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COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF POLISH ENVOYS IN ACCOUNTS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO TURKEY IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Abstract. One of the sources of information about Old Polish legations to Turkey are accounts written down by legation members. Such reports from diplomatic missions were mandatory. The paper seeks to analyze the communication strategies of the authors of the reports from the Polish missions to Turkey in the 18th century. The research material are two descriptions of legations: one by Stanisław Chomentowski from 1712–1714 and the other by Józef Podoski from 1759–1760. The article examines the methods of describing formal communication as part of the diplomatic ceremony (according to the methodology of Eric W. Rothenbuler). The subject of the research will be descriptions of meetings with Turkish dignitaries and contacts with diplomats from other countries. The way of describing successes, difficulties and failures in negotiations will be presented and the information recorded in the description will be confronted with historiographic opinions.

Keywords: diplomatic mission; diplomatic ceremony; social communication; Turkey; Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

STRATEGIE KOMUNIKACYJNE POLSKICH POSŁÓW W RELACJACH Z MISJI DYPLOMATYCZNYCH DO TURCJI W XVIII W.

Abstrakt. Jednym ze źródeł informacji o staropolskich legacjach do Turcji są relacje spisane przez członków poselstw. Tego typu opisy były wymagane jako sprawozdania z misji dyplomatycznej. Celem artykułu będzie analiza strategii komunikacyjnych autorów relacji z polskich misji do Turcji w XVIII wieku. Materiałem badawczym są dwa opisy poselstw: jedno autorstwa Stanisława Chomentowskiego z lat 1712–1714, drugie autorstwa Józefa Podoskiego z lat 1759–1760. W artykule będą analizowane sposoby opisywania komunikacji formalnej jako elementu ceremoniału dyplomatycznego (zgodnie z metodologią Erica W. Rothenbuhlera). Przedmiotem badań będą opisy spotkań z tureckimi dostojnikami oraz kontakty z dyplomatami innych państw.

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Przedstawiony zostanie sposób relacjonowania sukcesów, trudności i porażek w negocjacjach, a zawarte w opisach informacje zostaną skonfrontowane z opiniami historiograficznymi.

Słowa kluczowe: podróż dyplomatyczna; ceremoniał dyplomatyczny; komunikacja społeczna; Turcja; Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów

The eighteenth century ended the Polish-Turkish wars, and diplomatic contacts dominated political relations.¹ Importantly, this aspect of the Second Republic of Poland's (Rzeczpospolita's) foreign policy was in Poles' hands throughout the century. It was not evident because during the reign of the Saxon dynasty of the house of Wettin in Poland, many missions related to the Republic's foreign policy were carried out by Saxon diplomacy. During the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, the last king of Poland, efforts were mainly focused on rebuilding the diplomatic service. Such actions were related to the desire to improve the functioning of Polish diplomacy in Istanbul. The main objective during this period was to establish a permanent embassy or diplomatic mission in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Essential accounts of Polish diplomatic activities in the eighteenth century can be found in reports from diplomatic missions containing valuable information about their activities. The members of the legation prepared these reports for the needs of the most important institutions and dignitaries. The reports allow us to learn about the legation's diplomatic and political activities and everyday life. They can also be treated as creations of the image of the legation's activity. It should be remembered that they were written down in a specific writing convention that imposed chronology and reflected the need to inform about the most

¹ *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 2, 1572-1795, ed. Zbigniew Wójcik (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982); Andrzej Dziubiński, *Na szlakach orientu. Handel między Polską a imperium osmańskim w XVI-XVIII w.* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Leopoldinum, 1997); Dziubiński, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-tureckie w latach 1500-1572 w kontekście międzynarodowym*, (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo UWr, 2005); Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Podole pod panowaniem tureckim. Ejalet kamieniecki 1672-1699* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Polczek, 1994); Kołodziejczyk, "Posłowie Rzeczypospolitej w Stambule," in *Dawne elity. Słowo i gest*, ed. Justyna Olko and Jerzy Axer (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2005), 217-23; Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th-18th Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania. International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th-18th Century). A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Jan Reychman, *Życie polskie w Stambule w XVIII w.* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1959); Marian Bałczewski, "Zmiany w ocenie Turcji w opinii polskiej XVIII w.," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis, Folia Historica* 22 (1985), 91-108.

important meetings, e.g., with viziers, the sultan, and diplomats of other countries, and the results of the talks.

This paper aims to explore the activity of Old Polish diplomats presented in the accounts of their missions as an example of intercultural communication manifested in the form of a ritual. For this purpose, the concept of ritual as the central element of ritual communication, proposed by the American researcher Eric W. Rothenbuhler, will be used.² The advantage of this approach is its universality and the ease with which it can be used in research on situations related to public activity. Regarding ritual communication, diplomatic contact can be analyzed as a cultural experience.

