




Articles

ARTICLE

Ottoman-Austrian Ceremonial Embassies of the First Half of the Seventeenth Century: The Selection of Ambassador Rıdvan Agha (1633)

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Abstract

The Treaty of Zsitvatorok, signed between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans in 1606, has long been accepted as a watershed in the relations between the two dynasties. Nevertheless, interest in its influence on diplomatic practices has flourished only recently. Focusing on the elaboration of new diplomatic traditions, such as the growing retinue sizes, use of titles for Ottoman ambassadors, and exchange of embassies at the border, this study argues that the post-Zsitvatorok period was marked by the Austrian insistence on, and reluctant Ottoman acceptance of, parity and reciprocity. By relying on the reports of Johann Rudolf Schmid von Schwarzenhorn, the Austrian resident representative in Istanbul, it closely scrutinizes the selection and preparation of the Ottoman ambassador (Rıdvan Agha) to Vienna in 1633. The article argues that the terms in the Zsitvatorok Treaty prompted the Ottoman diplomatic mechanism to refine itself in its dealings with the Austrian Habsburgs in the seventeenth century, encouraging the Ottomans to accept elements of modern diplomacy long before the establishment of Ottoman resident embassies in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: early modern diplomacy; Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606); Ottoman-Habsburg relations; titles; Großbotschaft; Johann Rudolf Schmid von Schwarzenhorn; Rıdvan Agha

Introduction

When [Austrian] ambassadors arrive at His Majesty Our Gracious Padishah with the cash and presents worth 200,000 thalers, as recently agreed, his excellence our gracious commander-in-chief should send one of his prominent county governors to the Archduke [of Austria] with presents worthy of his state. And when the [Austrian] presents reach His Majesty Our Mighty Sultan, He should also send presents with a dignitary to the Roman Caesar more respectfully than the accustomed fashion and in accordance with His stateliness and sultanate.¹

That the Ottoman sultan would now be obliged to send a gift embassy (or ceremonial embassy) to the Austrian Habsburgs was thus stipulated in the tenth article of the Turkish version of the Zsitvatorok Treaty of November 1606. This was a surprising novelty given that the Ottoman administration had never made a pledge of this sort before, and never to the Habsburgs. Article twelve similarly stated that gift embassies would again be sent reciprocally three years after this first round. Setting aside

¹Gustav Bayerle, “The Compromise at Zsitvatorok,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980): 5–54, at 43: “Onuncu Madde budur ki: sa’adetlü Padişahımız hazretlerine şimdikihalde müşavere olunan nakd ve yadigar ile 200.000 guruş olur büyükelçileri vasıl oldukda sa’adetlü serdarımız hazretleri dahi devletine layık hedaya ile bellü başlu bir sancakbegin Hersek hazretlerine gönderile ve ‘azametlü padişahımız hazretlerine pişkeş vasıl oldukda anlar dahi devlet ve saltanalarına layık olduğu üzere ‘adet-i kadimeden ziyadece ri’ayet ile Roma Çasar’ına bellü başlu adam hedaya ile göndereler.” Bayerle’s English translation of the Hungarian version on page 22 suggests that there was not a great discrepancy between different treaty versions, at least not on this specific subject.

the material or symbolic importance of the gifts for either court, these measures in the treaty text marked the first time the Ottomans were compelled by a European monarch to send a representative to a foreign court.²

In the Zsitvatorok Treaty's seventeen points, the Habsburg and Ottoman delegates had handled many issues, such as the bilateral recognition of borders, the preservation of existing fortifications and a prohibition on the construction of new ones, the exchange of prisoners, and certain territorial rearrangements.³ A nineteenth-century observer defined it as the "first international barrier that put *nec plus ultra* on the Ottoman power that was menacing Europe," adding that it established "the principle of amicable parity as the basis of mutual relations."⁴ According to Ludwig Fekete, in many respects, the treaty aimed to create a new order and an egalitarian political landscape for both parties. Despite its disregard for numerous unresolved matters, it was concluded by people who no longer maintained the superior claims and presumptuous attitudes of their predecessors and who were obliged to achieve a peaceful end after long years of fighting.⁵ Zsitvatorok became a formative moment for Austrian-Ottoman relations in the seventeenth century because it remained a reference point for subsequent treaties between the two powers until the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699.⁶

The provisions of the treaty were, however, more easily put down on paper than eventually realized. After all, the Ottoman administration would for the first time prepare an obligatory ceremonial embassy for a European audience, and it had to please the Austrian ruling cadres. That is to say, issues such as arranging a proper title for the Ottoman envoy, assembling an embassy retinue, or making the right choice for the representative would occupy the minds of the decision-makers at the Porte. And this would become a persistent issue of consequence since the peace signed in 1606 was renewed several times in the seventeenth century.⁷ The present study will try to answer the question of how the terms in the peace treaty were reflected in actual diplomatic practice. It will also consider the larger implications of these novel practices in how the Ottomans changed their diplomatic perception of the Habsburgs in the aftermath of Zsitvatorok.

Focusing on the Austrian case contributes to our understanding of Ottoman diplomacy in the early modern period. Even though earlier studies emphasized that the Ottoman transition from unilateralism to reciprocal diplomacy started late in the eighteenth century with the opening of Ottoman permanent embassies in Europe,⁸ later works suggested that the roots of modern diplomacy took form in Ottoman Istanbul, where the main characteristics of modern diplomacy—permanent missions on the one hand, and the principles of extraterritoriality and reciprocity on the other—were all shaped by the experiences of Italian states in the Ottoman Empire.⁹ The present study demonstrates that Ottoman diplomatic reciprocity started in the seventeenth century, and that it became possible due to the

²Karl Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins Gesandtschaftsreise nach Konstantinopel: Ein Beitrag zum Frieden von Zsitvatorok (1606)* (Munich, 1983), 60.

³József Zachar, "Der 'Lange Krieg' zwischen dem Osmanischen Reich und dem Habsburgerreich: Von der Kriegserklärung bis zum Friedensabschluss 1593–1606," in *"Einigkeit und Frieden sollen auf Seiten jeder Partei sein": Die Friedensschlüsse von Wien (23.06.1606) und Zsitvatorok (15.11.1606)*, eds. János Báta, Manfred Jatzlauk, and Klára Papp (Debrecen, 2007), 229–44; Bayerle, "The Compromise at Zsitvatorok," 19–22.

⁴Baron I. de Testa, *Recueil des Traités de la Porte Ottomane, Tome Neuvieme, Autriche* (Paris, 1989), 16.

⁵Ludwig Fekete, *Türkische Schriften aus dem Archive des Palatins Nikolaus Esterházy* (Budapest, 1932), xxvii–xxviii.

⁶Dennis Dierks, "Friedensbild und Herrscherbild in osmanisch-habsburgischen Friedensverträgen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen: Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Arno Strohmeier, Norbert Spannenberger, and Robert Pech (Stuttgart, 2013), 311–31.

⁷Neuhäusel (1608), Vienna (1615), Komorn (1618), Gyarmat (1625), Szóny (1627 and 1642), Istanbul (1649), Vasvár (1664), and, again, Istanbul (1681), see Ernst D. Petritsch, "Vom Tribut zum Ehrengeschenk: Friedensbemühungen zwischen Hamburgern und Osmanen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," in *Si vis pacem...? Bemühungen um Frieden und Friedenssicherung im pannonischen Raum vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart: Tagungsband der 17. Schlaininger Gespräche 1997 (22.–25. September 1997)*, eds. Rudolf Kropf and Margarete Wagner (Eisenstadt, 2011), 65–77.

⁸J. C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European State System," *Middle East Journal* 15, no. 2 (Spring, 1961): 141–52.

⁹Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), 186–87; Harriet Rudolph, "The Ottoman Empire and the Institutionalization of European Diplomacy, 1500–1700," in *Islam and International Law*, eds. Marie-Luisa Frick and Andreas Th. Müller (Leiden, 2013), 161–83.

Austrian Habsburgs' influence in the decades after Zsitvatorok. In other words, instead of looking at how European diplomacy was influenced by the Ottomans, this study argues that the Austrian insistence on diplomatic parity encouraged the Ottomans to adopt elements of reciprocity long before the opening of permanent embassies at the end of the early modern period.

The overwhelming majority of scholarship related to seventeenth-century Ottoman-Habsburg diplomatic interactions focuses on the Habsburg embassies to Istanbul.¹⁰ Recent studies have reconstructed in remarkable detail how Habsburg diplomats were chosen, established, and operated during their missions in the Ottoman capital.¹¹ It is, nonetheless, difficult to make a similar claim for the Ottoman emissaries, and therefore, the main concern of the present study is to analyze the selection of an Ottoman ambassador in the post-Zsitvatorok era.

In order to understand the Ottoman diplomatic mechanism and the preparation of the ambassador in 1633–34, Ottoman archival documentation will be used in tandem with the dispatches of Johann Rudolf Schmid von Schwarzenhorn (1590–1667), who served as the Austrian resident representative at the Porte between 1629 and 1643. On the Ottoman side, in general, documentation is strong in portraying the mechanics of diplomatic procedure: protocol registers (*teşrifat defteri*) and central treasury books (*büyük ruznamçe defteri*) provide useful information with respect to Ottoman diplomatic terms (employed to define if an embassy held the quality of ambassador, *internuntius*, or resident), the date of arrival and departure for each embassy, and basic financial matters relating to diplomatic agents, such as the amount of daily allowance or transportation costs paid to emissaries visiting the Porte. However, these sources facilitate the study of incoming emissaries, that is, the Austrian diplomats to the Ottoman court, rather than the opposite. Furthermore, the lack of ego documents (diaries, personal letters, travelogues of embassy members) and the scarcity of extant decrees issued by the Ottoman imperial administration in the first half of the seventeenth century pose a challenge to any analysis of diplomatic issues. So does the dearth of Ottoman embassy reports in the period in question, which renders it difficult to scrutinize the Ottoman emissaries to Vienna or Prague.¹² This being the case, the narrative aspect of any Ottoman emissary setting out for a mission at a foreign court is lacking for analyses before the eighteenth century, when the first systematic diplomatic reports (*sefaretnâme*) emerged. Therefore, the correspondence of European diplomats in Istanbul offers the only evidence to study how an Ottoman ambassador was made fit for the mission in 1633.

