bolstering the stability of the new Romanov government.[79] The English anticipated the successful mediation of the Company's principal agent Sir John Merrick with the King of Sweden to result in a new *gramota* from Michael that would include the letters of safe passage. Upon the conclusion of peace in 1617, the memorandum prepared by the Company informed the Muscovites that James (and the Company) expected 'noe denyall' to English requests for letters of safe passage to Persia, in gratitude for James' 'medyac[i]on' of 'those great weightie busineses between [Michael] and the Kinge of Sweden'.[80] The memorandum also implied that if Michael failed to satisfy English demands, the merchants would abandon the Volga route and bypass Muscovy by establishing a direct sea route to Persia.[81] The new route would exclude the Tsar from sharing in any profits of the Anglo-Persian trade. The Muscovite response, to some extent, was reminiscent of the clever caveats the English had been using in their negotiations with the Tsars. Although Michael expressed gratitude for English mediation and sent lavish gifts, the Tsar noted that he could not grant letters of safe passage to the English while his kingdom

[78] For instance, in 1621 consideration was given to the question of whether the Company 'would further prosecute that trade or finally give it over, and if they proposed still to continue it, whether with a joint stock, or as particular adventures': TNA, SP 14/124, f. 41r.
[79] Merrick to Ralph Winwood, dated 29 January 1615, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 7r.
[80] Merrick's Report, dated 28 March 1618, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 54r.
[81] Ibid., f. 54r

was at war with Poland. Instead, Michael promised to address the matter if the English Crown would supply a loan of 100,000 roubles and offer military support against the Poles.[82] The proposed exchange was unlikely to occur, since Michael's proposals clashed with James' intention to avoid entanglement in Muscovite geopolitical affairs, and the accrued debts of the Company (and the royal treasury) made the furnishing of the loan an impossible task. The English could only offer 'brotherly love and fri[e]ndship'.[83]

The Muscovite resolution to reject English requests for access to Eastern markets until James had fulfilled Michael's requests was interlinked with the economic and political context of the early Romanov dynasty. Michael's Muscovy was far less stable, both economically and politically, than that of Ivan, and the new Tsar was not in a position to grant benefits with little promise of obtaining reciprocal rewards, especially as Stuart foreign policy emulated that of Elizabeth.[84] A conclusion of an alliance was just as unlikely in 1621 as it was in 1570. The increasing prominence of Dutch trading activities in Muscovy lessened Muscovite dependence on English imports and engineers. The Tsar was able to seek alternative commercial arrangements, and the Dutch supplanted the English as the main importer of munitions and weapons into Moscow. This meant that a monopoly of European trade in Moscow granted by Michael's *gramota* was becoming an increasingly valuable tool of diplomacy. The possibility of the privileges to be granted to either the Dutch or English merchants encouraged both states to compete for the favour by outbidding each other with various offers of assistance to the Tsar. Both, for instance, acted as mediators at the Russo-Swedish peace talks of 1614-17.[85] The Dutch presence altered the status of the Muscovy Company within the Muscovite foreign policy, since England was

[82] Proposals of Muscovite Ambassadors, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 42r-v.
[83] Last Proposal of Muscovy Ambassador, dated 15 April 1618,TNA, SP 91/2, f. 60r.
[84] P. Dukes, G.P. Herd and J. Kotilaine (eds), *Stuarts and Romanovs: The Rise and Fall of a Special Relationship* (Dundee, 2009), pp. 25-53.
[85] Merrick to Ralph Winwood, TNA, SP 91/2, fos 1-2v.

no longer the only Western European state maintaining a permanent diplomatic relationship with the Muscovite Tsar. Retaining the friendship of the English monarchs was no longer as vital as it had been in the sixteenth century. Hence, whilst the renewal of the privileges held by the Company emphasised the continuity of amicable relations between the two monarchies, additional benefits and rights were only to be exchanged for direct assistance rather than a promise of future favours or the prestige of royal English friendship.

Furthermore, Michael's *gramoty* of mercantile privileges, granted and confirmed in 1614, 1617, 1621 and 1628, obliged the Stuart Crown to reciprocate. James and Charles, like Elizabeth before them, persisted with their own interpretation of anticipated Muscovite reciprocity. Naturally, Michael's proposed Anglo-Muscovite military alliance against Sweden and Poland was declined. James agreed 'to entertaine all brotherly love and friendship in as firme and strict amitie as hath heretofore by former treatie byn betwene their Ma[jes]ties progenitors, their kingdoms and dominions', alongside an ambiguous promise that England was willing to consider 'anie further overture' of strengthening the relations between the two monarchies.[86] In response, Michael's letter expressed the love he bore for his 'brother, James, the King of England', but the Tsar's affection did not warrant him to share the Persian trade with the English merchants. Similarly to a rejected material gift, refusal of Muscovite requests was unlikely to achieve a favourable diplomatic conclusion.

While the *gramota* aided the Muscovite Tsars in directing the course of diplomatic relations with England, the lucrative privileges granted by the Tsars' *gramoty* attracted the attention of Dutch, Swedish and German merchants who likewise wished to capitalise upon the mercantile wealth of the Muscovite lands.

[86] James I to Mikhail Romanov, dated June 1620, TNA, SP 91/2, f. 69; James to Patriarch Filaret, dated 24 June 1620, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 28, f. 1r.

In turn, this facilitated an increased diplomatic contact between the Muscovite Tsars and the rulers and governments of Western European states.[87] Through direct encounters with European diplomatic representatives, the seemingly alien Muscovite Tsar was gradually integrated into the European codes of diplomatic communication and political affairs. It could even be argued that without the *gramota* as a diplomatic bargaining tool, the Muscovites would have found it much harder to attract and retain the interest of Western European states. Notably, the Muscovite *gramota* bears a resemblance to the Ottoman *ahdnâmes* (capitulations), which the Ottomans granted to European merchants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The capitulations exempted European merchants from local taxation, prosecution and conscriptions, whilst also effectively creating an official agreement between the Sultan and his European counterparts, notably the Kings of France, England and the Venetian and Dutch Republics.[88] The foundation and continuity of English diplomatic relations with the Ottomans in the 1580s were similar to those of Anglo-Muscovite relations; both were driven by English mercantile interests and focused on the exchange of mercantile privileges for military and political benefits.[89] Yet, the Muscovite *gramota* was distinguished by the fact that it was presented as a gift rather than an official trading agreement. The contents of the document did not specify that the privilege was given in an exchange for specific reciprocal benefits; on the contrary, it was described as a gift given to the English out of the generosity of the Tsar. Hence, the Muscovite propositions regarding an exchange of mercantile benefits for military and political concessions were restricted to oral diplomatic mediations and royal letters. In this way, there was no official document that set out the precise conditions the English Crown was required to fulfil in order to

[87] M. Poe, 'A Distant World: Russian Relations with Europe Before Peter the Great' in C.H. Whittaker, E. Kasinec and R.H. Davis (eds), *Russia Engages the World, 1453-1825* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 2-23.
[88] H. Inalcik and D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire. 1300-1600* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 188-190.
[89] S. Skillier, *William Harbourne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582* (London, 1997); D. Vlami, *Trading with the Ottomans: The Levant Company in the Middle East* (London, 2015), pp. 13-30; 87-95.

receive the *gramota*. Although reciprocity was expected, its exact nature was often open to English interpretation. Generally, in spite of various setbacks experienced by the Muscovy Company, the privileges granted by the royal Muscovite *gramota* favoured the English merchants above other foreign, but also native Muscovite, merchants.

As reciprocal gifts of the Muscovite Tsars, the *gramota* was intended to fulfil several significant functions. Firstly, the grant acknowledged friendship between the English and the Muscovite sovereigns. Secondly, the generosity of the grant and the exceptional rights and exemptions granted by the *gramota* emphasised the privileged position of the English within Muscovite foreign policy, which was intended to encourage English reciprocation. Thirdly, in the broader context of Muscovite aspirations to achieve equality within the brotherhood of Western rulers, the grants bolstered an image of the Tsar as a dispenser of mercantile wealth. Lastly, the *gramota*, just as tangible material gifts, was not given without an expectation of receiving benefits of an equal value from the English as a reciprocal gesture. Ultimately, the grants obliged the English Crown to respond, yet the interpretation of what was deemed as a suitable reciprocation was dependent on the interpretation of individual English sovereigns. The examination of the Muscovite *gramota* has demonstrated that it was the Tsar, rather than the English monarch or the Muscovy Company, that was the driving force in directing the course of Anglo-Muscovite relations through his power to grant or revoke his gifts of mercantile privileges. The dependence of English commercial success upon the whim of the Tsar forced the English Crown to address Muscovite concerns, engage in diplomatic mediations and in some instances to grant concessions that were unfavourable to English foreign policy.

The examination of the Muscovite *gramota* offers an essential reminder that premodern diplomatic gift-giving was not restricted solely to an exchange of

material objects, but could encompass favours, exceptions, exemptions, exchange of news, promises and expressions of friendship. Within the diplomatic setting of Anglo-Muscovite relations, whereby promises and favours were closely interlinked with a monarch's reputation and honour, failure to reciprocate (or respond with an unsuitable equivalent) could lead to diplomatic repercussions. Gifts, therefore, represented not only a monarch's material wealth but also his honour, generosity and magnificence, all vital attributes of good kingship.

Fig. 5. The *gramota* of Michael Romanov to *d'yak* Kolachev, dated May 1619
(http://portal.rusarchives.ru/smuta/09-kostromskoi-krai.shtml [accessed 27 December 2017])

Fig. 6. The *gramota* of Michael Romanov to *kniaz'* Khovanskii, dated July 1621
(RGADA, fond 170, opis' 1, d. 136)

Chapter 7

Materiality and Diplomacy: English and Muscovite Royal Letters

Focusing on a *de visu* examination of Anglo-Muscovite royal letters, this chapter continues the discussion concerning the nature and role of non-tangible gifts exchanged within the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic relationship.[1] It specifically considers the ways in which the function and purpose of royal letters overlapped with that of royal gifts. Both were used to affirm friendship and, on occasion, dissatisfaction with either could be used as an excuse to break diplomatic relations. Similarly to gifts, letters provided an opportune medium for royal self-representation, within which the image of the monarch and Crown could be moulded to suit individual political aspirations. In other words, the appearance and content of a royal letter were intrinsically linked to the diplomatic aims of its sender. An important difference, however, was that, while the message conveyed by material gifts was open to interpretation, the letter and its textual content were more assertive in its intentions. The exchange of letters itself followed comparable rules to those of gift-giving, involving unspoken expectations of reciprocity and courtesy. Within the Anglo-Muscovite relationship, royal letters authorised grants of favours and promises, conveyed affirmation of friendship and amity, and facilitated an exchange of news and political information. This was given willingly, was reciprocated – if not necessarily symmetrically – and created emotional, political and social bonds between the English sovereign and the Muscovite Tsar, all of which conformed to the anthropological definition of a 'gift'.

[1] The chapter applies a *de visu* examination to the surviving original English and Muscovite royal letters preserved at British and Russian Archives. This includes seventeen Elizabethan and thirteen Jacobean letters preserved at RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2. Photographic copies of English letters can be found in TNA, 22/60, fos 1-32. A fraction of original Muscovite letters is preserved in TNA, SP 102/49, fos 1-13. Contemporary translations and drafts of both Muscovite and English letters can be found in the archival collections of The National Archive, London; the British Library; the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; the Cambridge University Library and the aforementioned fond 35, opis' 1 at RGADA in Moscow.

