



European
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DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY
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CIVILIZATION

Behind the Curtains of Diplomacy

The Household, Material Culture and Networks of
French Ambassadors in Venice (1550-1610)

Laura Mesotten

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

Florence, 12 January 2017

European University Institute
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Department of History and Civilization - Doctoral Programme**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the social and material surroundings of French ambassadors stationed in the Venetian Republic between 1550 and 1610. Centred around the activities and experiences of Ambassador François de Noailles (1557-1561), three important facets of the diplomatic reality abroad are scrutinised. Part I sets out the characteristics of the ambassador's court through an investigation of the architectural, social and domestic features of the diplomatic house. In so doing, it will shed light on some of the realities behind the political world of diplomacy and reveal social complexities. Part II opens an illuminating window to the ambassador's possessions and discloses the great importance of material culture for the performance of diplomacy. By exposing the furnishings and clothing purchased and displayed by the ambassador, the use of objects to assert diplomatic identity will be unravelled. Part III again takes material culture as the point of departure, as it studies the movement of goods through the brokerage and patronage networks constructed by ambassadors while on mission. Whereas diplomatic service had benefits, it also had disadvantages, most importantly, the physical absence from the centre of power. Both the delivering of procured goods and the offering of unsolicited gifts were used to sustain ties with influential people at the French court in order to pursue private and family interests. Throughout the entire study, all these diplomatic activities are strongly contextualised and linked with the specificity of Venice as a trading metropolis, situated between West and East and ruled by a republican government. By looking behind the curtains of diplomacy, this dissertation contributes to the field of the new diplomatic history especially by its extensive focus on material culture. Objects had an important communicative power as they conveyed political messages and, this way, were essential for the functioning of early modern diplomacy.

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During my first presentation at the European University Institute, I was asked the question why I decided to focus on ambassadors in my research. My reply was simple: “I just love ambassadors!”. The figure of the early modern ambassador captivated my interest already during my bachelor and master studies at the University of Leuven. I was stimulated by my supervisor Prof. Violet Soen to pursue my investigations further and it is thanks to her encouragement that this dissertation materialised, for which I would like to express my sincere gratitude. The specific ideas for my thesis sprang from the letters of French Ambassador François de Noailles, which I unexpectedly discovered in the French Archives of Foreign Affairs in Paris during my first archival mission. I instantly knew that he would become the central character and shape the structure of my research. Four years later, I can honestly say that I am still fascinated by early modern ambassadors.

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR ARCHIVAL REFERENCES

AMAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
ASMa	Archivio di Stato di Mantova
ASMo	Archivio di Stato di Modena
ASV	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BNM	Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
CSP	Calendar of State Papers

b.	<i>busta / buste</i>
f.	<i>foglio</i>
ff.	<i>fogli</i>
fz.	<i>filza / filze</i>
reg.	<i>registro / registri</i>
vol.	volume
vols.	volumes

A NOTE ON COINAGE

France

In sixteenth-century France, we encounter two types of money that existed side by side: money of account and actual coins. As the name already indicates, money of account was used in account books and only existed on paper. The principal money of account was the *livre*; one *livre* was worth twenty *sous*, one *sou* worth twelve *deniers*. Actual transactions were carried out with gold and silver coins. The main coin that this study will refer to is the *écu*, the value of which fluctuated; in 1575, the *écu* was worth three *livres*.¹

Venice

Similarly, in the sixteenth-century Venetian Republic, both money of account and tangible gold and silver coins were in use. To avoid confusion, I will employ two standards when indicating value and price: the *ducato* or ducat, which was a money of account used in written accounts, and the *scudo*, an existing coin that circulated in the market. Whereas the value of the *ducato* remained stable during the time frame under study (1550-1610), the rate of the *scudo* fluctuated:

1 *ducato* = 6 *lire* 4 *soldi* or 124 *soldi* in all

1 *scudo* = approximately 7 *lire*²

A NOTE ON DATES

France

Between the eleventh and the middle of the sixteenth century, the calendar year in France started with Easter. Consequently, every year, the first day of a new year fell on a different date. In 1563, King Charles IX fixed the beginning of the year at the first of January for the entire country. This new calendar was accepted throughout the French Kingdom starting from 1567.³ All dates have been converted to conform to modern practice.

¹ Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

² On money and coins in Venice, see: Frederic C. Lane and Reinhold C. Mueller, *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

³ Adriano Cappelli, *Cronologia e Calendario Perpetuo: Dal Principio dell'Era Cristiana ai Nostri Giorni* (Milan: Hoepli, 1906), xxi.

Venice

In the Venetian Republic, the calendar year began on the first of March (*more veneto*), following the seasonal, agricultural calendar. The Venetian style was officially abolished and converted into the Gregorian calendar in 1797, when Napoleon conquered the Republic.⁴ All dates have been converted to conform to modern practice.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

With regard to some specific terms, preference is given to provide the reader with the original Venetian or French terminology, alongside the English translation.

Concerning the Venetian terminology, the translation is always given first with the original word, as it is written in the consulted source, between brackets, accompanied by the corresponding modern Italian version (it.). When the Venetian and Italian words are the same, only one single term will be listed between brackets. If no English translation is available, the Venetian original, and the Italian equivalent (where applicable), are provided, followed by a definition of the word the first time it is mentioned. The consulted dictionary for the Venetian dialect is: Giuseppe Boerio, *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano*, 3rd edition (Venice: Reale Tipografia di Giovanni Cecchini Editore, 1867).

The same rules apply to French words, which are always translated or defined. The main dictionary used for old French is: Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'Ancienne Langue Française et de Tous Ses Dialectes du IXe au XVe Siècle* (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881-1902).

A NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTIONS

Quotations from Italian and French sources are translated to English in the text, but with the original in the footnotes. All translations are mine, unless specified otherwise. When essential for the reading of the text, capitals, full stops and commas have been inserted.

The transcriptions respect the original spelling and are not amended to modern spelling, except for commonly accepted rules (*i* becomes *j*, *v* becomes *u*) and important accentuation, and contractions and abbreviations are solved. Names and places are given in their original form. Where text has been lost or is unreadable, this is stated in square brackets, and when the transcription starts or finishes midway through a text, this is identified with ellipses in square brackets.

⁴ Cappelli, *Cronologia e Calendario Perpetuo*, xviii.

INTRODUCTION

When the newly appointed French Ambassador François de Noailles arrived in Venice in the summer of 1557 to start his diplomatic assignment, his predecessor, Dominique du Gabre, provided him with a memoir on how to manage the embassy.¹ This advice did not concern political affairs or ongoing negotiations, but was directed solely towards the daily embassy routine. Gabre's instructions show us what the French embassy in Venice regarded as significant. In the first place, he discussed the practicalities of locating a residence and buying furnishings, and pointed out the people who could assist Noailles in this enterprise. Secondly, Gabre defined the social environment of the embassy by elucidating the diplomatic household and its associates. He identified loyal servants and agents of the French embassy so that Noailles would know whom to contact for secretarial and financial matters, the replenishing of his food stock, the acquisition of merchandise at local markets and the gathering of intelligence. Lastly, we can see how essential sociability was for the embassy, since Gabre put forward the importance of inviting people for dinner in order to gain access to their knowledge, the latter being one of the main tasks of the ambassador.

The memoir of Dominique du Gabre clearly stressed the importance of the domestic and material features of diplomatic life. The correspondence and documents of François de Noailles, the main character of this dissertation, reveal that he followed Gabre's advice and invested a great deal of time, energy and money into the social and material surroundings of his embassy. French ambassadors understood that these aspects formed the backbone of the execution of their diplomatic assignments. Inspired and guided by the sources handed down by the French ambassadors in Venice, I place household, material culture and networks at the centre of my research. I will underline that these so-called "trivial" matters are actually crucial to acquire a deeper understanding of the functioning of early modern diplomacy. In spite of the fact that I will not deal directly with the diplomatic content of the embassy, a focus on its unique profile as a space of public business and private residency, royal representation and social interaction will also uncover the political operation of the embassy. Politics cannot be separated from social and cultural matters. Altogether, by focusing on these relatively understudied topics, I intend to offer an additional narrative for the studying of diplomatic culture. The common threads on which I will concentrate in this narrative are the interweaving of the public and private spheres, the construction of a dual diplomatic

¹ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, ff. 8r-8v. See Source 1 for the full transcription of this memoir.

identity and the importance and constant use of material culture in the diplomatic environment and in the process of self-fashioning. All these concepts will be clarified throughout this introduction.

The New Diplomatic History

The social and material features pointed out by Dominique du Gabre as crucial for the day-to-day functioning of the embassy have long been neglected by traditional diplomatic historiography. However, during the last decades, increasing numbers of scholars have responded to recent calls for a new approach to diplomatic history. Within the field of what has been labelled as the new diplomatic history, the study of the ambassadorial system is enjoying a revival.² Historians have moved away from the traditional approach to diplomacy characterised by a one-dimensional national viewpoint, an impersonal approach to state interactions and a strict political and military framework. The complex diplomatic context is now being explored with attention to the multi-layered structures. This significant renewal occurred starting from the 1990s, when diplomatic history underwent a modernisation process. First of all, historians adopted new insights from intellectual, social and cultural history and amalgamated literary, semiotic and anthropological methodologies. Secondly, interdisciplinary cooperation caused an expansion of research topics, inspired by the idea that, as John Watkins has put it, “one story cannot be fully told without reference to others.”³ Apart from politics, the social, economic, commercial, cultural and gender aspects of early modern diplomacy are being subjected to a thorough examination.⁴ Thirdly, the geographical scope of the research has been broadened by abandoning the strict focus on European states.⁵

² The movement of the new diplomatic history questions and moves beyond two important classic works, which dominated studies on early modern diplomacy in the second half of the twentieth century: Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955); Donald E. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

³ John Watkins, “Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008), 6.

⁴ A good example of this interdisciplinary approach is the special issue of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* entitled *Toward a New Diplomatic History* (2008), wherein seven scholars (John Watkins, Daniela Frigo, Douglas Biow, Timothy Hampton, Anthony Cutler, Denis Crouzet and Russell E. Martin) from various disciplines (history, art history and literary studies) created a broad perspective on early modern diplomacy.

⁵ Some relevant studies include: Ivana Elbl, “Cross-Cultural Trade and Diplomacy: Portuguese Relations with West Africa, 1441-1521,” *Journal of World History* 3, no. 2 (1992), 165-204; Christian Windler, *La Diplomatie comme l'Expérience de l'Autre: Consuls Français au Maghreb (1700-1840)* (Geneva: Droz, 2002); N.R. Farooqi, “Diplomacy and Diplomatic Procedure under the Mughals,” *The Medieval History Journal* 7, no. 1 (2004), 59-86; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

One of the major outcomes of the new diplomatic history is the emphasis on the impact of individual actors on the evolution of the diplomatic process. Rather than focusing on the great diplomatic deeds of monarchs and states, investigations following this perspective start from the multifaceted figure of the ambassador and reveal that diplomatic activity was to a great extent influenced by the priorities and personal relations of the ambassador. Already in 1973, William J. Roosen, a specialist in French diplomacy, stated that:

“[...] some aspects of French diplomacy which cannot be explained purely by reference to the behaviour of the king and his ministers may be more intelligible when the background of the ambassadors who actually implemented foreign policy is more fully understood.”⁶

According to Roosen, it was the actions of people that instigated an evolution of diplomatic institutions; consequently, he believed that insight into the ambassador as an individual complements our knowledge of impersonal structures.⁷ More recently, this “actor-centered” approach has had a strong impetus in German historiography with the works of Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler. They point to the complexity of the world of diplomacy by stressing that ambassadors had varied allegiances and operated at overlapping levels of activity.⁸ In Anglophone scholarship, Toby Osborne’s study on diplomacy at the seventeenth-century court of Savoy similarly analyses the diplomatic machinery by investigating the personality, actions and interests of a single ambassador.⁹ On account of this attention to the agency of the individual, a more subtle picture of diplomatic practices has emerged. Diplomatic historians now argue that early modern diplomacy was not merely shaped by protocol, but also by personal style. All these studies have thus revealed the interesting dual

⁶ William J. Roosen, “The True Ambassador: Occupational and Personal Characteristics of French Ambassadors under Louis XIV,” *European History Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1973), 121.

⁷ See also other works by Roosen: William J. Roosen, “The Ambassador’s Craft: A Study of the Functioning of French Ambassadors under Louis XIV” (PhD diss., University of Berkeley, 1967); William J. Roosen, “The Functioning of Ambassadors under Louis XIV,” *French Historical Studies* 6, no. 3 (1970), 311-332; William J. Roosen, “Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial: A Systems Approach,” *The Journal of Modern History* 52, no. 3 (1980), 452-476.

⁸ See, especially: Hillard von Thiessen, *Diplomatie und Patronage: Die Spanisch-Römischen Beziehungen 1605-1621 in Akteurszentrierter Perspektive* (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2010); Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler, eds., *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im Historischen Wandel* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010).

⁹ Toby Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy: Political Culture and the Thirty Years’ War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Catherine Fletcher’s book on Ambassador Gregorio Casali similarly tells a story about Tudor politics, and especially English King Henry VIII’s divorce, from the point of view of the ambassador, in: Catherine Fletcher, *Our Man in Rome: Henry VIII and His Italian Ambassador* (London: The Bodley Head, 2012). Daniela Frigo likewise points to the importance of starting the research on diplomacy from the figure of the ambassador in: Daniela Frigo, “Prudence and Experience: Ambassadors and Political Culture in Early Modern Italy,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008), 15-17.

loyalty of an ambassador: he simultaneously defended his prince's prerogatives and acted on his own behalf, promoting his own interests.