In the following pages, the focus will be on Johann Rudolf Schmid von Schwarzenhorn's documentation, which became the primary source of information for the Viennese court. Like any

¹⁰See, for example, Rudolf Neck, "Andrea Negroni (Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der österreichisch-türkischen Beziehungen nach dem Frieden von Zsitvatorok)," *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 3 (1950): 166–95; Karl Teply, *Die kaiserliche Großbotschaft an Sultan Murad IV. im Jahre 1628 des Freiherrn Hans Ludwig von Kuefsteins Fahrt zur Hohen Pforte* (Vienna, 1976); Petr Štěpánek, "War and Peace in the West (1644/1645): A Dilemma at the Threshold of Felicity?," *Archiv Orientální* 69, no. 2 (2001): 327–40; Anna Huemer et al., eds., *Reisebericht des Johann Georg Metzger über die Internuntiatour des Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn nach Konstantinopel 1649, Konstantinopel/Wien, 1650*, <https://gams.uni-graz.at/o:dipko.rb>.

¹¹Among many others, see Gergely Brandl and János Szabados, "The Burden of Authority – The Preparations for the Ambassadorial Mission to Constantinople of Baron Johann Ludwig von Kuefstein in 1628," in *New Approaches to the Habsburg–Ottoman Diplomatic Relations*, eds. Sándor Papp and Gellért Ernő Marton (Szeged, 2021), 63–86; Christoph Würflinger, "Die Verschlüsselung der Korrespondenz des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel, Alexander von Greiffenklau zu Vollrads (1643–48)," *Chronica* 19 (2020): 6–23; Zsuzsanna Cziráki, "Making Decisions at the Imperial Court in Vienna Related to the Election Procedure of the Resident Ambassador Simon Reniger von Renningen (1649–1666) in Constantinople," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 33 (2016): 91–99; and Zsuzsanna Cziráki, "Mein gueter, väterlicher Maister' – Wissenstransfer unter kaiserlichen Gesandten an der Hohen Pforte in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Chronica* 19 (2020): 42–83.

¹²So far, Ottoman historiography has unearthed only two Ottoman embassy accounts from the second half of the seventeenth century, and none from the first half. See, Ernst D. Petritsch, "Die osmanische Großbotschaft und der Weltreisende Evliyâ Çelebi in Wien (1665/66)," in *Die Schlacht von Mogersdorf / St. Gotthard und der Friede von Eisenburg/Vasvár 1664. Rahmenbedingungen, Akteure, Auswirkungen und Rezeption eines europäischen Ereignisses*, eds. Karin Sperl, Martin Scheutz, and Arno Strohmeier (Eisenstadt, 2016), 269–91; Richard F. Kreutel, "Ewlijâ Çelebis Bericht über die türkische Großbotschaft des Jahres 1665 in Wien: Ein Vergleich mit zeitgenössischen türkischen und österreichischen Quellen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 51 (1948/52): 188–242; Yasir Yılmaz, *An Ottoman Peace Attempt at the Habsburg Court during the Ottoman-Holy League War: Zülfikar Efendi in Vienna, 1688–1693* (MA thesis, Ankara, 2008).

contemporary resident diplomat, he regularly sent dispatches (about every three weeks) to Vienna either in German or in Italian, which are now preserved in *Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv's Turcica* collection and provide invaluable information into Ottoman politics, including the empire's foreign relations.¹³ Schmid's reports reflect his interviews with the Ottoman authorities; in the summer of 1633, his negotiations revolved around the preparation of the Austrian-Ottoman exchange of ambassadors. In the absence of Ottoman narrative accounts relating to the seventeenth-century Ottoman embassy preparations, Schmid's dispatches emerge as an invaluable source base to understand the selection of the Ottoman embassy.

This article first addresses the new diplomatic concepts introduced by the Treaty of Zsitvatorok. It will then analyze the preparation of the Ottoman ambassador Rıdvan Agha in 1633 with reference to a number of other Ottoman embassies sent to Vienna in the first half of the seventeenth century. Maintaining Austrian-Ottoman diplomatic relations after the Peace Treaty of Zsitvatorok, it will be shown, required constant adjustments through which the Austrian insistence gradually prompted the Ottoman diplomatic mechanism to refine itself in its dealings with the Habsburg court, in other words, to adopt the principle of diplomatic reciprocity.

The Diplomatic Reverberations of the Treaty of Zsitvatorok

A number of features of the Austrian-Ottoman embassy exchange in 1633–34 were shared by other ceremonial embassies sent by both courts to each other's capitals after the signing of the Zsitvatorok Treaty in 1606. And these features were novelties introduced by the treaty, creating new concerns, caveats, and practices. Therefore, in order to better contextualize the 1633–34 embassy exchange, it is worthwhile to review the setting that was established with Zsitvatorok.

Studies on Ottoman-Habsburg relations make it clear that Zsitvatorok was a turning point in the political balance between the two powers. The treaties would from then on be signed not in Istanbul, but on a relatively neutral ground in the frontier area, symbolically recognizing the equality of both parties.¹⁴ Furthermore, the Habsburgs, who had been paying a yearly tribute to the Ottomans since 1547, would no longer do so. The rulers on both sides would now address each other as emperors, bidding an end to the Ottoman political and titular superiority. In short, the emphasis was now on the equality (parity) of both parties.¹⁵

Works on Ottoman-Habsburg bilateral diplomatic relations, nevertheless, have duly pointed to the fact that the Ottoman attitude toward the acceptance of this parity was rather limited. Hedda Reindl-Kiel, for example, argued that Ottoman claims of symbolic superiority over the Habsburgs continued throughout the seventeenth century and came to an end only with the Treaty of Passarowitz in 1718.¹⁶ Georg Wagner, in the same vein, noted that the parity established in 1606 was always breached in essential matters, such as the exchange of gifts, since the Ottomans constantly sent gifts of lower value than those of the Habsburgs.¹⁷ The Porte's approach to this parity is best described by Strohmeyer, who called it "the core theme of the peace processes" in the seventeenth century; the

¹³Peter Meinenberger, *Johan Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn als kaiserlicher Resident in Konstantinopel in den Jahren 1629–1643* (Bern, 1973); Arno Strohmeyer, "Kategorisierungsleistungen und Denkschemata in diplomatischer Kommunikation: Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn als kaiserlicher Resident an der Hohen Pforte (1629–1643)," in *Politische Kommunikationen zwischen Imperien: Der diplomatische Aktionsraum Südost- und Osteuropa*, eds. Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Harriet Rudolph, and Christian Steppan, (Innsbruck, 2013), 21–29.

¹⁴Dierks, "Friedensbild und Herrscherbild," 325.

¹⁵Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins*; Bayerle, "The Compromise at Zsitvatorok"; Harald Heppner, "Der lange Türkenkrieg (1593–1606) - Ein Wendepunkt im habsburgisch-osmanischen Gegensatz," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/Journal of Ottoman Studies* 2, no. 2 (1981): 133–46; Rudolf Neck, *Österreichs Türkenpolitik unter Melchior Klesl* (Vienna, 1948), 27–58.

¹⁶Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Symbolik, Selbstbild und Beschwigtungsstrategien: Diplomatische Geschenke der Osmanen für den Wiener Hof (17.–18. Jahrhundert)," in Strohmeyer, Spannenberger, and Pech, *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen*, 265–82.

¹⁷Georg Wagner, "Österreich und die Osmanen im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Hermann Graf Czernins Großbotschaft nach Konstantinopel 1644/45," *Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs* 14 (1984): 325–92.

Habsburgs, he wrote, were “insistent on achieving this equality of status,” which the Ottomans “only hesitantly allowed” them.¹⁸

These claims about Ottoman rigidity concerning parity with the Habsburgs, however, fail to adequately portray how much of the new political and diplomatic scenario the Ottomans did accept. “Hesitance” comes to the fore as the operative word in those interpretations, and it eclipses the fact that the Ottomans did eventually accept (at least partly) the demands put forth by the Habsburgs. By analyzing the embassies sent to Vienna and the procedures at play in their preparations, it is possible to gauge how the Ottomans modified their diplomatic treatment of the Habsburgs. In this way, the refinement of Ottoman bilateral diplomacy with the Habsburgs becomes more visible, something not seen with any other European power in the seventeenth century.

In examining the Ottoman Empire’s changing attitude toward the Austrian Habsburgs, the first thing to emphasize is the apparent preeminence accorded to the Habsburg diplomatic representation: already by 1612, the imperial ambassadors at the Porte “were given the highest honours by the sultan” among their European counterparts.¹⁹ Furthermore, the evolving diplomatic categories in the Ottoman registers subsequent to the Treaty of Zsitvatorok are telling in the same respect: it was only with the Habsburgs that the Ottomans conducted a practice predicated on a tripartite spectrum of ambassador, *internuntius*, and agent/resident.²⁰ But before going into detail about these categories, it is worthwhile to give a brief overview of diplomatic terminology of the early modern period and how the Ottomans perceived it.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the titles carried by diplomatic representatives in Europe were categorized under two headings: ambassadors, who were of the higher (first) rank and agents/residents, who were of lower (second) rank.²¹ Ambassadors were superior in the rights they were granted. In Austria, for example, they had the privilege of “receiving the first visit, entering the palace courtyard with a six-horse carriage, keeping their headgear in the emperor’s presence with his permission, and attending festivities at the court.”²² But such categories or privileges did not mean much to the Ottomans: English, Dutch, or French ambassadors who served as first-rank diplomats in permanent quality at the Porte were simply referred to as *elçi* (literally, emissary) throughout the seventeenth century. The representatives of the Ottoman tributary states of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania were agents (second rank) and given the name *kapikethüdası* (literally, stewards) by the Ottomans.²³ In short, distinguishing between the *elçi* and *kapikethüdası* was the most conspicuous categorization effort for the Ottomans.