While Chapter 6 looked at the ways in which the Muscovite *gramota* (a charter of mercantile privileges that was conveyed in the form of a royal letter) was assimilated into the gift-exchange cycle, this chapter explores whether the English royal letters were given a similar function. The potential use of English royal letters as intangible gifts paves the way to considering if such practice was common to both states or if it was a Muscovite singularity. It further poses broader inquiries about the role of letters in premodern diplomacy and encourages scholars to assess whether these documents – and their usage – were more complex than previously described by academic research.[2] Although letters were certainly used to affirm friendships and legitimise the actions of ambassadors, clearly this did not restrict a royal letter from having an additional purpose. The Muscovites regarded diplomatic correspondence as a literal reciprocation of words and action.[3] The letters were essential components in the formation of the *starina* (literally, 'ancient ways'), a Muscovite system of diplomatic precedents and norms that was sanctioned by usage and tradition. In instances of disagreement, the Muscovite officials habitually referred to previous diplomatic correspondence for precedence.[4]

Prior to the analysis of English royal letters as intangible diplomatic gifts, this chapter discusses the physical attributes of Anglo-Muscovite letters and the ways in which they were used to strengthen roylal English declarations of friendship. Letters, like gifts, bestowed respect upon the recipient, whilst offering an opportune medium for royal self-representation. The physical features of royal letters, including variations in size, seals, ink colours, ribbons, endorsements and decorative motifs, were all imbued with social signs. Contrary to the

[2] C.H. Carter, *The Western European Powers, 1500-1700* (London, 1971); J. Mueller and L.S. Marcus (eds), *Elizabeth I: Autograph Compositions and Foreign Language Originals* (London, 2003); C.M. Bajetta, G. Coatalen and J. Gibson (eds), *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric and Politics* (Basingstoke, 2014).
[3] R. Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York, 2012), p. 143.
[4] J. Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 82-90.

assumption that the decorative elements of royal letters were superfluous and had no specific political purpose, this chapter shows that the decorative motifs of English and Muscovite royal letters, especially those of James I, often reinforced the message expressed within the letter. In a letter to Patriarch Filaret in 1620, the visual elements of the decoration, including the image of two clasped hands, were poignant references to James' intentions to establish a friendship with Filaret, who had been recently released from Polish captivity and assumed the status of a *de facto* ruler of Muscovy.[5] Similarly, the dynastic imagery and symbols were used to strengthen a letter's royal authority and legitimacy, especially if it was delivered by a messenger rather than an embassy. Several English and Muscovite royal letters provide excellent examples of this practice.[6] Overall, the physical attributes of royal letters offer useful insights into the state of relations between Elizabeth, James and their royal Muscovite correspondents. The gradual replacement of Latin with English as the chosen language of Elizabeth's letters to Tsar Boris Godunov, for instance, could suggest a transition into a more familiar mode of communication between the two royal courts.[7] Alternatively, the development could have been a practical solution intended to speed up the process of translating English letters into Russian.[8] This does not mean that the English and Muscovite royal courts operated within a universal system of mutually accepted epistolary conventions, and there were frequent instances of contention over a letter's format, the mode of its address and the ceremony of its presentation. For example, Muscovite diplomatic protocol prescribed that a foreign ambassador should never give a royal letter directly into the hands of the Tsar. This requirement frequently irked English ambassadors, who publicly disobeyed the rules to the annoyance of Muscovite

[5] James to Patriarch Filaret, dated 24 June 1620, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 28, f. 1r.
[6] James to Michael Romanov, dated 20 May 1623, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 33, f. 1r.
[7] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated May 1598, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 15, f. 1r-v.
[8] The majority of translations of English and Muscovite royal letters were undertaken by the agents of the Muscovy Company, including Daniel Sylvester, Jerome Horsey, Francis Chery and John Merrick: I. Zagorodnaia, 'English Diplomats at the Court of the Tsars', in O. Dmitrieva and N. Abramova (eds), *Britannia & Muscovy: English Silver at the Court of the Tsars* (London, 2006), p. 179.

officials.[9] Yet, the disagreements over epistolary protocol were not always a sign of cultural incommensurability. Instead, they suggest that both courts were aware of the significance given to every action performed by the ambassadors. For the Muscovites, deviations from the prescribed norm were predominantly perceived as deliberate expressions of dishonour upon the reputation of the Tsar. The decorative and physical elements of royal letters were thus not superfluous, but rather an essential component of the early modern epistolary protocol. Their study, therefore, is crucial for understanding the complexities and intricacies of Anglo-Muscovite relations.

1. Royal Letters and Affirmation of Friendship

Royal letters have long played an important role in the facilitation of diplomacy and the spread of news and political information. Rulers regularly exchanged letters with each other to negotiate treaties and mercantile privileges, make requests, declare war and reaffirm bonds of kinship and amity. Nevertheless, royal letters did more than authorise diplomatic action abroad. The way in which a letter was structured, the mode of its address and the use of different seals could make important statements about the relationship between English and Muscovite monarchs.[10] Aspects such as the size of the seal, the colour of the ink, the quality of the parchment, and even the placement of the royal signature were all social signs that were intended to be recognised by contemporaries, though in the cross-cultural setting of Anglo-Muscovite interaction these signs had the potential to be misunderstood and create instances of diplomatic tension. Thus, while the expeditions of English merchant adventurers mapped the coasts and ports of the 'discovered' Muscovite lands, royal letters chart the

[9] In 1583, the English ambassador Sir Jerome Bowes refused to hand over Elizabeth's letter of credence to the Muscovite officials, complaining that the Muscovites esteemed him 'as yt seemed, though her Ma[jes]tie's Ambassador, unworthy to deliver them myself': BL, Additional MS 3581, f. 310r.

[10] Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, p. 18.

significant, but still under-studied, facet of Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic interaction.

The majority of royal Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic correspondence was formulaic and concerned with mundane matters, whether the appointment of ambassadors or the negotiations of trading privileges. Royal letters of credence were the most common type of diplomatic correspondence and affirmed the ambassador's credentials. As noted by the celebrated poet John Donne,

> After those reverend papers, whose soul is
> Our good and great Kings lov'd hand and fear'd name,
> By which to you he derives much of his,
> And (how he may) makes you almost the same (1-4).[11]

Bolstered by the authority of the royal letter, Donne's ambassador was metaphysically transformed into his master. Royal letters, however, did more than authorise diplomatic action abroad. As a system of direct communication across geographical boundaries, they were a means of exchanging news and political information, expressing salutations, conveying personal messages and transmitting the official business of the sovereign. The letters performed several functions, but on a fundamental level, they helped to bridge the cultural and ideological divides by offering a ritualised method of personalising abstract relationships between rulers. Ivan IV thus 'considered the connection with England not in the least as an international affair, but as a matter personally concerning Elizabeth and himself'.[12] Muscovite royal letters were intended to be simultaneously public and private, personal and governmental.

The essential function of the exchange of royal letters was to establish, maintain and personalise the abstract friendship between the English sovereign and the Muscovite Tsar, but the expectations of each court as to what this friendship

[11] J. Donne, 'To Sir H.W. at his going Ambassador to Venice (1633)', in H.J. Grierson (ed.), *The Poems of John Donne*, 1 (Oxford, 1912), pp. 214-5.
[12] Y. Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years* (St. Petersburg, 1875), p. xxiv.

entailed were starkly different. The divergence of interest is evident when comparing the format, tone, content and decoration of Anglo-Muscovite letters. The rhetoric of Elizabethan and Jacobean letters incorporates expressions of friendship, sisterly/brotherly love, gratitude, and praises the generosity of the Muscovite Tsar. In contrast, the Muscovite letters lack courtly prose, are often frank in their expressions and intentions, and are entirely concerned with diplomatic affairs. The letters exchanged between Elizabeth and Ivan IV offer an excellent example of such epistolary contrast.

The earliest example of an Elizabethan letter sent to Ivan (Fig. 7), preserved at RGADA, begins with a recollection of the commencement of Anglo-Muscovite friendship in 1553. Within the letter, Elizabeth acknowledges the many favours and hospitality Ivan had since shown to her merchants and envoys.[13] She expresses her gratitude to Ivan for his 'solum singulari humanitate' (singular kindness) and 'incredibili etiam bonitate' (incredible goodness) and requests the Tsar to grant a new letter of safe passage to the Company's agent, Anthony Jenkinson, which would enable the latter to travel into Persia for the purpose of establishing an Anglo-Persian trade route. The letter concludes with Elizabeth's assurance that, based on the previous generosity shown by Ivan towards the English, she is certain that Ivan would fulfil her request. The letter is dated as 'anno mundi 5523 [,] Domini ac Dei nostri Iesu Christi 1561[,] regnorum vero nostrorum tertio'.[14] The inclusion of 'anno mundi' is significant, as it acknowledged the Muscovite custom of dating the year from the creation of the world.[15] The placement of 'anno mundi' before the Gregorian and regnal years can further be interpreted as a sign of deference. The inclusion of 'anno mundi' could have been incorporated to strengthen the appearance of a close bond of

[13] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 25 April 1561, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 2.
[14] Ibid., d. 2.
[15] P. Kuzenkov, 'How Old is The World? The Byzantine Era and its Rivals', in E. Jeffreys, F.K. Haarer and J. Gilliland (eds), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London, 2006), pp. 21-6.

friendship between the two monarchs, considering that most of the English diplomatic letters were only dated with 'anno domini' and the regnal year. Despite the intention, the English date of '5523' did not correspond to the Muscovite dating, which for the year 1561 would have been 7069. Similarly, Elizabeth's letter of June 1564, dated the year as 5526 rather than 7072.[16] Ivan's letters show no comparable degree of epistolary flexibility or acknowledgement of the English, or essentially Western European, dating system, though they do include three different regnal years, each representing his reign over Muscovy, Astrakhan and Kazan.[17] The divergence of dating reveals profound cultural differences between the two states, though English attempts to incorporate the 'anno mundi' into their letters, despite the mistake in dating, can be seen as an attempt to bridge the cultural divide. Interestingly, the English version of 'anno mundi' was never corrected to correspond to that of the Muscovites, and by 1570 it no longer appeared in Elizabeth's letters to Ivan. The inclusion of the 'anno mundi' in Elizabeth's earliest letters to Ivan was likely a reflection of English experimentation with different epistolary conventions to see which one would prove most effective.

The rhetoric and purpose of Muscovite royal letters were rather different from that of the English. Ivan's letters were written on parchment and in Russian, the first line was accentuated in gold ink.[18] They began with an almost identical preamble that invocated the Trinity and offered a prayer of thanksgiving, which was followed by the Tsar's title that enumerated separately all of the provinces and cities under his control.[19] After a brief address to 'our sister Elizabeth, Queen of England, France, and Ireland', the letter summarised the contents of

[16] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 23 June 1564: Tolstoi, *First Forty Years*, pp. 22-4.
[17] One of Ivan's letters is dated as 'from the beginning of the world 7077, in the month of April 1, Induction 12, the year of our lordship and reign 35, and of our empire of Russia 23, Kazan 17, Astrakhan 15': ibid., pp. 66-7.
[18] BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, f. 2r.
[19] The title could list up to twenty-seven cities and regions: Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 24 October 1570, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 1r-v.

the preceding English letter and proceeded to inform Elizabeth about the political and mercantile matters that Ivan wished to address. Inna Lubimenko described the contents of Ivan's letters as lacking all order, heavy in style and obstructed by repetitions so that 'even a Russian cannot easily come to a clear understanding of the document'.[20] Whilst that is true, a closer examination reveals that while Ivan's letters lacked the courteous tone of Elizabeth's missives (Lubimenko called Ivan's prose 'rude' and 'medieval'), the semantic aspects of the documents emphasise that for Ivan correspondence was predominantly a political tool of diplomacy rather than a scholarly exercise in prose. Unlike Elizabeth, Ivan never sent holograph letters or those written in his own hand, which encouraged scholars to question the extent of his participation in the production of Muscovite diplomatic letters.[21] While the majority of Ivan's diplomatic letters adhered to the rigid epistolary conventions set by the *Posol'skii Prikaz*, as was common, in several of his letters to Elizabeth individual passages can be identified as being characteristic of Ivan's style of expression. Riccardo Pikkio, writing about Ivan's epistolary style, noted that the Tsar's language was one of practicality, and each of his lines bore the imprint of a thought that was entirely occupied with state affairs.[22] In his letters, the Tsar propagated his views, justified his politics and engaged in disputes and debates with his correspondents.[23] The contents of Ivan's letters sent to England were, therefore, primarily concerned with advancing his political ambitions. In a letter of 1567, Ivan proposed to Elizabeth to 'bee and Ioyne with him (as one) vpon the Pole', while in 1571 he reminded Elizabeth that the favour he had shown to the English

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[20] I.I. Lubimenko, 'The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth with the Russian Czars', *The American Historical Review* 19 (1914), p. 528.

[21] On the question of Ivan's participation in the writing of diplomatic letters, see I.N. Zhanov, *Sochineniia Tsaria Ivana Vasil'evicha* (St. Petersburg, 1904), p. 86; D.S. Likhachev, 'Stil' Proizvedenii Groznogo i Stil' Proizvedenii Kurbskogo' in D.S. Likhachev (ed.), *Perepiska Ivana Groznogo s Andreem Kurbskim* (Moscow, 1993), p. 184; L.A. Iuzefovich, *Put' Posla* (St. Petersburg, 2007), p. 263.