This study is deeply anchored in the new diplomatic history and starts from the “actor-centered” approach by focusing on the experiences of sixteenth-century French ambassadors. In doing so, I will look behind the scenes of diplomacy and combine small hints of a very different nature in order to construct a more general picture of early modern embassy life. My research contributes to the field of diplomatic history especially by its extensive focus on material culture.¹⁰ By analysing the architecture of diplomacy, the furnishings of the embassy, the wardrobe of the ambassador and the goods acquired for brokerage and gift-giving, the important communicative power of objects is emphasised throughout the dissertation. Just like negotiations, the display of luxury goods conveyed political messages. Therefore, my study thoroughly explores the relationship between material culture and high politics. This is a central concern, for example, in the sections on the political role of sociability and food, the application of furnishings as political tools and the messages communicated by dress codes and colours about socio-political standing. In this way, the viewpoint taken in my investigation provides an interesting framework for our understanding of early modern diplomacy.

Fashioning the Self: Private Identity and Public Representation

Throughout this dissertation, some key concepts will be repeatedly used and, therefore, they should be briefly clarified here. In the first place, the notion “diplomatic identity” features prominently in my research, since one of my main aims is to uncover how nobles both constructed their new public identity as ambassadors and sustained their private status while abroad. This necessitates a consideration of the term “identity”, and in particular the self-fashioning or construction of the self. Ever since Jacob Burckhardt's masterpiece, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, historians have assessed the notion of the self. Burckhardt claimed that during the Renaissance, man emerged as he really was, as he became an individual and recognised himself as such. Hence, Burckhardt spoke of the

¹⁰ An important study that similarly focuses on the role of material culture in embassy life is: Helen Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power: The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat, 1660-1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Another inspiring work for my investigations is Barbara Furlotti's study on the material culture of the duke of Bracciano, Paolo Giordano I Orsini, in sixteenth-century Rome. She explores how Orsini employed the objects he owned and gifted to construct and display his identity and status, in: Barbara Furlotti, *A Renaissance Baron and His Possessions: Paolo Giordano I Orsini, Duke of Bracciano (1541-1585)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

discovery of man and the rise of self-consciousness, which he saw reflected in the appearance of (auto)biographies and (self-)portraits.¹¹

An innovative and groundbreaking study that contested Burckhardt's understanding of individualism is *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* by Stephen Greenblatt, which is still today considered as the seminal work on self-fashioning. Greenblatt, and more generally the movement of new historicism which based its work on his findings, addressed the individual the same way as it approached literary texts, specifically, as closely related to the contemporary context. Accordingly, Greenblatt defined self-fashioning as the construction of identity and a public persona in line with, and controlled by, socially and culturally acceptable standards. He underlined that identity is not a given; on the contrary, it is a political or cultural artefact generated by social, economic, political and religious events.¹²

Starting from the 1980s, self-fashioning became a central theme in the study of early modern culture, and it still continues to be applied in different research fields, such as social history, art history, intellectual history and literary studies.¹³ Just like Greenblatt, these studies stress that the fashioning of the self was a manipulable process. A complex difficulty that scholars point to is that identity was continually revised and remade as it was influenced by social and cultural settings.¹⁴ Another important facet that complicates the study of forging identities in early modern Europe is the cultural exchange that took place between cultures, which played a central role in the defining of personality. Consequently, the cultural context that influenced self-fashioning was in itself a product of constant interaction between the acceptance and rejection of foreign influences.¹⁵ Important to note is that scholars are also moving beyond Greenblatt's emphasis on the fact that self-fashioning is only determined by

¹¹ Many editions and translations of Burckhardt's study have appeared after the first publication in 1860. For an English translation, see, for example: Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2008).

¹² Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). The first edition dates from 1980. For an analysis of Greenblatt's work, see, for instance: John Jeffries Martin, "Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997), 1312-1319; Laura Delbrugge, introduction to *Self-Fashioning and Assumptions of Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Laura Delbrugge (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1-7.

¹³ John Jeffries Martin gives a comprehensive overview of studies approaching self-fashioning from various angles in his article: Martin, "Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence", 1309-1342.

¹⁴ See, for example: Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), ch. 4.

¹⁵ Herman Roodenburg, ed., *Forging European Identities, 1400-1700*, vol. 4 of *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Robert Muchembled and William Monter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

forces outside of the individual, by pointing to individual agency in the formulation of identity and, this way, fully incorporating the *self* into the process of self-fashioning.¹⁶

In my approach to diplomatic identity, I will keep the complexities surrounding self-fashioning in mind. When appointed as ambassador, a new identity needed to be moulded in line with this new role. The shaping of the altered personality was deeply imbedded in the changed cultural and social environment in which the ambassador found himself. However, while these external stimuli influenced identity formation, I also recognise the agency of the individual in the process of self-presentation. The early modern world was characterised by a conscious forging of the self; in order to survive in court society, people performed a role and created a mask to wear in public.¹⁷ The idea of inventing and presenting a persona to others is clearly reflected in diplomatic life, since ambassadors needed to represent their king during the time of their embassy. As a result, early modern ambassadors had a dual identity, characterised by both royal grandeur and private magnificence.¹⁸ To make the diplomatic personality even more complex, besides their new diplomatic role, ambassadors also remained part of their national elite and did not give up their noble, occupational identity at the home court.¹⁹ Consequently, while on mission, they needed to sustain their position and status in national politics. Hence, ambassadors constantly negotiated between different identities.

The ambassador's task of representing the prince penetrated every aspect of diplomatic life, which greatly blurred the distinction between the public (official, political) and the private (informal, domestic) spheres. The close entanglement between these two spheres is another recurrent topic in my study; therefore, the meaning of these concepts should be considered in the early modern context. During the early modern period, the boundaries between the public and private spheres in society were very permeable, and we cannot really

¹⁶ Martin, "Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence", 1338-1342; Delbrugge, ed., *Self-Fashioning and Assumptions of Identity*.

¹⁷ A comprehensive overview of the complexity and variety of the concept of the self can be found in: Peter Burke, "Representations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes," in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 18-20.

¹⁸ For more information on the dual identity or mixed persona of an ambassador, see: Valentin Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts: Presents and Politics at the End of the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), especially ch. 2.

¹⁹ Jonathan Dewald has analysed the fixation with the self amongst the French nobility in: Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570-1715* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Dewald examined memoirs produced by the French nobility in the seventeenth century and concluded that the nobles in this time became preoccupied by the nature of selfhood. Demands from both the family and the state heightened and nobles increasingly felt a gap between the social expectations and personal needs. They responded to these pressures by manifesting their individuality in activities such as autobiographical writing.

separate one from the other: the private infiltrated the public, and vice versa. A new approach to the history of the state emphasises their intertwinement, and points to the important place occupied by private structures, such as kin groups and courtly factions, in the political organisation of early modern society. These alternatives to official politics, labelled as “privatistic” political practices, had a powerful grip on the public sphere and influenced the functioning of the state.²⁰ Similarly, studies on the early modern house and household have moved away from the idea that the house was a secluded place, detached from society.²¹ The domestic sphere often functioned as an important parallel centre of power, which is strongly reflected in the embassy building, as it was both the ambassador’s private house and his official working place.

Chronological and Geographical Focus of the Study

Turning to the structure of the dissertation, I focus my investigation on the period between roughly 1550 and 1610. The central sections are restricted more precisely to the period from the beginning of François de Noailles’ mission in Venice in 1557 and the end of Philippe de la Canaye’s residency in 1607, two ambassadors that are prominently represented in this study. For an analysis of diplomatic culture, the second half of the sixteenth century is an interesting time frame, since this is the period during which diplomacy became more “professionalised”. In the first half of the sixteenth century, resident embassies were constructed all over Europe, and even smaller states started to appoint permanent ambassadors.²² This system of fixed diplomatic representation was standardised by the

²⁰ For an extensive scrutiny of this approach, see: Giorgio Chittolini, “The ‘Private,’ the ‘Public,’ the State,” in *The Origins of the State in Italy, 1300-1600*, ed. Julius Kirshner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 34-61. In the field of diplomacy, this approach has led to the rejection of the presumption that only the state practiced diplomacy; instead, the vital and effective role of the interstate relations forged by leading families are underlined, see: Riccardo Fubini, “Classe Dirigente ed Esercizio della Diplomazia nella Firenze Quattrocentesca: Rappresentanza Esterna e Identità Cittadina nella Crisi della Tradizione Comunale,” in *I Ceti Dirigenti nella Toscana del Quattrocento*, ed. Donatella Ruggiadini (Impruneta: Papafava, 1987), 117-189; Paolo Margaroli, *Diplomazia e Stati Rinascimentali: Le Ambascerie Sforzesche fino alla Conclusione della Lega Italica (1450-1455)* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1992); Franca Leverotti, *Diplomazia e Governo dello Stato: I “Famigli Cavalcanti” di Francesco Sforza (1450-1466)* (Pisa: GISEM-ETS, 1992).

²¹ Marta Ajmar-Wollheim, Flora Dennis, and Ann Matchette, “Introduction: Approaching the Italian Renaissance Interior: Sources, Methodologies, Debates,” *Renaissance Studies Special Issues* 20, no. 5 (2006), 623-628.

²² Diplomatic historians do not agree on the exact date of the establishment of the first resident embassies, but it is a generally accepted consensus that permanent embassies first appeared in Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. A discussion on the rise of resident diplomacy can be found in the articles by Riccardo Fubini: Riccardo Fubini, “La Figura Politica dell’Ambasciatore negli Sviluppi dei Regimi Oligarchici Quattrocenteschi,” in *Forme e Tecniche del Potere nella Città (Secoli XIV-XVII)*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Perugia: Università di Perugia, 1979), 33-59; Riccardo Fubini, “La “Résidentialité” de l’Ambassadeur dans le Mythe et dans la Réalité: Une Enquête sur les Origines,” in *L’Invention de la Diplomatie: Moyen Âge - Temps Modernes*,

second half of the sixteenth century, and this allows for an investigation into the cultural and social side of this newly erected international network of agents. However, even though the sixteenth century was an important century for the development of diplomatic practices, diplomacy as such did not yet exist as a universal or abstract institution. This makes it even more necessary to start from the role and profile of the ambassador when researching early modern diplomacy, rather than from abstract political ideas.

With regard to material culture, the sixteenth century is likewise the perfect epoch on which to concentrate in my study. Throughout the Renaissance, the demand for local and exotic items increased, individuals became proud of their possessions and identities were constructed through the appropriation of artefacts. The stimulation of this luxury consumption was a result of the political stabilisation of Europe during the late Middle Ages, which had made an expansion of markets and trading networks possible. In particular, the Italian peninsula, followed by the rest of Europe, witnessed a growth in their economy.²³ By the sixteenth century, people, goods and ideas moved rapidly throughout the world and conspicuous consumption became ubiquitous amongst the wealthy. The elite dressed themselves in lavish apparel and built magnificent palaces that were filled with splendid furnishings. In short, the sixteenth century marked the period during which people abundantly used objects for personal display and self-fashioning.²⁴

Geographically, the research concentrates on Venice for two main reasons. In the first place, the Venetian Republic had a long history of receiving ambassadors. The Republic's attractiveness resulted from the fact that it had developed a strong diplomatic network from early on which, together with the city's location between the West and the East, contributed to the accumulation of information in the city.²⁵ Another important explanation for the abundant presence of foreign envoys was the fact that Venice was one of the great commercial centres of the early modern Mediterranean world. This brings me to the second

ed. Lucien Bély (Paris: PUF, 1998), 27-35; Riccardo Fubini, "Diplomacy and Government in the Italian City-States of the Fifteenth Century (Florence and Venice)," in *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, ed. Daniela Frigo, trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25-48.

²³ On the economic growth and commercial revolution in Italy and Europe, see: Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 3-12.

²⁴ The importance of material culture in the early modern world will be repeatedly discussed throughout the chapters. To cite already some classic publications: Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme: XVe-XVIIIe Siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979); Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Daniel Roche, *Histoire des Choses Banales: Naissance de la Consommation dans les Sociétés Traditionnelles (XVIIe-XIXe Siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

²⁵ Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

reason why Venice provides the ideal environment for my investigation: it was a place where goods gathered from every part of the world, a city where West encountered East. This generated the development of a strong luxury market and endless opportunities for extensive consumption. Ambassadors also employed this kaleidoscopic panoply of merchandise in the construction of their private and public identities. As a consequence of these two factors, European nations, like France, strove to maintain stable diplomatic relations with the Republic so as to have access to its information and luxury market.²⁶

Lastly, regarding the nationality of the ambassadors, the central focus is, as has already become clear, on French diplomatic agents. The French network of foreign representation was already set up by King Charles VIII during his military campaigns in Italy (1494-1498); however, Kings Francis I and Henry II in particular established an extended diplomatic network. As a result, by 1559, the French king was represented at the most important courts of Europe. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the French embassy system continued to expand and a type of career diplomacy could be perceived, in which the notion of experience became increasingly important.²⁷ Interesting to note is that France's first permanent embassy was established precisely in Venice in 1517.²⁸ During the period of the Italian wars (1494-1559), the relationship between France and Venice shifted between hostility and engagement according to the progression of the political situation.²⁹ In particular during the 1530s, Venice became an important centre of French diplomatic activity. King Francis I wished to safeguard his relations with the Italian princes, and Venice was the place where intelligence about these Italian states could be gathered. Furthermore, the king desired to establish a connection with the Ottoman sultan. The Venetian Republic had long-standing ties with the Ottoman Empire, and thus Francis hoped that the Venetian government would support and moderate his approaches to the sultan.³⁰ After the end of the Italian wars, with the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, the diplomatic relations between France and Venice

²⁶ The list of studies that have investigated Venice's political, commercial and economic history is endless. Frederic C. Lane's book has been considered as the classic work for a general history on Venice: Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). For a recent study of Venetian history, see: Eric Dursteler, ed., *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013).