A transformation, however, took place regarding the Austrians. After 1606, the Habsburg envoys sent for ceremonial purposes and in the quality of an ambassador (first rank), i.e., *Grossbotschafter*, were called a *büyükelçi* (literally, grand emissary). The second category was of the second rank, namely, *internuntius*, and referred to as *küçükelçi* (literally, small emissary) by the Ottomans.²⁴ Both *Grossbotschafter* (*büyükelçi*) and *internuntius* (*küçükelçi*)²⁵ were extraordinary envoys who fulfilled

¹⁸Arno Strohmeyer, “Krieg und Frieden in den habsburgisch-osmanischen Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit,” in *Die Türkei, der deutsche Sprachraum und Europa. Multidisziplinäre Annäherungen und Zugänge*, eds. Reiner Arntz, Michael Gehler, and Mehmet Tahir Öncü (Vienna, 2014), 31–50.

¹⁹Tracey A. Sowerby, “Sociability and Ceremony: Diplomats at the Porte c. 1550–1632,” in *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court, c. 1500–1630*, eds. Tracey A. Sowerby and Christopher Markiewicz (New York, 2021), 217–42.

²⁰On this issue, see Meienberger, *Johan Rudolf Schmid*, 59–60; and most recently, János Szabados, *Die Karriere des deutschen Renegaten Hans Caspar in Ofen (1627–1660) im politischen und kulturellen Kontext* (Vienna, 2023), 39–43.

²¹Otto Krauske, *Die Entwicklung der ständigen Diplomatie vom fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis zu den Beschlüssen von 1815 und 1818* (Leipzig, 1885), 154.

²²Leopold Auer, “Diplomatisches Zeremoniell am Kaiserhof der Frühen Neuzeit: Perspektiven eines Forschungsthemas,” in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im mittleren Osten in der frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota, and Jan Paul Niederkorn (Vienna, 2009), 33–54, 43–44.

²³Gábor Kármán, “Sovereignty and Representation: Tributary States in the Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic System of the Ottoman Empire,” in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, eds. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden, 2013), 155–85.

²⁴Bolsover notes that *internuntius* had been a second-rank *ad hoc* diplomatic agent in the early modern era. See G.H. Bolsover, “The Meaning and History of the Term ‘Internuncio,’” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 12, no. 36 (1935): 145–51.

²⁵It seems that even though *internuntius* was *küçükelçi* in the first half of the seventeenth century, it started to get translated as *orta elçi* (lit. middle emissary) in the second half. Songül Çolak, ed., *Viyana’da Osmanlı Diplomasisi (Zülfikar Paşa’nın*

their ad hoc missions in the Ottoman capital within a few months. In comparison to *internuntius* who completed minor tasks such as congratulating imperial enthronements or transporting the negotiated treaty texts to Istanbul before ratification, the *Grossbotschafter* was fulfilling ceremonial missions as ambassador (first rank) at the Porte in order to consolidate peace renewals. Therefore a *Grossbotschafter* was obviously higher in prestige and was recruited from a higher social background.²⁶ These extraordinary embassies aside, there were also resident Habsburg representatives (who started to settle in Istanbul after 1610 as second-rank representatives, namely, as either *agents* or *residents*), who formed a third category and, similar to those from tributary states, were named *kapikethüdası* (literally, stewards).²⁷ Admittedly, the distinction between *büyükelçi* and *küçükkelçi* was also made with reference to ad hoc Polish embassies at the time, too;²⁸ nonetheless, they did not hold any permanent representation at the Porte until the second half of the eighteenth century, rendering the Polish case less relevant than the Habsburg one.²⁹

That this tripartite, hierarchical categorization (*büyükelçi*, *küçükkelçi*, *kapikethüdası*) was used only for the Habsburgs points to the exceptionality of the Austrian case for the Ottomans. Furthermore, since the Habsburgs paid attention to not appointing ambassadors (i.e., first-rank diplomats) as resident representatives but rather chose to employ *agents* or *residents* as permanent (i.e., second rank) diplomats in Istanbul, the Ottoman wording *kapikethüdası* showcases the Porte's respect for the Austrian choice of title. In addition, the Ottomans themselves adopted two of these categories in their dealings with the Habsburg court: they sent their own ambassadors (*büyükelçis*) and *internuntii* (*küçükkelçis*)³⁰ to Austria (even though they continued to abstain from opening a permanent representative in Vienna), which was not the case with any other European court. Lastly, the fact that the term *büyükelçi* still serves as the equivalent of “ambassador” in modern Turkish suggests that the Zsitvatorok Treaty marked an important transition in the modernization of Ottoman diplomacy.

To further emphasize the peculiarity of Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic relations, the issue of permanent representation must be highlighted. It is a well-known aspect of Ottoman diplomatic practice that until 1793, the Ottomans adhered to the employment of ad hoc missions, refusing to open permanent diplomatic establishments in any European capital. Hence, there was no Ottoman resident embassy in Vienna throughout most of the early modern period.³¹ Nonetheless, the Austrian Habsburgs, notwithstanding their own aloofness from creating a widespread network of resident diplomats, took pains to maintain an embassy in Istanbul, emphasizing the Ottomans' “wide-ranging impact on the [Habsburg] Emperor's foreign policy.” This becomes all the more important when one considers that the two other courts where the Austrians had a standing embassy at the close of the sixteenth century were those in Rome and Madrid, showing the religious and familial connections of the Habsburg dynasty.³² Finally, the obligatory gift embassies can be brought into the discussion once more. The gift embassies that both sides were supposed to exchange were those of the

Mükaleme Takriri 1688–1692 (Istanbul, 2007), 78. Furthermore, in terms of function, the Austrian permanent representatives at the Porte gradually started to bear the title of *internuntius* instead of agent/resident after the 1740s. See Bolsover, “The Meaning,” 148.

²⁶Szabados, *Die Karriere des deutschen Renegaten Hans Caspar*, 40.

²⁷Meienberger, *Johan Rudolf Schmid*, 34–35, 59–60. For the use of the term *küçükkelçi* in the contemporary Ottoman sources, see Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (hereafter BOA), Kamil Kepeci Defterleri (KK.d) 667, 21: “elçi-i küçük-i Nemçe”; for *büyükelçi* (or *elçi-i kebir*), see BOA, Maliyeden Müdevver Defterler (MAD.d) 7339, 17; for *kapikethüdası* (or *kethüda-yı der*) see BOA, Büyükrüznamçe Defterleri (D.BRZ.d) 20683, 195; BOA, D.BRZ.d 20685, 239.

²⁸For an example from 1635, see BOA, Sadaret Defteri (A.d) 435, 34 “elçi-i küçük-i Kral-ı Leh.”

²⁹Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of ‘Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden, 1999), 171–72.

³⁰Ottoman ambassador Recep Pasha, for example, was defined as *büyükelçi* in Turkish, *ambasciatore* in Italian, and *Pottschafter* in German correspondence in 1628–29. See Gábor Kármán et al., *The Correspondence of the Beylerbeys of Buda 1617–1630* (Budapest, 2022), 476, 494, 571, 650.

³¹Bülent Arı, “Early Ottoman Diplomacy: Ad Hoc Period,” in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A.Nuri Yurdusev (Basingstoke, 2004), 36–65.

³²Aneliya Stoyanova, “The Benefits and Limits of Permanent Diplomacy: Austrian Habsburg Ambassadors and Ottoman-Spanish Diplomacy in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century,” in Sowerby and Markiewicz, *Diplomatic Cultures at the Ottoman Court*, 153–73, 154.

Grossbotschafter status, suggesting that the Habsburg court was the only European one to which the Ottomans were now obliged to send a *büyükelçi* to transfer their presents.

Another concept that carries meaning for early modern (and modern) diplomacy was that of equality, or *parität*, as the Austrians sources referred to it. It can be understood with reference to the principle of reciprocity in international relations. According to Jeremy Black, reciprocity was “central to the issue of honour” and highly relevant when sending an envoy in the early modern period.³³ In the Ottoman case, reciprocity might at first seem hard to detect, since the Ottomans eschewed opening resident embassies throughout the early modern era.³⁴ Nonetheless, the concern for the maintenance of parity established a certain degree of reciprocity among Ottoman and Habsburg extraordinary embassies in the European sense. In short, both the Ottoman and Habsburg courts placed greater emphasis on the diplomatic representation of the other power than with other European states, and as a result, the Ottomans underwent a degree of diplomatic transformation, as this study seeks to make clear.

Launching a Diplomatic Mission: Searching for a Candidate

Teply suggests that in the late fifteenth century, the first Ottoman representatives visited Vienna, and throughout the early modern period, some ninety people were sent by the Ottomans to the Habsburg imperial court.³⁵ Nonetheless, only a very limited number of these figures have attracted the attention of researchers,³⁶ and even less work has been done on how they were made fit for their missions.³⁷ This being the case, studying the individual Ottoman embassies to Austria becomes essential in not only understanding Ottoman-Austrian relations in further detail but also counterbalancing the weight of research on the Habsburg missions to Istanbul. The present study therefore addresses one such Ottoman official sent to the Habsburg court, ambassador Rıdvan Agha, who was exchanged with his Austrian counterpart Count Johann Rudolf Puchheim (c. 1600–51) in 1634 to corroborate the peace between the two empires.