[22] R. Pikkio, *Drevnerusskaia Literatura*, trans. E.Y. Saprykina (Moscow, 1968), p. 237.

[23] D.S. Likhachev, 'Na Puti k Novomu Literaturnomu Soznaniiu Sochineniia Tsaria Ivana Groznogo i Kniazia Andreia Kurbskogo', in D.S. Likhachev, L.A. Dmitrieva, A.A. Alekseeva and N.V. Ponyrko (eds), *Biblioteka Literatury Drevnei Rusi*, 11 (St. Petersburg, 2001), p. 8.

merchants was 'so large as the like was neuer giuen to our [Muscovite] merchants'.[24]

Most of Ivan's letters are reminiscent of a memorandum that lists each issue, concern or question that the Tsar wished to address. In a letter dated August 1571, Ivan discussed the reception of his ambassador in London, the matter of English interlopers in Moscow, Elizabeth's refusal to comply with his epistolary instructions, the silence over the matter of an alliance and the arrival of Jenkinson as Elizabeth's ambassador.[25] In another letter dated August 1574, Ivan likewise addressed a variety of issues relating to commercial and political matters.[26] In comparison to Elizabeth's, Ivan's letters were very long and direct in their expression. On occasion, the placid, official tone of the Muscovite letters could be replaced with vehement fury, as the Tsar berated Elizabeth for her silence or disregard of his proposals. In a letter dated October 1570, the Tsar scolded Elizabeth and questioned her governance by noting that,

> wee had thought yt yow had beene ruler over yo[ur] lande and had sought honor to yo[ur] self and proffitt to yo[ur] countrie, and therefore wee did pretend these wightie affaires betweene yow and us. But now wee p[er]ceive yt there be other men that doe rule, and not men but bowers and marchauntes the w[hi]ch seeke not the wealth and honor of our maiesties, but they seeke there owne proffitt of marchaundize. And yow flowe in yo[ur] maydenlie estate like a maide [.][27]

Similarly, in another letter Ivan admonished Elizabeth for the behaviour of her merchants, stating that 'in future you [Elizabeth] ought to send us in our empire good men, who will do nothing but trade and be trusty, without dealing in any evil practice or in any way siding with our enemies and traitors'.[28] He advised Elizabeth to 'ponder upon that subject [the matter of the treaty] and do that

[24] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated November 1567, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 332r-v. The contents of Ivan's letter of 1571 are summarised in Elizabeth's corresponding letter: Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 24 January 1571, CUL, Baker MS 32, fos 29r-30r.
[25] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated August 1571, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. viii, fos 19v-21v.
[26] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 20 August 1574, in Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, pp. 148-58.
[27] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 24 October 1570, TNA, SP 102/49, f.1r.
[28] Tolstoi, *First Forty Years*, p. 157.

business', if she wished 'for more amity and friendship from [Ivan]'.[29] The contrast in the rhetoric of English and Muscovite letters should not be simply attributed to a perceived difference in the degree of epistolary conventions between the two rulers. The fundamental purpose of Ivan's letters was to extract political concessions rather than to express gratitude or cultivate Anglo-Muscovite trade. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's often innocuous and vague replies were intended to circumvent matters relating to Muscovite geopolitical ambitions. The divergence of political interests predetermined an inevitable clash of words, especially considering Ivan's personality, conception of governance and personal involvement in the matters of foreign policy. Yet, despite the occasional slur on Elizabeth's mode of governance, most of Ivan's letters echoed those of Elizabeth in expressing the desire to maintain friendship and 'brotherly/sisterly' love between the two royal courts.[30]

The affirmation of Anglo-Muscovite friendship was not limited to the rhetoric of the letters. Physical attributes, such as the layout of a letter and whether it was a holograph or an autograph can reveal valuable insights into the state of relations between the two correspondents. A letter that was written in the sovereign's own hand (a holograph) was a more tangible sign of intimacy and friendship than an autograph letter, written by a secretary and signed by a monarch, though Muscovite letters were never signed by the Tsar. A holograph was likewise considered more valuable diplomatically as it demonstrated the time and honour a monarch was willing to dedicate to another. Rayne Allinson notes that such letters were prized as a metaphysical manifestation of the author's real presence.[31] Similarly, James Daybell points out that in a political system that operated upon personal relationships, 'private' letters or holographs

[29] Ibid., p. 158.
[30] On the Muscovite understanding of the concept of diplomatic 'brotherhood', see Iuzefovich, *Put' Posla*, pp. 14-23.
[31] Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters*, pp. 17-35.

'lent a degree of confidentiality' to exchanges between correspondents; which was central to cultivating social and political bonds.[32] All of the Muscovite royal letters were produced by the Ambassadorial Chancellery, since epistolary conventions forbade the Tsars to write with their own hand.[33] Letter-writing was considered to be a form of manual labour that was to be delegated to the *d'yaks* (clerks) and scribes of the *Posol'skii Prikaz*. In Western Europe, changing attitudes to letter-writing meant that an ability to write was regarded as a sign of advanced education and cultural sophistication, though holograph letters continued to be exchanged only between close kin. One example of such letter is that sent by Elizabeth to Ivan in 1570 (Fig. 8).[34] The letter was intended to be a 'secret' or private letter sent in accordance with Ivan's requests.

In contrast to the lavishly decorated official letters sent by Elizabeth to Ivan, the 'secret' letter of 1570 lacks vibrant ornamentation. The letter is written in Elizabeth's formal italic hand with the first line embossed in gold. It is also written in English rather than Latin. The absence of decoration reflects the letter's function as a private communication between the Queen and the Tsar, whereby there was no need for an outward appearance of English royal magnificence. The holograph letter was one of a pair of letters, one 'public' and one 'secret', sent by Elizabeth to Ivan as a reply to the formal and private messages delivered by the Muscovite ambassador.[35] Initially, the Privy Council rejected the idea of sending a written reply to Ivan 'secret' request for a political asylum in England should the Rurikids be forced to flee Muscovy.[36] The practice was unprecedented in English diplomacy since such private matters were often delegated to the oral messages delivered by the ambassadors. Ivan's

[32] J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 108.
[33] A. Possevino, *The Moscovia of Antonio Possevino, S.J.,* trans. and ed. by H.F. Graham (Pittsburgh, PA, 1977), p. 12.
[34] Elizabeth's holograph letter to Ivan, dated 18 May 1570, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 3, f. 1r.
[35] BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 335r.
[36] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 3, f. 1r.

ambassador, however, was persistent in obtaining a written reply, noting that Elizabeth's response would only be deemed genuine if the Queen conformed to Ivan's request. As a means of compromise, the Crown agreed to the request, but ignored the ambassador's insistence that the 'secret' letter should be written 'word for word as that l[ett]re w[hi]chi [Ivan] sent'.[37] Contrary to Ivan's expectations, Elizabeth 'sett her hand' to the letter in the presence of her 'nobles and councellors', rather than the Muscovite ambassador, and it is unclear if the Russian translations were 'donne in the sight of [Ivan's] Embassador'.[38] The Queen likewise declined to take an oath or kiss the cross and attached her 'privie' rather than the Great Seal.[39] Notably, the Muscovites did not request Elizabeth's 'secret' letter to be a holograph. It is likely that the Crown expected the Muscovites to perceive the holograph letter as a sign of Elizabeth's esteem for the Tsar, through the act of writing the letter by her own hand. Unfortunately, the Muscovites did not comprehend the significance of such letters, as the practice did not exist and had no special meaning within the Muscovite epistolary tradition. As revealed by Ivan's responding letter, for the Muscovite court epistolary ritual and ceremony were much more important than personal monarchical input into letter-production.[40] Ivan's letter gives no indication that the Muscovites understood the significance of Elizabeth's holograph. On the contrary, the Tsar admonished Elizabeth for not sealing her letters with a verbal oath and the kissing of the cross in the presence of his ambassador as was requested. Ivan was likewise unsatisfied with Elizabeth's vague reply to his proposed alliance and refused to renew the mercantile privileges of the English merchants. The lack of success generated by the dispatch of the holograph letter might explain why no other Elizabethan or Stuart holograph letter has been identified to date amongst the surviving English

[37] Savin to Cecil, dated 6 May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 335r.
[38] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 18 May 1570, BL, Cotton MS Nero, B. xi, f. 341r-v.
[39] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated August 1571, BL, Cotton MS, Nero B. viii, f. 21r.
[40] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated August 1571, BL, Cotton MS, Nero B. viii, f. 21r.

royal letters sent to the Tsars. Evidently, the Muscovites accorded no distinction to either holograph or autograph letters.

An additional element of royal letters that was often a point of contention between the English Crown and the Muscovite Tsar was the royal seal. In England and Muscovy, all of the royal letters were closed with seals to ensure that they would not be read before they reached the intended recipient, and to identify the sender. Elizabeth's letters were often sealed with one of the following seals: the Great Seal, the Privy Seal and the Signet.[41] The Great Seal was used by the Chancellery to show that a document (such as letters patent, charters and royal grants) was produced in the Queen's name. It depicted Elizabeth in resplendent dress flanked by the royal arms and Tudor roses, alongside the Queen's motto.[42] Whilst the Great Seal was the most visually impressive, its size made transportation cumbersome, especially over long distances.[43] The Queen had her own personal or 'privy' seal for documents (including the Queen's diplomatic correspondence) that she approved herself. These documents were often of a more personal nature than those authorised by the Great Seal. A letter sealed with a royal Signet was the mark of the most intimate friendship since the Signet was kept on the royal person, often in the form of a signet ring. The interchange of the seals enabled Elizabeth to mould her letters to suit the expectations of her recipients or to make a particular statement about a diplomatic relationship. Within the Anglo-Muscovite context, royal English letters reveal that in similarity to the addition of the 'anno mundi', the English Crown was experimenting with epistolary conventions to identify that which would prove most effective. The seals attached to Elizabeth's earliest letters varied from letter to letter but were often sealed with the privy seal. This

[41] A. Wyon, *Great Seals of England* (London, 1887), pp. 76-8.
[42] The Great Seal of Elizabeth I, 1586-1603, TNA, SC 13/N3.
[43] Elizabeth's Great Seal of 1584 measured 6 inches or 15 cm in diameter: http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/exhibitions/royal-visit-1564/elizabeth-queen.html#pivot [accessed 1 March 2017].

explains Ivan's complaint of 1569 that Elizabeth's letters 'hath had a contrarie seale w[hi]ch is no princelie fashion', since 'everie Prince hath in his realme one prop[er] seale'.[44] In other words, Ivan expected Elizabeth to seal her letters with the Great Seal as was the custom in Muscovy. The Muscovites, incidentally, did not have an equivalent to a privy seal.

Within the Anglo-Muscovite relationship, the interchange of royal English seals continued into the 1590s. In a letter of January 1592 Elizabeth apologised to Feodor I for the 'adding of our greatest seale or signet of armes to the letters which we sent to so great a prince as your majesty is'.[45] The letter was an answer to Feodor's previous complaint about Elizabeth's preference for the use of the smaller seals. As evident with Elizabeth's reply, in this instance, Elizabethan described her Signet as her 'greatest seale', even though it was the smallest of the three seals in size.[46] The Queen noted that when

> we write to all our allies, kinsemen, and friends, kings and princes, we haue in vse two seuerall seales; both which we esteeme alike honourable, being our princely seales. And as the volume of our letters falleth out to be great or small, so accordingly is our greater or lesser seale annexed to the sayd letters, without esteeming either of them more or less honorable than the other.[47]

Undoubtedly, Elizabeth's choice of seals was intended to emphasise intimacy rather than magnificence. Thus, the smallest seal represented the greatest degree of intimacy.