²⁷ Jean-Michel Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage: Les Ambassadeurs du Roi de France auprès de Philippe II du Traité du Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) à la Mort de Henri III (1589)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 42-56.

²⁸ Already starting from the thirteenth century, France occasionally sent envoys to the Venetian Republic. For an overview of French diplomatic presence in Venice before the sixteenth century, see: Armand Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise: Histoire de la Chancellerie Secrète* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1870), 411-422.

²⁹ Ivan Cloulas, "Luigi XII e i Veneziani," in *Venezia e Parigi*, ed. Banca Cattolica del Veneto (Milan: Electa, 1989), 54-70; Gaetano Cozzi, "La Repubblica di Venezia e il Regno di Francia tra Cinquecento e Seicento: Fiducia e Sfiducia," in *Venezia e Parigi*, 113-144.

³⁰ Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise*, 422-428; Robert J. Kalas, "Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France: The Rise of the Selve and Noailles Families" (PhD diss., New York University, 1982), 383.

stabilised. In the further progression of the sixteenth century, the two states remained allies and maintained durable and loyal relations.³¹

The Profile of an Ambassador: Introducing the French Ambassadors in Venice

Since this study starts with an “actor-centered” approach and considers issues of diplomatic identity construction, it is necessary to delineate the background and career of the French ambassadors under study. But first, the general profile of an early modern ambassador has to be briefly uncovered; however, this is not something that can be easily defined. In the sixteenth century, diplomacy was still in its infancy without any clear rules regarding the type of individuals suitable for the job. Consequently, diplomats had different socio-occupational backgrounds in the political, military, ecclesiastical or juridical world. In their appointment of ambassadors, sovereigns mainly searched for men who were familiar with the princely political culture and lifestyle, seeing that the life of the diplomat had to reflect the honour and status of the king. Monarchs expected the possession of certain qualities, such as humanistic education, aptitude for conversation, knowledge of etiquette, familiarity with court culture and experience abroad.³²

Jean-Michel Ribera has analysed the diplomatic corps of the French monarchy during the sixteenth century and has uncovered some general characteristics regarding the social and cultural surroundings and familial and professional backgrounds of French ambassadors. Many of them first performed the function of master of requests (*maître des requêtes*), a high-level officer of administrative law, a function that stimulated the writing skills necessary for the diplomatic vocation. Another recurrent occupational preparation for French ambassadors was a career as domestic officer in the household of the king, with functions such as valet of the chamber (*valet* or *gentilhomme de la chambre*) or grand master of the household (*maître d’hôtel du roi*). Additionally, the social and family environment was taken into account during the selection process. The bulk of the French ambassadors of this time descended from the nobility, and there are various examples in which a noble family produced more than one ambassador. Younger family members often accompanied the ambassador as part of the diplomatic retinue and served as secretary or messenger. This was the best way to get hands-on experience with ambassadorial life and become familiar with

³¹ Armand Baschet, *La Diplomatie Vénitienne: Les Princes de l’Europe au XVIe Siècle: François Ier - Philippe II - Catherine de Médicis - Les Papes - Les Sultans etc., etc. d’après les Rapports des Ambassadeurs Vénitiens* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1862), part 3, ch. 5 to 12.

³² These qualities are repeated in practically all the contemporary treatises devoted to the figure of the ambassador.

the political world.³³ The growing emphasis on the importance of training and experience can also be gleaned from the fact that from the 1550s onwards, an increasing number of ambassadors conducted several missions. These evolutions indicate the gradual professionalisation of the French diplomatic practice.

Another important consideration put forward by Ribera is that during the sixteenth century, a high percentage of French ambassadors were clergymen. Ribera based his calculations on the overview listing all French representatives drawn up by Fleury Vindry at the beginning of the twentieth century, and adjusted some of Vindry's mistakes. Although there might still be some errors in Ribera's outline, his general conclusions are valid. Of the total number of sixteenth-century French ambassadors, around 33 percent, or one in three ambassadors, were ecclesiastics. In 1559, for instance, eight out of twelve diplomatic agents were selected from ecclesiastical circles.³⁴ The preference for cleric-diplomats can be understood when considering the unique relationship between the French king and his ecclesiastics. The French monarchy controlled all clerical appointments, as a result of which only loyal supporters of the king were eligible for the positions. This way, a patron-client relationship was established and the French clergy was more dedicated to the king, their patron, than to the pope. During the second half of the sixteenth century, when France was plagued by severe religious conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, allegiance to the monarchy became all the more important. Since the king was also in charge of personally selecting his ambassadors, clergymen were most often appointed, as he could count on their loyalty.³⁵

Other reasons also contributed to the popularity of cleric-diplomats. Firstly, men of the Catholic Church were educated and eloquent men who possessed the necessary qualities expected from an ambassador. Secondly, at some European courts, high-ranking clergymen superseded ambassadors from more high-ranking countries in the battle for precedence.³⁶ However, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the number of clergymen active in French diplomatic service diminished: in 1589, they represented only one in eight, and of the five permanent ambassadors in 1598, not even one was a cleric. Diplomacy had become more

³³ Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage*, 49-50.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 54-55

³⁵ Loretta T. Burns, "Cleric-Diplomats and the Sixteenth-Century French State," *Historian* 57 (1995), 721-722.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 721-722.

regulated, which consequently enhanced the professionalisation of the diplomatic personnel; military men now became the central group from which ambassadors were recruited.³⁷

How about the French ambassadors in Venice? Were they clerics in line with the general trend? And what was their social and political background? In order to answer these questions, I will give a brief biographical sketch of the French resident ambassadors stationed in Venice throughout the time span of my research.³⁸ The first ambassador, Dominique du Gabre (d. 1558), is immediately an example of a cleric-diplomat. The Gabre family was of noble ancestry, but they did not live an opulent life. Gabre successfully studied theology and started his ecclesiastical career as vicar general of the Cardinal of Tournon, who became his patron and introduced him to the king, which in turn led to a rapid evolution of his career in the Church. After becoming chaplain of King Francis I, Gabre received the appointment of bishop of Lodève in 1547. Gabre, however, longed for an important political promotion as well, which he received in 1551, when Henry II sent him to Ferrara to act as general treasurer of the French troops in Italy. This was a very important task, as France was constantly struggling to maintain a stronghold on the Italian peninsula. Besides managing the finances, Gabre moreover had to gather every kind of useful information and pass it along to the French court. His experience in Italy made him an ideal candidate for the embassy in Venice, where he resided from 1554 until 1557.³⁹

Gabre was succeeded by François de Noailles (1519-1585), whose career shows many similarities with that of his predecessor. Since Noailles functions as the central character in this research, his life will be sketched out in more detail (Figures 1 to 5).⁴⁰ Noailles descended from an ancient noble family whose members occupied important posts in early modern France.⁴¹ He enjoyed a high education and studied *belles lettres* and sciences,

³⁷ Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage*, 55. During the second half of the seventeenth century, under the reign of Louis XIV, ambassadors were still the most often selected amongst military men. Yet, also the clergy continued to make up a substantial minority. Roosen, “The True Ambassador”, 121-139.

³⁸ Although I have not integrated the correspondence of every individual in my research, it is still interesting to give a brief biographical sketch of all resident ambassadors in order to get a sense of the general profile of a French ambassador in Venice at that time. The extraordinary ambassadors have not been included in this outline.

³⁹ Dominique du Gabre, *Correspondance Politique de Dominique du Gabre (Évêque de Lodève), Trésorier des Armées à Ferrare (1552-1554), Ambassadeur de France à Venise (1554-1557)*, ed. Alexandre Vitalis (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1903), v-xxvii.

⁴⁰ The overview of François de Noailles’ life and career is based on the biographical information gathered from: René Aubert de Vertot, ed., *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Dessaint et Saillant, 1763), 27-76; Philippe Tamizey de Larroque, “François de Noailles, Évêque de Dax,” *Revue de Gascogne* 6 (1865), 9-25; J.B. Gabarra, *Un Évêque de Dax: François de Noailles* (Dax: Imprimerie Typographique et Lithographique Hazael Labèque, 1888); Kalas, “Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France”, 314-335. The various portrayals of François de Noailles show some discrepancies, therefore, it is impossible to determine his exact physiognomic appearance.

⁴¹ For a study of the Noailles’ family, see: Kalas, “Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France”.

schooling that was in line with the ecclesiastical profession for which he was destined. He entered the French court under the rule of King Henry II, who appointed him as his royal chaplain. Noailles conducted his first diplomatic assignments between 1553 and 1554, when he performed various extraordinary missions to England, alongside his brothers and likewise diplomatic agents, Antoine and Gilles. In 1556, as a reward for his loyal service and diplomatic activities in England, he was appointed as bishop of Dax. This nomination was perhaps also part of a strategy to give Noailles more credibility and authority, since he was again sent to England, this time as resident ambassador, from 1556 until 1557.⁴² After being called back from London due to the deterioration of French-English relations, Noailles did not have much time to arrange the affairs of his diocese. The French crown lauded his diplomatic skills and immediately sent him on another mission, this time to Venice, where he remained from 1557 until 1561.

While performing his tasks in Venice, Noailles took part in the conclave in Rome that was called to elect the new leader of Christianity in 1559. Another mission to Rome occurred in 1563, which he concluded with a halt in Trent, where the ecclesiastical council was still taking place. Soon afterwards, Noailles was again nominated as extraordinary ambassador to Rome, his main instruction being to defend the rights of the Gallican Church, as the pope was attacking the liberties of the French king. Since the pope knew that Noailles was a bold and extremely skilful ambassador who would not take no for an answer, he, together with some of his cardinals, wanted to thwart Noailles' mission. In order to do so, they accused him of having betrayed his religion by negotiating with the Protestant Prince of Condé in 1562. They prohibited him from entering Rome unless he appeared before the Inquisition; Noailles refused and asked Queen Regent Catherine de' Medici to allow him to return to France. After an interlude away from his diplomatic career, he was again ordered to leave for Constantinople, where he arrived in January 1572. Noailles qualified this mission as a "[...] miserable and very dangerous post [...]".⁴³ He was consequently relieved when his younger brother Gilles replaced him in the summer of 1574. Noailles is a perfect example of the evolutions that occurred in the French diplomatic corps during the mid-sixteenth century: he was both a cleric-diplomat and a career-diplomat, who gained experience at various courts and was part of a diplomatic family network with both his brothers also serving the monarchy as ambassadors.

⁴² This was a common practice in early modern France, see: Joseph Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate, 1589-1661* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1996), 287.

⁴³ Quoted in: Antoine Degert, "Une Ambassade Périlleuse de François de Noailles en Turquie," *Revue Historique* 159, no. 2 (1928), 226: "[...] cette misérable et très périlleuse charge [...]".

A laudatory admiration by future French King Henry III for Ambassador François de Noailles is the perfect summary of his merits:

Sir d'Acqs [François de Noailles], I have heard for a long time and very often, through the testimony of honourable people, about your merit and value, and about the good and notable services that you have executed on many journeys, charges, negotiations and embassies [...] where you have always proven your eloquence, magnanimity, loyalty, diligence and experience in the affairs.⁴⁴

Sixteenth-century French historians, such as Pierre de Bourdeille (better known as Brantôme) and Jacques-Auguste de Thou, likewise praised Noailles' diplomatic qualities and skills.⁴⁵ In fact, all references found about Noailles applaud his talents as a negotiator; clearly, he was considered by his contemporaries as one of the finest French ambassadors of his time. Furthermore, Noailles was respected by both the French court and the courts where he resided. For example, his stay in Venice had made such a grand impression on the *Signoria* that they implored the French king to send Noailles to Constantinople to act as mediator in a peace treaty between Venice and the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶

Noailles' successor, Jean Hurault de Boistailié (c. 1517-1572), similarly belonged to a noble family with various members active in diplomatic service. Moreover, again we see an ambassador with an ecclesiastical background, as Hurault de Boistailié was predestined for a life at the Church and was appointed as abbot. Afterwards, he was nominated councillor at the Parlement of Paris and master of requests. Owing to the fact that he was a loyal client of the Cardinal of Lorraine, one of the most powerful figures at court, Hurault de Boistailié was entrusted with several diplomatic assignments: to Constantinople between 1557 and 1558,

⁴⁴ Letter from future King Henry III to François de Noailles, 15 February 1570: "Monsieur d'Acqs, j'avois longtemps et souvent entendu, par le témoignage de personnes honorables, votre mérite et valeur, et les bons et notables services que vous avez faits en plusieurs voyages, charges, négociations et ambassades [...] auxquelles vous avez fait preuve de votre éloquence, magnanimité, fidélité, diligence et expérience aux affaires." Quoted in: Vertot, *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, vol. 1, 41-43.