To begin with the temporal framework, Rıdvan Agha’s diplomatic mission in 1634 corresponded to a period when the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48) was ravaging Central Europe and when the Ottomans were fighting the Safavids on their eastern frontier. Although it might be tempting to believe that the Habsburgs initiated the exchange process in response to the incessant warfare inside the Holy Roman Empire’s territories,³⁸ archival documentation maintains that it was the Ottomans who asked for the embassies. In his report dated 13 March 1633, the Habsburg resident in Istanbul, Rudolf Schmid, made it clear that he had recently been admonished by the grand vizier to alert Vienna regarding the sending of a Habsburg ambassador to Istanbul.³⁹

³³For the concept of *parität*, see Arno Strohmeier, “Internationale Geschichte und Ernährungsforschung: Verwendungsformen und Funktionen des Kaffees in der Habsburgisch-Osmanischen Diplomatie (16.-18. Jh.),” in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis/International History in Theory and Practice*, eds. Barbara Haider-Wilson, William D. Godsey, and Wolfgang Mueller (Vienna, 2017), 613–33; Jeremy Black, *A History of Diplomacy* (London, 2010), 68–69.

³⁴For arguments regarding the early modern Ottoman understanding of reciprocity, see A. Nuri Yurdusev, “The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy,” in Yurdusev, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 28; Ari, “Early Ottoman Diplomacy,” 44.

³⁵Karl Teply, “Türkische Gesandtschaften nach Wien (1488–1792),” *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 20 (1976): 14–32.

³⁶For seventeenth-century examples, see Yasir Yilmaz, “An Ottoman Peace Attempt at the Habsburg Court during the Ottoman-Holy League War: Zülfikâr Efendi in Vienna, 1688–1693” (MA thesis, Ankara, 2008); Philip Steiner, “Zwischen religiösen Vorbehalten und diplomatischem Pflichtgefühl. Die habsburgische Großbotschaft unter Walter Leslie an die Hohe Pforte (1665–1666),” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 132 (2012): 276–303; Petritsch, “Die osmanische Großbotschaft,” 269–91; M. Halef Cevrioglu, “Avusturya’da Osmanlı Diplomasisi: Büyükelçi Recep Ağa’nın Viyana Sefareti (1628–1629),” *OTAM: Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi* 50 (2021): 81–111.

³⁷A notable exception is Murat Uluskan, “Bir Osmanlı Elçisinin Yolculuk Hazırlığı: İbrahim Paşa’nın 1699 Avusturya Elçiliği,” *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 20 (2008): 251–75.

³⁸By looking at the Habsburg ambassador’s instructions, Szabados is misled to conclude that the Austrians wished to start the exchange first. János Szabados, “The Habsburg and Transylvanian Aims Related to the Campaign of the Ottomans Against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1634),” *Prace Historyczne* 148, no. 4 (2021): 731–43.

³⁹Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (OeStA), Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter HHStA), Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Korrespondenzen 1633), f. 34v: “hatt mich der Vesir ermannt, ich solle schreiben wegen deß Gesandte sollicitirn. Damit Eu:

Schmid's reaction to the demand was positive, but far from being an outright acceptance. Now that the Ottomans had asked for an ambassador, Schmid had to ensure that they were to commission one of their own, and, in the appropriate fashion, befitting the dignity of the emperor. Therefore, from this earliest moment onward, Schmid assumed a negotiating attitude and tried to intervene in the appointment of the Ottoman ambassador. His aim, as expected, was to ensure parity between both parties by trying to influence the decisions of the Ottoman ruling cadres, particularly, the grand vizier. Accordingly, Schmid's response to the grand vizier's admonition was that the emperor would send his ambassador if the sultan would send his own to Vienna. Nonetheless, Schmid continued, he had not yet heard of the appointment of any Ottoman ambassador (*nambhaft machen*) and would not write to his government before he did so. When the grand vizier simply retorted that when the Austrian ambassador departed the Ottoman emissary "from here will not be lacking,"⁴⁰ Schmid had applied his first pressure on the Ottomans to take the embassy selection process seriously.

About two months after this meeting with the grand vizier, Schmid was informed that the Porte had chosen an official for the mission, whose name was not yet specified. Schmid was merely allowed to know that the would-be ambassador was yet to arrive in Istanbul.⁴¹ A month later still, nothing had changed: the official chosen by the Porte would soon reach the capital, and the Porte would invest him with the mission and prepare him for departure (*benennen und abfertigen*). In any case, noted Schmid, certain people at the Porte hoped that they would receive the Austrian ambassador without making much of a concession to the Ottoman side; the Ottomans still resented the parity between the two sides.⁴² In July 1633, however, the Ottoman ruling apparatus took concrete steps toward settling the issue.

First, the governor-general of Buda, who was the administrator and commander of the province neighboring the Habsburg lands and in charge of establishing regular contact with the Austrian court, sent word to Istanbul that the Ottoman ambassador needed to be prepared for his mission.⁴³ This request implies that Austrian decision-makers must have promised smooth progress for the arrangements regarding their ambassador, now obliging the Ottoman side to accelerate their preparations. It must be kept in mind that the exchanges took place on the border, i.e., closer to Vienna, requiring the Ottoman emissaries to cover a longer distance to reach the border from Istanbul.

More importantly, rumors now started to spread regarding the identity of the Ottoman ambassador. It became known that the Porte's appointee was the steward of the governor-general of Buda (*Offnerischen Agent*), which was puzzling for Schmid. As he noted in his report, the steward was a simple *çavuş* (an official responsible for minor tasks in the Ottoman Empire) with the title of *agha*, who would be promoted to a higher position before setting out for Vienna. For Schmid, this was quite problematic: he was well aware that "all Turkish officers and ministers, from highest to the lowest, were the slaves and dependents of the sultan, among whom was to be found no noble, [but rather] they were esteemed in accordance with their offices." So, the post of *çavuş* was not an impressive office. And it would seem as if the ambassador would be representing the governor-general of Buda, not the Ottoman sultan. Speaking from experience, Schmid pointed out that the latest Ottoman ambassador in Vienna (Recep Agha, 1628–29)⁴⁴ had practically vanished in Ottoman bureaucracy after his return to Istanbul.⁴⁵

Kay: May:tt ehest einen abfertigen, solches binde die freuntshafft, andergestalt kunde man nicht urtheillen, wie zwischen uns ein rechte frid. habe ein schlechtes ansehen." In this report, Schmid also discusses with the grand vizier the change of Ottoman governors on the Hungarian frontier and issues related to Transylvania.

⁴⁰OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 34v.

⁴¹OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 73r (Constantinop[e]l, 19 May [1]633). The remainder of this report informs the Austrian court about the Ottoman campaign against the Safavids and the developments in the Black Sea region.

⁴²OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 81r (Datum Constant[inope]l den 12 Juny 1633): "...Sie alß dan einen Gesandten wollfeyle und mit leichten Konditionen bekommen möchte, dan iezo geht innen her, die Paritet zue herzen, und kombt sie harrt an."

⁴³OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 91r (Datum Constant[inope]l den 12 Jülj 1633).

⁴⁴Cevrioğlu, "Avusturya'da Osmanlı Diplomasisi"; Teply, *Die kaiserliche Großbotschaft an Sultan Murad IV.*

⁴⁵OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 93v-94r (Datum Constant[inope]l den 12 Jülj 1633): "alle Türkhishe Officier und Ministri, anzureithen vom höchsten biß auff den geringsten, [f. 94r] sein von Sklaven und deß Sultan leibaigen,

Schmid's observation was quite accurate. The established literature confirms that in the Ottoman Empire, it was the honor of the office that mattered. In this vein, for example, the practice of gift-giving drastically diverged from that of the European one; the higher an official held an office in the Ottoman bureaucracy, the better gift he expected. As opposed to the European perception, gifts were not understood to create a personal obligation between the giver and the recipient, but rather they were deemed to be "intended solely and exclusively for the honor of the office."⁴⁶ So, when an Ottoman ambassador was demoted after the end of the mission, he automatically lost his social esteem and indirectly repudiated the principle of parity between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, which Schmid did not wish to happen. Schmid's ideal candidate, it seems, had to be someone who was esteemed highly at the Porte at present and who would also keep that status after the end of the mission. Therefore, he felt it expedient to raise his objections beforehand this time, as will be shown below.

Schmid's uneasiness in this respect requires further analysis since it touches certain controversial chords of early modern diplomacy and was strongly associated with one of the most problematic issues about the Austro-Ottoman reciprocal gift embassies in the post-1606 period: the determination of the titles the ambassadors were supposed to bear. In consecutive embassy exchanges, the use of the proper title gave rise to debate due to the Habsburg dislike of the titles assumed by the Ottoman ambassadors. Here again, the Habsburg emphasis was placed on achieving parity between the two sides.