Unfortunately, Muscovite epistolary conventions regarding the use of seals were more rigid than those of Elizabeth, which explains Feodor's disapproval. According to the Rurikids, all great princes, including the Ottoman Sultan and the Holy Roman Emperor, 'doe sealle their letters with theire greate seale of

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[44] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 24/28 October 1570, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 1r.
[45] Elizabeth to Feodor, dated 14 January 1592: Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, p. 408.
[46] Elizabeth's privy seal measured 4 inches or 9 cm in diameter, the size of a Signet was even smaller: http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/exhibitions/royal-visit-1564/elizabeth-queen.html#pivot [accessed 1 March 2017].
[47] Tolstoi, *The First Forty Years*, p. 411.

ma[jes]tie', as an expression of brotherly love and friendship.[48] The Muscovite Tsar never signed his letters. Instead, the legitimacy and authority of the letter were validated by the attachment of the Great Seal.[49] The Muscovites, in common with Ottoman rulers, equated the size of the seal with the degree of friendship and honour. Thus, the Great Seal was perceived as the highest mark of honour accorded to the Tsar by the sender. The Muscovite emphasis on the use of the Great Seal was likely connected to their aspiration to acquire recognition of the equality of their status in comparison to that of their Western European neighbours. As the Great Seal was the embodiment of a monarch's 'seal of approval', it denoted that a letter sealed with this particular seal contained the monarch's wishes and commands. Evidently, the Muscovites were unfamiliar with the intricacies of the English epistolary practice, and were prone to regard both the privy seal and the Signet as a literal representation of a lesser degree of honour. Notably, the contentions over the use of various seals by the English monarchs were not as prominent in the reigns of Boris Godunov and Michael Romanov as it had been under Ivan and Feodor, even though the English royal letters continued to be sealed with the privy seal. Although one might expect the presence of a more vehement Muscovite argument against the English interchange of seals, perhaps due to the lapse of time since the formation of Anglo-Muscovite relations, Boris and Michael were more familiar with the epistolary preference of the English Crown and regarded the appearance of the privy seal or the Signet as being of equal value to that of the Great Seal.

Another notable example of a significant change in Elizabethan royal letters over the course of Anglo-Muscovite interaction was the transition from a single-page, horizontal letter that was sent to the Rurikid Tsars to that of a double-sided,

[48] Feodor to Elizabeth, dated July 1591, TNA, SP 91/1, f. 82r.
[49] G. Alef, 'The Adoption of the Muscovite Two-Headed Eagle: A Discordant View', *Speculum*, 41 (1966), pp. 1-21.

portrait (vertical) letters addressed to Boris Godunov. Landscape letters, such as that of 1561 (Fig. 7), projected bureaucratic control; the decoration and text were neatly contained within a three-sided border, which could be filled with visual political messages and symbols of dynastic publicity, and the remaining blank space could attest to the magnificence of the sender.[50] In a portrait layout (Fig. 10), the quantity of the decoration was restricted by much narrower borders, and the text was written on both sides of the parchment, but magnificence was still expressed through the 'historiated' initial, limning and the decoration of the borders with gold scrollwork or flowers.[51] The portrait-oriented letters resembled those sent by the Muscovites, and were written in English rather than Latin. The transition in the layout of the English royal letter during the reign of Boris Godunov can be indicative of the following changes.

Under the regency and reign of Boris Godunov, correspondence between the two courts became more regular. Muscovite political ambitions for an alliance with England were abandoned, but complaints about the misbehaviour of Company merchants and threats of terminating English mercantile privileges meant that in order to address these issues, Elizabeth's letters become lengthier. As a practical solution, the Crown could have chosen the portrait layout as it offered more blank space that could be filled with text, especially as these letters used both sides of the parchment.[52] Likewise, as the contents of the letters addressed commercial rather than political matters, the Crown (or the Company) might have felt that there was no longer a need to produce expensive and visually appealing letters. By the 1590s, the Muscovites were sufficiently familiar with

[50] J. Gibson, 'Significant Space in Manuscript Letters', *The Seventeenth Century Journal*, 12 (1997), pp. 1-10.

[51] A 'historiated' initial was an enlarged letter at the beginning of the letter that contained a picture, frequently the coat of arms. For an example see James to Michael Romanov, dated 30 September 1616, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 24, f. 1r. Similar decoration featured in James' letters to the Japanese Shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada; one such original letter is preserved at Tokyo University: https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/1/1324/John_Saris_Story_of_Adventure.pdf [accessed 7 January 2018].

[52] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, March 1596, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 14, f. 1r-v.

England and its Queen, which lessened the need for royal letters to project the majesty and splendour through opulent decoration. The decoration of the portrait letters was thus restricted to a historiated 'E' and some ornamentation of the upper border (Fig. 10).[53] It could be suggested that Elizabeth's letters bore a marked departure from those previously sent to the Rurikids as a subtle reflection of Godunov's elective sovereign status. Yet, examples of Elizabeth's letters to other elective rulers dispel this notion and instead suggest that portrait-oriented letters were likely intended to be perceived as a sign of intimacy.[54] While richly decorated horizontal letters were typically sent to distant rulers, portrait-oriented letters were reserved for rulers within the immediate English political networks (including the Kings of France and Spain). Moreover, Elizabeth's letter of credence given to Sir Jerome Bowes in 1583 followed a portrait-oriented layout, though, in contrast to letters sent to Godunov, it was written in Latin and was decorated with images of Tudor roses, laurel branches, feathers and royal monograms.[55]

Nevertheless, the most plausible explanation for the change of the layout and the diminution of decorative elements may be related to the financial burden of letter-production. Production of limned, decorative letters was expensive, and by 1590s, the mismanagement of the Company's finances and fiscal problems of the English Crown called for a re-evaluation of expenditure spent upon the maintenance of Anglo-Muscovite friendship. Chapter 5 has already discussed the effect of this development upon English gift-giving, and it is quite possible that the transition to a less decorated portrait-oriented letter was a practical solution towards diminishing the production cost of royal letters. The fact that the new layout was similar to that favoured by the Muscovites might have been either

[53] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated 24 May 1598, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 15, f. 1r-v.
[54] Elizabeth to Philip II of Spain, dated 17 February 1566, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., MS X.d, f. 138r-v; Ibid., MS V.b., f. 131r-v.
[55] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 8 June 1583, RGADA, fond 35, opi's 2, d. 3, f. 1r.

deliberate or coincidental, though it should be noted that the Muscovites, despite their predisposition to complain about changes in English epistolary conventions, made no comments on the change of the layout. By the time of James' correspondence with the Muscovite Tsars, English royal letters returned to a horizontal layout.

Finally, in some royal letters, the affirmation of Anglo-Muscovite friendship was expressed and bolstered by the addition of specific imagery. James' letter of June 1620 offers a great example of such practice (Fig. 11).[56] The letter is a 'princely adresse of congratulac[i]on' to Feodor Romanov, the Patriarch of Moscow, upon his 'safe and happie returne to Muscovy', following a prolonged captivity in Poland. It was James' letter of credence for his ambassador, Sir John Merrick, and a similar letter was likewise presented to Michael Romanov.[57] The decoration of James' letter to Filaret consists of a historiated 'J', the King's coat of arms, and a variety of gold flowers and stars in the borders. The centrepiece of the ornamentation is a heart held by a sea-lion and a sea-horse, within which is an image of a handshake.[58] The handshake is often regarded as a gesture of peace and a symbol of union or friendship. As a gesture of peace, it echoed James' brief recount of England's role in the conclusion of peace between 'our good brother the [Tsar …] and the King of Sweden'.[59] As a symbol of friendship, it emphasised James' message of 'prosperous continuance and increase' in amicable relations between the English and Muscovite royal courts. The letter also expresses gratitude for the previous favour shown to English merchants and the King 'pray[s] you [Filaret] to hold them still under the protect[i]on of your grace and favour'. The language and the imagery of the letter reinforced the

[56] James to Filaret, dated 24 June 1620, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 28, f. 1r.
[57] Only a draft copy of this letter has survived: TNA, SP 91/2, f. 69r-v.
[58] The image is reminiscent of the Claddagh ring, a traditional Irish ring which represents love, loyalty and friendship. The ring was first produced in the seventeenth century and might have served as an inspiration for the royal limners: G.F. Kunz, *Rings For the Finger, From the Earliest Known Times to the Present* (Philadelphia, PA, 1911), pp. 223-4.
[59] Sir John Merrick's Commission, dated 18 June 1614, TNA, C76/217, fos 18r-19r.

diplomatic aims of Merrick's embassy. Merrick was instructed to negotiate additional mercantile privileges and use the example of English mediation with Sweden, as well as accentuate the continuity of amicable relations between previous English and Muscovite sovereigns, as a means of persuading the Muscovite Tsar and his father, the Patriarch, to continue to favour the English merchants above those of other nations.

Alternatively, the heart and handshake image could have been a reference to the composite state of James' kingdom.[60] While the sea-lion and the sea-horse were the heraldic beasts of England and Scotland respectively, the clasped hands evoke an act of unity and the merging of the two Crowns. Considering that this letter was the first to be sent from James to the Patriarch, the image might have been intended to reinforce James' status as the King of both England and Scotland. Although such a reading of the image is plausible and might have even been the original intention of the royal limner, it is unlikely that the Patriarch would have understood this reference. Moreover, using the image as a reference to Anglo-Muscovite friendship rather than James' composite state would have been more effective for the purpose of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy. The example reminds us of the importance of the social materiality of royal letters, whereby interpretations of ornamentation were dependent on the context within which the letters were produced, disseminated and consumed. For example, at the stage of letter-production, the choice to portray heraldic beasts as hybrid sea-creatures could have indicated contemporary fashions and the artistic themes favoured by individual limners.[61] Similar hybrid creatures also appeared amongst the decoration of English gift of silver-gilt plate. During the presentation of a royal letter by the ambassador, however, the perception of the

[60] M. Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy: Seventeenth-Century English Decorated Royal Letters to Russia and the Far East* (Leiden, 2015), p. 73.
[61] In James' reign, the cost of production and transportation of royal letters was paid by the King through the treasurers of his household: Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy*, pp. 13-4.

imagery would attain a more political meaning, whether as a proclamation of James' royal status or an evocation of Anglo-Muscovite friendship. It could even be supposed that some of this imagery might not have been understood by the Muscovites whatsoever, or perhaps the Muscovites had no interest in interpreting the various symbols and imagery that appeared on English royal letters. Clearly, there was a gap between the original intentions of English decoration and its reception by the Muscovites upon the receipt of the letter.

2. Royal Letters and Representation

Previous chapters have already discussed the function of gifts as markers of royal magnificence, but in similarity to gifts, letters likewise offered an opportune medium for the projection of royal majesty. Both Elizabeth and James only sent decorated letters to rulers outside of their geographical sphere of influence (including amongst others the Muscovite Tsar, the Ottoman Sultan and the Japanese Emperor).[62] The vibrant colours and gold limning projected the wealth and grandeur of the English sovereign, suggesting to the recipient that the King or the Queen of England was a desirable ally and trading partner. The royal letters were particularly important within contexts where the sender and the recipient were establishing a new relationship. The Muscovite Tsar, for example, knew less about England and its Queen than did the King of France. Thus, the inclusion of adornment in the form of dynastic heraldry, personal mottoes, monographs and the coat of arms equipped English ambassadors with additional visual aids that could be used to relate to the Tsars an abridged history of the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, thereby enabling the Muscovites to learn more about England and its rulers. Considering the importance of personal relationships within diplomacy, simplifying the process of learning about each

[62] Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy*, pp. 7-12.

other and personalising abstract relationships was both essential and beneficial for the progression of diplomatic relations.

The principal method of projecting royal majesty was achieved through the ornamentation of royal letters, frequently in the form of dynastic heraldry. Several of Elizabethan and Stuart letters sent to the Muscovite Tsars were beautifully decorated with a painted three-sided frame that drew the viewer's attention towards the text. The frame was often decorated with vibrant colourful images of flowers, ribbons, heraldic animals, coats of arms and gold scrollwork. Elizabeth's 1561 letter to Ivan, for instance, remains one of the most decorated Anglo-Muscovite letters to have survived.[63] Visually, the letter is very impressive (Fig. 7). Elizabeth's name is emphasised in a large font, suggesting that it was the most important text on the page, and is reinforced with the addition of the royal motto ('dieu et mon droit'), the royal coat of arms and her personal monogram of 'ER' (Elizabeth Regina). Further references to her royal status are expressed through the image of a closed crown that is placed above her coat of arms, a symbol that denoted imperial rule. Elizabeth's dynastic lineage is emphasised through the inclusion of a variety of flowers: the white rose of York, the red rose of Lancaster, lilies as a reference to English claim to the throne of France, marguerites as a link to her paternal great-grandmother Margaret Beaufort, and pansies, which were Elizabeth's favourite flowers.[64] Additionally, the wreathed portcullis alluded to the Queen's Beaufort ancestors, while the Tudor rose symbolised the unity of York and Lancaster. Although the symbolism of the floral decoration was unfamiliar to the Muscovites, it provided English envoys with an opportunity to explain the meaning of these symbols and relate an abridged history of Elizabeth's dynastic lineage to the Muscovite Tsar.[65] A

[63] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 25 April 1561, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 2, f. 1r.
[64] T. Sowerby, 'A letter from Elizabeth I to Tsar Ivan "the Terrible"': http://www.textualambassadors.org/?p=610 [accessed 18 July 2016].
[65] Ibid., [accessed 18 July 2016].

prominent place was thus accorded to dynastic imagery in order to emphasise the identity of the sender. In the same way, English sovereign gifts were decorated with the royal court of arms to emphasise the identity of their sender.

