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Imperial Envoys at the English Royal Court (1660–1740): Reception Ceremony and Disputes over the Titles*

Abstract:

This article has two main goals. First, the author tries to analyse the development of the first audiences of imperial envoys at St James' Court between 1660 and 1750. He focuses on the styles of audiences (public/private), their venues (residences in England, the Netherlands and the Electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg), and mainly on the ceremonial rules and the role of the Master of the Ceremonies. The author describes the crucial changes that were introduced by James II in the 1680s when the English king declined to respect the privileged position of the Holy Roman Emperor in the European royal society and attempted to unify ceremonial rules for the reception of all envoys. Second, the author seeks to outline the periods of the long-lasting conflict between English kings and Habsburg emperors regarding the appropriate title that should be given to the English king by the emperor and his imperial chancellery (*Reichskanzlei*). English kings obtained the *Serenitas* title from Vienna but desired to be addressed as *Majestas*. To analyse both the phenomena, the author uses the sample of approximately twenty diplomats of the Austrian Habsburgs that reached the shores of England during this period. They usually held the position of envoy and only two of them gained the title of ambassador during their stay. The article is based on research of the instructions and reports of these diplomats that are preserved in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, and on the English daily press.

Departing for England as an imperial envoy (*Abgesandte*) at the end of 1686, Count Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz received from the Imperial Court Chancellery (*Reichskanzlei*) an instruction from Emperor Leopold I about how to behave at the beginning of his mission. He was instructed to stop in the Northern Netherlands to meet the governor William of Orange. Upon his arrival in London he was ordered to meet the Imperial Legation Secretary Johann Philipp Hofmann to learn about the news and immediately afterwards establish communication with the Spanish ambassador Pedro Ronquillo. Only then, as reads the instruction, 'will our repeatedly mentioned envoy Count of Kaunitz (in compliance with the local court rules) present the attached credentials to the king and ask him for an audience. Then he will have the audience on our behalf at the scheduled time which will only include common courtesies because the first audience is public and only general issues are presented. He will speak Latin and all the necessary memorials will be presented in this language as

well.’ The instruction continues: ‘But during the next private audience (which can be done in French to calm the king down), inform him in detail that we...’, specifying what the count ought to inform the king about.¹ The instruction prescribed that the count speak at the first audience only generally for it is public and it is unnecessary to inform all the onlookers about the emperor’s intentions. Kaunitz was instructed to bring up more detailed information only at the second private audience. The text may easily misguide today’s reader that the first public audience of diplomats was just a formality of no specific importance as more concrete issues were negotiated behind closed doors without the presence of the public.

Nevertheless, it has been proven convincingly that abiding by the formal procedures during the official reception in the early modern period clearly showed the quality of the mutual relationship between the host and the guest and whether they respected their social statuses. Only after the first audience, during which the foreign diplomat presented his credentials, the procuration, and the letter of his sovereign, was he accredited at the court and could begin to negotiate what he had been entrusted with.² In fact, since very little attention has been paid to audiences of imperial diplomats at the courts of English kings and their family members, their procedure remains unknown and we are unaware of the possible political tension between the two parties that often cast doubts on the deep-rooted ceremonial

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¹ Moravský zemský archiv Brno [= Moravian Land Archive Brno], Kaunitz Family Archive, inv. no. 2454, cart. 273, instruction, Vienna, 11 October 1686.

² Cf. William J. Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV: The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Mass., 1976), pp. 117-9; Klaus Müller, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen im Jahrhundert nach dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648–1740)* (Bonn, 1976), pp. 129-37; André Krischer, ‘Souveränität als sozialer Status: Zur Funktion des diplomatischen Zeremoniells in der Frühen Neuzeit’, in Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota and Jan Paul Niederkorn (eds), *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im mittleren Osten in der frühen Neuzeit* (Wien, 2009), pp. 1-32; Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger, ‘Honores regii. Die Königswürde im zeremoniellen Zeichensystem der Frühen Neuzeit’, in Johannes Kunisch (ed.), *Dreihundert Jahre Preußische Königskronung. Eine Tagungsdokumentation* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 1-26. Regarding contemporary authors, the key role of the ceremony is described by Johann Christian Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale Historico-politicum I–II* (Leipzig, 1719–20); Gottfried Stieve, *Europäisches Hof-Ceremoniel* (Leipzig, 1723).

rules. Partly, the indifference of British historians, who with only a few exceptions mostly studied the relationships between the English sovereigns and France, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and Spain,³ or just generally wrote about the ceremony at the English court, is to blame.⁴ But research has not advanced significantly in Central Europe where one must still rely on the earlier works of Onno Klopp and Alfred Francis Pribram.⁵ If someone does pursue the imperial diplomacy of the British Isles, they do not primarily devote their research to the ceremony and reception of the envoys.⁶

Nevertheless, it is not the primary aim of this study to research the instructions for the imperial diplomats that are often similar to the one I quoted at the beginning of this article. They do not reveal much about the course of the audiences. Therefore, it is essential to analyse the collection of diplomatic reports of the imperial envoys in England (or rather Great Britain) from 1660–1740, describing their first public or alternatively private audiences.⁷ Subsequently, they will be complemented with additional sources, mainly instructions and the period press.⁸ Through restoring the course of the first audiences of the imperial diplomats at the Court of Saint James's and the applied ceremony, I will attempt to point out the importance of the symbolical communication and its effect on the quality of relationships

³ One of the few exceptions is presented by Carl Brinkmann, 'The Relations between England and Germany, 1660–1688', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 24 (1909), pp. 247-77, 448-69.

⁴ E.g. Anna Keay, *The Magnificent Monarch: Charles II and the Ceremonies of Power* (London and New York, 2008), pp. 92-119.

⁵ Onno Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart II–III* (Wien, 1875–76); Alfred Francis Pribram (ed), *Österreichische Staatsverträge, England. Erster Band 1526–1748* (Innsbruck, 1907).

⁶ Elke Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft in London (1701–1711). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Haager Allianz* (Bonn, 1972); Christoph Kampmann, 'Ein großes Bündnis der katholischen Dynastien 1688? Neue Perspektiven auf die Entstehung des Neunjährigen Kriegs und der Glorious Revolution', *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 294 (2012), pp. 31-58; Idem, 'The English Crisis, Emperor Leopold, and the Origins of the Dutch Intervention in 1688', *Historical Journal*, vol. 55 (2012), no. 2, pp. 521–32. The only author to have pursued the reception and ceremony, though only during the 1720s–1730s, is Charlotte Backerra, *Wien und London, 1727–1735. Faktoren der internationalen Beziehungen im frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Ph.D. thesis, Mainz, 2016), pp. 253–64.

⁷ The reports are in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv [hereafter ÖStA] Wien, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv [hereafter HHStA], Staatenabteilungen [hereafter StA], England. The parts concerning the ceremony are sometimes available in the copies in ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8.

⁸ Mainly the newspaper *The London Gazette* that has been published continuously since 1665. All issues are available digitally from URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/all-notices> [2020-11-17].

between the Habsburg emperors and English kings. The following pages will first discuss the transformations of the ceremony and then the difficulties faced by the imperial envoys after their reception in the British Isles. It was mainly the dispute over the title of the English sovereign on the official documents from the Imperial Court Chancellery which lingered from the time of James II to the mid-18th century. But first we must take at least a brief look at the political context.