According to Rothenbuhler, ritual and ritual activities in communication express the social order they create, maintain, and adapt to changing needs. It is vital to consider the perspective from which Rothenbuhler defines ritual. In his opinion, humans have a decisive influence on the communicative effectiveness of the ritual. He writes, "From this point of view, ritual is not so much the immortal powers that exert an overwhelming influence on human affairs as the sphere of activity of the people themselves."³ Moreover, the effectiveness of the ritual depends on its interpretation by the recipients: "It is rather related to the sphere of understanding in terms of the logic of signs, understood in terms of meanings created by man, morality, and custom."⁴ However, he adds, "The essence of ritual, like any other form of communication, consists of a combination of ideas and forms of material expression, individual interpretations and common structures of languages, symbols, and meanings, especially features of the communication situation and universals of tradition and culture."⁵

We shall analyze three situations involving communication between Polish diplomats and Turkish dignitaries, including the Sultan. Rothenbuhler's position will make it possible to view these interactions and the accompanying ceremonies as acts of diplomatic communication, which obviously occurs between representatives of different cultures, and due to its ritual character any significant inter-cultural differences are overcome.

The first interaction between Old Polish diplomats and the Ottoman administration took place at the border – crossing it meant entering a different cul-

² Eric W. Rothenbuhler, *Ritual Communication: From Everyday Conversation to Mediated Ceremony* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998); Polish translation in Rothenbuhler, *Komunikacja rytualna. Od rozmowy do ceremonii medialnej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2003).

³ Rothenbuhler, *Komunikacja*, 79.

⁴ Rothenbuhler, 79.

⁵ Rothenbuhler, 79.

tural space. The encounter was highly ritualized, which resulted from the official, ceremonial nature of the envoy's entry into the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The mission's reports include many descriptions of such situations, one example being the crossing of the border by Józef Podoski's⁶ embassy in 1759–1760, described in detail in a handwritten account, currently preserved at the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław.⁷ It was the focus of Kajetan Chrzanowski's *Wiadomości o Państwie Tureckim [...]*,⁸ who presumably witnessed this type of activity when he was a secretary in Karol Boscamp-Lasopolski's legation that came to Istanbul in 1776.⁹ Valuable information also appears in the report from the embassy of Tomasz Aleksandrowicz, the castellan of Podlasie, dating back to 1766, which is also kept in manuscript form at the Ossoliński National Institute.⁹

The ceremony of crossing the Dniester River near Khotyn, which constituted a natural border between the two countries, took place in a formal setting. It was attended by senators and other officials of the Polish Republic, accompanied by the flag of the Crown troops, solemnized by a salvo from artillery hauled from the nearby fortress in Kamieniec Podolski, and attended by crowds of spectators on both sides of the river. The secretary of Podoski's legation described the arrival of Turkish administration representatives at the river bank, led by the basha of Khotyn, janissaries, and residents of the city

⁶ Wojciech Szczygielski, "Podoski Józef Antoni h. Junosza (1710–1779)," in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 27, ed. Emanuel Rostworowski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1982–1983), 164–67; *Historia Dyplomacji Polskiej*, 2:386; Reychman, *Życie polskie w Stambule*, 24.

⁷ Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego Ossolineum [hereafter: BOss.], *Dyaryusz poselstwa Podoskiego Józefa do Turek napisany przez Adama Gotartowskiego sędziego grodzkiego bobrownickiego sekretarza tegoż poselstwa*.

⁸ Kajetan Chrzanowski, *Wiadomości o państwie tureckim przez iednego Polaka w listach do przyjaciela pisanych przeslane [...]* (Warszawa, 1797), 5; see the earlier edition of 1786, *Wiadomości o Państwie Tureckim: przez iednego Polaka w Listach do Przyjaciela pisanych przeslane [...]* (Warszawa, 1786); Władysław Konopczyński, "Chrzanowski Kajetan," *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Kraków: PAU, 1937), 3:460; Reychman, *Życie polskie w Stambule*, 51–52; Maria Bogucka, "Szlachta polska wobec Wschodu turecko-tatarskiego. Między fascynacją a przerażeniem (XVI–XVIII w.)," *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny „Sobótka”*, nos. 3–4 (1982): 185–93; Dariusz Dolański, *Trzy cesarstwa. Wiedza i wyobrażenia o Niemczech, Turcji i Rosji w Polsce XVIII w.* (Zielona Góra: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2013), 143–70; Adrian Maško, "Obraz islamu w Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII w.," *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, nos. 3–4 (2015): 191–206.