Another important function of the selected ornamentation was used to strengthen the royal authority and legitimacy of the letter. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the letter of 1561 was delivered by Anthony Jenkinson with the intention of acquiring a new letter of safe passage from Ivan. The 1561 visit, however, was not one of a royally-appointed embassy. Jenkinson was selected to act as an agent of the Muscovy Company, as well as a messenger entrusted with delivering the Queen's letter.[66] In the absence of a royally-appointed ambassador, the authentication of the letter's authority was dependent upon epistolary conventions. While one would expect that the addition of the seal and the royal signature would have been deemed sufficient by the Muscovites, the ornamentation and visual appeal of the letter reinforced the message of royal authority. This is further supported by the fact that subsequent Elizabethan royal letters delivered by royally-appointed ambassadors never reached the same level of extensive decoration.[67]

The interplay between the authority of the royal letter and the theme of its ornamentation is likewise evident within the diplomatic letters of James I. According to Kevin Sharpe, James was his 'own spokesman in print', and the king's letters to Muscovy are excellent examples of the ways in which decorative elements were used to mould the image of the King and Crown that James wished to convey to the Muscovites.[68] The central imagery was that of dynastic legitimacy. To reflect his status as the King of a composite state, the letters

[66] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 25 April 1561, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 2, f. 1r.
[67] Elizabeth to Ivan, dated 8 June 1583, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 4, f. 1r.
[68] K. Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealth in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven, CT, 2010), p. 46.

included the image of a compound flower, half-Tudor rose and half-thistle, presenting James as the heir to the Stuart and Tudor dynasties, alongside the inclusion of English and Scottish heraldic beasts.[69] A great example of this practice is James' letter to Michael Romanov, dated May 1623 (Fig. 12). In this letter, the historiated 'J' was decorated with a miniature portrait of the King.[70] The King, seated on his throne in the robes of state, holds an orb and a sword, the dynastic symbols of royal power. In the background, an image of the sun signifies divine approval. A survey of James' letters reveals that miniature portraits of the King within his letters were not uncommon. The King's patent letter of 1610 (Fig. 13), which granted his son Henry the titles of Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, shows a historiated 'J' with a similar image of an enthroned James. Below the King is an image of kneeling Henry and a cherub.[71] James' 1623 letter refers to Michael as the 'most excellent dearest brother', affirms the 'brotherly love' between the two monarchs and requests Michael to release from service an Englishman, John Scroope, so that his 'friends here [in England] may enjoy the comfort of his Company'.[72] Similarly to the letter of 1561, this letter was delivered by a messenger. In the absence of a royal ambassador, the inclusion of a royal portrait within the letter represented a metaphysical manifestation of the author's real presence, which could be seen as both a sign of intimacy and a means of bolstering the royal authority of the document. Notably, James' letter of 1623 likewise remains one of the most decorated Stuart letters amongst the thirteen surviving Jacobean letters sent to Michael.

In contrast to English royal letters, the decoration of Muscovite letters was sparse. The ornamentation of Ivan IV's letters, for example, consisted of a short

[69] James to Michael, dated 20 May 1623, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 33r, f. 1r.
[70] Ibid., d. 33, f. 1r.
[71] Letters Patent of James, (1610), BL, Additional MS 36932, f. 1r.
[72] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 33, f. 1r. Michael had previously written to James to explain that John Scroope was not permitted to return to England as he had married a Muscovite wife and had converted to Orthodoxy: Michael to James, dated 23 April 1623, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 12r.

gold border on the left side of the page, which run the length of the first paragraph (Fig. 14). Gradually, the ornamentation of Muscovite royal letters, in the form of elaborate gold scrollwork, began to appear in the letters of Boris Godunov but was developed into a more opulent style in the reign of Michael Romanov. The transition reflected the preoccupation of the new Romanov dynasty with royal self-representation and concern about how the Muscovite Tsar was perceived at other foreign courts.

For Ivan, diplomatic correspondence was a means of addressing matters of state, as well as creating a permanent record of Anglo-Muscovite relations that could be referred to for precedence in future negotiations. As a reflection of an almost business-like approach to diplomatic correspondence, Ivan's letters are crammed with text rather than ornamentation.[73] No original letter from Feodor I to Elizabeth has survived. Bearing in mind that matters of state were managed by Feodor's regents rather than the Tsar, it is unlikely that the letters sent on behalf of Feodor would have followed a distinct epistolary style from those previously sent by Ivan. On the contrary, considering the importance of precedent at the Muscovite court, Feodor's letters were likely to have been very similar in format, layout and decoration to Ivan's letters. Moreover, even the letters sent by Boris Godunov following his accession, are in many ways similar to those of Ivan IV. In a letter to Elizabeth dated May 1599, the parchment is similarly filled with text, while ornamentation is limited to a comparable style of border favoured by Ivan.[74] The most noticeable change is a slight development within the decoration of the border. Whereas Ivan's border appeared in the form of three straight lines, in Godunov's letters the outward lines are drawn as columns, and the space inside the columns is decorated with scrollwork in the shape of crosses and flowers, topped with a star. Further changes are evident in

[73] Ivan to Elizabeth, dated 24 October 1570, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 1r; Ivan to Elizabeth, dated May 1582, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 2r.
[74] Godunov to Elizabeth, dated May 1599, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 4r.

the letter dated February 1603 (Fig. 15); the inside of the border features a more stylised motif that is somewhat reminiscent of the borders of English royal letters.[75] The first two lines of the text are written in gold ink. On the one hand, the similarity of the ornamentation of Godunov's letters to those of his predecessors reinforced the visual representation of dynastic continuity. By following an established epistolary precedent, Godunov was presenting himself to other foreign sovereigns as the legitimate successor to the Rurikids. On the other hand, gradual changes within the decoration of the border were likely intended to bolster the projection of royal majesty. Similarly to the way in which James' lavish decorated letters conveyed the image of a magnificent King, the inclusion of a more ornate gold ornamentation was intended to put across a message that the new Muscovite ruler remained a wealthy and powerful ruler despite his non-royal origins.

The Muscovite concern with the projection of royal magnificence and majesty is especially evident in the ornamentation of Michael Romanov's letters. While the short border, discussed above, remained, its decorative motifs are more sophisticated and incorporate intricate gold scrollwork, strapwork and floral patterns. As evident from Michael's letter dated June 1613 (Fig. 16), the additional decoration takes the form of a triangle-shaped border at the top of the letter, which uses various decorative motifs (flowers, berries, leaves) and culminates with a crown at the top.[76] There is further decoration at the sides of the letter, in the form of a long string of interconnected flowers and swirls, which increases in size throughout Michael's reign. Likewise, the customary Muscovite preamble and the enumeration of the Tsar's title are written in gold ink. Visually, Michael's letters present a significant contrast to those of Ivan and Godunov. Although the retention of the border motif possibly meant to emphasise dynastic

[75] Godunov to Elizabeth, dated February 1603, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 5r.
[76] Michael to James, dated June 1613, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 6r.

continuity, the overall ornamentation of the letter suggests that a royal Muscovite letter was no longer used simply as a tool of political communication, but also as a medium of royal self-representation. For example, one of the most decorated of Michael's letters was that of June 1621, dispatched alongside the Muscovite ambassadors, Pogozhev and Vlasiev (Fig. 17).[77] A comparison between Michael's letter of 1621 and that of June 1613 reveals an immense increase in ornamentation. The small border at the left-hand side of the text has been extended and resembles the historiated capitals of English letters rather than the simple design favoured by Ivan. The motifs within the top border are more detailed and there is a large string of what looks like floral ornamentation drawn along the sides of the letter. Evidently, increasingly detailed and lavish ornamentation was intended to represent the growing strength of Michael's royal authority. Although Michael was elected to the Tsardom, the letters would have left no doubt that this was a missive from a powerful and magnificent sovereign, one who was not in any way inferior to the King of England. Interestingly, the ornamentation of Patriarch Filaret's letter of June 1621 (Fig. 18) is almost identical to that of Michael. Undoubtedly, the similarity of the two letters was intended to emphasise Filaret's role as a *de facto* ruler of Muscovy.[78] Thus, although the ornamentation of Muscovite royal letters was less flamboyant than that of the English Crown, surviving letters attest to the fact that both royal courts were aware of the multi-faceted function of royal letters as both texts and objects.

3. Royal Letters as Gifts

This chapter has thus far discussed and demonstrated the ways in which the use of royal letters corresponded to that of royal gifts. Royal intentions were

[77] Michael to James, dated 17 June 1621, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 10r.
[78] Filaret to James, dated 17 June 1621, TNA, SP 102/49, f. 11r.

complex and, therefore, required different levels and mediums of engagement. Although gifts occupied an important role in Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy, they lacked the metaphysical manifestation of royal presence that could only be embodied by a royal letter. The final question that remains is whether the royal letter itself could be perceived as a gift, either as a physical object or through the intangible favour or grant that it might have conveyed. Throughout this thesis, it has been emphasised that in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of gift-giving, it is important to depart from the anthropological definition of a 'gift' as being restricted to a tangible object (or living creature).[79]

It has already been pointed out that English royal letters did more than authorise diplomatic action abroad, yet one of the most understudied functions of these documents was their role in satisfying (most of) the requests of the Muscovite Tsars. Some of these requests have already been addressed elsewhere in this thesis. The act of fulfilling these requests was itself one of gift-giving; it conveyed royal favour and strengthened the bonds of royal friendship, but, in similarity to the *gramota*, created an expectation of reciprocal favour from the Muscovites. Unlike the exchange of material gifts, whereby one physical object was directly exchanged for another, the exchange of intangible gifts was more asymmetrical and less rigid. The benefit of exchanging such gifts was that each participant was able to request something that was essential only to their needs. For instance, there was no direct exchange of mercantile privileges between England and Muscovy; such an exchange was of no interest to the Tsars. Similarly, while satisfying Muscovite requests for skilled engineers, the English Crown did not expect the Muscovites to reciprocate with a dispatch of its own artificers.

[79] M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London, 1990), pp. 3-10.

The additional benefit of the exchange of non-tangible gifts was the fact that the nature of diplomatic relations between England and Muscovy actually encouraged rulers to use it as a means of fulfilling their diplomatic aims. The importance of personal relationships within the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic context has been consistently emphasised throughout this thesis; this chapter has specifically addressed the role of letters as a means of affirming royal friendships. Bearing in mind that friendship between rulers was an essential component of favourable diplomacy, this chapter has shown how the English monarchs, for instance, employed the rhetoric of friendship and 'brotherly love' as reasoning for their expectation of a favourable answer to their requests by the Muscovite Tsar.[80] By alluding to friendship, the Anglo-Muscovite letters show how the rulers of both states attempted to persuade the recipient of the letter to uphold Anglo-Muscovite amity by fulfilling the requests. This does not mean that such an approach was universally successful. Ultimately, the fulfilment of requests was dependent upon what was asked for and the potential impact it would have had on the giver. Thus, constant English requests for letter of safe passage into Persia in the seventeenth century, as described in Chapter 6, were rejected not as a manifestation of Muscovite enmity, but because a satisfaction of English requests was both politically and economically disadvantageous to the Muscovites. Likewise, Muscovite requests for a military and political alliance remained unfulfilled for a similar reason.