The ceremonial embassies the Habsburgs sent to the Ottoman Empire were all led by members of the nobility (all *Grossbotschafter* were barons) during the period under study,⁴⁷ creating the expectation that the Ottomans would also reciprocate the practice. By European standards, such an expectation had a logic since the concept of "honor" (*Ehre*) was associated with social capital. Accordingly, a representative taking an audience with a European monarch was supposed to have a social capital worthy of his own monarch. Since belonging to the aristocracy was in a way the precondition to possess such capital, the Habsburgs had every reason to anticipate that the Ottomans would also appoint an ambassador from among the Ottoman nobility, or at least, the elite.⁴⁸

The early modern Ottoman diplomatic mechanism, however, was not bothered by such concepts. To begin with, the Ottoman bureaucracy did not include any category of specifically defined diplomat; and the Ottoman emissaries to European courts were simply palace officials such as *çavuş* (pursuivants) or *müteferrika* (men fulfilling miscellaneous duties), whom Hammer defined as *Huissier* and *Furiere*, respectively, under the common category of *Staatsbothen*.⁴⁹ More importantly, Ottoman society did not have any aristocratic class comparable to the European ones; instead, becoming an Ottoman "elite" was closely linked with serving the sultan. In other words, the concept of "honor" in the Ottoman Empire was transferred to an individual in accordance with the position he held in the sultan's administration. Hence, being a member of the Ottoman administration was concomitant to becoming an Ottoman elite.⁵⁰

This was precisely the solution adopted by the Porte when they were confronted with the obligation to choose a title for their ambassadors after 1606. The Ottoman ambassador Ahmet Kethüda (his epithet *kethüda* meaning a steward, or *Sachwalter*⁵¹), to begin with, was a *müteferrika* of the Porte, who served as the steward of Ali Pasha, the Governor-General of the Buda Province.⁵² This low-ranking

unter Ihnen ist kein Adel, nachdem ihre Ambter höher oder minder, auch also mehrers oder weniger werden sie respectiert"; regarding Reep Agha, "nach dessen widerkhunfft hab nit gespürt, man ihm umb ein haar werths mehrers æstimirt hette."

⁴⁶Peter Burschel, "A Clock for the Sultan: Diplomatic Gift-giving from an Intercultural Perspective," *The Medieval History Journal*, 16 no. 2 (2013): 547–63; Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Der Duft der Macht. Osmanen, islamische Tradition, muslimische Mächte und der Westen im Spiegel diplomatischer Geschenke," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 95 (2005): 195–258.

⁴⁷Cziráki, "Mein gueter, väterlicher Maister," 53.

⁴⁸André Krischer, "Souveränität als sozialer Status: Zur Funktion des diplomatischen Zeremoniells in der Frühen Neuzeit," in Kauz, Rota, and Niederkorn, *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell*, 5–8.

⁴⁹Joseph von Hammer, *Des osmanischen Reichs Staatsverfassung und Staatsverwaltung, Zweiter Teil* (Vienna, 1815), 54.

⁵⁰Ehud Toledano, "The Emergence of Ottoman-Local Elites (1700–1900): A Framework for Research," in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas: A History From Within*, eds. Illan Pappé and Moshe Ma'oz (London, 1997), 145–62.

⁵¹Hammer, *Des osmanischen Reichs*, 29.

⁵²Uğur Kurtaran, *Osmanlı-Avusturya Diplomatik İlişkileri, 1526–1791* (MA thesis, Tokat, 2006), 164.

Ottoman official visited the Austrian court numerous times as an ambassador in the first and second decades of the seventeenth century, and it is known that in 1617 he held the title of the *Pasha of Kanizsa* (Kanischa). Even though this *müteferrika* was not actually appointed the governor-general of the Kanizsa province, he was temporarily given that title to elevate his status during his diplomatic mission to the Habsburgs.⁵³ In the nominal capacity as the governor-general of the Kanizsa province, Ahmet Kethüda became a *pasha*, and hence, a member of the Ottoman elite with enough social capital to represent his sultan at the Habsburg court, if only for a limited duration of time.

In 1628, the Ottoman ambassador Recep Agha was similarly promoted from a simple *müteferrika* of the Porte to the pasha of Kanizsa for his mission to Vienna.⁵⁴ The registers of the imperial treasury and Buda provincial treasury vividly attest to how Recep left Istanbul as an *agha*, reached Buda with the same title, and was transformed into a *pasha* before moving into Austrian territory.⁵⁵ This transition from *agha* to *pasha* in his title, or from *müteferrika* to honorary governor-generalship vis-a-vis his function, immediately disappeared once Recep returned to the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁶

Pasha of Kanizsa was not the only title to honor the Ottoman ambassadors to Vienna. Hasan Agha was given the pasha title for Timișoara around 1650 when he was appointed ceremonial ambassador to Austria.⁵⁷ Provinces outside Hungary could also provide Ottoman officials with temporary titles in ambassadorial missions (*müteferrika* Kara Mehmed in 1665 and Zülfikar Efendi in 1687 were both made the Governor-General of the Rumeli Province)⁵⁸; nonetheless, the fact remained that they were all made pasha to match the Austrian ambassadors from the nobility.

With the rest of the European powers, the Ottomans followed no such policy as there was no requirement to that effect as stipulated by any capitulations. To give just a few examples, the first Ottoman envoy to the Dutch Republic was but a *müteferrika*, Ömer Agha, who arrived in The Hague in 1614.⁵⁹ The Ottoman emissaries to Venice in the seventeenth century were predominantly either a *çavuş* or a *müteferrika*.⁶⁰ The famous Ottoman mission to Paris in 1669 by another *müteferrika*, Süleyman Agha, caused great discussion when it came to deliberate the envoy's status, because he "was not an ambassador, but a messenger tasked simply to deliver the sultan's letter."⁶¹ So the elevation of the status of Ottoman emissaries seen in Austria was not repeated at any other European court in the seventeenth century.

The titular promotions for embassies to Austria make it clear that the Ottoman administration was navigating in uncharted waters to coincide with Habsburg demands for equality in prestige. Yet, such promotions also showcased the Ottoman concern for reciprocity in titular arrangements. The issue thus stands out as evidence that organizational, ritual, and symbolic innovations were undertaken by the Ottoman government in their diplomatic interactions with the Habsburg court after 1606.

This being the case, in 1633, Schmid deemed it necessary to raise an objection to the Porte's choice. He made it known to the grand vizier that the steward of the Buda governor-general was not a fitting choice, because "according to the pact, the *Personen* had to be of equal worth and quality," and the emperor was, as usual, choosing a prominent "Cavallier Herrn" for the mission. Therefore, Schmid continued, commissioning anybody from the circle of the governor-general of Buda could only be a clumsy course of action for the Ottomans. And this was bound to create problems at the frontier,

⁵³Sándor Papp, "Osmanische Funktionäre im Informationsnetz des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel Simon Reniger (1649–1666)," *Chronica* 19 (2020): 24–41.

⁵⁴OeStA, HHStA, Venedig, Dispacci di Germania, (V.Disp.G) 70, p. 23: "Di Prage li 15 Marzo 1628."

⁵⁵BOA, KK.d 1814, p. 139; BOA, MAD.d 7339, p. 4, 13, 14.

⁵⁶I suspect that the entry in the treasury register pointing to a certain "Recep Agha who came from" Buda and received a robe of honor at the Porte around February 1630 is the ambassador to Vienna, BOA, Büyük Ruznamçe Defterleri (D.BRZ.d) 20683, 350.

⁵⁷Papp, "Osmanische Funktionäre," 32.

⁵⁸Petritsch, "Die osmanische Großbotschaft," 269; Yılmaz, "An Ottoman Peace Attempt," 4.

⁵⁹Alexander Hendrik De Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations 1610–1630* (Leiden, 1978), 125–27.

⁶⁰Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore* (Venice, 1994), 201–02.

⁶¹Phil McCluskey, "An Ottoman Envoy in Paris: Suleyman Aga's Mission to the Court of Louis XIV, 1669," *Osmanlı Arastirmalari-The Journal Of Ottoman Studies* 48 (2016): 337–55.

before the exchange of embassies.⁶² Here, Schmid was referring again to the Kuefstein-Recep exchange in 1628, which had to be delayed for months before the discrepancies in the text of the Ottoman ratification of the 1627 peace treaty and the titular arrangement of the Ottoman ambassador were eliminated to please the *Hofburg*.⁶³

The grand vizier's response was reassuring to Rudolf Schmid: the choice of the steward of the Buda governor-general was not yet certain, and even if he were chosen, this would not change the fact that he was a servant and slave of the Sultan, not of the governor-general. In any case, the grand vizier promised to contemplate the issue further and discuss it with other viziers in the next *Divan* (Ottoman imperial council).⁶⁴ That the grand vizier did not dismiss Schmid's objection and gave him hope about reassessing the subject is noteworthy, further making it evident that the Ottoman administration was earnest in not causing a diplomatic crisis with the Habsburgs.

After his meeting with the grand vizier, Schmid continued to use his best efforts to exert pressure. This time, he contacted a *müteferrika* of the Porte, Şahin Agha, whom he came to know personally during the preparations for the 1628 Kuefstein-Recep exchange of ambassadors. Schmid asked Şahin Agha to persuade the grand vizier to choose "a qualified and notable" person as the Ottoman ambassador.⁶⁵ Schmid was therefore trying to influence the grand vizier not only personally but also through the agency of one of his acquaintances at the Porte.

Precisely a week after Schmid's discussion with the grand vizier, on 19 July 1633, the latter kept his promise and did indeed open the matter to discussion in the imperial council. The grand vizier, according to Schmid, made an interesting proposal: the governor-general of Kanizsa himself could be appointed as the Ottoman ambassador to Vienna. The offer was welcomed by the other viziers in the council and even approved by the sultan.⁶⁶ This development was rather important in gauging how much the Porte had taken heed of Schmid's objection; the grand vizier, probably on the advice of Şahin Agha, had come up with a figure who was the actual officeholder of a province. It was thus more likely that the would-be ambassador was to return to his governorship position after the completion of the diplomatic mission, which Schmid would be delighted to know. Subsequent to the imperial council's meeting, however, Schmid would be once more disappointed. This time, it was the Ottoman side that brought forth a reservation: as the highest religious authority in the Ottoman Empire, the *shaykhulislam* (chief mufti) was informed about the selection of the governor-general of Kanizsa as the ambassador, which he did not approve. It was unheard of, the *shaykhulislam* argued, that an actual pasha be appointed an ambassador. Furthermore, he continued, "a prominent castle such as Kanizsa" could not be ruled by a lieutenant of the governor-general, meaning that the actual governor-general should not leave his province unattended.⁶⁷ Thereafter, the Porte was left with no choice but to look for another candidate to lead the embassy.