Political Context

The English king was among the sovereigns with whom the Austrian Habsburgs wanted to establish regular diplomatic contacts hoping to receive help in their fight against France during the Thirty Years' War. The mutual relationships that developed promisingly were interrupted by the English revolution that in 1649 culminated with the execution of King Charles I and exile of his family. After the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, Emperor Leopold I tried to establish contacts with the new sovereign Charles II, but a regular diplomatic representation was not established until 1677,⁹ which was rather late in the formation of the network of permanent imperial diplomats. Since then, envoys, residents, or at least legation secretaries almost continuously represented the Austrian Habsburgs in the British Isles. But the emperor's endeavour to conclude an alliance with the English monarchs failed because of the pro-French inclination of Charles II and his successor and brother James II.¹⁰

The first agreement was signed between Leopold I and William of Orange and his wife Mary, the first English monarchs after the Glorious Revolution in 1688. Since they

⁹ Ludwig Bittner and Lothar Groß (eds), *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648–1715)* (Oldenburg and Berlin, 1936), p. 139.

¹⁰ Cf. Brinkmann, *The Relations between England and Germany*.

fought against France during their sojourn in the United Provinces of the Netherlands, they needed an ally against the expansive plans of the Sun King down the river Rhine. The emperors could mostly enjoy the persistent support of the English kings and queens over the following twenty years, until the death of Joseph I in 1711.¹¹ The English evaluated the attempts at universal rule of the Habsburg dynasty as a greater threat and terminated collaboration with the new emperor Charles VI. However, this situation did not last long since following the Peace of Utrecht, or rather the Treaty of Rastatt (1713/1714), the two powers restored their close association. It is further evidenced by other agreements signed between the English Hanoverian kings, George I and George II, and Emperor Charles VI in 1716 and 1731. Therefore, the last Habsburg regularly sustained his representatives in Great Britain with only a short break at the turn of 1727 and 1728.¹²

Although relations between the English kings and Austrian Habsburgs developed auspiciously during the 17th century, for a very long time none of the parties appointed an ambassador who could best and most universally represent his sovereign at the foreign court. At that time, only ambassadors were entitled to the festive entry in the residence of their host and enjoyed the greatest honours on behalf of the sovereigns.¹³ Such hesitation is rather surprising because during the second half of the 17th century, the ambassadors of French, Spanish, and Swedish kings stayed in London for the long-term as well as those of the Venetian Republic and the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and from the 1680s also the ambassadors of the Savoy dukes as titular kings of Cyprus.¹⁴ There were a couple of reasons behind it. First of all, the emperor only sent ambassadors to his traditional and stable allies

¹¹ For more details see Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft*.

¹² Esp. Pribram (ed.), *Österreichische Staatsverträge*; Jiří Kubeš et al., *V zastoupení císaře. Česká a moravská aristokracie v habsburské diplomacii 1640–1740* (Praha, 2018), Chapter II. 3, pp. 246-69.

¹³ Stieve, *Europäisches Hof-Ceremoniel*, p. 272.

¹⁴ Esp. Bittner and Groß (eds), *Repertorium*, pp. 216-18 (France), pp. 355-57 (the Netherlands), pp. 489-90 (Sweden) and pp. 517-18 (Spain); Phyllis S. Lachs, *The Diplomatic Corps under Charles II and James II* (New Brunswick: New Jersey, 1965), pp. 97-8 and elsewhere; Susan Tipton, 'Diplomatie und Zeremoniell in Botschafterbildern von Carlevarijs und Canaletto', *Riha Journal*, vol. 8 (1 October 2010), URL: <http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2010/tipton-diplomatie-und-zeremoniell>.

namely in Spain, Venice, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He thus avoided ceremonial disputes with French diplomats who refused to recognise his precedence and also saved money because fully funding an ambassador was very costly. Finally, the English kings also sent only envoys so in this respect the law of reciprocity was observed.¹⁵ It was not until the first half of the 18th century that Charles VI decided to bestow an ambassadorial rank on two of his representatives, Konrad Sigmund von Starhemberg, active in the British Isles with interruptions between 1720 and 1726, and Philipp Josef Kinsky (1728–36). They first left for England as envoys and only during their sojourn was their mission changed and they became ambassadors (1722 and 1732).¹⁶ It indicates that imperial diplomats in London did not perform festive entries and only the first audience bound by the essential ceremonial rules was used for their introduction.¹⁷

First Audiences of Imperial Diplomats

Table no. 1 summarises the information that is available on the first audiences of sixteen high-rank imperial diplomats. The diplomats of the resident or legation secretary ranks were not monitored. During the second half of the 17th century, the imperial representatives arrived with the status of the envoy extraordinary while under Emperor Charles VI they mostly received the new title of minister plenipotentiary for ceremonial reasons. In the researched sample, and perhaps even throughout Europe, Count Starhemberg was the first

¹⁵ Kubeš et al., *V zastoupení císaře*, pp. 256-59.

¹⁶ Friedrich Hausmann (ed.), *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)*, II: 1716–1763 (Zürich, 1950), p. 65; Backerra, *Wien und London*, pp. 182–83, 227. But Starhemberg received two sets of credentials in 1722. One of them addressed him as ambassador, the other one as minister plenipotentiary. Yet he used the second set at the audience, ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 62, report from 5 September 1722.

¹⁷ The general rules about the reception of ambassadors and envoys in Great Britain were briefly summarised by Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, I, pp. 475-77; Jean Rousset de Missy, *Le cérémonial diplomatique des cours de l'Europe [...] II* (Amsterdam and La Haye, 1739), esp. pp. 495-97. Regrettably, they do not specify the date to which the information is related and whether the rules in England changed in any respect.

bearer of this title in 1720. Nevertheless, there were no significant differences in practice between the audience of an envoy or a minister plenipotentiary.¹⁸

Table no. 1: Imperial envoys with detailed information available about their first audiences with the English sovereign (1660–1740)¹⁹

Diplomat's Name	Year	Date of Arrival	Audience with the Sovereign	Audience with the Sovereign's Spouse
Leopold Wilhelm von Königsegg	1664	April	day after arrival	day after arrival ²⁰
Karl Ferdinand von Waldstein	1677	early June	11 June	11 June ²¹
Franz Sigmund von Thun	1680	29 October	1 November (8 pm)	17 November (7.30 pm)
Georg Adam II von Martinitz	1685	18 June	20 June (8 pm)	28 June
Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz	1687	25 January	31 January (noon)	2 February (8 pm)
Sigmund Wilhelm von Königsegg	1690	before 21 February	26 February (noon)	26 February (4 pm)
Heinrich Johann von Strattmann	1691	1 November	11 November late morning	11 November afternoon
Leopold von Auersperg	1694	10 April (The Hague)	21 May (The Hague)	25 November (London)
Johann Wenzel Wratislaw von Mitrowitz	1701	8 January	11 January afternoon	did not take place
Johann Wenzel Gallas	1705	20 February	6 September	6 September
Johann Karl von Kuefstein	1709	30 May	10 June (8 pm)	did not take place (†)

¹⁸ Müller, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen*, pp. 138-40.

¹⁹ If not stated otherwise this table was drawn up based on the information from the sources cited in note 7.

²⁰ Königsegg's audiences are described by Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, I, pp. 623-24. No reports by Königsegg survived in ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England.

²¹ The audience was described by Jiří Hrbek, *Barokní Valdštejnové v Čechách, 1640–1740* (Praha, 2013), pp. 535-38. Waldstein, however, did not arrive in London in the middle of May because on 31 May 1677 he sent a letter to the emperor from The Hague. See ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 19, reports from 31 May (The Hague) and 11 June (London) 1677.