A good example of an English response to one of the most common Muscovite requests was the dispatch of physicians and apothecaries.[81] Pre-Petrine Muscovy was reliant on foreign medical professionals. In 1557, possibly upon Ivan's

[80] Jansson, *Art and Diplomacy*, p. 28.
[81] F.G. Clemow, 'English Physicians at the Court of Moscow in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Anglo-Russian Literary Society Proceedings*, 21 (1898), pp. 35-47; J. Bishop, 'English Physicians in Russia in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 33 (1909), pp. 144-55; G.M. Phipps, 'Britons in Russia: 1613-82', *Societas,* 7 (1977), pp. 19-45.

request conveyed through the Muscovite ambassador, the physician Dr Richard Standish (d.1559) and the apothecary Richard Elmes were sent to Moscow upon the recommendation of the Muscovy Company and Queen Mary.[82] Similar requests were later made to Elizabeth, and the Queen responded by sending her own royal physician, Dr Robert Jacob, for the personal use of the Tsar and his court.[83] Considering that each of the arriving English physicians, and apothecaries, could not enter the service of the Muscovite Tsar without a letter of recommendation and introduction from the English sovereign, it can be argued that such royal letters 'gifted' the services of English subjects to the Tsars. In a letter dated 27 May 1594, for example, Elizabeth informed Godunov that she had agreed to send the physician Mark Ridley, into the service of the Tsar.[84] James' letters similarly gifted the services of skilled Englishmen to Michael Romanov, including physicians (Dr Arthur Dee), as well as military officers and soldiers, including the aforementioned John Scroope who had served in the Tsar's army from 1615 to 1622.[85] In some instances, the services of English physicians were rejected. In 1599, Elizabeth dispatched and recommended Dr Thomas (Timothy) Willis, upon yet another Muscovite request for a physician. Arguing that Willis arrived without medical books or instruments (these were shipped separately) and failed the Muscovite examination of his medical training (Willis found these insulting and responded flippantly), the Muscovite government rejected his services.[86] Another example was the

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[82] R. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations,* 1 (2nd edn., London, 1598-1600), p. 421. Richard Standish began the tradition of sending English physicians to the Muscovite Court. Standish only served for two years before dying in 1559; other royal physicians, Richard Reynolds (d. 1606) and Mark Ridley, served the Tsars in 1567-8 and 1594-8 respectively. Additionally, Elizabeth gifted the services of several apothecaries, the most notable of whom was James Frencham. Frencham is credited with establishing the first court pharmacy (*apteka*) following his arrival in 1581: J. Hamel (ed.), *England and Russia* (London, 1854), pp. 177, 235, 442; A. Cross, *By the Banks of the Neva* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 121-58.

[83] Hamel, *England and Russia*, p, 235; Tolstoi, *First Forty Years*, pp. 284-5.

[84] Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, dated 27 May 1594, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 13, f. 1r-v.

[85] James to Michael, dated 30 April 1615, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 22, f. 1r; James to Michael, dated 11 June 1621, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 29, f. 1r.

[86] The incident had likely arisen due to the fact that contrary to the established tradition, Willis arrived into Moscow without a royal letter of instructions that was to be handed to the Muscovite

unsuccessful petition of the Muscovite Tsars to recruit Elizabeth's famed astrologer and adviser, Dr John Dee.[87] Although the Muscovites were unable to obtain Dee's services, his son Arthur was sent to Moscow on behalf of James I as a royal physician to Michael Romanov. Dee served the Romanovs for twelve years before returning to England in 1634.[88] Thus, while there is no substantial evidence to imply that a royal letter (as an object) was perceived as a gift, it was, nonetheless, an important medium through which English sovereigns expressed their generosity by loaning (or 'gifting') the services of their own physicians to the Muscovite Tsars.

Generally, English intangible 'gifts' were not limited to the provision of medical and military service by the Crown's subjects, as the concept could be applied to the provision of political information. Elizabeth's letters to Ivan and Boris Godunov, in particular, were often filled with answers to Muscovite questions and concerns about the state of European foreign affairs. Thus, the royal letter delivered in 1598 by the English ambassador Francis Cherry refuted the allegations of English military support to the Ottomans, while the letter sent back with the Muscovite ambassador Grigorii Mikulin in 1601 denied rumours of English support to Poland.[89] There are, however, scarce direct references in English royal letters to answers given to the Muscovites about the state of affairs in Europe. Nevertheless, the diplomatic reports of Muscovite ambassadors reveal that throughout the duration of their embassy the Muscovites were able to gather news and information, but only through their contact with the Crown's

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officials, compounded by the absence of his medical equipment. Moreover, when the Muscovites demanded Willis' instructions, rather than await the arrival of Elizabeth's diplomatic representative, Sir John Merrick, Willis handed over his own personal instructions, which contained information relating to the affairs in Poland that the Muscovites deemed to be suspicious: TNA, SP 91/1, fos 144r-147r.

[87] Phipps, 'Britons in Russia: 1613-82', pp. 36-8.

[88] J.H. Appleby, 'Dr Arthur Dee: Merchant and Litigant', *Slavonic and Eastern European Review*, 58 (1979), pp. 32-55.

[89] Elizabeth to Godunov, dated May 1598, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 15, f. 1r-v; Elizabeth to Godunov, dated 11 May 1601, ibid., d. 18, f.1r-v.

Privy Council and the merchants of the Muscovy Company.[90] As a final point, it could even be argued that the exchange of royal letters in itself can be regarded, if not as a gift, then a manifestation of courtesy and reciprocity. Just as material gifts were given, received and reciprocated, each royal letter was given, read and answered.

Rulers have, therefore, exchanged letters with each other to negotiate treaties and mercantile privileges, make requests and reaffirm bonds of friendship. Letters were used to project royal magnificence and generosity, facilitate an exchange of news and information, all of which made royal letters essential to the operation of international relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An exchange of royal correspondence was thus much more complex than simply a medium of verbal communication across geographical boundaries. Consequently, in order to improve the understanding of its complexity and meaning within international relations and diplomacy, scholars need to begin to adapt and apply the methodological developments of manuscript studies, including codicology and palaeography, to the examination of diplomatic letters as both texts and objects, placing emphasis on the social, political and cultural practices and contexts, within which the letters were produced, disseminated and consumed. Diplomacy itself consisted of a series of practices adapted to circumstances, within which royal letters, gifts and diplomatic mediation were closely intertwined.

This chapter and the present thesis as a whole examine gifts and royal letters through the example of English relations with the Muscovites, but it is important to ask whether the findings are a product of Anglo-Muscovite singularity or are pertinent to other diplomatic relationships. While such a comparison is beyond

[90] F. Pisemskii, 'Stateinyi Spisok', in D.S. Likhachev (ed.), *Puteshestviia Russkikh Poslov* (Moscow, 1954), pp. 100-55.

the scope of this chapter, even a superficial investigation of the English gift and letter exchange with sovereignties such as the Ottomans, Persians and the Japanese, would reveal striking similarities in intention, transmission and reception to that of English relations with the Muscovites. The ornamentation of James I's letters to Japan was strikingly similar to those sent to Muscovy, as were their expressions of 'brotherly love' and, to some extent, the diplomatic aspirations of the English – access to the mercantile wealth of the Tokugawa shogunate.[91] The extent to which this might be indicative of the existence of a singular English foreign policy towards non-European sovereignties (or those at the margins of Europe), regardless of their religion, culture or the mode of governance, requires further investigation.

[91] For an overview of English activities in Japan see D. Massarella, *A World Elsewhere. Europe's Encounter with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New Haven, CT, 1990).

Fig. 7. Elizabeth to Ivan, 25 April 1561
(RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 2)

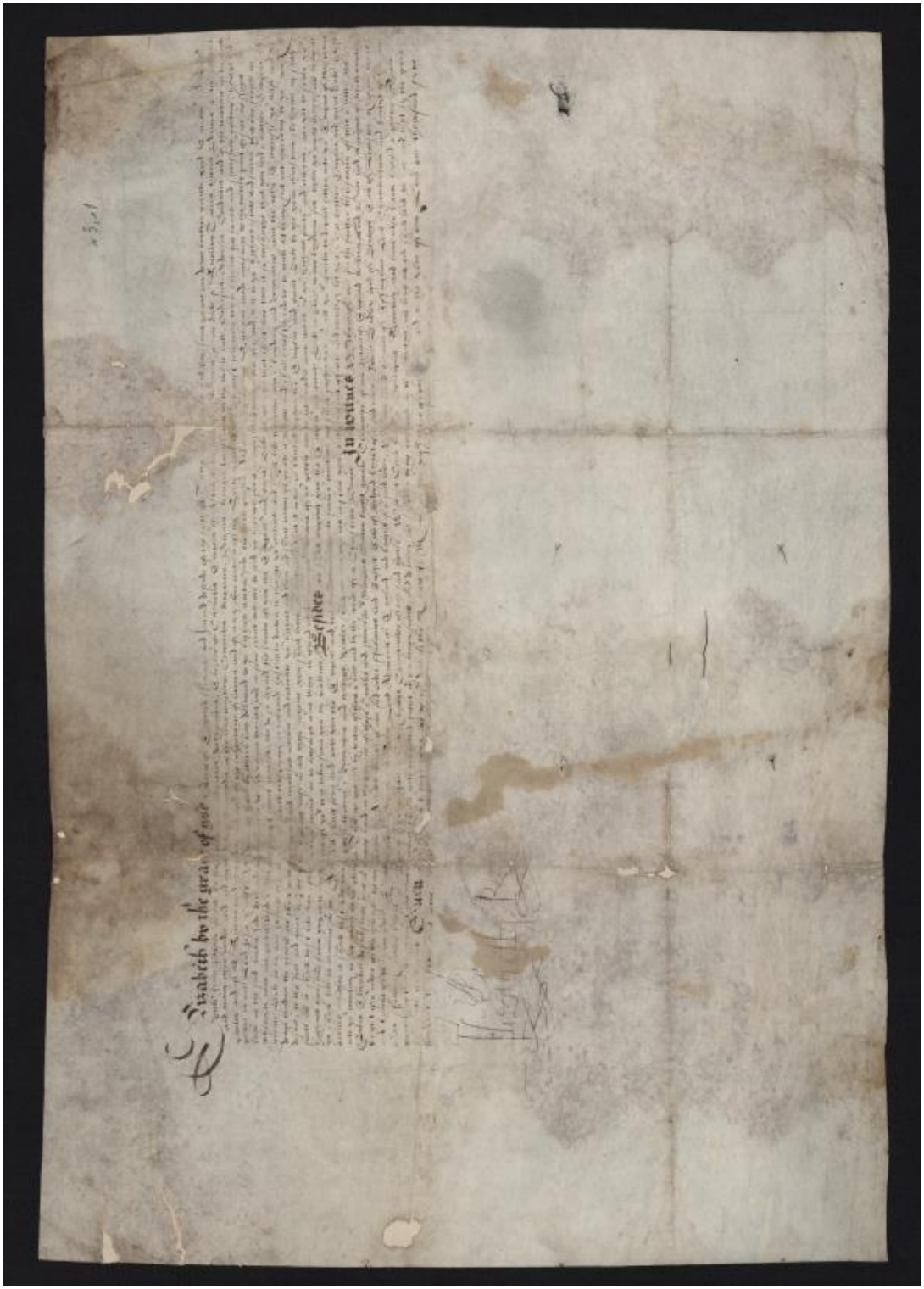

Fig. 8. Elizabeth to Ivan, 18 May 1570
(RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 3)

Fig. 9. Elizabeth to Feodor, 24 March 1585
(RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 6)