⁴⁵ Brantôme: "Aussi pensai-je que pour ce fait n'y a-t-il eu jamais homme de robe longue plus digne d'ambassadeur pour tout, que monsieur le cardinal du Bellay et monsieurs l'évêque d'Acqs de la maison de Noailles, en Limosin, qui a servi nos rois en cette charge, fort dignement et suffisamment, en Angleterre, à Venise, où je l'ai vu, et puis à Constantinople vers le grand seigneur. Je ne veux point faire de tort à une infinité d'autres grands personnages; mais, selon mon avis, monsieur le cardinal du Bellay et monsieur d'Acqs ont surpassé; car ils se fussent aidés aussitôt de leur épée que de leur langue, bien disante et bien diserte."

Jacques-Auguste de Thou: "Mais François de Noailles, évêque d'Acqs, qui étoit alors ambassadeur du roi à Venise, personnage de grand coeur et illustre par l'expérience qu'il avoit dans les affaires, résista courageusement à l'entreprise des Espagnols." Both quotes can be found: *Ibid.*, 40-41.

⁴⁶ Tamizey de Larroque, "François de Noailles", 16-17; Degert, "Une Ambassade Périlleuse", 228.

and to Genoa in 1559.⁴⁷ These missions prepared him for his task as resident ambassador in Venice between 1561 and 1564. After his diplomatic career, he retired to the French court, where he assisted Constable Anne de Montmorency, who de facto governed the country when King Charles IX was absent, and resumed his function as master of requests. His final diplomatic assignment to London in 1572 meant his death, as he succumbed en route.⁴⁸

With the next French ambassador to Venice, Arnaud du Ferrier (1508-1585), we notice a gradual shift in the French diplomatic practice. First of all, he would perform two long missions, from 1563 to 1567 and from 1570 to 1582, a significant increase compared to the length of the postings of his predecessors. Secondly, he is the first ambassador in Venice during the second half of the sixteenth century who was not recruited amongst the French clergy. Instead, Ferrier had built an impressive juridical career and acquired one prestigious juridical post after the other, culminating in his appointment as president of the Parlement of Paris.⁴⁹ His religious sympathies influenced the further progression of his career. When France was divided by religious conflicts, Ferrier chose a tolerant stance and condemned the persecutions of the followers of the reformed religion. Therefore, he was accused of supporting Protestant values, but King Charles IX appointed him anyways as his representative at the Council of Trent in 1562. However, as a result of his strong attack on the pretensions of Rome, Ferrier was removed from the Council by the prelates and, instead, appointed by the king as his ambassador in Venice. Nevertheless, his enduring sympathy for the Protestant faith eventually cost him the king's grace. Subsequently, Ferrier was approached by the Protestant leader, King Henry of Navarre, who appointed him as chancellor. From then on, Ferrier openly professed Calvinism.⁵⁰

Ferrier's replacement after his first mission in Venice, Paul de Foix (1528-1584), had a very similar profile. His training was rooted in the juridical sphere as councillor at the Parlement of Paris. Furthermore, he likewise was a supporter of a tolerant stance towards the reformed religion and a disciple of the *politiques*, a group of people who shared the political idea that a strong and united French monarchy was more important than religious beliefs. Just as Ferrier, Foix was suspected of harbouring Protestant sympathies, and even arrested, but he

⁴⁷ Jean Hurault de Boistaillé changed his allegiance from the Guise faction to the Montmorency clan when the political situation changed. These court factions will be discussed at length in Chapter 7.

⁴⁸ Isabelle de Conihout, "Jean et André Hurault: Deux Frères Ambassadeurs à Venise et Acquéreurs de Livres du Cardinal Grimani," *Italique: Poésie Italienne de la Renaissance*, no. X (2007), 107-113.

⁴⁹ Arnaud du Ferrier had conducted his studies of jurisprudence in Toulouse before moving to Padua, where he received a doctoral degree in law. He then returned to France and became a law professor at the universities of Bourges and Toulouse.

⁵⁰ Edouard Frémy, *Un Ambassadeur Libéral sous Charles II et Henri III: Ambassades à Venise d'Arnaud du Ferrier d'après sa Correspondance Inédits (1563-1567-1570-1582)* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1880).

regained the favour of the French court and became a member of the Privy Council. In spite of these suspicions, he was even nominated archbishop of Toulouse in 1577. Foix fulfilled several residencies, respectively in England (1561-1565), Venice (1567-1570) and Rome (1579-1584), and, in between these posts, he executed several extraordinary negotiations in Savoy, Mantua, Florence, Rome and England.⁵¹

After Ferrier's second mission, he was succeeded by André Hurault de Maisse (1539-1607), brother of the aforementioned Jean Hurault de Boistaillé. Hurault de Maisse built a career parallel to that of his older brother, first as councillor at the Parlement of Paris and then as master of requests. This way, he gained experience and prestige as juridical officer before being sent to Venice. Even though this post was his first diplomatic assignment, he stayed there for fourteen years (from 1582 to 1588 and from 1589 to 1596). Immediately afterwards, he resided for two years as a diplomatic envoy at the English court of Queen Elizabeth (from 1597 to 1598).⁵² The career of his successor Antoine Séguier (1552-1624), which followed the development typical of the individuals discussed here, was characterised by various juridical appointments: councillor of the Parlement of Paris, master of requests, councillor of state, advocate general and the high legal post of *président à mortier*. Contrary to his predecessors, Séguier's diplomatic mission in Venice from 1598 until 1601 was his only ambassadorial assignment.⁵³

Philippe de la Canaye (1551-1610) is the last ambassador that needs to be introduced. Once more, his life and career were distinguished by Protestant sympathies and successes in the juridical world. When he was fifteen years old, Canaye converted to Calvinism, inspired by his travels to German and Italian territories. In 1572, when he was about to return to Paris, the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre took place, so, instead, he joined the entourage of the French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, François de Noailles, and travelled to Constantinople. Although he only stayed with the ambassador for three months in 1573, being an apprentice under an ambassador as experienced and talented as Noailles was the perfect way for Canaye to get acquainted with the world of diplomacy. Back in France after his long wanderings, Canaye applied himself to the law and became a successful attorney. Despite his religious beliefs, he even acquired the post of councillor at the Great Council. The newly appointed French King Henry IV entrusted Canaye with extraordinary diplomatic

⁵¹ Noël Didier, "Paul de Foix à la Mercuriale de 1559, son Procès, ses Idées Religieuses," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 56 (1939), 396-435.

⁵² de Conihout, "Jean et André Hurault", 122-123.

⁵³ Madeleine Foisil, "Harangue et Rapport d'Antoine Séguier, Commissaire pour le Roi en Basse-Normandie (1579-1580)," *Annales de Normandie* 26 (1976), 25-40.

missions to England and the German territories. In the years that followed, he even received the post of ordinary ambassador to all the Protestant German princes and became president of the Parlement of Toulouse. When he was acting as mediator between Catholics and Protestants at the conference at Fontainebleau in 1600, he re-embraced the Catholic faith and converted. Finally, the ultimate act of his diplomatic career was his post as resident ambassador to Venice between 1601 and 1607.⁵⁴

Overview of French ambassadors to Venice, 1554-1607⁵⁵

Name	Period of embassy	Occupational background
Dominique du Gabre	1554-1557	Ecclesiastical Finances
François de Noailles	1557-1561	Ecclesiastical
Jean Hurault de Boistaillé	1561-1564	Ecclesiastical Juridical
Arnaud du Ferrier	1563-1567	Juridical
Paul de Foix	1567-1570	Ecclesiastical Juridical
Arnaud du Ferrier	1570-1582	Juridical
André Hurault de Maisse	1582-1588; 1589-1596	Juridical
Antoine de Séguier	1598-1601	Juridical
Philippe de la Canaye	1601-1607	Juridical

As this overview of French ambassadors to Venice has shown, only erudite individuals were selected who, for the most part, had experience in the juridical sphere. Even at the end of the sixteenth century, when Ribera noticed a general trend towards a preference for military men, the post in Venice was still reserved for scholarly men with a background in jurisprudence and administration. With regard to the presence of the clergy in the diplomatic corps, the same tendency pointed out by Ribera can be perceived: four ambassadors of the

⁵⁴ Philippe de la Canaye, *Lettres et Ambassades de Messire Philippe de Canaye, Seigneur de Fresne, Conseiller du Roi en Son Conseil d'État, avec un Sommaire de Sa Vie, et un Récit Particulier du Procès Criminel Fait au Maréchal de Biron, Composé par Monsieur de la Guesle, lors Procureur General*, ed. Robert Regnault, book 1 (Paris: Jean Jost, 1645), 1-14 [hereafter cited as *Lettres et Ambassades*]; Philippe de la Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant de Philippe du Fresne-Canaye (1573)*, ed. Henri Hauser (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1896), v-xxiii. The original letters of Canaye are preserved in the AMAE (vols. 37-40). Robert Regnault has published all these letters in 1645. A comparison of the printed letters with the original documents showed the accuracy of the copies. Therefore, I have chosen to work with Regnault's edition.

⁵⁵ For a list of French ordinary and extraordinary ambassadors in Venice between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, see: Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise*, 411-445; Marie Laure Richert, ed., *Ambasciatori di Francia a Venezia / Ambassadeurs de France à Venise XVI^e-XVIII^e Sec. Catalogo di Mostra (23 Febbraio - 3 Marzo 1987)* (Venice: Palazzo Querini Stampalia, 1987), 43-44. With regard to the social background of the French ambassadors in Venice listed in my overview, they all belonged to the French nobility.

second half of the sixteenth century were ecclesiastics, but they disappeared in the 1570s.⁵⁶ The fact that many of these ambassadors were openly tolerant towards the Protestants, or Huguenots, and strove for a united country should not be considered as unusual. This was in line with the values of the supporters of the *politique* cause, for who religion was less important than the survival of the monarchy. Consequently, they were ideal candidates for a diplomatic appointment, since they would vigorously defend the interests of the French monarchy.⁵⁷

Another shared background that should be stressed, considering the importance of (material) culture in this dissertation, is the elevated cultural level of these French ambassadors to Venice. This trend had already started under King Francis I in the first half of the sixteenth century. Generally speaking, under the reign of Francis I, the most prestigious posts were awarded to individuals who were highly educated in cultural matters. This practice is also visible in his selection of ambassadors for a post in Venice. All of them were very learned men who knew Greek and were anchored in the humanist milieu. This way, they were perfect candidates to collect works of art and books for the king and establish networks with artists. Venice was an important hub of cultural richness and, consequently, François I chose to send ambassadors who were already immersed in culture. As my outline has shown, King Henry II and his successors continued to favour erudite ambassadors.⁵⁸

A Note on Sources

The documentation employed for my investigation is mainly of diplomatic nature, and the starting place to conduct my study is a thorough examination of the letters left behind by the French ambassadors in Venice. This does not only refer to the letters exchanged between the ambassador and the French court, and vice versa, but also to the correspondence maintained with patrons, clients and other ambassadors. It is a misconception that the letters written by ambassadors while on mission are formal accounts, simply depicting the state of public affairs. As Michael Levin has formulated it: “Diplomatic correspondence is often dry or routine, but the writers’ personalities still manage to shine through, and that is where history

⁵⁶ During the first half of the sixteenth century, there was a strong dominance of cleric-ambassadors in Venice. The bulk of them had an ecclesiastic career and often were appointed as bishop, see: Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise*, 427-428. For a short biography of French King Francis I’s ambassadors in Venice, see: Gilbert Gadoffre, *La Révolution Culturelle dans la France des Humanistes: Guillaume Budé et François Ier* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997), 94-100.

⁵⁷ Burns, “Cleric-Diplomats and the Sixteenth-Century French State”, 723.

⁵⁸ An overview of the cultural knowledge of King Francis I’s and King Henry II’s ambassadors in Venice can be found in: Gadoffre, *La Révolution Culturelle dans la France des Humanistes*, 94-102; 163-165.

comes alive.”⁵⁹ Even though the main attention in these letters is devoted to political events, ambassadors reported on all sorts of matters, ranging from high politics to private and domestic issues. Hence, their dispatches truly contain a treasure of information for early modern historians. Most importantly for my research, ambassadors’ reports about, for instance, matters relating to social events, purchases and the use of servants, allow me to shed light on the functioning of diplomacy on a daily level.

However, the letters of ambassadors also pose some problems and challenges. First, the diplomatic, public nature of the correspondence necessitated the use of a specific language, directed towards a specific audience. As a result, the dispatches are filled with bombastic, longwinded language and the obligatory flattery that shaped patronage relationships. Second, ambassadors tended to compose long letters and, therefore, it can be a time-consuming exercise to sort out the interesting material. A third, and most important, difficulty to keep in mind is that diplomatic correspondence does not always contain truthful depictions of events or people. Often, a narrative was constructed that had to benefit the ambassador’s self-fashioning and social and political advancement. Not able to boast about their merits in person, ambassadors had to use their letters to distinguish themselves in court society; while courtiers could display their skills at a daily basis during ceremonies and conversations at court, ambassadors had to resort to writing. Therefore, ambassadors could magnify their abilities and accomplishments in their correspondence, and downplay their mistakes. In doing so, they aimed at securing royal favour, satisfying existing patrons or attracting new benefactors and presenting themselves as aspirants of higher appointments.

In light of the observation that ambassadors could spin information, the content of diplomatic correspondence always has to be approached with care. As diplomatic historian Toby Osborne has accurately summarised it: “Language or the articulation of aims did not always correlate with actions.”⁶⁰ When trying to discover the true ambitions of political figures by analysing their correspondence, conflicting conclusions can be drawn by different historians depending on how the interplay between rhetoric, actions and personal goals and beliefs is tackled. Osborne continues by setting out the two extreme approaches to the truthfulness of diplomatic, public letters. On the one hand, accepting their language as completely true would lead to an uncritical analysis of information and would not allow for a deeper understanding of motivations. On the other hand, by making a strong distinction

⁵⁹ Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), vii.