Rıdvan Agha, the Ambassador

The impasse was overcome within the following week, before 26 July 1633, as Schmid's report dated 31 July makes clear. The Porte, wrote Schmid, chose a notable *agha* called Rıdvan, who had been the steward of the former grand vizier Topal Recep Pasha for twelve years before the latter was strangled in May 1632. Schmid also noted that even though many of the former grand vizier's associates had likewise been murdered at the behest of the sultan, Rıdvan Agha managed to survive, which Schmid

⁶²OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 94v (Datum Constant[inope]l den 12 Julij 1633).

⁶³Cevrioglu, "Avusturya'da Osmanlı Diplomasisi," 86–88.

⁶⁴OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 94v-95r (Datum Constant[inope]l den 12 Julij 1633): "Vezir gahr wohl, sagte drauff, Eß seÿe mit dem Offnerischen Agenten noch nit gewiß, und gesetzt man sollte sich so resolvirn, seÿe offtgemelter Agent deß Bassa zu Ofen diener [f. 95r] nicht, sondern eben so wohl alß andern deß Sultan Diener und *Sclavo*, welche man nach alter Brauch zu allen Dignitäten gepflegt zu erheben."

⁶⁵OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 104r (31 July 1633): "Mit dem Schahin Aga deme bewust, . . . , und Ihme die Gedechtnuss in willen erfrischt, damit er eines und anders dem Groß Vezir zu gemüeth führe, und darob seÿ, das man ein qualifizierte fürnehme Persohn hinauß shükhn in diesen hatt gesagter Aga mihr wohl gedient."

⁶⁶OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 104r-v (31 July 1633).

⁶⁷OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 104v (31 July 1633).

attributed to the *agha's* political acumen. When the sultan had demanded the confiscation of the possessions of the executed grand vizier the year before, Rıdvan Agha had done a good job in cataloguing the treasures of his former master down to the last penny. The satisfied sultan thus favored his obedient servant by sparing his life, and the *agha* now chosen as the Ottoman ambassador to Austria was quickly prepared for the voyage.⁶⁸

Nothing much is known about the identity of Rıdvan Agha, as common for numerous other Ottoman diplomatic agents at the time. Evidence at hand confirms that Rıdvan Agha had indeed run errands for his former master, Topal Recep Pasha (deputy grand vizier between 1626 and February 1632, grand vizier between February and May 1632).⁶⁹ His solid bond with his master had to be broken, however, when the latter fell from grace and lost his life. Apart from this, he was described as a man of “mature age, good intellect, vigilance, and solemnity,”⁷⁰ and he was probably employed in the palace office of *bostancıbaşı* (head of the gardener corps, or in Hammer’s parlance, *Gartenwache*).⁷¹

Schmid’s impression regarding this ultimate choice was positive. Admittedly, he would himself prefer to get a *visier* elected as the ambassador if he could, and he had left no stone unturned to get the best result. In any case, he was certain that Rıdvan Agha would be a “*grato* and agreeable” figure as an ambassador at the Viennese court. As per his understanding, the steward of a grand vizier was like a vice-grand vizier, whose favor at times other pashas and viziers had to seek, and who could be directly appointed as a governor. Therefore, reported Schmid, no former ambassador had been a person as much esteemed as this one, including Recep Agha in 1628.⁷²

The interpretation of the Ottoman ambassador in Schmid’s exposition is important in revealing contemporary perceptions: the Habsburgs resented that the *de jure* titles given to Ottoman ambassadors were ephemeral. Moreover, Schmid’s bid for the appointment of an actual governor-general (that of Kanizsa) had not paid off, either. Nevertheless, the person of Rıdvan Agha manifested itself as a compromise figure; he was a *de facto* respected palace official due to his proximity to the former grand vizier and the loyal service he rendered to the sultan. Furthermore, this factual esteem he evoked would be reinforced by the title he was to assume throughout his diplomatic mission to Austria. In short, Rıdvan Agha appeared as an acceptable figure in whom both actual and official qualities of honor materialized, which was expedient for matching the Habsburg demand for parity.

The title of the ambassador was the first issue Schmid sought to settle. Deliberating on the exact title of the ambassador was again the responsibility of the Habsburg representative, and his active engagement with the Ottoman authorities continued for a while. As the Dutch ambassador in Istanbul, Cornelius Haga, informed his government in August, Rıdvan Agha was given the title of a *pasha* in accordance with the “reciproque accorden” between the Habsburg and Ottoman courts.⁷³ Nonetheless, the *pasha* of which province remained an open question, for which Schmid demanded an answer on 26 July 1633, when he met the grand vizier personally. The grand vizier’s response to the question was that Rıdvan Agha’s title would be revealed once he reached the Ottoman frontiers, before he crossed the border with Austria. Furthermore, the grand vizier assured him that the assortment of presents and every other issue would be taken care of by the Ottoman administration.⁷⁴

Following his audience with the grand vizier, Schmid’s proactive character now prompted him to visit the would-be ambassador in person, perhaps indicating that he was not putting too much trust in the grand vizier’s words. On 30 July, Schmid’s meeting with Rıdvan Agha started with the

⁶⁸OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 104v-105r (31 July 1633).

⁶⁹BOA, KK.d 1813, p. 362 (8 Şaban 1035/ 5 May 1626); BOA, D.BRZ.d 20683, p. 195 (8 R 1038/ 5 December 1628).

⁷⁰OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 106v (31 July 1633).

⁷¹As noted below, BOA, KK.d 266, p. 38 refers to a certain Rıdvan (*bostancıbaşı*) who became the Governor General of Timișoara at roughly the same time the embassy was taking place; for the term *Gartenwache*, see Hammer, *Des osmanischen Reichs*, 47.

⁷²OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 107r (31 July 1633).

⁷³Cornelius Haga, “1631–33. Brieven van Cornelis Haga aan de Staten-Generaal,” *Kronijk van het Historisch Genootschap, getygd te Utrecht* 23 (1867), V (II): 370–455. Haga’s letter is dated 1 August 1633, Julian date.

⁷⁴OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 105r (31 July 1633).

Austrian agent's good wishes for the *agha's* approaching embassy. Thereafter, Schmid made clear to the *agha* the necessary measures to take; the sultan's letter of credentials had to be prepared with the correct title of the emperor, which had previously caused tensions that had to be solved at the border. Here, Schmid was once more alluding to the 1628 Kuefstein-Recep embassy exchange and trying to preclude the repetition of a similar mistake. Second, the presents Rıdvan Agha would carry to Vienna had to be of equal value with those of the Habsburgs. Moreover, Schmid recommended that he form his retinue with people from Istanbul as much as possible, and not with people from the border region. In case Rıdvan had to enlist men from the frontier, the governor-general of Buda had to transfer to him full authority to punish any of them in the event of excess of any violations committed in Austria. Last, the issue of daily allocations (*Deputaten*) was brought to the fore. Before leaving for Vienna, Rıdvan Agha had to arrange with the grand vizier and the chief treasurer that his counter embassy (Count Puchheim) was to be properly paid the daily allowance. Otherwise, Rıdvan Agha's allowance in Austria would be withheld, as had been the case, again, with the Kuefstein-Recep Agha embassy five years earlier.⁷⁵

Schmid's emphasis on the points of possible contention is apparently based on experience. His active involvement in almost all the stages of the Kuefstein-Recep embassy exchange in 1628 and 1629 served as a blueprint on which Schmid based his actions.⁷⁶ The effort he put into pushing the Ottoman authorities did not escape the attention of Sir Peter Wyche, the English ambassador at the Porte, who remarked that "[t]here hath bin a greate negotiation in this Porte by the Emperours Resident to procure that Ambassadors might be sent from each side to confirme the Peace and settle what is amisse, and it is agreed unto . . ."⁷⁷ It was Schmid's negotiations, to which Wyche called attention, that gave shape to the Rıdvan Agha embassy in line with parity between both sides.

Almost two weeks after Schmid's meeting with Rıdvan Agha, all the preparations had been completed and the Ottoman embassy took to the road. Schmid's report on 16 August 1633 points to several details: on 15 August, the grand vizier transferred to Rıdvan Agha the sultan's letters and presented him with a robe of honor to commence his embassy.⁷⁸ The same day, Rıdvan Agha rode home accompanied by a *çavuş*, who carried the imperial letter in his raised hands (*con man alzato*) through the streets of the Ottoman capital. On 16 August, Rıdvan Agha left Istanbul for Austria in the company of seventy men. As Schmid informs us, one of Rıdvan's brothers from Bosnia would join him with thirty more men at Buda and thus the retinue would reach 100 people.⁷⁹ Thus, most of the agha's retinue was made up of people from Istanbul, meaning that the Ottomans had taken heed of Schmid's recommendation.⁸⁰

At this point, it might be useful to step back and analyze the retinue size to better understand why the *agha* was sent with so many people. To begin, it showed the parity observed in the post-Zsitvatorok diplomatic arrangements, because one of the most conspicuous effects of the period after 1606 for the Ottoman embassies was the evident increase in the size of their retinues. As one would expect, the ambassadors (*büyükelçis*) who were sent to Vienna had the dual obligation to transfer the sultan's presence to the Austrian court and to represent the sultan's grandiosity in Europe. This marked a change from the previous century, when Ottoman representatives in Austria could hardly stage an impressive appearance. The sporadic Ottoman envoys to the Habsburg court held modest offices in

⁷⁵OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 106r-v (31 July 1633).