Otto Christoph von Volckra	1715	10 November	25 November	did not take place
Konrad Sigmund von Starhemberg	1720	26 May	28 May	did not take place
Konrad Sigmund von Starhemberg	1722	13 August	15 August	did not take place
Philipp Josef Kinsky	1728	1 September	16 September	?
Ignaz Johann von Wasner	1736/7	29 August 1736	26 March 1737	26 March 1737 ²²
Heinrich Karl von Ostein	1740	9 August (Herrenhausen)	11 August (12.30 pm)	did not take place (†)

The finding that not all imperial diplomats had public audiences is quite surprising. Although it was a standard practice during the second half of the 17th century, the examples from the first half of the 18th century show a rather different picture because some imperial diplomats were received only privately for various reasons. Either they had met with the king in the Northern Netherlands where he did not adhere to keeping the formalities (Auersperg, 1694)²³ or they were not granted a public audience at the request of the sovereign such as George I who did not like formalities. Count Otto Christoph von Volckra was the first to experience this situation in 1715. He was instructed to ask for a public audience but found himself in hot water in London; therefore, he sent a letter of apology to Vienna, writing that ‘yesterday, at the king’s request, the public audience I had asked for took place in private in his retirade’.²⁴ Next time, the emperor took it into consideration and in 1720 commanded Count Konrad Sigmund von Starhemberg to ask for a private audience only after his arrival.²⁵

²² In Wasner’s case, the time lag between his arrival in the country and the granting of the first audience was caused by the fact that George II stayed in Hannover in the second half of 1736. Wasner came to England from Portugal and then waited for the king’s arrival for a long time. Cf. his letters to Court Chancellor (*Hofkanzler*) Sinzendorf and his reports to the emperor deposited *ibidem*, cart. 71 and 72.

²³ King William III arrived in The Hague as late as 17 May 1694. The imperial envoy who expected him there, received at the king’s request just a private audience that substituted the public reception. The king let the envoy decide whether he also wanted an official audience after the king’s return to London in the autumn of 1694. But it did not materialise. See *ibid.*, cart. 25, Auersperg’s report from 18 May 1694.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, cart. 52, a report from 26 November 1715.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, cart. 60, a report from 31 May 1720. Cf. *The London Gazette*, no. 5852, 17 May 1720, p. 4.

The envoys to King William III and Queen Anne first had a private audience to promptly inform the sovereign about their mission. The public audience took place only after some time when they were prepared for it, meaning they had procured a representative carriage and horses and after all their servants arrived (Heinrich Johann Strattmann, 1691,²⁶ Johann Wenzel Gallas, 1705,²⁷ and probably also Johann Wenzel Wratislaw von Mitrowitz, 1701²⁸). Generally, it seems that the British monarchs stopped granting public audiences as the 18th century advanced. Imperial envoys had private receptions upon their arrival and public audiences did not need to follow.²⁹ Even Count Philipp Joseph Kinsky, who was promoted to ambassador in 1732, was first granted only private audiences by George II and his wife.³⁰ Over time, Emperor Charles VI and his advisors adapted to it and stopped insisting on the public audiences of their diplomats toward the end of his rule.³¹

If the audience took place in London and its vicinity, as a rule the envoy was picked up and conveyed to the royal residence by the *Master of the Ceremonies*. It was not customary

²⁶ Strattmann had the first audience with the king in the Southern Netherlands, yet the royal couple granted him a public reception after their arrival in London. ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 24, a report from 13 November 1691.

²⁷ Count Gallas had his first (private) audience in London as early as 23 February 1705, at 5 pm, but the public one took place as late as September at Windsor Castle. It was caused by the death of Emperor Leopold I and the difficulties with the new accreditation of Count Gallas as the envoy of Joseph I and Charles III, King of Spain. Ibid., cart. 39, reports from 24 February and 8 September 1705.

²⁸ On 11 January 1701, Wratislaw had just a *particular audienz*, not a public audience. It was at his request because, as he informed Vienna, 'meine equipage zu der öffentlichen audienz noch so baldt nicht könnte fertig werden'. But he also wanted to inform the king about the news without delay; therefore, he requested the audience with the king in the earliest possible time. Ibid., cart. 33, a relation from 11 January 1701. It has not been ascertained yet whether he also had a public audience. He did not have an audience with the queen because she had been dead for several years.

²⁹ In addition to Volckra and Starhemberg, the following envoys were granted just the first private audiences: Baron Ignaz Johann Wasner in March 1737, Count Heinrich Karl von Ostein in Herrenhausen in August 1740 and in London in December 1740, *The London Gazette*, no. 7595, 19 March 1736 (English dating, should be 1737); *ibid.*, no. 7934, 5 August 1740 (a wrong date of the audience, 10 August, is recorded; it did not take place until 11 August 1740); *ibid.*, no. 7974, 23 December 1740.

³⁰ *The London Gazette*, no. 7170, 17 February 1732: 'St. James's, February 15. This Day Count Kinski, Ambassadors from the Emperour, had his first Private Audience of his Majesty in that Character; being introduced by the Right Honourable the Lord Harrington one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, and conducted by Sir Clement Cottrell, Kt. Master of the Ceremonies.' The audience with the queen took place the next day.

³¹ It arises from the chancellery's instruction issued on 5 July 1740 and received by Heinrich Karl von Ostein. It said that the place of the meeting with the king would be of great consequence, whether in England or in the Holy Roman Empire. In any case, the decision whether to ask for a private or a public audience was left upon him and his evaluation of the situation, ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 75.

elsewhere, in Vienna for example, because such a position did not exist and various members of the host court were sent to bring the diplomats over in the royal carriage.³² In England, the Cotterell family members (1641–1818) held the Master of the Ceremonies position since the time of Charles I. Their duties included inter alia the communication with diplomats. In most cases, they were the first members of the English royal court to visit the envoys immediately after their arrival and agreed on a date, place, and type of reception.³³ In 1685, the imperial envoy extraordinary Georg Adam II von Martinitz reported to Vienna that he observed the advice of the envoy Count Franz Sigmund von Thun and ‘as soon as I informed the Master of the Ceremonies about my arrival, he came and saw me without delay. When I later asked him for granting me the king’s audience, they scheduled it to last Wednesday, i.e. the day before yesterday.’³⁴ As revealed by reports from the 18th century, imperial envoys sent a copy of their credentials to the Master of the Ceremonies which was not customary elsewhere.³⁵ He handed it to the relevant Secretary of State who checked it and informed the sovereign about its form and content.³⁶ Martinitz, the same as Count of Thun five years before him, met with Cotterell again on the day of the audience when he picked him up and took him to the court in a royal carriage drawn by a team of six horses.³⁷ The exception was the reception of Count

³² Cf. Albert J. Loomie, ‘The Conducteur des Ambassadeurs of Seventeenth Century France and Spain’, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire*, vol. 53 (1975), pp. 333-56; Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, II, pp. 1317-22.

³³ Charles Cotterell (1641–1686) was followed by Charles Lodowick (1686–1710) and then by his son Clement Cotterell (1710–1758) and other family members who held the position until 1818: Timothy Venning, *Compendium of British Office Holders* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 482. For the duties see John M. Beattie, *The English Court in the Reign of George I* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 48. More also in the National Archives in Kew, LC 5/2, diaries of royal Masters of the Ceremonies from 1660–1710.