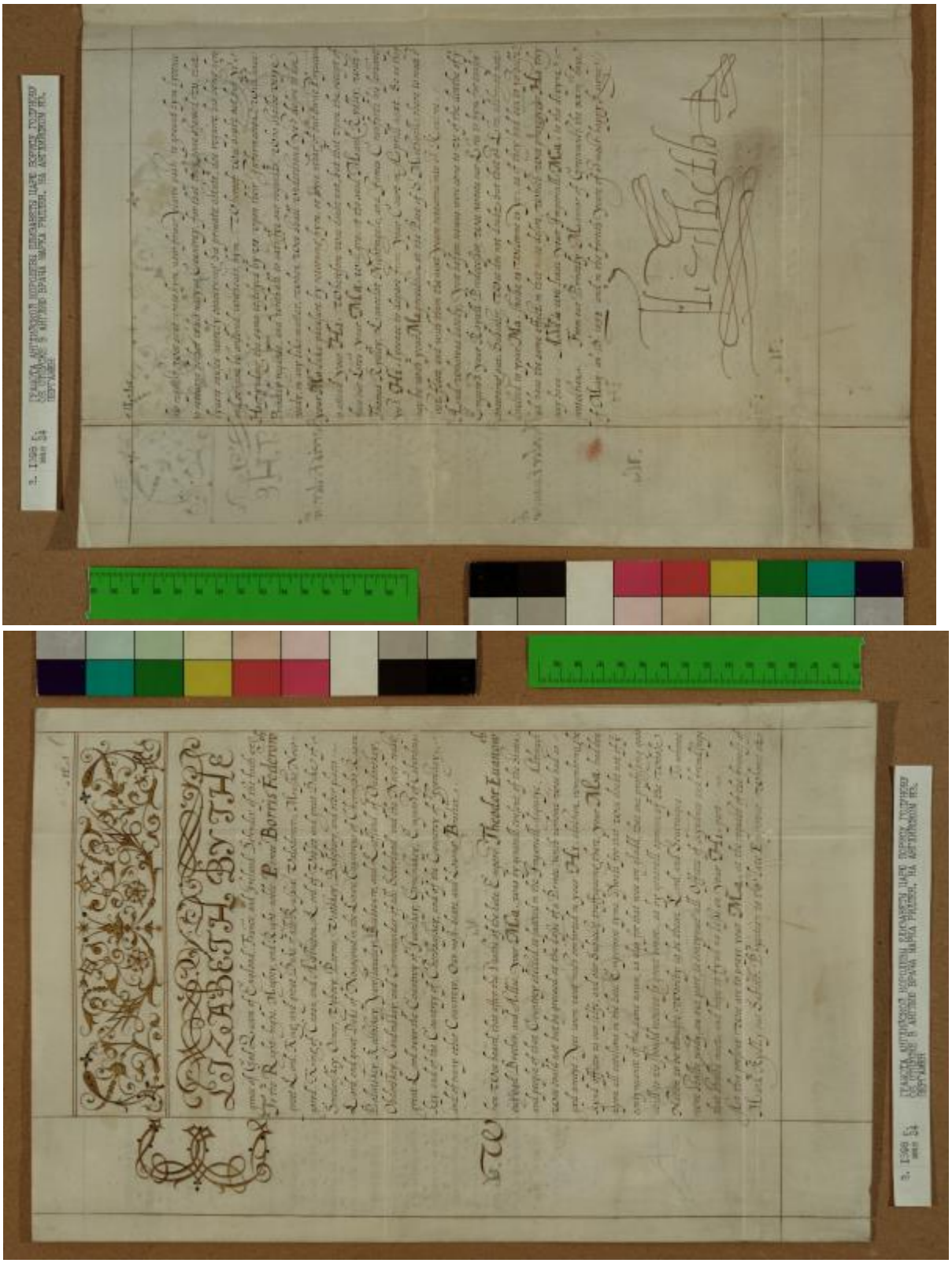

Fig. 10. Elizabeth to Boris Godunov, [?} May 1598
(RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 15)

Fig. 11. James to Patriarch Filaret, 24 June 1620
(RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 22)

Fig. 12. James to Michael, 20 May 1623
(RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 33)

Fig. 13. Letter Patent of James, Creating His Son, Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, 1610 (BL, Additional MS 36932, f. 1r.)

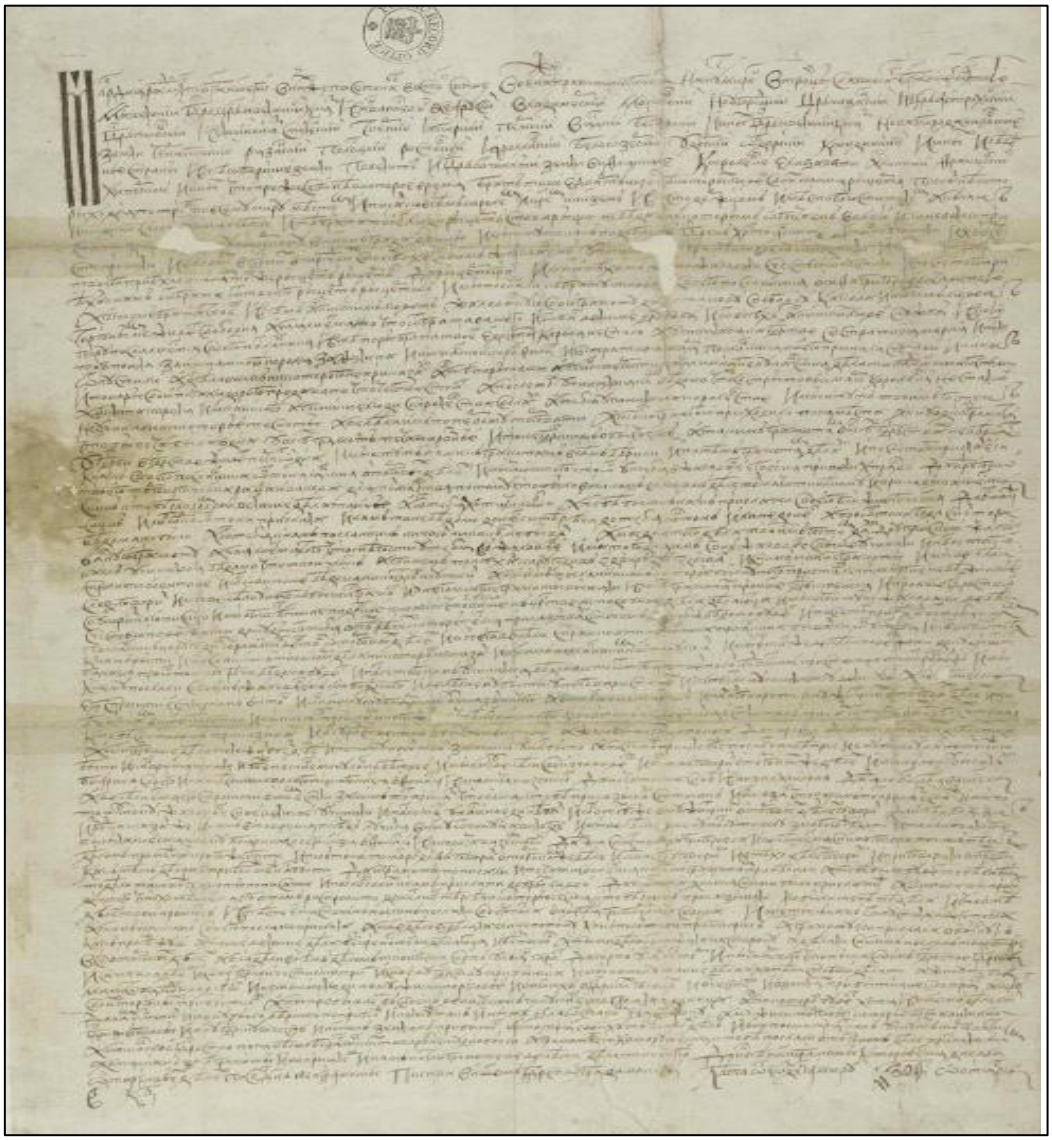

Fig. 14. Ivan to Elizabeth, 24 October 1570
(TNA, SP 102/49, f. 1r)

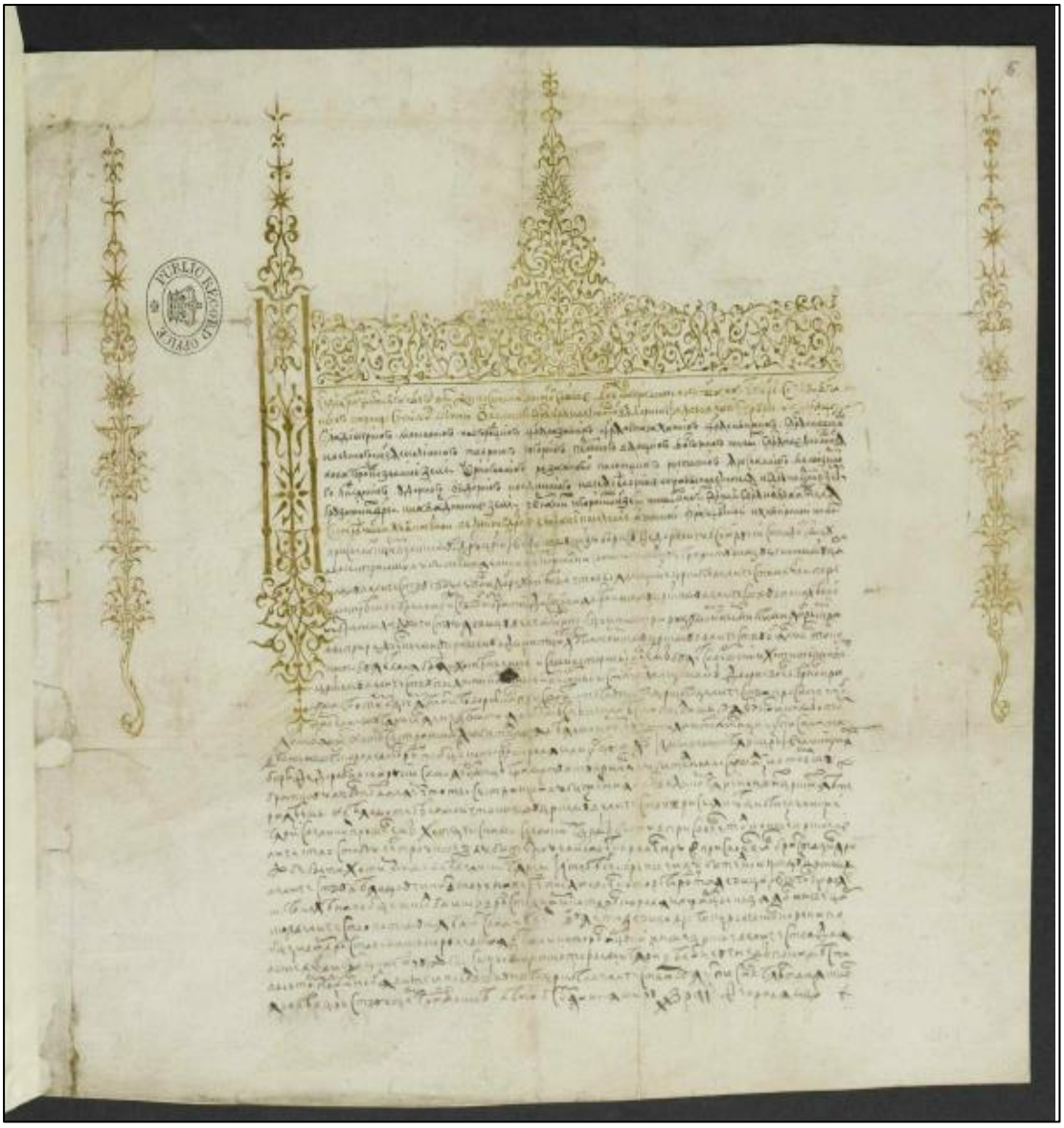

Fig. 15. Godunov to Elizabeth, February 1603
(TNA, SP 102/49, f. 5r)

Fig. 16. Michael to James, June 1613
(TNA, SP 102/49, f. 6r).

Fig. 17. Michael to James, June 1621
(TNA, SP 102/49, f. 10r)

Fig. 18. Filaret to James, June 1621
(TNA, SP 102/49, f. 11)

Conclusion

The departure of the Muscovite ambassador Isaak Samoilovich Pogozhin in July 1622 marked the final exchange of royal embassies between James I and Michael Romanov. The embassy was finally given a definitive refusal by the English Crown to ratify an offensive and defensive league with the Muscovites, concluding the matter of the alliance that had dominated Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic agenda since the 1560s. For the next four years, relations between James and Michael focused exclusively on the affairs of the merchants and were mediated through an exchange of royal correspondence rather than embassies.[1] James died in March 1625, and in July of that year his son, Charles I, dispatched a messenger to Moscow to inform Michael of James' passing, express condolences to Michael upon the death of the Tsar's wife, and reiterate the interest of the English Crown to continue the 'princely affec[ti]on of our father [James] to your Ma[jes]tie'.[2] Charles' subsequent letter of 1626 congratulated Michael on the Tsar's second marriage and expressed the Crown's gratitude for the renewal of trading privileges for the English merchants.[3] In the period that followed, Charles' correspondence with Michael was characterised by the recurrent English requests to purchase a hundred thousand bushels of wheat, alongside occasional calls to release specific Englishmen from the Tsar's service and dispatch them back to London.[4] Michael died in July 1645, and on 30 January 1649 Charles I was led to the scaffold and executed at Whitehall. In response, Michael's successor Alexis I cut off all commercial relations with the English Commonwealth by revoking English mercantile privileges and expelling the Company merchants from Muscovite dominions. Whilst on the surface the

[1] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, dela 30-5.
[2] Charles to Michael, dated 1 July 1625, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 36.
[3] Charles to Michael, dated 1 February 1626, RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 37; Charles to Patriarch Filaret, dated 1 February 1626, ibid., d. 38.
[4] One of such letters, dated 31 October 1629, consisted of a request to purchase 'hundred thousand quarters of bread [wheat]' to be sent to Ireland: RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 44.

expulsion was attributed to the Muscovite expression of solidarity with the English monarchy, in truth, Anglo-Muscovite commercial activities had been steadily declining. In 1646, for instance, amidst the hostility and protests by the Muscovite mercantile elite against foreign merchants, Alexis revoked the long-standing English exemption from paying customs duties.[5] The Muscovite merchants reminded the government that the English *gramota* granted by Michael in 1628, and renewed by Alexis in 1645, was given as a gift from the Tsar to the King, and as the English traders were being disloyal to Charles (by supporting Parliament), is was Alexis' duty to revoke the gift. By 1649, Charles' execution offered the perfect pretext to scrap the remaining English privileges and banish the Muscovy Company merchants from Moscow. The commercial relationship created by Chancellor's voyage of 1553, and carefully cultivated by English and Muscovite sovereigns over the course of almost a century, was thus brought to an end.