⁶⁰ Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy*, 11.

between what was written and what actually happened, it is implied that ambassadors operated outside from political and moral premises. This assumption would suggest that ambassadors were free to separate what they said from what they did, however, in practice, ambassadors were obliged to adhere to certain principles and accurate reports were expected from them.⁶¹ Thus, instead of totally separating language from actions, a balanced approach should be preferred, where narratives are valued for both the information they contain and their, at times, moralising, entertaining or self-promoting objectives.

With regard to the correspondence of sixteenth-century French ambassadors in Venice, an additional practical difficulty is that their dispatches are not concentrated in one location but scattered over various archives and libraries in Paris. While the bulk of the correspondence is kept at the Archives of Foreign Affairs (*Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*), the letters of some ambassadors are stored in various subunits of the National Library of France (*Bibliothèque Nationale de France*): the Richelieu Library and the Arsenal Library. A positive feature is that the integral correspondence of many of these ambassadors has been copied or published in later centuries. Preference is given to work with these copies or printed texts, as they are identical reproductions, well-organised and more readable. However, when necessary for the understanding of the text, the original letters are also consulted.

The core documentation for this dissertation is the correspondence left behind by François de Noailles. To date, only Noailles' diplomatic correspondence of his missions to England and the Ottoman Empire have been analysed to chart his political actions.⁶² His life and activities in Venice, on the contrary, have not yet been subjected to a thorough examination; only his impressive political accomplishments are known. However, after a close analysis of the documentation relating to his residence in Venice, I have discovered the rich information that it contains with regard to the daily life of an early modern ambassador and the functioning of diplomatic culture. Both Noailles' original (fourteen volumes) and copied (eight volumes, subdivided into two categories: "important" and "less important") letters are

⁶¹ Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy*, 11.

⁶² Vertot, *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, 5 vols.; Ernest Charrière, ed., *Négociations de la France dans le Levant; ou, Correspondances, Mémoires et Actes Diplomatiques des Ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople et des Ambassadeurs, Envoyés ou Résidents à Divers Titres à Venise, Raguse, Rome, Malte et Jérusalem, en Turquie, Perse, Géorgie, Crimée, Syrie, Égypte, etc., et dans les États de Tunis, d'Alger et de Maroc*, 4 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1853); Tamizey de Larroque, "François de Noailles", 9-25; Degert, "Une Ambassade Périlleuse", 225-260; Elmore Harris Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors at the Court of Queen Mary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940); Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011); Amy V. Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy: Patterns of Diplomatic Practice at the Mid-Tudor Courts" (Master diss., University of Oxford, 2013).

preserved in the Archives of Foreign Affairs.⁶³ The transcriptions of Noailles' correspondence were made by French historian René Aubert de Vertot over the course of the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Vertot was a close friend of the Noailles family and was appointed by the duke of Noailles to transcribe and publish the letters of the three sixteenth-century Noailles brothers, Antoine, François and Gilles, regarding their various diplomatic appointments. In the end, only a publication concerning the brothers' English residency, with a strong focus on Antoine, was published.⁶⁴ However, Vertot also transcribed François' correspondence related to his Venetian residence, which are the eight volumes preserved today in the Archives of Foreign Affairs.

Besides this extensive correspondence, other diplomatic sources in the Parisian archives related to François de Noailles need to be consulted, such as his lists of expenses, his passport and the inventory of his property. This vast and varied documentation provides an additional framework through which I can examine the French embassy in sixteenth-century Venice. However, just as is the case with ambassadorial dispatches, these type of sources pose their own challenges. Even though these lists are much more than mere summaries of owned and purchased goods, they communicate a static and fragmentary image of an ambassador's possessions when analysed as isolated documents. Therefore, the information found in these sources should be strongly contextualised, carefully linked to each other and supplemented with traces found in other documents, such as letters and public records.⁶⁵ Furthermore, family papers will be used when they contribute to an understanding of Noailles diplomatic life. Nevertheless, the use of family records is relatively limited since, even though I extensively recognise the importance of the family in both diplomatic practice and society in general, this is not a study of the family clans of ambassadors.

In addition to these archival documents, a number of published sources related to French diplomatic history, and diplomacy in general, enrich this study. The most important group consists of treatises composed on the figure of the ambassador in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Throughout the early modern period, a vast number of manuals on how an ambassador ought to behave were published. Hence, only a select few can be

⁶³ In the volumes of both originals and copies, there are two systems of page numbering, one handwritten and one stamped; the latter was added by the archivist. Since the original handwritten numbering corresponds to the table of contents at the beginning of each volume, I have chosen to refer to the original numbering in my footnotes. Similarly, when double numbering appeared in other diplomatic dispatches, I have consistently adhered to the handwritten numbering.

⁶⁴ Vertot, *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, 5 vols. Elmore Harris Harbison, who has worked thoroughly with the dispatches of Antoine de Noailles' English embassy, gives a more detailed description of the history of the sources related to the Noailles family in: Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 343-350.

⁶⁵ The challenges posed by inventories will be discussed more at length in Chapter 4.

incorporated into the investigation. Seeing that French ambassadors constitute the subject of my investigation, a preference is given to treatises written by French authors. These books sought to describe the qualities and actions of the perfect ambassador, and should consequently be approached carefully. Rather than contributing to our knowledge of the exact nature of diplomacy, they provide us with a valuable insight into what was customarily expected from early modern ambassadors.

The second stage in my research is to move beyond the individual French ambassadors under study and place them in the urban, political and cultural surroundings of Venice in order to contextualise their experiences. Already from very early on, the Republic of Venice collected and organised an extensive state archive (the *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*). In particular the documentation of three government institutions is scrutinised in order to understand the Republic's treatment of foreign representatives. In the first place, the ceremonial books produced by the *Collegio* offer a wealth of information for the study of diplomatic ceremony in Venice. Secondly, the records of the Venetian Senate further elucidate diplomatic customs. Thirdly, the accounts of the *Ufficiale alle Rason Vecchie*, the office that was responsible for the entertainment of foreign visitors, allows me to investigate the material facets of embassy life, as they recount the gifts offered to diplomatic agents and the lodgings and furnishings prepared for the stay of extraordinary ambassadors. A third phase in the research is to situate the documentation concerning the French ambassadors to Venice in a comparative framework by considering, where possible, the actions and experiences of ambassadors from other nations stationed in the Venetian Republic. This enables me to gain a more general understanding of early modern diplomatic practices. Even though it is impossible to offer an all-encompassing account, since new sources are constantly emerging, I will strive to extract all the necessary information to tell a wide-ranging story of embassy life in sixteenth-century Venice.

Chapter Outline

The dissertation is divided into three sections, covering the social and material facets of the diplomatic reality abroad. Even though the focus in every chapter is centred around François de Noailles, his experiences will be supplemented and compared to those of his successors in Venice. Noailles will thus not only be approached as an individual but also as a member of his social group. Consequently, this study does not follow a biographical approach, which would be too restrictive, as the aim is to get a deep sense of the operation of diplomacy.

Instead, I opt for a thematic approach, where every part focuses on a specific sphere of diplomatic life: the household, the material world and networks. Even though it is principally a study about diplomacy, the detailed study of the French ambassadors' activities and observations permits the exposure of crucial aspects of both French and Venetian histories. Additionally, through the investigation of different themes, the dissertation sheds light on the more general social, cultural and material life in early modern Venice.

The three parts are preceded by an introductory chapter, which sets the fundamental background of the thesis by presenting the city on which the research concentrates, Venice, with a special focus on the diplomatic ceremonies that took place in the Venetian Republic. Three important aspects of the rituals of diplomacy are investigated in this first chapter. First, an examination of all the stages of the diplomatic welcome ceremony (entry, audience and tour of the city) highlights how the diplomatic arena was to a large extent a theatre of appearances. Second, the types of gifts offered to foreign representatives divulge the political and representational nature of gifts, as they symbolised both the power and wealth of Venice and the status of the receiving ambassador's state. Third, a hitherto overlooked ceremony is set out in detail: the diplomatic funeral. Just as is the case for the welcome ceremony and gift-giving, an understanding of the symbolic messages inherent to an ambassador's funeral broadens our insight into the mechanisms and symbolic power of diplomatic ceremonial.

Part I further introduces diplomatic life by setting out the characteristics of the ambassador's court. Chapter 2 investigates the practicalities of living in a foreign country by looking at the architectural and social features of the diplomatic house. Both the appearance and location of the house and the sociability taking place within the residence illustrate how profoundly bureaucratic and domestic roles were combined. Hence, the chapter immediately exposes the problematic distinction between official and unofficial, since private life had a public face, which remains a recurrent topic throughout the study. Additionally, the political meanings of sociability, hospitality and food are scrutinised. Chapter 3 continues to look at the house as an important space of diplomacy and politics through an analysis of the people that surrounded the ambassador. It considers the role of servants, family members and wives, who all shared a roof with the ambassador, but also discusses the employment of agents who acted on behalf of the ambassador outside the confines of his residence. These minor actors of diplomacy have received only marginal consideration in historiography. Furthermore, the chapter pays attention to moral issues, such as virtuous household management; how an ambassador organised his house can reveal information about his qualities as an ambassador.

Part II moves from the social characteristics of the ambassador's house to the material environment and reveals the great importance of material culture for the performance of diplomacy. Chapter 4 considers the furniture with which an ambassador equipped himself to establish his embassy in an appropriate way. It argues that in order to accurately execute the role of royal representative, the ambassador needed to surround himself with luxurious objects. The detailed analysis of the interior of François de Noailles' house sheds light on the increasing care with which ambassadors furnished their residences. His objects conveyed messages about his identity and visualised his cosmopolitan, diplomatic profile. Chapter 5 concentrates on an equally vital material aspect of diplomacy that, to date, has not yet received a systematic analysis: the ambassador's wardrobe. Similarly to objects, dress was crucial for an ambassador's self-fashioning and was used to communicate political messages. Noailles' wardrobe will be meticulously examined to gain an insight into how his clothing adapted to or rejected local customs and how it was used to shape the ambassador's multiple identities. Both chapters additionally pay attention to how and where all these goods were acquired. In doing so, section II will underline both the wealth of Venice and the international nature of an ambassador's purchasing network.

Part III again takes material culture as the point of departure, as it studies the movement of objects through the networks constructed by the ambassador while on mission. Chapter 6 reveals how French ambassadors constantly operated as mediators in the elite's quest for luxury objects. By constructing a firm network of agents abroad, ambassadors had easy access to a wide variety of merchandise, and by procuring these goods, they stimulated the ever-increasing demand for foreign, luxury objects. For François de Noailles and his successors, being a broker was also a way to maintain the channels of patronage: by delivering the desired goods, they hoped for favours and support in return. The vital importance of patronage networks is explored more extensively in Chapter 7. While diplomatic service had benefits, it also had disadvantages, most importantly, the physical absence from the centre of power. The case study of Noailles shows how he used gifts to sustain ties with influential people at the French court in order to pursue his own interests and those of his family. State service and personal, familial interests constantly overlapped, hence, a diplomatic career was shaped by entangled private and public concerns. This final chapter links François de Noailles back to his home court, where he had to manoeuvre between factional groups and adapt to the changing patterns of allegiances, and underscores that the family histories of ambassadors always have to be kept in mind.

CHAPTER 1

RITUALS OF DIPLOMACY IN THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Ceremonies were, and still are, an essential component of diplomatic culture. Although these ritual occasions might seem trivial at first sight, they transferred strong political messages: they symbolised the honour of the king or republic, reflected the international hierarchy of states and exposed the condition of the relationship between nations.¹ Ceremonies were just as indispensable to the functioning of diplomacy as political negotiations and the signing of treaties. Consequently, every aspect of the ritual was meticulously organised in order to show the importance of the occasion and to avoid any errors, since an improper ceremonial treatment of ambassadors could lead to a breach of diplomatic relations. Ceremonies were thus not just ridiculous and time-wasting formalities, as they have been qualified by traditional diplomatic historiography, but a powerful medium for visualising and communicating political conceptions.

Contemporary diplomatic theorists acknowledged the central place that ceremonies held in diplomatic culture. In his famous treatise, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, Dutch Ambassador Abraham de Wicquefort opened his chapter on the reception and entry of ambassadors with the following words: “The Civilities and Ceremonies that are done to Embassadors, making one of the most essential parts of the Embassy, I shall bestow upon them the three or four following Chapters [...]”² Underlining the weight of ceremonies on diplomatic practice, Wicquefort criticised the fact that the welcoming rituals became standardised at European courts only at the end of the sixteenth century. However, he went on to praise the Republic of Venice, since he believed that there was no other state where the

¹ See the article by William J. Roosen for an overview of the importance of diplomatic ceremonies: Roosen, “Early Modern Diplomatic Ceremonial”. Some other relevant studies include: Lucien Bély, “Souveraineté et Souverains: La Question du Cérémonial dans les Relations Internationales à l'Époque Moderne,” *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, 1993, 27-43; Jan Henning, “The Semiotics of Diplomatic Dialogue: Pomp and Circumstance in Tsar Peter I's Visit to Vienna in 1698,” *International History Review* 30, no. 3 (2008), 515-544.