³⁴ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 22, Martinitz’s report from 22 June 1685.

³⁵ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8, a copy of the report by Johann Karl von Kuefstein of 9 July 1709. It was customary at the English court to send a copy of the credentials to the Master of the Ceremonies whom Kuefstein called in French *maitre des ceremonies*; the Master then passed it on to the Secretary of State to check it. For the key role of credentials in diplomacy see Stieve, *Europäisches Hof-Ceremoniel*, pp. 235-42.

³⁶ Count Jörger wrote about it in his report in 1702, ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8. Imperial envoys fell within the authority of the Secretary of State for the Northern Department. Cf. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/office-holders/vol2/pp22-58#h3-0002> [2020-11-17].

³⁷ This fact is documented by ceremonial science (Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, I, p. 477) as well as the experience of imperial envoys (ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 20, Thun’s report from 4 November 1680). All the sources from the second half of the 17th century record that the Master of the Ceremonies picked up the envoys at their house. In the case of the audience of Philipp Joseph Kinsky in 1728 Charlotte Backerra

Konrad Sigmund von Starhemberg in 1720 who was accompanied to the private audience by the Secretary of State.³⁸

The majority of the first audiences of imperial envoys took place in London and vicinity. As an exception, Heinrich Johann von Strattmann and Leopold von Auersperg were received in The Hague where King William III regularly stayed during the 1690s prior to his military campaign against the French. These two envoys were granted only private audiences.³⁹ At the close of the studied period, Heinrich Karl von Ostein also did not receive his first audience in England because he joined the court of George II in Hannover and subsequently was received in adjacent Herrenhausen.⁴⁰ The audiences of other envoys took place either in London or at nearby castles. The Stuarts preferred large Whitehall in Westminster, granting audiences in the state apartment to Count Königsegg in 1664, and later to Waldstein, Thun, Martinitz, and Kaunitz. Following the Glorious Revolution, William III and Mary as well as their successors gave preference to St James's Palace or Kensington Palace. Besides, Whitehall burnt down in 1698 and lost the status of a royal residence. St James's Palace was a venue for the first audience of the ambassador Count Philipp Joseph Kinsky (1732); later, George II received Baron Ignaz Johann Wasner (1737) and Count Heinrich Karl von Ostein (1740) there. The first audience of Count Heinrich Hyacinth von Nay-Richcourt took place in Kensington Palace (1749). During summer months, the Stuart kings abundantly used Windsor Castle where the public audience of Count Johann Wenzel Gallas took place in 1705. But William III preferred Hampton Court that he had substantially

claims that the royal carriage waited for the count two miles away from Hampton Court and that Cotterell did not pick him up but instead welcomed him at the castle. See Backerra, *Wien und London*, p. 260.

³⁸ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 60, a report from 31 May 1720.

³⁹ Ibid., cart. 25, a report dated 22 May 1694 from The Hague. Auersperg arrived there on 10 April and expected the arrival of the king from England. But William III did not reach the Continent until mid-May and Auersperg received a private audience on 21 May 1694. Auersperg and the king travelled to London as late as November 1694. Ibid., a report from 23 November 1694.

⁴⁰ Ostein received a private audience already in Herrenhausen and wrote that everything took place 'without any ceremonies'. Ibid., cart. 77, a report from 14 August 1740.

rebuilt. Occasionally, his successors also used it. The imperial envoy Count Kinsky was received by George II in 1728 there.⁴¹

In addition to the reception venue, the course of public audiences can also be studied. After the arrival at the royal residence, the Marshal of the Ceremonies (the Master of the Ceremonies deputy) greeted imperial envoys and ushered them to the first floor along with his superior. They passed through the Guard Chamber where armed guards paid them tribute, similar to Vienna. They continued all the way to the second antechamber where the Lord Chamberlain or his deputy welcomed them at the audience hall door.⁴² Count Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz in 1687 proudly reported that both the Lord Chamberlain and his deputy received him which was a standard practice reserved for the audiences of ambassadors.⁴³ Nonetheless, Count Sigmund Wilhelm von Königsegg was honoured the same way three years later but did not specifically mention it.⁴⁴ Sometimes the envoys had to wait for a while in the antechamber or the Lord Chamberlain's rooms if the monarch was not yet ready to receive them in the audience hall.⁴⁵ When everything was ready, the door opened and the envoy entered the hall with the Lord Chamberlain on his right and the Master of the Ceremonies on his left and bowed three times before reaching the throne.⁴⁶ The first bow took

⁴¹ For these edifices in detail see Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural History of the Royal Apartments, 1240–1698* (Yale, 1999); Idem, *Hampton Court Palace* (London, 1996); Edward Impey, *Kensington Palace: The Official Illustrated History* (London, 2003). The audience venues are regularly published in *The London Gazette*. The envoys usually did not specify the venues of their audiences. Other sources revealed that Charles II received ambassadors in the sumptuous Banqueting House in Whitehall while envoys were granted public audiences in the audience hall of the state apartment. Private audiences took place in his *bedchamber*: Key, *The Magnificent Monarch*, pp. 108-9.

⁴² ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 22, Martinitz's report from 22 June 1685; *ibid.*, cart. 23, Kaunitz's report from 31 January 1687. According to Charlotte Backerra, the German writing envoys used the term 'Obristkammerer' for the position of the Keeper of the Privy Purse. But she is wrong because this position did not include welcoming diplomats before the sovereign's apartment. Backerra, *Wien und London*, p. 260.

⁴³ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 22, Martinitz's report from 22 June 1685.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, cart. 24, Königsegg's report from 28 February 1690.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, cart. 20, Thun's report from 4 November 1680.

⁴⁶ As described by Count Jörger in 1702 who arrived to congratulate Queen Anne on her accession to the throne and express his condolences for the death of William III. Cf. an extract from his report in ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8.

place in the centre of the hall and the last one shortly before reaching the throne where the last bow (*Reverenz*) was the deepest.⁴⁷

Upon entering the audience hall, different views open up to imperial envoys. While Charles II welcomed them with above-standard respect, the same as ambassadors, in a standing position and with his hat off,⁴⁸ James II and all other monarchs accepted imperial envoys seated and wearing their head covers. Such behaviour was part of the period trends. Beginning in the 1680s, the French king Louis XIV refused the precedence of imperial diplomats; other monarchs, including the newly elevated Prussian king, gradually followed him.⁴⁹ In 1680, Count Franz Sigmund von Thun reported that Charles II stood bareheaded in the presence of several lords, privy councillors, and chamberlains in the hall and, seeing the envoy, he stepped towards him to hear his speech.⁵⁰ On the contrary, in the second half of the 1680s, Georg Adam II von Martinitz and Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz experienced a slightly different and less honourable reception, although it was adequate for their rank of envoy because, as mentioned above, the emperor did not send diplomats in the ambassadorial rank to England at that period. When these two envoys entered the audience hall, King James II was seated on the throne, his hat on, and whenever the imperial envoy bowed before him, he shortly lifted his head cover.⁵¹ This does not attest to the words of the theoretician Johann Christian Lünig who in his work from 1719 wrote that the English king stood up during the audience, made a step towards the envoy, and listened to his speech.⁵² There is also no

⁴⁷ Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, I, p. 476, writes about bows using the example of ambassadors (but envoys behaved the same way).

⁴⁸ In addition to the above-mentioned authors of that time, the reception of ambassadors is further described by Stieve, *Europäisches Hof-Ceremoniel*, p. 284; Müller, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen*, pp. 130-31.