⁹ BOss, rkps. 1615/III, *Dyaryusz legacyi JW. JMÉ pana Tomasza Alexandrowicza podkomorzego nadwornego JKMci y posła extraordinaryjnego do Porty Ottomańskiej w roku 1766 odprawioney*; Władysław Konopczyński, "Aleksandrowicz (vel Alexandrowicz) Tomasz Walerjan" in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Kraków: PAU, 1935), 1:72; Reychman, *Życie polskie w Stambule*, 40–41.

and its surroundings, who settled on the hills by the river.¹⁰ The envoy was “handed over” by the Polish dignitaries to the Turkish representatives on a ferry moored in the middle of the Dniester. Chrzanowski described this type of practice in his “letters”. He emphasized that the Polish court would appoint an official to hand over the envoy in the middle of the river and collect a document from the basha of Khotyn confirming the diplomat’s handover. In that spot, the envoy would change from his Polish boat to the Turkish vessel that had been sent for him.¹¹ The same ceremony is described in detail in Podoski’s legation’s account,¹² as well as in the report from the legation of Tomasz Aleksandrowicz.¹³ Adam Gotartowski, the secretary of Podoski’s legation and the author of the report, also assessed the efficiency of the local pasha of Khotyn, who was obliged to furnish horses for the envoy’s retinue. He stated that the pasha had performed his role badly because the horses were of poor quality.¹⁴ The ceremony was graced by a janissary band. Although it is commonly repeated in historiography that Old Polish dignitaries knew this type of music, it must have caused some confusion among the legation members. Gotartowski complained about the loudness of the wind instruments used by the band.¹⁵

The descriptions of the border crossing and the ritual of transferring the envoy to the care of the Turkish state reveal the purpose of this type of communication, which has a complex symbolic meaning. First of all, both parties act as equal partners. Polish diplomats emphasize that the ceremony they participated in was about a guaranteed safe journey to Istanbul and back to their homeland. The attitude of Turkish officials is to show respect to the representatives of the Republic of Poland and highlight their own state’s seriousness. Visual elements of mutual communication were essential on such occasions.

The reception by the leader was preceded by a visit to the grand vizier, who formally received the envoy with a ceremony that could be regarded as a communication ritual. For the most part, such courtesy meetings went smoothly. Tomasz Aleksandrowicz received an audience with the vizier on June 15, 1766, just a day after his official entry into Istanbul. The respectful nature of the meeting is evidenced by the mention of a conversation during which the diplomat was asked about the comfort of the journey and his health. It is worth

¹⁰ BOss, rkps. 614, 18.

¹¹ Chrzanowski, *Wiadomości* (1797), 5.

¹² BOss, rkps. 614, 19.

¹³ BOss, rkps. 1615/III, 6.

¹⁴ BOss, rkps. 614, 19.

¹⁵ BOss, rkps. 614, 19–20.

adding that right after his visit, a Russian envoy was received.¹⁶ However, the encounter cannot be analyzed as a ritual for the brevity of its account.

On the other hand, a lot of information about the diplomatic ritual is found in the report from Podoski's embassy. The envoy met the vizier a few days after his arrival in Istanbul, which was accompanied by an extensive ceremony. The envoy and his companions crossed from Perea in several boats, and Podoski was entertained with coffee and tobacco and "eastern ceremonies", which were not described in detail. Then, the delegation made its way to the palace of Grand Vizier Regip Pasha, riding horses gifted by the Turkish authorities.¹⁷ Significantly, ahead of the envoy rode the secretary of the legation, holding a letter from the Polish king to the vizier wrapped in a special cloth. The secretary's horse had to be led by two Polish servants. Podoski was led into the room where he was to wait for the vizier. He was seated on a chair prepared specially for him. After a few minutes, the vizier arrived with a large group of officials. The author of the report admired his expensive attire, which he compared with the Old Polish outfit of a wealthy envoy. Podoski gave a speech in honor of Regip Pasha, which was translated for him. The vizier thanked the envoy for his speech and declared his friendship towards the Republic of Poland, inquiring about the health of the king and the Polish dignitaries he knew, including the voivode of Kiev, Franciszek Salezy Potocki. This civil dialogue enabled the envoy to start negotiations on the return of the exiled Haji Giray, brother of Khan Qırım Giray, to Crimea.¹⁸ The exile lived in Potocki's estate and caused much trouble to the host. The vizier offered his assistance in this matter. As we read later in the report, he kept his word and Haji Giray was allowed to return to Crimea. After the conversation, the members of the legation were presented with expensive hilabs and returned to Perea.¹⁹

The Polish diplomats knew the protocol very well, and the report stressed the whole procedure proceeded as expected. The praise of the Turkish side, which conducted the entire ceremony very efficiently, was also intended to highlight the success of the deputy. According to the report's author, thanks to his involvement, the Republic of Poland was represented well. By this account, the successful ritual communication led to mutual respect and laid the

¹⁶ BOss. rkps. 1615/III, 12–13.

¹⁷ Koca Mehmet Ragıp Pasha (1698–1763).