² Translation taken from: Abraham de Wicquefort, *The Ambassador and His Functions*, trans. Mr. Digby, book 1 (London: Printed for Bernard Lintott, at the Cross-Keys between the Temple-Gates, 1716), 127. The original book in French was for the first time published in 1682 and was subsequently reprinted many times. I have consulted the edition of 1746. Original quote in French in: Abraham de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1 (Amsterdam: François l'Honoré et Fils, 1746), 197: “Les Civilités et les Ceremonies, qu'on fait aux Ambassadeurs, faisant une des parties les plus essentielles de l'A[m]bassade, je leur donnerai les trois ou quatre sections suivantes [...]”.

ceremonies were better regulated or where greater civilities were bestowed upon ambassadors.³

The Venetian Republic had indeed developed a strong ceremonial apparatus, in which careful attention was paid to diplomatic ceremonies. Especially the reception of foreign ambassadors was thoroughly considered. This ritual consisted of three important events: the entry, first audience and disclosure of the city. The diplomatic reception was a separate ceremonial genre with its own spatial dimension, which differed from civic and liturgical rites. Not St. Mark's Basilica and its square functioned as the setting of the ceremonial celebrations; rather, the lagoon, its islands and the *Sala del Collegio* in the Doge's Palace were the central ritual spaces.⁴ The Venetian government charged these spaces with political meanings and employed them to represent their identity and power. Their aim was to control and disseminate a well-calculated image of the Republic. An important tool during these ceremonies was the diplomatic gift. Presents ranging from foodstuffs to luxury objects were offered to ambassadors upon their arrival and also upon departure. Each offering had to cultivate diplomatic relations by conveying messages of friendship. An additional important aim was to embody the Venetian nation through these gifts, as they demonstrated the city's artisanal and technical skills. The various elements of the welcome ceremony and the use of gifts will both be investigated in this first chapter.

Furthermore, a very specific type of ritual will be examined, that is, the funeral of an ambassador. Obsequies assumed an important place in Christian cultures, which were preoccupied with the cult of death and commemoration. During the early modern period, funeral rites were considered as occasions where one's identity and status in society could be established one final time. Consequently, these rituals became increasingly more conspicuous and expensive.⁵ The funeral of an ambassador had an additional layer of political importance: the way in which the deceased ambassador was honoured reflected the standing of the ambassador's sovereign. Therefore, by studying diplomatic funerals, I will not only uncover a hitherto neglected diplomatic ceremony, but I will also draw conclusions about issues of international rank and esteem.

This first chapter will thus sketch the setting of the thesis by introducing the city of Venice. By depicting the specific diplomatic environment of the Serene Republic, the subsequent analysis of the social, political and cultural life of French ambassadors residing in

³ de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 199; 215.

⁴ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 235.

⁵ Minou Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy: The Art and Culture of Conspicuous Commemoration* (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 7-10.

Venice will be contextualised. Moreover, the crucial narratives of my dissertation, such as the link between diplomacy and material culture and the complexity of the ambassador's dual identity, will already be touched upon. The time frame of the sources that are consulted to tell this story coincides with the period under study in the rest of the dissertation: 1550 to 1610, with some references to earlier and later decades. Argued from primary sources that are for the greater part located in the Venetian State Archive, the culture of diplomacy in the Venetian Republic will be vividly evoked.

Pageantry and Politics in Diplomatic Receptions

Public rites and festivities were a common feature in Venetian society. By the sixteenth century, civic celebrations had become more elaborate with parades crossing through the city and its squares on a frequent basis.⁶ Both great events in Christian and Venetian history were commemorated with splendid processions and celebratory Masses.⁷ The fact that a large ceremonial administration had developed to oversee all these political and religious festivities testifies to the fact that rituals assumed an important place in Venetian society.⁸ One of the special types of ceremonies that took place in the city were those that celebrated visits by foreign monarchs, princes and ambassadors.⁹ While most of the research done to date has focused on the first two categories, my research concentrates on the third, and most common, observance: the arrival of ambassadors. Edward Muir has determined that of the 337 non-liturgical rituals recorded in the *Cerimoniali* books, in which all visits to Venice were compiled, for the period from 1556 to 1607, receptions of ambassadors accounted for more than half (171).¹⁰ I will investigate how and where ambassadors were received, the setting and structure of the first audience and how Venice endorsed an image of power and wealth of the city.

In this investigation of diplomatic receptions, some considerations will repeatedly come to the fore: the importance of movement and space, the creation of hierarchy and the

⁶ Standard works on Venetian ceremonies include: Giuseppe Tassini, *Feste, Spettacoli, Divertimenti, e Piaceri degli Antichi Veneziani* (Venice: Libreria Filippi Editrice, 1961); Bianca Tamassia Mazzarotto, *Le Feste Veneziane: I Giochi Popolari, le Cerimonie Religiose e di Governo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1961); Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*; Matteo Casini, *I Gesti del Principe: La Festa Politica a Firenze e Venezia in Età Rinascimentale* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996).

⁷ For an overview of the most important annual and special observances, see: Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 212-250; Casini, *I Gesti del Principe*, 149-183.

⁸ For an overview of the specialists in charge of the ceremonial bureaucracy, see: Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 187-189.

⁹ *Memorie del passaggio per lo Stato Veneto di Principi e Soggetti Esteri, 1347-1773*: BNM, Mss. It. VII 164 (7306).

¹⁰ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 232.

significance of the participants and material setting. This is in line with Edward Muir's findings in his pioneering study on civic ritual in Renaissance Venice. He uncovered that the *who* and *where* were important signifiers in the ceremonial welcomes of the Venetian Republic. Whereas in religious rites, the setting, structure and course of the event remained stable, these factors varied in diplomatic observances according to the honour that Venice wished to bestow upon the ambassador and the sovereign he was embodying. As a result, questions about space, people, decor and clothing stood at the centre of the ceremonial concerns. Every variable contributed to generating the political message that the welcoming ceremony had to convey.¹¹ However, even though these variables were altered and personalised according to the visit, we also can see that a certain routine was always respected. Decisions were registered and customs were passed on for several generations.

The handing down and organising of diplomatic receptions was in the hands of the *Savi di Terra Ferma* and the *Savi agli Ordini*, two committees inside the *Collegio* that were each composed of five patricians who held the office for six months. A chancellery secretary was responsible for inscribing the practices in the *Cerimoniali* books. The fact that the ceremonies were meticulously documented is again proof of the importance attached to rituals by the Venetian government. These records served as precedents for later occasions and, this way, a diplomatic protocol gradually developed.¹² Another important source is provided by the accounts of the *Rason Vecchie*. Their officials prepared lodgings, proffered food and found appropriate gifts for foreign dignitaries. By combining these various sources, the messages of the highly ritualised Venetian ceremonies can be deciphered and, in turn, the inner workings of Venetian politics divulged.

Ceremonial Entries as Political Theatres: The Power of Space and Pomp

The ambassadors' first acquaintance with the ceremonial observances of Venice was during their official entry into the city.¹³ What distinguished Venetian receptions from other

¹¹ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 232-235.

¹² Patricia Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp: The Ceremonial Welcomes of the Venetian Republic," in *Triumphal Celebrations and the Rituals of Statecraft*, vol. 1: "All the World's a Stage..." *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, ed. Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 138.

¹³ A marginal note has to be made regarding this first entry. It was sometimes the case that the ambassador had already been staying in the city for some days in search for appropriate lodgings. He had arrived incognito and without any ceremony; only later would he be officially welcomed into the city. See the example of English Ambassador Henry Wotton when he arrived in Venice in 1604: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 15r (28 September 1604).

European states was the Republic's unique geographical environment, which astonished foreign visitors:

“And I marveled greatly to see the placement of this city and to see so many church towers and monasteries, and such large buildings, and all in the water [...] and it is a very strange thing to see such beautiful and large churches constructed in the sea.”¹⁴

The Venetian ceremonial space was indissolubly connected with the water that surrounded the city. The sea and the lagoon not only constituted a majestic backdrop for the reception of foreign dignitaries, they also endowed the Venetian officials with the practical advantage that newly arrived diplomats could not easily escape out of their sight. As a result, the magistrates had full control over the movements of ambassadors and regulated the first impressions that they would have of the city. However, the ubiquity of water also posed some challenges: it created limitations regarding the way in which ambassadors were received, and weather conditions could interfere with the course of events. Nonetheless, the Venetian officials managed to master these obstructions and to exploit the spatial surroundings to their own benefit.¹⁵

The well-thought-out management of space is reflected in the Republic's strategies to employ the various locations and islands in the lagoon to convey politically charged messages. During the fifteenth century, all European ambassadors were greeted at one of the four harbours at the edges of the lagoon: Marghera in the north, Chioggia in the south, Lizza Fusina in the west and San Nicolò di Lido in the east.¹⁶ For example, in 1494, French Ambassador Philippe de Commines was welcomed at Lizza Fusina and from there he was escorted to the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, located on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore. Fifteenth-century ambassadors were traditionally lodged in this monastery for their first night in Venice. This location was consciously selected because the island was

¹⁴ Translation taken from: Philippe de Commines, *The Memoirs of Philippe de Commines*, ed. Samuel Kinsler, trans. Isabelle Cazeaux, vol. 2 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 489. The original quote in French can be found in: Philippe de Commines, *Mémoires de Philippe de Commines*, ed. Émile Dupont, vol. 2 (Paris: Jules Renouard et Cie, 1843), 404-405: “Et fus bien esmerveillé de veoir l'assiete de ceste cité, et de veoir tant de clochiers et de monasteres, et si grant maisonnement, et tout en l'eaue [...] et est chose bien estrange de veoir si belles et si grans eglises fondees en la mer.”

¹⁵ Fortini Brown, “Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp”, 145.

¹⁶ The situation was different with regard to Ottoman ambassadors. Most of the time, Ottoman envoys travelled to the Republic of Ragusa, nowadays the Croatian city of Dubrovnik, where a Venetian galley transported them to Venice. Other cities where the first meeting with Venetian officials took place were: Vlorë, in southern Albania, and the Croatian coastal towns of Zadar (Zara), Split (Spalato) or Trogir (Traù). From there, the Ottoman ambassadors were or brought to the Lido, where they spent their first night in the house of the Council of Ten, or immediately escorted to the official residence prepared for them, which was most of the time situated on Giudecca Island. Maria Pia Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore: Inviati Ottomani a Venezia dalla Caduta di Costantinopoli alla Guerra di Candia* (Venice: Deputazione Editrice, 1994), 49-52; 59.

situated precisely in front of the political and religious centres of Venice: the Doge's Palace and St. Mark's Basilica. This shows how, going back to the point I made above, the Republic immediately controlled the ambassadors' perception of the city, as they were brought face to face with the power of Venice. Moreover, the choice of location was intended to communicate a clear message of surveillance: the government always kept an eye on foreign ambassadors.¹⁷

Starting from the middle of the sixteenth century, however, a spatial alteration occurred. Newly arrived ambassadors were no longer welcomed at one of the four harbours and lodged at the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore; instead, the welcome reception took place on a well-selected small island in the lagoon, where the ambassadors were subsequently housed for, customarily, one night. This way, the reception was moved closer to the urban centre of Venice and became more integrated into the city's direct surroundings. Once again, we can see how this spatial, ceremonial decision was infused with a political meaning. The island selected for an ambassador's welcome was linked with his nationality: delegates of the Holy Roman Empire were accommodated at the island of San Secondo; French, Spanish, English and Papal ambassadors stayed at the island of Santo Spirito; and for the ambassadors from smaller principalities, such as Savoy, Tuscany, Mantua, Ferrara, Parma and Urbino, the island of Santa Maria della Grazia was selected.¹⁸

In order to understand the connection of an island to the ambassador's nationality and his sovereign's status, the distance of the various islands to St. Mark's Square, the centre of power, has to be considered.¹⁹ In doing so, the same logic that was valid during diplomatic encounters between sovereigns needs to be applied: when greeting each other, neither prince wished to cover a greater distance than the other, therefore, the place of the encounter was carefully measured out.²⁰ However, when there was a clear divergence in status between

¹⁷ Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp", 140; Stefanie Cossalter, "Dai Porti alle Isole: Di Accoglienza nella Serenissima," in *Spazi Veneziani: Topografie Culturali di una Città*, ed. Sabine Meine (Rome, Venice: Viella, 2014), 131-135.

¹⁸ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, passim; *ibid.*, reg. 3, passim. Reg. 2 is a partial copy of the first register and was therefore not consulted. See also: Cossalter, "Dai Porti alle Isole", 131-133. A fourth island that should also be mentioned is the island of San Giorgio in Alga, which seems to have been used starting from the seventeenth century. Both French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye and the extraordinary delegate of the States General of the Low Countries, Cornelis van der Mijle, were housed here during their first nights in Venice. ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 4r (18 October 1601); *ibid.*, f. 29r (8 November 1609).

¹⁹ See Figure 6 for a map of the Venetian lagoon, visualising the distance between St. Mark's Square and the various islands.