⁴⁹ Louis XIV is believed that no later than in 1685 he left one wing of the audience hall's door closed during the receptions of imperial envoys. Similarly, French kings adapted to other gestures that were applied to the audiences of their diplomats in Vienna. Müller, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen*, pp. 133-34.

⁵⁰ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 20, Thun's report from 4 November 1680. Cf. the description of the audience of Leopold Wilhelm von Königsegg in the spring of 1664 as described in Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, I, p. 623.

⁵¹ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 22, Martinitz's report from 22 June 1685; *ibid.*, cart. 23, Kaunitz's report from 31 January 1687.

⁵² Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale* I, p. 477.

evidence that Queen Anne stood up to receive an imperial envoy. As it emerges from the reports of imperial diplomats, she was also seated and instead of taking off a hat, she nodded her head at relevant moments.⁵³

After bowing, imperial envoys stopped in front of the sovereign and gave a prepared speech that, however, did not disclose the details of their legation. Simultaneously, they passed their credentials and Latin written letters of their rulers⁵⁴ – with one exception, Johann Karl von Kuefstein in 1709.⁵⁵ A speech followed that, as expected, was consisted of a courtly compliment to the host, including several general sentences regarding mainly his health.⁵⁶

For long, the choice of language probably had symbolic value. It is generally believed that the official language of the diplomat's country was used, meaning Latin and German in the case of imperial envoys. The choice of another language that was closer to the host was regarded as a significantly positive gesture and expression of respect. Yet, the envoy had to observe his instruction in this matter.⁵⁷ The desire of Emperor Leopold I to make the English king his ally was most likely reflected in the command given to Count Königsegg and later to Count Thun to speak French during their public audiences.⁵⁸ Count Martinitz spoke Italian to James II in 1685 when he expressed to him his condolences for the death of his older brother and predecessor on the royal throne.⁵⁹ Records exist that Count Gallas also used French.

⁵³ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8, an extract from the report of Count Jörgen of 1702.

⁵⁴ In most cases they were not letters written by the emperor's hand but so-called chancellery letters (*Kantzley-Schreiben*) that the emperor only signed. I conclude it from their copies; those dated from the 1680s are deposited in The National Archives Kew, Secretaries of State, State Papers Foreign, Entry Books, SP 104/58 and SP 104/59. As a rule, they start with the titles of Leopold I encompassing several lines and only at the end is probably his handwritten signature *Serenitatis Vestrae bonus frater Leopoldus*. Cf. also Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, II, p. 57.

⁵⁵ Johann Karl von Kuefstein pretended handing over his credentials only because of the present foreign diplomats since the queen refused to receive him due to the dispute over the title. *Ibid.*, a copy of Kuefstein's report from 9 July 1709; see more details below.

⁵⁶ It is for example evidenced by Kaunitz's speech in 1687. Cf. ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 23, Kaunitz's report from 31 January 1687. The French speech of Count Gallas from 1705 has also survived. *Ibid.*, cart. 39, appendix A of the report from 8 September 1705.

⁵⁷ Müller, *Das kaiserliche Gesandtschaftswesen*, pp. 131-32.

⁵⁸ Lünig, *Theatrum Ceremoniale*, I, p. 623 (Königsegg); ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 20, Thun's report from 4 November 1680.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, cart. 22, Martinitz's report from 22 June 1685 (he used Italian but the king answered in French).

During the reign of the Hanoverian kings, imperial envoys presented their speeches in German. It was no special gain for Philipp Joseph Kinsky in 1728 because the king responded in English and the envoy did not understand a word.⁶⁰ Perhaps this experience prompted the aging Emperor Charles VI to slightly change his opinion. In the summer of 1740, he equipped Count Ostein, the last diplomat he sent to the British Isles, with an instruction that the first speech was customarily presented in German or Latin but immediately added: ‘but following a longer discussion or on other occasions, it by no means prevents you from speaking the language that is the easiest and most acceptable for the person who grants you the audience’.⁶¹

After the diplomat spoke, the time came for the king’s response, usually a short one. All the audiences throughout Europe commonly ended with the king’s hand offered for a kiss.⁶² It is peculiar that neither Lünig and Rousset nor any other diplomat within this study mentioned this part of the English milieu in their reports. Perhaps it was so natural that everyone remained silent about it. Subsequently, the envoy bowed three times before leaving the audience hall. The same persons that brought him to the audience ushered him to the carriage. The Master of the Ceremonies took him back home.

The first reception of Johann Wenzel Wratislaw von Mitrowitz in 1701 can be compared to public audiences. After his arrival in London, the count did not ask for a public audience for his equipage was unprepared. But because he regarded his task as very acute, he asked for a private audience, according to custom, to be able to inform King William III in the shortest possible time.⁶³ For that reason, nobody picked him up; he arrived at Hampton Court by himself and sought the king’s counsellor Earl of Albemarle, who ushered him to the

⁶⁰ Backerra, *Wien und London*, p. 50. The audience is also described in *The Historical Register Containing An Impartial Relation of all Transactions, Foreign and Domestic*, vol. 13 (1728), pp. 48-9.

⁶¹ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 75, a chancellery instruction from 5 July 1740.

⁶² E.g. Keay, *The Magnificent Monarch*, p. 108 or Ruth Frötschel, ‘Mit Handkuss: Die Hand als Gegenstand des Zeremoniells am Wiener Hof im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert’, in Irmgard Pangerl, Martin Scheutz and Thomas Winkelbauer (eds), *Der Wiener Hof im Spiegel der Zeremonialprotokolle (1652–1800): Eine Annäherung* (Innsbruck, 2007), pp. 337-56.

⁶³ Count Volckra chose the same strategy in 1715. ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 52, a report from 12 November 1715.

sovereign's antechamber. After a short wait, Lord Chamberlain Earl of Jersey informed him that the king waited for him in private, in the so-called Withdrawing Room where they walked together and had a rather long private audience without any formalities.⁶⁴

In addition to an audience with the king or queen, each imperial envoy also had to be received by the sovereign's spouse (in the case of Queen Anne by her husband, Prince George of Denmark) and other adult members of the royal family who were living in the British Isles. In this context, the case of George I is rather interesting for he lived separately from his wife who did not stay in England; therefore, imperial envoys were received by George Augustus, Prince of Wales, and his wife. Theoretically, these audiences normally were held shortly after the envoy's audience with the sovereign but the queens often used their health condition as an excuse and granted the audience to the envoy later (Franz Sigmund von Thun, 1680; Georg Adam II von Martinitz, 1685). Otherwise, the scenarios of these audiences were very much alike those with the sovereign. For a public audience, the Master of the Ceremonies picked up the diplomat who was welcomed by the queen's Lord Chamberlain in front of her apartment. Only the venue of the audience sometimes differed. While Count Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz in 1687 and Count Leopold Wilhelm von Königsegg in 1690 stated that the audience with the queen was the same as that with the king,⁶⁵ Count Franz Sigmund von Thun in 1680 reported that the queen received him in her bedroom because of her weakened health. After all, he reported to Vienna that she looked very poorly.⁶⁶ Imperial envoys were not always granted a public audience with the queen. When Count Leopold von Auersperg in 1694 sought a reception by Mary Stuart, he attempted to choose the manner of audience but the servants immediately informed him that the queen disliked formalities. Therefore, he decided

⁶⁴ Ibid., cart. 33, a report from 11 January 1701. Count Volckra was also received in the Withdrawing Room in 1715: *ibid.*, cart. 52, a report from 26 November 1715.