⁷⁶Cziráki, "Mein gueter, väterlicher Maister," 60-61, 64.

⁷⁷The National Archives, State Papers, 97-15, f. 208v-209r (Constant[in]ople the 26 of August 1633).

⁷⁸Ottoman documentation attests to two golden capsules and some precious clothes used for an imperial letter to the Austrian ruler [Kral-ı Nemçe] on 16 August, BOA, KK.d 667M, p. 117 (dated 10 Safer 1043).

⁷⁹OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 112-6 (Kor. 1633), f. 128r (Di Constant[inopoli]li alli 16 d'Agosto 1633). This ten-page report starts with Schmid informing the Austrian court about the Habsburg-French precedence altercation in Istanbul but continues with a detailed account of his interview with the grand vizier regarding the audience ambassador Rıdvan was to be given in Vienna.

⁸⁰OeStA, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Sonderbestände-Sammlungen und Selekte, Reichsakten, 302.63, fol. 545r-v, provides us with a restricted view of who the members were: Rıdvan Agha's two stewards, two religious officials (*hoca*), a stable master, a captain, six pursuivants (*çavuş*), a translator (*Tragman*), six pages (*iç oğlani*), seven servants, and eight more people (who cannot be identified) received parting gifts from the Viennese court in August 1634.

the Ottoman bureaucracy and visited Vienna or Prague with an equally humble number of retainers. For instance, Ibrahim Beg's mission to Ferdinand I in 1562 comprised approximately fifty people, whereas the mission headed in 1565 by Hidayet Agha recorded some twenty to thirty men, the average figure for Ottoman embassy retinues in the era.⁸¹

The first ceremonial embassy after the Zsitvatorok Treaty, however, registered a dramatic increase in the size of the retinue. Ahmet Kethüda, the head of the first Ottoman gift embassy to the Habsburgs, led about 150 men first to Vienna and then to Prague in 1609.⁸² This was evidently the counter embassy to the Habsburg mission to the Ottoman court in 1608 in which Adam Herberstein visited Istanbul with 110 people.⁸³ In other words, the increase on the Austrian side was matched by a rise in the Ottoman embassy. Furthermore, Hermann Czernin von Chudeniz' mission to the Porte in 1616 numbered around 150 people, while Ahmet Kethüda's second ceremonial mission to the Habsburg court a year before had comprised 136 men.⁸⁴ Baron Kuefstein's mission to Istanbul in 1628–29 consisted of about 150 men,⁸⁵ and the Ottoman counter embassy of Recep Agha registered around 130 people.⁸⁶ In 1633–34, retainers in both the Puchheim mission and the corresponding Rıdvan Agha embassy numbered about 100 people.⁸⁷ In 1650, the Ottoman ambassadorial retinue was calculated at 144 people, while that of the Habsburg ambassador was 150.⁸⁸ In short, the sizes fluctuated in tandem between a 100 and 150 in the diplomatic setting created by Zsitvatorok. In other words, a concern for numerical parity was coming into practice in the first half of the century.

Returning to 1633–34, the information one can find about Rıdvan Agha became scarce once he left the Ottoman capital, and at the same time, Schmid's observing glance. Nonetheless, the governor-general of the province of Buda expressed in a letter to the Habsburgs that ambassador (*büyükelçi*) Rıdvan Agha had reached Belgrade toward the end of September and was waiting for the last important ceremony to take place: the exchange of embassies (*tebdil*) at the border.⁸⁹ Exchange of embassies was another novelty introduced in the post-Zsitvatorok period and, as mentioned, began when the first gift embassy sent by the Habsburgs (led by Adam Herberstein) reached Istanbul in 1608, while the corresponding Ottoman envoy headed for Austria upon Herberstein's departure, in 1609.⁹⁰ It was, however, in 1628 that the ceremonial embassies would for the first time visit the other's capital simultaneously, which inevitably necessitated a physical exchange of ambassadors on the frontier.

The meeting in 1628 of Hans Ludwig Kuefstein and Recep Agha therefore marked a watershed in Habsburg-Ottoman bilateral diplomacy vis-a-vis the exchange of embassies. On 26 September, the ambassadors met each other on a supposedly neutral ground between the villages of Almas and Szöny. The whole idea behind the exchange, as one can imagine, was to arrange the simultaneity of the border crossing so that no one party would advance first. Because so far as the symbolism was concerned, "who stepped forth first and how much in order to greet the other person" was an

⁸¹Teply, "Türkische Gesandtschaften," 17–18; Harriet Rudolph, "Türkische Gesandtschaften ins Reich am Beginn der Neuzeit-Herrschaftsinszenierung, Fremdheitserfahrung und Erinnerungskultur. Die Gesandtschaft des Ibrahim Bey von 1562," in *Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie*, eds. Marlene Kruz et al., *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 48 (Vienna, 2005): 295–314; Özgür Kolçak, "Sınır Diplomasisinden Saltanat Elçiliğine: Bir 16. Yüzyıl Diplomasi Hikâyesi Yahut Marcus Scherer/Hidayet'in Esrarlı Sergüzeşti," *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 39, no. 67 (2020): 139–214.

⁸²Teply, "Türkische Gesandtschaften," 19.

⁸³Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins*, 44.

⁸⁴Adam Wenner, *Türkisches Reisebuch von Prag aus biss gen Constantinopel, Das ist: Beschreibung der Legation und Reise...* (Nürnberg, 1622), 128–31; Rudolf Neck, *Österreichs Türkenpolitik unter Melchior Klesl* (Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1948), 116.

⁸⁵OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 111-3 (Kuefstein's Relation 1629), fol. 27r: "meinem ganzen Comitatz bey 150 Persohnen"; Olga Nefedova, *Heritage of Art Diplomacy: Memoirs of an Ambassador* (Milan, 2013), 41, relates that the retinue was more than 100 men.

⁸⁶OeStA, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Sonderbestände-Sammlungen und Selekte, Reichsaktent, 302.24, fol. 266v.

⁸⁷*Recueil des Gazettes... l'Annee 1634... par Renaudot* (Paris, 1635), 41, 65; and see above for Rıdvan Agha.

⁸⁸Richard Perger and Ernst D. Petritsch, "Der Gasthof 'Zum Goldenen Lamm' in der Leopoldstadt und seine türkischen Gäste," *Studien zur Wiener Geschichte: Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* 55 (1999): 147–72; Peter Meinenberger, *Johan Rudolf Schmid*, 121.

⁸⁹Fekete, *Türkische Schriften*, 103–04.

⁹⁰Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins*, 52.

important element of spatial order to which a diplomatic representative was bound.⁹¹ Therefore, to ensure parity between both sides, ambassadors had to meet each other in the middle point and cross the border at the same time. But given that this was the first exchange of ambassadors, the lack of institutional preparedness quickly became apparent. As the sole author of testimonies regarding the exchange, Kuefstein claimed in his narrative that when both sides started walking toward each other, the Ottoman ambassador slowed down his steps. In Kuefstein's words, Recep Agha's pace slowed so much that he almost stood still in his haughtiness to assume preeminence over the Habsburgs. Symbolically, the one reaching the middle point earlier than the other meant accepting the inferiority of his ruler.⁹² Perceiving that the parity was at stake, Kuefstein sent word to the Ottomans that he could stop walking altogether and withdraw from the whole exchange ceremony. It was only after such an ultimatum jeopardizing the whole peace process that the ceremony got back on track and both ambassadors proceeded toward each other until they met and concluded the exchange ceremony.⁹³ Thereafter, Kuefstein took the way to Istanbul while Recep Agha's shorter journey to Vienna started.

This eventful beginning of the exchange tradition in 1628 became an essential lesson for later missions. The next exchange of embassies on 19 January 1634 between Rıdvan Agha (now pasha) and Count Puchheim was much better orchestrated, as evidenced by the Habsburg accounts (Puchheim's report).⁹⁴ This time, three poles (*Pfähle*) were erected before the ceremony on the neutral ground (close to Szőny) that was "equally measured by spears."⁹⁵ The pole erected in the middle designated the point where the ambassadors would come face-to-face and greet each other. And when the Habsburg ambassador Count Puchheim arrived at the meeting area, he realized that Rıdvan Pasha was already waiting for him for the ceremony to start; a Habsburg official had warned the Ottoman ambassador that if he were not present in the designated place in time, the ceremony would not take place on that day.⁹⁶ Rıdvan Pasha heeded the admonition and the rest of the ceremony unfolded as desired. Rıdvan reached the middle pole at the same time as his Austrian counterpart, shook the latter's hands and exchanged letters of safe conduct with him before both ambassadors continued on their way into each other's territory.⁹⁷ The ceremony of 1634 took place without any problem.

The demarcation of three points to ensure simultaneity—that is, parity—thus started in 1634.⁹⁸ In 1650, Habsburg and Ottoman ambassadors again performed the ceremony at a location marked with three wooden poles, without incident and with both sides crossing the border simultaneously.⁹⁹ Later embassies all referred to three poles already arranged before the meeting, which were transformed into full-fledged columns (*Säule*) by 1719.¹⁰⁰ The measures to ensure the simultaneity, and the Ottoman

⁹¹Auer, "Diplomatisches Zeremoniell am Kaiserhof," 47.

⁹²Teply, *Die kaiserliche Großbotschaft an Sultan Murad IV*, 33.