²⁰ Two of the most famous examples where the place of encounter was carefully selected in terms of equidistance are the meeting between French King Francis I and English King Henry VIII at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520, and the encounter between the same Francis I and Emperor Charles V at Aigues-Mortes in 1538. Xavier Le Person, "A Moment of 'Resverie': Charles V and Francis I's Encounter at Aigues-Mortes (July 1538)," *French History* 19, no. 1 (2005), 6-7; 19.

princes, the one with the inferior rank had to cover the greater distance.²¹ In Venice, a consideration of these spatial strategies translated into the practice that the Venetian officials honoured ambassadors representing more important monarchs by showing their willingness to advance a longer distance to encounter them. Consequently, the island on which most of the elevated diplomatic agents were greeted, the island of Santo Spirito, was more remote from the main island of Venice than the island of Santa Maria della Grazia, where ambassadors of less powerful rulers were welcomed. Just as in contemporary European courts, the Venetian Republic thus employed space to qualify the ambassador's rank and hierarchy.²²

The ambassadors themselves were also preoccupied with space and were aware of its symbolic meaning. In his *Mémoires*, Philippe de Commynes specified the span between the location where he was welcomed, Lizza Fusina, and Venice: five miles. Similarly, the letters from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French ambassadors indicate the obsession with distance, as they mentioned the precise length between St. Mark's Square and the island where they were accommodated, the island of Santo Spirito: three miles.²³ Since distance was such an important marker of honour, ambassadors felt indignant when the Venetian Senate proposed to greet them at a location that was situated closer to the city centre. When French Ambassador René de Voyer de Paulmy d'Argenson arrived in 1651, the weather conditions were so bad that the magistrates suggested moving the welcome reception from the island of Santo Spirito to the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, which was located much closer to St. Mark's Square. Argenson regarded this as an insult and refused to advance such a distance; he proposed instead to wait at Chioggia, forcing the Venetian officials to travel even further in case they declined to come to the island of Santo Spirito.²⁴

In addition to location, another barometer of rank during the diplomatic entry was the cohort of Venetian officers who came to greet the ambassador. They travelled to the island where the ambassador was staying to formally welcome him and guide him to his residence in the city. On the day of the first audience, the same Venetian officials would escort the ambassador from his residence to the Doge's Palace and back. The records of the *Cerimoniali* reveal that the members of this committee could vary. The group was always composed of *pregadi*, members of the Senate, and often headed by a *cavaliere della stola*

²¹ Monique Chatenet, "The King's Space: The Etiquette of Interviews at the French Court in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Politics of Space: European Courts, ca. 1500-1750*, eds. Marcello Fantoni, George Gorse, and Malcolm Smuts (Rome: Bulzoni, 2009), 195.

²² Cossalter, "Dai Porti alle Isole", 140.

²³ Commynes, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 404; Cossalter, "Dai Porti alle Isole", 140.

²⁴ de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 202.

d'oro. Furthermore, the *Savi di Terra Ferma*, the *Savi agli Ordini*, and in some entries the Procurators of St. Mark's, could also be called upon to participate in these ceremonial occasions.²⁵ It appears that there did not exist a standard pattern and, likewise, the number of Venetian officials altered constantly. Typically, the party was composed of 30 to 40 *pregadi*, though the number fluctuated according to the honour and prestige of the ambassador's king. Whereas for smaller states, such as Urbino, the group was scaled down to 20 or 25, for representatives of powerful European actors, like Spain and France, the amount could be elevated to 50 or even 60.²⁶ However, practical reasons also could determine the size of the committee. For example, when French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye arrived in 1601, 60 senators were summoned to greet him, but only 35 appeared because most of them were preoccupied with the harvest of their grapes.²⁷

The analysis of space and actors has elucidated that the Venetian state carefully calculated every gesture. A spectacle was staged by creating a proper setting and regulating the conduct and experience of the participants. The ceremony was thus for the greater part a performance, controlled by appearances and pageantry. Therefore, the materiality of the entry ritual also has to be considered.²⁸ When ambassadors were transported from the islands in the lagoon to their residence in the city, magnificent boats were employed. This is accurately described by the aforementioned French Ambassador Philippe de Commines. When he arrived in the city in 1494, he was collected by barges that were covered with tapestries and decorated with luxurious carpets inside. When a second group of officials joined them, the party was moved into larger boats, called *piatte*, garnished with crimson satin and carpeted with tapestries.²⁹

²⁵ However, I believe that the Procurators of St. Mark, who belonged to the highest stratum of Venetian society, only rarely formed part of the welcome committee. To my knowledge, for the sixteenth century, they were only mentioned as participants in the diplomatic welcome reception in one case, the arrival of the papal nuncio: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 57v (1 July 1577).

²⁶ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, passim; *ibid.*, reg. 3, passim.

²⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique du Vic, 19 October 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 9. Patricia Fortini Brown gives another example, taken from Sanudo's diaries, where unforeseen occasions interfered with the size of the welcome party. Due to heavy rain only two of the selected senators decided to greet Cardinal Nicolò Fiesco, archbishop of Ravenna. As a result, a law was passed stating that the senators chosen to welcome a guest would be fined ten ducats if they were absent, and that their names would be read in the Great Council so that everyone would learn about their disobedience. Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp", 140.

²⁸ For an analysis of the performative nature and material surroundings of diplomatic entries in Baroque Rome, see: Martin Olin, "Diplomatic Performances and the Applied Arts in Seventeenth-Century Europe," in *Performativity and Performance in Baroque Rome*, ed. Peter Gillgren and Mårten Snickare (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 25-45.

²⁹ Commines, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 404-405; Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp", 140. For the appearance of the gondolas prepared for ambassadors during the eighteenth century, see: Susan Tipton, "Diplomatie und Zeremoniell in Botschafterbildern von Carlevarijs und Canaletto," *Journal of the International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art* 1 (2010). <http://www.riha->

An additional important material aspect of ceremonies was dress, since clothing produced political meanings during public rituals. Throughout the duration of the welcoming celebrations, sumptuary laws were temporarily suspended so as to allow a grand display of Venetian wealth through rich clothing. Especially silk, the main product of Venice's textile industry, was present in all its forms.³⁰ Among the Venetian officials who came to greet the newly arrived ambassadors, the *Savi* wore their traditional *veste* in *paonazzo*, a shade of violet-blue that can best be described as a livid purple, while the *pregadi* were dressed in magnificent crimson (*cremesino*, it. *cremisi*) silk robes.³¹ The documents from the French ambassadors in Venice also state that the senators traditionally wore red garments for the ambassador's public entry.³² Red was considered the most suitable and prestigious shade, due to the high price of the dye, to symbolise the dignity of the Republic. Therefore, also during other public ceremonies, it was the traditional colour of the wardrobe.³³

Not only did the hosting city understand the significance of staging a well-constructed spectacle, ambassadors themselves also were aware of the power conveyed by the theatre that was performed during the official reception. Even though the Venetian government determined the contours and protocol of the entry, ambassadors strove to impress the crowd and outshine other foreign ministers. Interesting insights into how ambassadors perceived diplomatic entries can be acquired from the correspondence of French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye. He expressed his concerns regarding the arrival of both a French and Spanish extraordinary ambassador to discuss the situation of the Venetian Interdict, the jurisdictional conflict between Venice and the papacy in 1606-1607. Initially, the French extraordinary

journal.org/articles/2010/tipton-diplomatie-und-zeremoniell. Tipton's analysis has uncovered that the sculptures and decorations of the gondolas contained political messages.

³⁰ Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 90; Eugenia Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy: From Sprezzatura to Satire* (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 131.

³¹ Only two instances could be found in which the garments worn by the *Savi* during the welcome reception are mentioned: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 53r (1577); *ibid.*, f. 59v (10 July 1577). More entries make note of the dress of the *pregadi*, who were most of the time clothed in silk garments; the colour, crimson, is often also specified. For some specific references to the crimson colour: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 132r (1 June 1595); *ibid.*, f. 133r (24 July 1595); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 13v (19 April 1604); *ibid.*, f. 22r (15 February 1607); *ibid.*, f. 24v (30 October 1607); *ibid.*, 35r (17 December 1611); *ibid.*, f. 63r (19 May 1621). For the late fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, both Sanudo and Commynes likewise point out red as the colour worn by Venetian officials during these ceremonial entries: Marin Sanudo, *Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., vol. 14 (Venice: Visentini, 1879-1903), col. 410-411; Commynes, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 405. However, according to Philippe de la Canaye, when ambassadors arrived during the Holy Week, the *pregadi* were dressed in black mourning clothing: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas IV de Neufville [from now on referred to as Secretary of State Villeroy], 22 April 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 199.

³² See especially the letters from Philippe de la Canaye in: *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 133; 141; *ibid.*, book 3, part 2, 136-137; *ibid.*, book 5, 278.

³³ Casini, *I Gesti del Principe*, 289.

representative, Cardinal François de Joyeuse, had planned to arrive incognito and without ceremony. His Spanish colleague, Francisco di Castro, on the other hand, had entered Venice with great pomp and a magnificent entourage of more than 120 people. Canaye accurately interpreted this as Spain's way of demonstrating their power to the Italian peninsula.³⁴ Therefore, he urged his king and Cardinal Joyeuse to appear equally splendid, "[...] as is fit for his quality."³⁵ Canaye namely knew that public appearances were of crucial importance, since people would judge someone's interior qualities and merits based on the look of his exterior:

[...] he [Cardinal Joyeuse] will have every opportunity to prepare his luggage, if not, I would advise him to not pass by here, because besides the fact that it will serve no purpose, it will give people a reason to talk about his way of showing himself to the world, and they will compare the stinginess of France with the splendour of Spain [...] knowing that in such cases the reputation and the lustre of the exterior prevails, and the opinion that the common people formulate takes the place of the truth.³⁶

Clearly, early modern spectators believed that the material aspects of the reception ceremony augmented the lavishness and lustre of the event. Paintings and prints have helped historians get a more profound sense of the beauty, colourfulness and opulence of diplomatic entries. Starting from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many depictions of diplomatic ceremonies were realised. Likewise, some entries of ambassadors in Venice were immortalised by famous Italian masters, such as Luca Carlevarijs and Giovanni Antonio Canal, better known as Canaletto. Even though they were conceived in a later period than the one under study, the general outlook of the diplomatic entry in Venice remained relatively stable throughout the centuries and, therefore, these images can also tell us something about the characteristics of sixteenth-century ceremonies. Carlevarijs' and Canaletto's paintings provide us with a visual translation of the information found in the written sources about the size of the entourage, luxurious amenities and splendid costumes. Both painters always

³⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 16 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 279; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Louis Lefèvre de Caumartin, 17 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 286-287.

³⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 16 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 282: "[...] comme il appartient à sa qualité."

³⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 16 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 283: "[...] il [Cardinal Joyeuse] aura tout loisir de se mettre en équipage, sinon je serois d'avis qu'il ne passast point icy, parce qu'outre que cela ne servira de rien, il donnera sujet au peuple de discourir sur cette maniere d'aller par le monde, et fera paralelle de la parsimonie Françoisse avec la splendeur Espagnole [...] sçachant bien qu'en telles affaires la reputation et le lustre exterior l'emporte, et l'opinion que le vulgaire en conçoit tient lieu de verité."

depicted the final step of the arrival ceremony when the ambassador reached the Doge's Palace. The architectural scene is the *molo*, the quayside in front of the palace, with the Doge's Palace on the right and the lagoon on the left. The ambassador and his entourage, together with Venetian officials, are shown whilst disembarking from their gondolas and entering the palace.³⁷

The accuracy of the details in these paintings is astounding. Specially, the physiognomy and clothing of the diplomatic party and the national emblems on the gondolas were adjusted to the occasion. For example, Carlevarijs' representations of the clothing and gondolas upon the arrival of French Ambassador Abbot Henri-Charles Arnaud de Pomponne at the Doge's Palace in 1706 concur with the written descriptions of the ceremony found in Pomponne's documents (Figure 7).³⁸ Likewise, Carlevarijs' painting of the arrival of British Ambassador Charles Montagu in 1707 correctly captured the details of the material surroundings, such as the galleys and gondolas that were garnished with various decorations that clearly referred to England (Figure 8). The works by Carlevarijs' successor, Canaletto, equally excel with their eye for detail, and truthfully visualise the written descriptions of the ceremonies (Figure 9).³⁹ These depictions are thus an additional valuable source to comprehend the rules of diplomatic protocol. Furthermore, they bring attention to the excitement that such an event instigated amongst the Venetian population: we can see how crowds gathered around to catch a glimpse of the magnificent ambassador and his entourage.

Diplomatic Audiences: Actors, Setting and Ornamentation

The paintings by Carlevarijs and Canaletto show the concluding step of the entry ceremony which was at the same time the first phase of the second stage of the ceremonial welcome: the first audience with the doge. Etiquette demanded that the day of the audience, a group of *pregadi*, often accompanied by the *Savi agli Ordini* or *Savi di Terra Ferma*, went to greet the ambassador at his residence, where they encountered the ambassador at the foot of the staircase of his house. Usually, the cohort of *pregadi* was composed of the same senators that had welcomed the ambassador upon his arrival in the city. They then embarked together in a gondola that conducted them to the Doge's Palace and, once arrived, the ambassador waited

³⁷ Tipton, "Diplomatie und Zeremoniell".