⁶⁵ Ibid., cart. 23, Kaunitz's report from 3 February 1687; *ibid.*, cart. 24, Königsegg's report from 28 February 1690.

⁶⁶ Ibid., cart. 20, a report from 18 November 1680.

for a private audience only. Auersperg thus was the last imperial diplomat to have been received by Queen Mary for she died a month later.⁶⁷

The Dispute over the Title of the English Sovereign

According to available information it may seem that the first audiences of imperial envoys were rather idyllic and unburdened by any significant difficulties. This basically holds true for the second half of the 17th century, yet even then the seeds of contention occurred, especially concerning the title of the English sovereign in the documents issued by the Imperial Court Chancellery in Vienna. Charles II was the first to point it out towards the end of his reign; James II and his counsellors warned about it even more vehemently but the emperor managed to fend off their claims without greater difficulties. Nevertheless, the dispute intensified over time and escalated in the first half of the 18th century. The cause of the dispute was that the emperor addressed the English king as Serene Highness (*Serenitas*) but he requested to be addressed as Majesty (*Maiestas*).⁶⁸

James II was the first English king who decided to resolve this problem in 1688. Exclusively for this purpose he sent Nicholas Taaffe, Earl of Carlingford, to Vienna. In January that year he issued quite a brief instruction for him where the fourth article was its most essential and longest part. The king commanded Carlingford to inform Emperor Leopold I on a suitable occasion after the first public audience that James II was very surprised after his succession to the throne that the emperor did not call him the same as the other kings and that 'he gives Us but the Title of Serenitas while He gives other Kings that of Majestas'. The envoy reputedly informed the emperor that James II regarded it as belittling the English

⁶⁷ Ibid., cart. 25, Auersperg's report from 26 November 1694.

⁶⁸ The dispute was previously briefly dealt with by David Bayne Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service 1689–1789* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 22, 208; further information based on research of Viennese sources was presented by Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft*, pp. 245–47.

king's status and requested that the emperor change this practice, 'since (by the Grace of God) We look upon Ourselves as equall in Rank and Royall dignity with the Chiefest of all the Crowned heads of Christendome and of all those that are placed in the first order of Monarchs'. Had the emperor failed to do so, James II threatened that he would either pay him back with the same title or would refuse to accept all his letters.⁶⁹ However, the emperor refused the innovation, stating that he did not use the Majesty title for any of the kings; moreover, James II fled from England in the autumn that year and William of Orange and his wife Mary replaced him and as imperial allies were not concerned with this problem.

But it did not take long for the English party to bring up the unresolved dispute again. It happened during the reign of Queen Anne in 1705 when Emperor Leopold I died. The queen's counsellors (especially the Secretary of State Robert Harley, in office 1704–08) requested that Anne be addressed as Her Majesty in the letter written by the Imperial Court Chancellery that informed about this sad news. In relation to it, a statement of denial arrived from Vienna elucidating that it was an ancient tradition and prerogative of the emperor, whom the crowned heads addressed as Majesty and who, on the other hand, addressed the other kings as Serene Highness. Nevertheless, Vienna was slightly forthcoming towards the queen, a key ally in the war that was underway, and attached to the official statement that used the title *Serenitas* a personal letter of Joseph I in which he addressed the queen as Her Majesty; but the envoy Johann Wenzel Gallas in London was requested to convey that it would be unacceptable to receive only personal letters in the future. Yet the Secretary of State Harley did not intend to make any concessions which is evident from his attitude towards the second imperial diplomat in England, the resident Johann Philipp Hoffmann. When this man essayed

⁶⁹ The National Archive in Kew, Secretaries of State, State Papers Foreign, Entry Books, SP 104/59 (1685–88), fol. 64r-65v, an instruction for Earl of Carlingford, Whitehall, 16 January 1688 SV. Published by David Worthington (ed.), 'The 1688 Correspondence of Nicholas Taaffe, Second Earl of Carlingford (d. 1690) from the Imperial Court in Vienna', *Archivum Hibernicum. Irish Historical Records*, vol. 58 (2004), pp. 174-209, here pp. 182-3.

to renew his accreditation in 1705 and 1707, he found himself in hot water. Harley let him know in both cases that he would accept no credentials with the title *Serenitas* ever again.⁷⁰

Although Harley was dismissed from his position of Secretary of State for the Northern Department in 1708, the dispute over the title definitely was not over. It returned to the pages of diplomatic reports with the increasing tension between Queen Anne and Emperor Joseph I during the War of the Spanish Succession. The queen's servants dealt with this issue with unparalleled verve in 1709 when the imperial envoy extraordinary Count Johann Karl von Kuefstein arrived in London at the end of May. The following day, the new Secretary of State Henry Boyle (1708–10) paid him a visit in lieu of the Master of the Ceremonies and asked him to present his credentials. Without delay, Kuefstein submitted the copy of the credentials and on that occasion asked Boyle for the first public audience with the queen. But the Secretary of State responded only several days later specifying that following a discussion the Privy Council decided it could not accept the credentials because of the inappropriate Queen's title. The legitimate imperial envoy to England, Johann Wenzel Gallas,⁷¹ defended Count Kuefstein, arguing that he did not have to undergo such difficulties but the State Secretary was as unyielding as his predecessor Harley. Queen Anne, encouraged by the establishment of Great Britain in 1707, reputedly decided to stop receiving this kind of title that was inappropriate for her high status. Boyle suggested two solutions to Kuefstein: either the queen would be officially ill and only receive the envoy at a private audience where he would be able to hand over the emperor's letter or Kuefstein would have a public audience but would not be allowed to present his credentials because the sovereign would only accept

⁷⁰ Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft*, pp. 245–46. Cf. also Gallas and Hoffmann's reports from May–September 1705 (esp. from 8 Sept 1705) in v ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 39.

⁷¹ For Gallas and his stay in England most recently Martin Krummholz, *Gallasové. Barokní kavalíři a mecenáši (1630–1757)* (Ph.D. thesis, Praha, 2013), esp. pp. 78–87.

the letter by Joseph I. His proposal comprised exactly what Vienna previously wanted to avoid. Then the two sides parted.⁷²

Count Gallas tried to convince the Secretary of State two more times to abandon this novelty, arguing that it would result in belittling the emperor's respect and this behaviour would soon be copied by all other sovereigns. Similarly, Count Kuefstein visited Boyle one more time to get his own way. He emphasised that he arrived in good faith with a condolence and that no English archive revealed a single example of the Imperial Court Chancellery using a title other than *Serenitas*. He threatened to urgently inform the emperor and wait for his command but nothing helped. Eventually, the imperial diplomats in London discussed the matter and decided to yield to Queen Anne, not provoking a dispute with such an important ally during the turbulent times of the War of the Spanish Succession.⁷³ They decided to accept the offer of a public audience at which no credentials would be presented but in return asked the English side to guarantee that other envoys would not hear about not presenting the credentials.⁷⁴ Finally, Johann Karl von Kuefstein was granted a public audience on the evening of 10 June (12 days after his arrival) during which he presented the emperor's letter only and made other envoys believe that he had presented the credentials as well. Queen Anne thanked for the condolence of the death of her husband George, assuring the emperor about her favour and support. After the audience, Kuefstein stayed in London for a short time and then left home without waiting for a written response (as a rule, the sovereign responded to the presented credentials in writing and issued so-called re-credentials to the envoy).