¹⁸ Khan Qırım Giray, ruler of Crimea between 1758–1764 and 1768–1769.

¹⁹ BOss. rkps. 614, 51–52.

groundwork for the meeting with the sultan, which was the most important event during the legation.

The audience in Istanbul differed from European audiences, for example, at the French or imperial court. Old Polish diplomats were mostly aware of how they would be treated. However, the dissimilarity of Turkish practices evoked many emotions, as reflected in the reports. For example, there is Gotartowski's report from an audience of the Podoski embassy. On January 8, 1760, the envoy's retinue gathered at 3 am and was prepared the same way as before the visit to the grand vizier. Having reached the vizier's palace, Regip Pasha went to meet the ambassador with his retinue, and they set out together. The author noted the friendly welcome given to the vizier and the envoy. A common way through the courtyards of the sultan's palace was described, where Poles witnessed a meal served to the janissaries in the inner courtyard of the Sultan's palace. Then the message was received by the vizier and other dignitaries in a special hall where they were waiting to meet the sultan. As mentioned by the author, the wait was accompanied by the exchange of written messages between the vizier and the sultan. There was total silence in the room during the four hours' wait. The Polish diplomat complained that when some members of the legation wiped their noses and blew them due to the cold, the Turkish hosts were displeased and looked at them with hostility. A recurring element of the diplomatic ritual was paying the janissaries in the envoy's presence. The report emphasized that the participation of Poles in this ceremony was proof of the respect shown to them. The Russian embassy did not have such a privilege. The next element of the ceremony was the court, with the participation of the vizier, which dealt with the affairs of several poor people. In the interpretation of the report's author, it was supposed to be a symbol of the efficiency of the Turkish courts, their justice and care for the needs of the sultan's poorest subjects. The Polish diplomat, accustomed to the noble judiciary in the Republic of Poland, emphasized that cases were dealt with differently in Turkey and the verdict was immediately final. Then a short feast began. For this purpose, tables and dishes were brought in, mainly meat and fish. The food was eaten with hands and spoons, which surprised the Poles. A lively conversation between the vizier and the envoy through an interpreter was recorded. It concerned the brother of the Tatar khan, who could return from Poland to Crimea based on the sultan's decision. It was also recorded that the sultan observed the meal through a heavily barred window. The

room was always silent, and no one else was talking.²⁰ After the feast, the envoy walked in front of the building where the audience was to take place. Meanwhile, the vizier moved to the sultan. Members of the legation were dressed in specially prepared hilabs. After the vizier's return, they went to perform an audience together with several other Turkish dignitaries. The author of the account was surprised by the customs accompanying this event. Members of the legation were led before the ruler by specially sent Kapid Pashas, who almost overpowered the Poles and then held them very tightly so they could find themselves in front of the sultan.²¹ Less surprising was the meeting with Mustafa III. The decor of the audience hall and the dignitaries accompanying the ruler were described with admiration. The envoy made a speech in Latin, which was translated into Turkish. Then the sultan ritually leaned towards the vizier, which was supposed to symbolize sharing comments with him. The vizier replied to the envoy on behalf of the ruler and stated that the sultan was grateful for the embassy and assured him of his friendship with the Polish king. This answer ended the audience and the Polish diplomats left the palace.²²

The diplomatic ritual presented in the reports was repeated in Old Polish parliamentary accounts in the eighteenth century and much earlier.²³ Naturally, it was not reserved only for legations from Poland. The description of the legation's participation in a carefully conducted diplomatic ritual proved the stability of political relations with Turkey to the king and Polish dignitaries. Effective ritual communication showed the mutual respect shown by both countries. This was one of the reasons why a detailed account of the entire ritual was essential.

For the Turks, it was a show of the authority and efficiency of the Ottoman Empire's administration. The focus on ritual communication was to convince the diplomats of the sultan's formidable power. This type of communication was undoubtedly closer to Old Polish envoys than to representatives of France or the Habsburgs.

One should also remember the interests of the envoy, who bore most of the expenses of the legation. After returning to Poland, all expenses were to be reimbursed by the state. A detailed description of the diplomatic rituals he participated in was supposed to show his commitment to performing his job

²⁰ BOss. rkps. 614, 53–55.

²¹ BOss. rkps. 614, 55.

²² BOss. rkps. 614, 56.

²³ Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Podróże i poselstwa polskie do Turcji* (Kraków, 1860); Adam Przyboś and Roman Żelewski, *Dyplomaci w dawnych czasach. Relacje staropolskie z XVI–XVIII stulecia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1959).

well. But the aim was also to indicate the expenses he incurred, e.g., by giving high-ranking Turkish officials expensive gifts or paying for a very large legation.

To sum up, meanings attached to ritual communication are only the most important examples. An analysis of diplomatic relations with this concept in mind may demonstrate many other aspects of international relations from the perspective of historical anthropology.

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