The cessation of the exchange of royal embassies from 1621 to 1648 did not mean that no English diplomatic gifts were ever given to the Tsars on behalf of Charles I, though as diplomatic mediation was restricted to the dispatches of messengers rather than ambassadors, the frequency of gift-giving was mostly limited to important occasions. In 1629, upon the birth of Michael's son (the future Alexis I), Fabian Smith was dispatched to Moscow to present the Tsar with several pieces of silver-gilt plate, including a pair of water pots and leopard ewers, sent on behalf of the King.[6] Meanwhile, the reciprocal gifts of Muscovites reverted to the staple gifts of fur. The dynamic of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange, however, was no longer the same as it had been in the previous period. The instructions of the Company agents reveal that none of the gifts

[5] M.S. Arel, 'Masters in Their Own House: The Russian Merchant Elite and Complaints Against the English in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 77 (1999), pp. 401-47.
[6] RGADA, fond 35, opis' 2, d. 105, fos 8r-9r.

presented to the Tsars on behalf of King Charles were given with the intention to influence or direct the course of Anglo-Muscovite relations. Instead, they were used to maintain a sense of friendship between the two royal courts.

A central theme explored in this thesis has been the exchange of sovereign gifts between Elizabeth, James and the Muscovite Tsars. From Jenkinson's gifts of silver-gilt plate in 1566 to Pogozhin's sable furs of 1621, the thesis demonstrated how gift-giving played an integral role in the conduct of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy. Whereas the exchange of sovereign gifts amongst European monarchs was a long-established medieval tradition, which by the early modern period was so trivial that gifts are rarely mentioned in contemporary treatises on the art of diplomacy, within the Anglo-Muscovite context gifts were significant, as the nature of diplomatic interaction was still being formulated. The importance of gifts within this diplomatic relationship owed much to Muscovite emphasis on ritual and ceremony, in which the presentation of gifts by foreign ambassadors on behalf of their sovereign was central. As attested by the Tsar's Cupboard of Estate, diplomatic gifts were considered to be tokens of the geopolitical range of royal Muscovite diplomatic and political network.

A closer look at the Anglo-Muscovite exchange reveals that material gifts did not only enable rulers to affirm friendships and reinforce the bonds of social and political amity but encouraged a completive display of magnificence and assisted ambassadors in mediating instances of diplomatic tension. Amidst asymmetrical political and mercantile aspirations, the gifts contributed towards the creation of mutual ceremonial norms that enabled these two seemingly incompatible states to maintain a functional diplomatic relationship over the course of a century. Within the framework of political culture, the exchange offered a means of symbolic representation of the magnificence of the monarch, the splendour of

their court and the wealth of their state. Gifts likewise bestowed respect upon the recipient and provided ample opportunities for self-representation. The English gifts of silver-gilt plate, for instance, accorded a prominent place to the royal coat of arms to emphasise the identity of the sender. The same tendencies were apparent in the decoration of both English and Muscovite letters discussed in Chapter 7.

As shown by this thesis, Anglo-Muscovite royal intentions were often multifaceted, while transmission of these intentions was reliant upon the conduct of diplomatic intermediaries. The reception of diplomatic gifts was thus intrinsically linked to political aims and aspirations. Since the English were the instigators of Anglo-Muscovite relations and sought to monopolise access to Muscovite trade and commodities (by attaining exclusive mercantile privileges), their diplomatic gifts were intended to impress, persuade and convince the Muscovite Tsars of the benefits the latter could derive from an Anglo-Muscovite commercial partnership. From highly-crafted examples of silver-gilt plate to gifts of Indian caskets, lions and antelopes, the gifts of the English Crown bolstered diplomatic negotiations (if not always successfully), conveyed expressions of honour and goodwill, and, most importantly, obliged the Muscovites to reciprocate. In contrast, the Muscovite preference to select gifts associated with their mercantile wealth (including furs, hawks and sables) was used to create a visual embodiment of the vast affluence of their lands. The visual rhetoric created by such gifts, alongside the Muscovite offer to grant access to this wealth through a royal grant of privileges, was, therefore, used as a bargaining tool to extract concessions and advance Muscovite political aspirations. In this way, while on the surface Anglo-Muscovite gifts might appear incommensurable, in truth, the selection of material objects was adjusted and moulded to suit the political and economic context of individual embassies.

Furthermore, within the Anglo-Muscovite diplomatic relationship, the non-tangible components like the Tsar's *gramota* should also be understood as 'gifts'. Borrowing the anthropological definition of a 'gift', scholars have predominantly applied it to the study of the giving and exchanging of material objects and commodities, such as the silver-gilt plate mentioned above. The central attributes of a 'gift', however, were that it had to be given willingly and was reciprocated.[7] In this regard, the Tsar's *gramota* and English royal letters (some of which authorised the dispatch of English subjects into the service of the Tsar) could both be regarded as gifts. They were given willingly, were reciprocated (if not necessarily symmetrically) and created social and political bonds between the English and Muscovite rulers. Bearing in mind that the pre-Westphalian world was a society of princes, in which relationships were conceived in terms of personal amities and enmities, manifestations of royal favour were perceived by contemporaries as gifts. The language of friendship used in royal letters and the Muscovite *gramota* reveals a mental framework in which the relationship between England and Muscovy was seen not only as an international affair but as a matter that personally concerned the English sovereign and the Muscovite Tsar. The examples of the Muscovite *gramota* and English royal letters thus provide an essential reminder that diplomatic gift-giving was not restricted solely to an exchange of material objects, but could be manifested through royal favour, fulfilment of promises and grants of generous privileges.

Whilst examining the mechanics of the Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange, the thesis places pre-Petrine Muscovite diplomacy in the broader context of Western European diplomatic practice of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although it is very convenient to contextualise Muscovy within the discourse of barbarism and avoid the question of its place and role within early modern

[7] M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London, 1990), pp. 3-6.

foreign relations, adherence to such methodology results in a very limited and restricted understanding of pre-Petrine Muscovy. At first glance, Muscovy and England appeared to share a profound difference in their mode of governance, culture and religion. There were also notable differences in the conduct of their diplomacy. It is, however, important to understand that Muscovite diplomacy operated within a context in which the Muscovite Tsars were still consolidating their position amongst their fellow rulers. The title of Tsar, for example, was adopted by Ivan IV just six years before the commencement of Anglo-Muscovite relations. Muscovite diplomacy placed a greater emphasis on ceremony and elements of diplomatic practice that were expected to acknowledge and reinforce the honour and rank of the Muscovite ruler, including gift-giving. In this regard, the English sovereigns were not much different. For James I the recognition of his status as ruler of England and Scotland was just as important. Moreover, disagreements and tensions that arose between Muscovite Tsars and English ambassadors were principally the product of asymmetrical political interests, whereby rejection of gifts or complaints about royal seals, were not necessarily intended to be seen as signs of political and cultural incompatibility, but rather deliberate threats to break friendship and coerce the other side into restoring amity by consenting to grant additional political and economic concessions. Notably, the Muscovites voiced their complaints through the discourse of monarchical honour (whereby every offending action or word was described as a mark of dishonour), a theme that was familiar to the English Crown.

The Anglo-Muscovite relationship was also characterised by instances in which both governments experimented with their epistolary conventions and gift-giving in order to find one that would prove most effective. It could be argued that in this regard the English Crown was more proactive, but once again it is important to remember that Muscovite diplomatic practice was still being developed, and, as emphasis was placed upon following the *starina* (ancient ways), any new

implementations acquired through direct contact with foreign sovereignties were only introduced gradually over the course of a diplomatic relationship. Thus, by the reigns of the early Romanov Tsars, the Muscovite diplomatic practice offered clear examples of growth in comparison to early Anglo-Muscovite interactions. This could be seen in a more regularised dispatch of envoys and improved record-keeping of individual diplomatic missions. Even the Romanov gift-giving became more similar to that of the English, whereby traditional gifts of furs were merged with new luxury commodities, and the generalised/negative reciprocity of Ivan's reign was replaced with a pursuit of a symmetrical exchange of non-tangible gifts (a direct exchange of mercantile privileges for English military assistance). While the reform of Muscovite diplomatic practice would not occur until the end of the seventeenth century, the early Romanov Tsars were fundamental in setting some of the foundations that were later built upon by their successors. Thus, although Peter the Great is credited with the introduction of a radical cultural revolution and a new political ethos modelled upon a Western European archetype, it was actually Ivan IV, and his relations with England, that offer evidence of the development of Muscovy's singular, yet integrated, diplomatic culture.

On a final note, the example of Anglo-Muscovite diplomacy and gift-giving offers a great vantage point for a future comparative study between Anglo-Ottoman relations and that of England and Muscovy. Both relationships were driven by the commercial aspirations of English merchant-adventures and were characterised by the establishment of joint-stock companies and the acquisition of a regulated monopoly over established trade routes.[8] Access to the commercial privileges granted by the Ottoman Sultan began with a familiar

[8] For an overview of the development of English diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire see, S. A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (London, 1977); L. Saunders, 'The Motives, Pattern and Form of Anglo-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations, c. 1580-1661' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 1994).

narrative. A message was sent on behalf of the English sovereign seeking friendship with the Sultan and a diplomatic representative was dispatched with gifts to secure it. For the Ottomans, like the Muscovites, gifts occupied a central role in the creation and maintenance of diplomatic relationships, since the objects embodied an expression of friendship and amity. As noted by M. Talbot, friendly commercial relations were dependent upon two necessary acts: gift-giving and display and declaration of friendship.[9] In this regard, the Ottoman traditions mirrored those of the Muscovites. Similarly to the English relations with Muscovy, Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy highlights the difficulties of establishing new diplomatic relations in an unfamiliar cultural environment, implications of long-distance communication and the divergence of interests between the Crown and a mercantile Company.[10] While English interactions with the Ottomans were by no means identical to Anglo-Muscovite relations, some apparent similarities pose the bigger question of whether the English Crown was able to develop a unique diplomatic approach to its diplomacy that was aimed to circumvent political, ideological and cultural differences in pursuit of commercial interests.

Unlike Spain, England was a latecomer seeking to find its niche in the mercantile economy of the late sixteenth century. In order to attain commercial success, its approach to establishing new diplomatic relations in an unfamiliar cultural environment had to be more flexible than that of its Iberian rivals. The Crown's occasional willingness to do so enabled England to circumvent the questions of political, cultural and ideological incompatibility in pursuit of mercantile interests. This is evident not only within the Anglo-Ottoman diplomacy but also in its relations with the Muscovites. Moreover, diplomacy was not static, and diplomatic practice evolved and altered alongside the progression of direct

[9] M. Talbot, 'A Treaty of Narratives: Friendship, Gifts, and Diplomatic History in the British Capitulations of 1641', *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 48 (2016), pp. 368, 372.
[10] For an overview of the Levant Company and its activities see M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London, 1908).

encounters. Each direct encounter between the representatives of the English Crown and the Muscovite Tsars, or the Ottoman Sultan, offered an opportunity to learn about each other's practices and expectations. While all of this knowledge was not necessarily added to the existing diplomatic practice of each state, on occasion, there was some degree of flexibility.

To achieve its aims, the English diplomatic practice adapted gift-giving traditions to suit its agenda. In a similar fashion, the Muscovite Tsars employed their grants of privileges and favours as diplomatic bargaining tools to further their own political interests, whilst gifts of furs and falcons served as potent reminders of their mercantile wealth. Additionally, the tangible objects themselves were inevitable contributors towards an exchange of ideas and knowledge across cross-cultural boundaries. Thus, an examination of Anglo-Muscovite gift-exchange provides crucial insights not only into the progression of England's relations with the 'rude and barbarous kingdom', but most importantly it enriches the understanding of the cultural, ceremonial and political mechanics of premodern diplomatic practice.

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