⁷² Cf. ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8, a copy of Kuefstein's report from 9 July 1709.

⁷³ From the perspective of imperial envoys, the situation in England deteriorated during 1709–11. As early as 1709, the Tories started to influence the queen and the pro-imperial Whigs were no longer welcomed at the court. For more see Krummholz, *Gallasové*, p. 84, and for the international political situation at that year see Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft*, esp. pp. 365-97.

⁷⁴ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8, a copy of Kuefstein's report from 9 July 1709. The queen also provided her view via Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland and the Secretary of State for the Southern Department as follows: 'as soon as you prove that Your Imperial Majesty treat the kings in Spain and France only with the serenity title we will leave the claim to the majesty title'.

Although Kuefstein did not fully achieve his goal, he succeeded in saving his face in front of the international public.⁷⁵

At that time, imperial diplomacy evidently lost firm ground regarding ceremonial issues. Until then, the ceremony was a symbolical imperial weapon which regularly publicised and confirmed the emperor's priority in the hierarchy of Western civilisation monarchs and allowed him to conduct 'universal' politics. However, the French king especially refused to come to terms with it since he would have loved to assume the emperor's exceptional position in this system; therefore, he and some others continuously cast doubt on this premise and tradition. Although France did not fulfil its ambitions, it went to such extremes at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession that the emperor had to begin adopt the principle, both internationally and inside the empire, that all the sovereigns were equal and there was no such thing as the hierarchy of monarchs.⁷⁶ The events in England in fact attest to this uneasy situation of imperial diplomacy. Luckily for the emperor, Queen Anne died shortly (1714) and the imperial Prince Georg Ludwig of the House of Hannover was appointed the new monarch who had once personally assisted the Austrian Habsburgs to liberate Vienna from the Turkish siege (1683) and who assumed a more forthcoming stance on this issue. Emperor Charles VI thus could return to the solution of 1705 and from that time on equipped his envoys both with the Latin credentials using the title Serene Highness and a personal French letter (*Kanzleyschreiben*) in which he used the Majesty title. The normalisation of relations is evidenced by the fact that in the autumn of 1715 the new envoy

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Cf. Krischer, *Souveränität*, pp. 8-10; Michael Rohrschneider, 'Das französische Präzedenzstreben im Zeitalter Ludwigs XIV.: Diplomatische Praxis – zeitgenössische Publizistik – Rezeption in der frühen deutschen Zeremonialwissenschaft', *Francia*, vol. 36 (2009), pp. 135-79; for the Bohemian milieu see Kubeš et al., *V zastoupení císaře*, Chapters I. 1 and I. 2. On the difficulties that the Bohemian electors-envoys faced during the election of Charles VI as the new Holy Roman Emperor in 1711 see Jiří Kubeš, 'Volba a korunovace Karla VI. římským císařem v roce 1711', *Český časopis historický*, vol. 111 (2013), pp. 805-41, here pp. 816-7.

Count Otto Christoph von Volckra sent the good news about an incident-free acceptance of his credentials in London.⁷⁷

Nonetheless, a small tension persisted as evidenced by the examples of imperial and British diplomats of the 1720s. When in the spring of 1728 the new envoy James Waldgrave arrived in Vienna,⁷⁸ he brought his credentials in Latin and French. He was explicitly instructed by the English kings George I and later George II to use only the French ones for they did not want to receive a Latin response from the emperor. Their thinking was pragmatic. They knew that the emperor had been fitting out his diplomats with chancellery letters in French that used the Majesty title and so they attempted to transfer the entire correspondence (including official credentials) with the emperor into this language to compel him to use the upheld salutation. Furthermore, Waldgrave delivered his speech in French during his first audience with the emperor and very much appreciated that Charles VI answered in the same language. Thomas Robinson, his successor in the envoy's position, had the same experience.⁷⁹ However, the imperial envoys at the time, to the displeasure of English kings, did not behave the same way and continued to present their credentials in Latin. Moreover, the emperor prohibited them from speaking German at the audiences (see above). In 1728, Lord Chamberlain Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, pointed out while negotiating the ceremony for the new envoy Philipp Joseph Kinsky, yet to no effect, that in the early 18th century Johann Wenzel Gallas delivered his speech at the audience with Queen Anne in French. Although the Lord Chamberlain argued that George II could use only French as a foreign language, Kinsky insisted that he had to give his speech either in Latin or German.

⁷⁷ See Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft*, p. 247; ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 57, Volckra's report from 26 November 1715.

⁷⁸ James Waldgrave (1684–1741) worked in Vienna during 1728–1730; then he assumed the position of the ambassador to France. See Hausmann (ed.), *Repertorium*, pp. 146, 150.

⁷⁹ Cf. the wording of the instruction of George I from June 1727: 'But as the Impl. Chancery in answer to the former [Latin] makes use of the Stile of Serenitas, and in answer to the latter [French] gives us the Title of Majesty, we would insensibly avoid receiving any Latin Letters from the Court of Vienna, & rather keep to the Correspondence as settled for some time past by Letters of Cachet, wherein the Title of Majesty is mutually given; [...].' Quoted from Backerra, *Wien und London*, pp. 261-62.

Eventually, the audience on 16 September was carried out in their ‘home’ languages because of the stubbornness of both parties, i.e. Kinsky spoke German and the king (and later the queen and their children) responded in English so the imperial envoy did not understand a word. The Master of the Ceremonies interpreted the content of the king’s response to Kinsky in private after the audience. It must be added that the emperor’s letter, handed to the king by the envoy, was this time written in Latin.⁸⁰

Obviously, this manner of communication could not be employed in the long-term and the dispute needed to be settled. However, it is not known for now how the situation was resolved. But a letter from Vienna probably from 1749 was found that was addressed to the imperial legation secretary in England, Anton von Zöhren. The writer, conversant with the reality of British–Austrian relations, complained about the persisting complicated and unbearable situation in mutual correspondence.⁸¹ He commenced the letter with the statement that although Holy Roman Emperor Francis I was far from being as obsessed with the observation of the ceremony as his predecessors,⁸² some principles must conventionally be respected. Allegedly, under Charles VI a rule was agreed on that the two crowned heads would exchange letters written in Latin only and that the emperor would concede the Majesty title to the king. Yet the writer immediately confessed that both sides breached this practice during the 1740s. The newly crowned Emperor Francis I notified London about his election from Frankfurt in German (September 1745); as a result, the British side – although the new envoy Baron Ignaz Johann Wasner was equipped with his Latin credentials in October –

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 263.

⁸¹ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8. The letter has no date but it must have been written in the spring or summer of 1749. The writer primarily refers to the birth of the daughter of Duchess of Wales (it must have been Princess Louise, the daughter of the heir to the throne Frederick, * 19 March 1749) and there is a later remark that the letter was never sent but that the information was included in the instruction issued for the imperial envoy Count Heinrich Hyacinth von Nay-Richecourt. He stayed in the British Isles from September 1749 to May 1752 (Hausmann (ed.), *Repertorium*, p. 66). The imperial Vice-Chancellor (*Reichsvizekanzler*) Rudolf Josef Colloredo most likely wrote the letter.