⁹³OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 111-3 (Kuefstein's Relation 1629), fol. 7v: "Ich aber gleich darauf vermerckhet, dass die Türggen ihrer stolzen arth nach, unnd zu erzaigung einer vermainten præeminenz, längsamer, dann Wier, fortgangen, unnd gar still zu stehen sich unterstanden".

⁹⁴OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 113-2 (Puchheim's Relation 1634), fol. 69v-71r; Franz Christoph Khevenhüller, *Annalium Ferdinandeorum Tom XII* (Leipzig, 1726), 1398–1399.

⁹⁵OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 113-2 (Puchheim's Relation 1634), fol. 70r: "durch beederseits Deputirten Designirtes, auch mit copien gleich außgemeßennes und mit dreÿen Pfählen bezeichnetes Orth ..."

⁹⁶OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 113-2 (Puchheim's Relation 1634), fol. 70r: "... An welchem der Ottomanischen Portten Pottshafter ein geraumbe Zeit beraihths gewartet, vermuetlich auß den Ursach, Weill mehrebemelter Obrister [von Komorn, Graf von Kollonitsch], demselben zuvor entbieten lassen, fahls Er nit zeitlich *in loco* sich befinden würde, die Außwechßlung selbigen Tages nit vor sich gehen köndte ..."

⁹⁷OeStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Turcica 113-2 (Puchheim's Relation 1634), fol. 70v-71r: "... seindt also wier baide in der Mitten, wo zum Zeichen ein Pfahl gesteecket, zuesamben getretten, einander die händt geben ..."

⁹⁸That Würflinger mistakes 1650 as the beginning of the practice of erecting three demarcation sticks before ceremonial exchanges is a clear example of how understudied the Puchheim and Rıdvan embassies are. See Christoph Würflinger, "Symbolic Communication in Habsburg-Ottoman Diplomatic Relations. The Grand Embassy of Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn (1650–51)," *Legatio* 4 (2020): 95–122.

⁹⁹Würflinger, "Symbolic Communication," 102–06.

¹⁰⁰Özgür Kolçak, "Habsburg Elçisi Walter Leslie'nin Osmanlı Ziyareti: Bir Tarihsel Anlatı İnşası (1665–1666)," *Tarih Dergisi - Turkish Journal of History* 79 (2023): 1–38; Arno Strohmeier, "Die Theatralität interkulturellen Friedens: Damian Hugo von

acceptance to abide by them, thus point to another area in which the Ottoman-Habsburg relations were redefined in terms of reciprocity and in which the Ottoman practice of diplomacy came closer to the demands set by the Habsburgs.

Having left the Ottoman territories after the exchange at the border, Rıdvan Agha became an elusive figure in the Ottoman sources. Nonetheless, European sources hint at the main episodes of his mission: Rıdvan made his ceremonial entry into Vienna on 25 January 1634 and took his lodgings on the island that later came to be called Leopoldstadt.¹⁰¹ He had an audience with Emperor Ferdinand II on 19 February and delivered the sultan's letters and gifts.¹⁰² At the end of his mission, on 25 July 1634, Rıdvan Agha was once more exchanged with Count Puchheim on the border on his way back to the Ottoman capital.¹⁰³ However, further focus on his dealings in the Habsburg territories is beyond the scope of the present study.¹⁰⁴ Within the framework of the issues Schmid raised, however, the following observation can be made: two Ottoman registers of appointments suggest that a certain Rıdvan Agha had been given the province of Timișoara on 3 September 1633,¹⁰⁵ that is, two weeks after ambassador Rıdvan left for Austria. If this Rıdvan Agha is the ambassador Rıdvan, it can be argued that another of Schmid's demands was granted after the embassy returned home. Rıdvan Agha preserved his governor-generalship of Timișoara in 1634 and then was made the governor of the county of Srem in late 1635,¹⁰⁶ meaning that he managed to keep his significance inside the Ottoman bureaucratic system despite the demotion from province governor to county governor.

Conclusion

Ottoman diplomatic unilateralism in the early modern period in general, and the Porte's hesitance to accept equality with the Habsburgs after 1606 in particular, have long been taken for granted. Nonetheless, this study has argued that an in-depth analysis of the Habsburg-Ottoman relations in the first half of the seventeenth century reveals that the Ottomans *did* accept parity with their Austrian neighbor, the complications in the process notwithstanding. More importantly, the Habsburgs' push for parity helped the Ottomans gain familiarity with the principle of diplomatic reciprocity, a *sine qua non* of modern diplomacy. Even though the Ottoman administration did not employ a similar diplomatic practice in its dealings with other European states until the eighteenth century, its seventeenth-century experimentation with the Habsburgs helped the Ottomans study the European diplomatic mentality before the opening of Ottoman resident embassies in Europe after 1793.

Austrian resident representative Rudolf Schmid's efforts to pressure the Ottoman authorities signal the change in the Ottoman-Habsburg diplomatic interactions. In the period following the Peace Treaty of Zsitvatorok, the new terms concerning diplomacy included in the treaty had to find a reflection in practice. Since these titles came as a novelty for the Ottoman administration, the demands of parity required a certain level of intervention. As this study has shown, such interventions eventually led to a limited refinement of Ottoman diplomatic practice with the Habsburgs. In this way, the diplomatic practices of the Ottomans in their dealings with the emperor also started to mimic those of the Habsburgs, which in the long run laid the ground for the terminology of modern Turkish diplomacy. The differentiation of first- and second-rank Habsburg diplomats and the specification of the term *büyükelçi* provide evidence in that respect. Furthermore, the temporary elevation of the Ottoman

Virmont als kaiserlicher Großbotschafter and der Hohen Pforte (1719/20)," in *Frieden und Friedenssicherung in der Frühen Neuzeit: Das Heilige Römische Reich und Europa*, eds. Guido Braun and Arno Strohmeier (Münster, 2013), 413–38 (here, 419).

¹⁰¹OeStA, HHStA, V.Disp.G 77, p. 565 (28 January 1634).

¹⁰²*Recueil des Gazettes*, 109: "De Vienne, le 23. Février 1634."

¹⁰³Khevenhüller, *Annalium Ferdinandeorum Tom XII*, 1444–1445.

¹⁰⁴Alongside the Turcica fonds in HHStA, the financial records in Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (such as Hoffinanz Österreich Prot. 751 or Reichsakten 302) provide further information relating to Rıdvan Agha's embassy in the Habsburg lands.

¹⁰⁵BOA, Cevdet-Dahiliye, 122- 6095, f. 17r: "Eyalet-i Temeşvar: Eyalet-i mezbure sabiken bostancıbaşı olan Rıdvan Ağa'ya sadaka olunmuşdur, fi 28 S[afar], li-sene 1043, ba-hatt-ı hümayun,"; and BOA, KK.d 266, p. 38.

¹⁰⁶BOA, KK.d 266, p. 36 for Srem (18 Ramadan 1044/7 March 1635); p. 38 for Timișoara (Evasıt-ı Ca 1044/1-10 November 1634).

ambassadors' status and title; the increasing number of retinue sizes to match those of the Habsburg ambassadorial missions; and the simultaneity of the border crossing at the exchange ceremonies in the no man's land at the frontier between the two empires were the most prominent signs of this Ottoman diplomatic evolution.

The bilateral diplomatic rearrangement was a product of earlier experience. Schmid's interventions in the preparation of the Rıdvan Agha embassy in 1633 time and again made reference to the previous embassy exchange, that of 1628–29, which seems to have become a watershed for both sides. Whenever Schmid wished to wrestle a concession from the Ottomans, he utilized the memory of the 1628–29 embassies as a stick. Schmid's involvement in the preparation of the Rıdvan Agha mission is also significant for highlighting how an Ottoman embassy was set up for the diplomatic enterprise. Instead of confining himself to simply informing the Ottoman grand vizier, the main decision-maker in the Ottoman Empire, about the necessities of a ceremonial embassy, Schmid arranged a personal interview with the designated Ottoman ambassador. In this way, Schmid acted as one of Rıdvan Agha's advisors in the preparation of the Ottoman mission. Coupled with the frequent references to the shortcomings of the Kuefstein-Recep Agha embassies, Schmid's mentoring session with Rıdvan Agha was a step taken toward the institutionalization of the Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic practices.

The making of the Rıdvan Agha embassy also underlines the favorable attitude the early modern Ottomans assumed toward diplomacy. Even though they were unhappy with the new turn of events after 1606, they felt obliged to reciprocate the Habsburgs within the context of extraordinary embassies. And this comes on top of the argument that the Ottoman adherence to reciprocity—for instance, in granting reciprocal rights to capitulation-holding European powers—was a phenomenon already well underway in the early modern period. Furthermore, the high number of Ottoman ad hoc emissaries to Europe has also been interpreted as a sign of reciprocity before the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Embassy exchanges between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, this study has shown, reveal that another aspect of reciprocity, equal diplomatic treatment in line with parity, was also observed by the Ottomans. It also supports the argument that by the Vasvár (Eisenburg) Treaty of 1664, the Ottoman-Habsburg diplomatic practice had already been fine-tuned to a remarkable extent and had become more professionalized.¹⁰⁸ That these changes were possible in the early modern period, and possible only with the Habsburgs, was thanks to the avid efforts of astute Habsburg diplomats, among whom Rudolf Schmid stands out as a memorable figure.

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¹⁰⁷Yurdusev, "The Ottoman Attitude," 27–28.

¹⁰⁸Özgür Kolçak, "Nezakette Kusur Etmeyen Barbarlar: Diplomasi ve Kültürel Yargılar Arasında Bir Cizvit Rahibin Osmanlı Gözlemleri (1665–1666)," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 30, no. 2 (2016): 23–48.