⁸² ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8, a letter with no date to the legation secretary Anton von Zöhren (1749).

refused to fit its new envoy to Vienna, Thomas Robinson, with new credentials, thus obstructing further negotiations between the two sides (very important during the War of the Austrian Succession). It was not until Vienna acknowledged the mistake and sent the new notification, this time in Latin, about Francis' election and imperial coronation in 1746 (though they had to antedate it to the autumn of 1745) that the British sovereign finally provided Robinson with new credentials.⁸³ Several years later, Vienna felt aggrieved for Robinson's deputy Robert Keith arrived in the autumn of 1748 with French credentials presented on a very small sheet of paper.⁸⁴ Similarly, the notification about the birth of a daughter of the heir to the throne in the spring of 1749 arrived in French and had the same format; therefore, as stated by the writer of the letter, they refused to open it. The explanation of the envoy Keith was that in London Latin was used for official matters only, while in this case it was an exclusively courtesy notification that is written in French as a rule. Yet, this explanation was not sufficient for the credentials and the writer got angry because, in fact, 'the credentials are official documents and not an unsubstantial compliment'. He further argued that in 1746 they rectified their mistake and sent the notification about the election in Latin.⁸⁵ Additionally, we learn that in Vienna credentials were written on large sheets of paper while the British ones were hardly half of their size during 1748–49. The letter concluded with a rather surprising statement revealing that in the mid-18th century, the title issue in personal letters exchanged by monarchs differed from previous times for the sovereign of the Kingdom of Great Britain abandoned the previous formal attitude. While according to the

⁸³ Ibid. Thomas Robinson (c. 1695–1770) was the envoy to Vienna during 1730–1748. See Hausmann (ed.), *Repertorium*, pp. 146–47, 157.

⁸⁴ Robert Keith († 1774) was the envoy to Vienna in the years 1748–57; later he represented the king in Russia. Ibid., p. 147. He had a public audience with Maria Theresa on 8 September 1748. See Rudolf Khevenhüller-Metsch and Hanns Schlitter (eds), *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias. Tagebuch des Fürsten Johann Joseph Khevenhüller-Metsch. Kaiserlichen Oberhofmeisters, Bd.2: 1745–1749* (Leipzig and Wien, 1908), p. 260.

⁸⁵ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, Reichskanzlei, Zeremonialakten, cart. 7, fasc. 8, a letter with no date to the legation secretary Anton von Zöhren (1749).

writer the emperor continued to address the British sovereign as ‘Serenissimi et Potentissimi’, George II addressed the emperor in his letters only as ‘monsieur mon frere l’empereur’.⁸⁶

Conclusion

The gathered information regarding the ceremony shows two development trends and discloses some particularities of the English court milieu. Above all it is evident that the imperial envoys travelling to the British Isles in the second half of the 17th century were granted the first audience, a public one, shortly after their arrival at the court. At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, this situation changed with respect to the exchange of sovereigns on the English throne. During the 1690s, William III spent every summer on the Continent fighting against the French king and granted imperial envoys with private audiences only promising that they would be received publicly after his return to London. Subsequently, after 1714, the first members of the Hannover Dynasty granted mainly private audiences to the imperial diplomats. George I was known for his distaste for formalities⁸⁷ and George II acted in a similar way. Secondly, the reception ceremony for imperial envoys changed substantially in 1685. Until then Charles II received the envoys of Leopold I as if they were ambassadors, expecting them in the audience hall standing and bareheaded. James II, however, ceased to respect the privileged status of the emperor as the head of Western Christianity and united the ceremonial rules for the reception of envoys as diplomats of the second rank. Since then he expected the representatives of Emperor Leopold I at public audiences seated on the throne and wearing a head cover. The succeeding kings and queens continued with this practice.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Count Starhemberg writes in one relation that the king ‘hates festive entries and public audiences immensely’. Ibid., cart. 62, a report from 5 September 1722.

The presence of the Master of the Ceremonies was a specific feature of the reception of diplomats at the English court. The imperial envoys were unfamiliar with this function in Vienna while in the British Isles the Master of the Ceremonies was usually the first man of the hosting court they encountered. He accompanied them to their first audience and was responsible for their communication with the sovereign; he also presented the king's gift to them at the end of their sojourn. It was the Master of the Ceremonies who delivered to the envoy Johann Wenzel Gallas the resolution of Queen Anne that he was *persona non grata* at her court.⁸⁸ The Master's duties further included the acquisition of copies of credentials from foreign diplomats.

We observe that it definitely was no sheer formality because during the 1680s a long-lasting dispute surged between the English sovereigns and the emperor over the title of the English king used in credentials and emperor's letters. The inappropriate title on an envelope sent from Vienna could lead to the refusal of the diplomat's credentials as well as further negotiations with the English side. The tension over the titles between the two monarchs persisted for several decades, yet it never obstructed their mutual negotiations and never prevented their regular alliance for long although very grave and somewhat incomprehensible formal faults occurred when the Habsburgs wrote the wrong name of the British sovereign George II in the form of Georgius Ludovicus (which was the name of his father) instead of Georgius Augustus on official documents.⁸⁹ There was a long-running dispute especially on the recognition of the Majesty title⁹⁰ where the emperor attempted to defend his traditional

⁸⁸ Cf. Abel Boyer, *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, Digested into Annals. Year the Tenth* (London, 1712), pp. 252-53. For the context of his dismissal see Jarnut-Derbolav, *Die Österreichische Gesandtschaft*, pp. 508-15.

⁸⁹ ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 78, a letter of the envoy Heinrich Karl von Ostein from 20 January 1741.

⁹⁰ There is also evidence that other crowned heads of England refused to accept documents with inappropriate titles. For example, Dominik Andreas von Kaunitz was declined by the Dowager Queen Catherine of Braganza in 1687. Cf. ÖStA Wien, HHStA, StA, England, cart. 23, Kaunitz's letter from 21 February 1687. The count writes that during the audience he gave the credentials from the empress to the Dowager Queen but the Master of the Ceremonies returned it to him unopened because it was equipped with the wrong title *principissae*

privileges while the English kings (James II, Anne, George II) wanted to achieve the equalisation of titles. Although it seems that over time these issues lost their importance, it never fully disappeared and whenever it was needed to demonstrate the deterioration of relations, the dispute over the title immediately came to the fore as a fitting tool to obstruct further negotiations as it was described in Robinson's case during the 1740s.

The ceremony and titles were sensitive indicators of mutual relations throughout the time, not being altered by the fact that 'only' envoys and various ministers arranged the diplomatic operations and that ambassadors represented the emperor and the king only very exceptionally.⁹¹ The ceremonial issues had the same importance even for the envoys of the second rank. We further demonstrated that the reception rules for imperial envoys in England changed substantially in the mid-1680s after James II acceded to the throne who, like the French, refused to acknowledge the emperor's precedence and started to treat imperial envoys as those sent by other kings – he no longer received them standing and no longer stepped towards them during the audience. Nevertheless, the emperor did not respond by sending ambassadors in lieu of envoys to England who would have been entitled to a more honourable reception; rather, he came to terms with this situation. It is another evidence that the emperors of the House of Habsburg progressively yielded (were compelled to yield) to their primacy among Christian sovereigns.

Bregantinae instead of the correct one *infantis Portugalliae*. Kaunitz asked Vienna to correct it and send it back to him soon.

⁹¹ Starhemberg and Kinsky were not awarded the ambassador's rank because of the relations between Emperor Charles VI and the kings George I and George II. In Starhemberg's case the emperor was pushed into it by the behaviour of the French ambassador to London and Hannover who requested precedence before imperial diplomats. His advisors originally recommended to him not to appoint Starhemberg the ambassador but later changed their opinion. More in Kubeš et al., *V zastoupení císaře*, Chapter II. 3.