³⁸ For the transcription of the ceremony, see: Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

in the antechamber of the *Sala del Collegio* (the Council Chamber) to be received by the doge and the members of the *Pien Collegio* (Full Council).⁴⁰

Upon entering the *Sala del Collegio*, the doge, together with the rest of the assembly, rose from his chair and invited the ambassador to take a seat at his right side, the place of honour. When a party of extraordinary delegates comprised several ambassadors, they were seated at both the right and left sides of the doge. However, the records of the *Cerimoniali* reveal that representatives sent by non-sovereigns, who were thus not official ambassadors, could not take a seat next to the doge. Instead, they were seated “sopra delli clarissimi Signori Savii di Terra Ferma”, from which it can be derived that these agents sat on the benches at the platform located behind the seats of the *Savi di Terra Ferma*.⁴¹ This first audience, which was traditionally a public event, was characterised by handing over the credentials, performing orations, exchanging the customary words of kindness and expressing hopes for an enduring friendship between the two states. As was the tradition, it was purely a ceremonial occasion where no important matters of state were discussed. At the end of the audience, the doge stood up another time and the ambassador was escorted to his lodgings by the same group of Venetian officials.⁴²

Movements and gestures during this first meeting with the doge were highly choreographed, since the number of steps taken by the doge reflected the prestige and privilege of the foreign visitor and the significance of the diplomatic mission.⁴³ The standard

⁴⁰ The *Pien Collegio*, or Full Council, comprised two bodies of government: the *Savi* and the *Signoria*. The first cluster consisted of three groups of *Savi*: six *Savi del Consiglio*, or *Savi Grandi*, who prepared the meetings of the Senate and supervised the execution of the Senate’s decisions, and were especially concerned with foreign policy; five *Savi di Terra Ferma*, ministers of war and the mainland; and five *Savi agli Ordini*, ministers who dealt with maritime issues such as commerce, navy and overseas colonies. The second assembly, the *Signoria*, acted as the steering committee of the Senate and was composed of the three heads of the *Quarantia*, the Council of Forty, and the members of the *Minor Consiglio*, Minor Council, which consisted of the doge and six ducal councillors. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, 254-255.

⁴¹ Some examples: a representative from Portugal, a Turkish agent from the grand vizier, the chief chamberlain of the duke of Mantua, an agent of the duke of Bavaria, an agent of the king of Scotland, an agent of the duke of Mayenne, and a nuncio of the king of Poland: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 78v (3 May 1580); *ibid.*, f. 79r (4 June 1580); *ibid.*, f. 80r (12 July 1580); *ibid.*, f. 102r (30 September 1584); *ibid.*, f. 145v (30 August 1598); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 58v (20 January 1616); *ibid.*, f. 62v (12 April 1621). The Persian ambassador who came in 1603 also was seated above the *Savi di Terra Ferma*: Giorgio Rota, “Safavid Envoys in Venice,” in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Ralph Kauz, Giorgio Rota, and Jan Paul Niederkorn (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 227. The images of the audiences discussed later on in this chapter show that the *Savi di Terra Ferma* were indeed seated at a slightly lower level and that there was a platform behind them.

⁴² ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, *passim*; *ibid.*, reg. 3, *passim*.

⁴³ Some works that underline the importance of space and movement in ceremonies include: Hugh Murray Baillie, “Etiquette and the Planning of the State Apartments in Baroque Palaces,” *Archaeologia, or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity* 101 (1967), 169-199; Werner Paravicini, ed., *Zeremoniell und Raum. Akten des 4. Symposiums der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Potsdam 1994* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1997); Marcello Fantoni, *Il Potere dello Spazio: Principi e Città nell’Italia dei Secoli XV-XVII* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2002); Peter-Michael Hahn and Ulrich Schütte, eds., *Zeichen*

place where the ambassador encountered the doge was inside the *Sala del Collegio*. The doge would only cover a distance to greet the ambassador if it was an exceptional occasion. When an ambassador was granted such a privilege, this did not go by unnoticed, and other ambassadors understood the political messages that this act entailed. The same occasion mentioned in the previous section, the arrival of French Extraordinary Ambassador Cardinal Joyeuse to discuss the Venetian Interdict, can be used to illustrate this statement. English Ambassador Henry Wotton described Joyeuse's first audience as follows:

The Cardinal Joyeuse arrived here yesterday was seven-night, in quality of ambassador extraordinary from the French King, and on the morning following he had audience as a Cardinal, the Prince with his assistants in College descending three rooms to meet him; and so, leading him up on his left hand, between himself and the ordinary French ambassador, he placed him on an equal form appointed for that purpose, before the regal seat, in the same order as he had led him, and brought him afterwards down to the last stairhead of the place.⁴⁴

Wotton would have quite certainly interpreted the fact that the doge went a great distance to welcome the ambassador as a reflection of Venice's amicable position towards France and, consequently, their willingness to support France's plan to mediate a resolution between Venice and the papacy. This intervened with England's strategy to isolate Venice from both France and Rome.⁴⁵

The report of the cardinal's audience in the *Cerimoniali* confirms Wotton's description. When Cardinal Joyeuse was mounting the *Scala dei Giganti*, the doge and all the members of the *Pien Collegio* simultaneously advanced towards the cardinal. They encountered each other on the landing of the *Scala dei Giganti*, which led to the doge's private apartments, and ascended together to the *Collegio*, with the cardinal placed at the doge's right-hand side, following an alternative route since the customary staircase was filled with people. Once they had arrived in the *Sala del Collegio*, the cardinal was seated in a chair equal to that of the doge. The next day, the doge even privileged Joyeuse with a visit to his residence; a rare

und Raum: Ausstattung und Höfisches Zeremoniell in den Deutschen Schlössern der Frühen Neuzeit (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006); Herbert Karner, "Raum und Zeremoniell in der Wiener Hofburg des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell*, 55-78; Fantoni, Gorse, and Smuts, eds., *The Politics of Space*.

⁴⁴ Letter from Henry Wotton to Edward Barrett, 24 February 1607 in Henry Wotton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, ed. Logan Pearsall Smith, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907), 379.

⁴⁵ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 234-235.

occasion of which no other examples could be detected.⁴⁶ All these movements of the doge demonstrate the glorious treatment reserved for the cardinal and, by extension, for France.⁴⁷

Clearly, spatial interaction was a strong medium to communicate hierarchical distinctions and the nature of the diplomatic relationship between states. Even though Venice was a republican state, these practices show many similarities with the ceremonial at court societies, where all these procedures came even more to the foreground. To give an example, at the French court, every aspect of monarchical space and gesture was mastered. Ambassadors had to traverse a constantly prolonged route, crossing a long sequence of rooms and an imposing architectural scene in order to reach the French king. Distance was clearly used to magnify the solemnity and dignity of the monarch.⁴⁸

In addition to space and gestures, the decor and material ornamentation of the audience were carefully considered, so as to convey an image of prestige and strength to foreign visitors. Again, the symbolic use of material culture in ceremonial spaces was not peculiar to Venice, but was a widespread phenomenon in court societies. Furnishings, paintings, stuccoes, wall and ceiling frescoes, carpets and clothing all played an important role during rituals, as they visualised splendour and power.⁴⁹ To this end, the iconographical decoration of the rooms in the Doge's Palace was deeply imbedded in a self-celebration of Venice's accomplishments and virtues. The diplomatic theme was also part of the commemoration of the Republic's great achievements. Starting from the seventeenth century onwards, the first room that ambassadors entered, the *Sala delle Quattro Porte*, which functioned as the first antechamber to the institutional rooms, was decorated with various paintings depicting

⁴⁶ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, ff. 22r-23r (15 February 1607).

⁴⁷ When Cardinal François de Joyeuse had visited Venice in 1583 on his way from Rome to France, he was similarly treated with the utmost respect: houses were prepared for him and his family and a feast was organised in Ca' Foscari. Additionally, the Venetian Senate ordered the officials in Padua to prepare honourable lodgings, carriages and meals for him. In 1585, the cardinal again resided in Venice for some days and was offered housing, daily food provisions, musical performances and eight gondolas with gondoliers. His audience with the doge took place in the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio* instead of the *Sala del Collegio*, and also then the doge awaited the cardinal at the landing of the staircase and guided him back after the audience until the *Scala dei Giganti*. Moreover, when Cardinal Joyeuse came to Venice another time in 1589 to discuss some French business, the doge went to greet the cardinal at his residence in the Monastery of *Santa Maria della Grazia*, just as he would do in 1607. In short, Joyeuse had always been treated with the greatest honours and as one of the Republic's most respectful guests. ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, ff. 103v-104r (25 June 1585); *ibid.*, f. 117r (13 September 1589); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 54, ff. 134v-135r (21 July 1583); *ibid.*, f. 135r (21 July 1583); *ibid.*, f. 136r (22 July 1583); *ibid.*, ff. 137r-137v (28 July 1583); *ibid.*, reg. 56, ff. 43v-44r (14 June 1585); *ibid.*, reg. 59, f. 68r (22 June 1589).

⁴⁸ Chatenet, "The King's Space", 193-208.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the importance and use of material culture during court ceremonies, see the articles in: Hahn and Schütte, eds., *Zeichen und Raum*.

diplomatic visits.⁵⁰ These visits contributed to the augmentation of Venice's prestige as an international actor, and it is therefore not surprising that they were chosen as the topics of grand works of art to be exhibited in the room that was frequented by foreign visitors and dignitaries the most often.

The central wall was, as it still is today, covered with the representation of the arrival of French King Henry III at the Lido in 1574 by Andrea Michieli, known as *il Vicentino* (Figure 10). This was considered the greatest ceremonial occasion of the sixteenth century: to welcome a king had enhanced the Republic's reputation and had put it on an equal footing with the other European potentates. Therefore, by immortalising this event, Venice wanted to show their importance on the international political scene. Moreover, by portraying the visit of the "Most Christian King", the title of the French monarchs at that time, Venice underlined their commitment to Catholicism. It was a clear message of their loyalty to the Catholic faith, which was especially directed towards the pope with whom Venice often maintained a strained relationship.⁵¹ Furthermore, it was probably also a well-thought-out choice to depict their allegiance with France, and not Spain. Spain constantly tried to convert the Venetians to a pro-Spanish policy, but more often than not, they failed and the Republic thwarted Spanish ambitions.⁵² To the left of *Vicentino's* canvas, visitors could behold the depiction of Doge Leonardo Loredan handing over copies of Venice's legislation to the ambassadors from Nuremberg, who had come to the city in 1506 with the ambition of adopting the laws of the *Serenissima* (Figure 11).⁵³ With this painting, the Republic emphasised the superior character of their constitutional laws, which had, according to them, led to the absence of tyranny in Venice.⁵⁴ Additionally, the painting communicated a message about the strong commercial network of Venice, since the Republic maintained close trade relations with Nuremberg.⁵⁵

Lastly, the painting in the right corner of the room showed Doge Marino Grimani receiving the Persian envoys in 1503 and accepting the gifts they had brought (Figure 12). This painting has been attributed with different meanings. Art historian Wolfgang Wolters

⁵⁰ Already at the end of the sixteenth century, the Venetian government wished to decorate this room with a painting commemorating the Japanese embassy of 1585 to point to Venice's contacts with remote cultures. However, this idea never materialised. Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 69.

⁵¹ Wolfgang Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes: Untersuchungen zur Selbstdarstellung der Republik Venedig im 16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), 223-227.

⁵² Levin, *Agents of Empire*, ch. 1.

⁵³ It is not clear if this event actually took place, but this does not undermine the clear message of the painting. Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes*, 228-229.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 228-229; Rota, "Safavid Envoys in Venice", 232.

⁵⁵ Bernd Roeck, "Venice and Germany: Commercial Contacts and Intellectual Inspirations," in *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer and Titian*, eds. Bernard Aikema and Beverly Louise Brown (Milan: Bompiani, 1999), 46; 48.

judged the exhibition of this work of art at such a prominent place in the Doge's Palace as somewhat surprising, since Shah Abbas the Great only played a minimal role in European politics at that time.⁵⁶ A possible explanation for the Republic's motivation to immortalise this event is provided by Giorgio Rota, a specialist in Persian history. Rota states that Venice wished to enhance their prestige and Christian image, at a time when the relationship between the Republic and Rome had again reached a low point, by displaying their close ties to Persia, a famous ally of Christianity.⁵⁷ However, a more plausible reasoning is that this painting, again, pointed to the vast trade network of the Republic. Whereas the Nuremberg painting referred to the European side of their commercial contacts, the connection with Persia highlighted the global aspects of Venetian trade. Furthermore, the painting should be placed within the contemporary political context. During the reign of Shah Abbas, both Venice and Persia were trying to counter the threatening Ottoman expansion, which we see reflected in the art work. By depicting the fruitful exchange with Persia, this state was represented as a trade partner and ally. The Ottomans, on the other hand, were always portrayed as enemies in paintings commemorating battle scenes. This way, Venice made a strong opposition between the two nations.⁵⁸

Once arrived in the *Sala del Collegio*, the celebration of Venice's merits continued. The pictorial programme after the fire of 1577 visualised the stability and continuity of the Republic's government and highlighted glorious episodes. Venice's role as defender of Christianity was placed at the foreground and became one of the common threads in the decorations.⁵⁹ In addition to the iconography, the surrounding material culture of the diplomatic audience had to strengthen the image that Venice desired to promote. It appears that the *Sala dell'Anticollegio* and the *Sala del Collegio* were adorned with precious carpets, which were specially reserved for audiences with ambassadors. However, we can only speculate about the appearance of these carpets as, so far, no specific information could be retrieved from the sources.⁶⁰ This brief overview of only a small section of the material

⁵⁶ Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes*, 227.

⁵⁷ Rota, "Safavid Envoys in Venice", 230-231.

⁵⁸ Elisa Gagliardi Mangilli, ed., *I Doni di Shah Abbas il Grande alla Serenissima: Relazioni Diplomatiche tra la Repubblica di Venezia e la Persia Safavide* (Venice: Fondazione Musei Civici Venezia, 2013).

⁵⁹ For a detailed description of the pictorial decorations in the *Sala del Collegio*, see: Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes*, 256-264. Wolters also provides a clear explanation for the reasons behind the adopting of a Christian theme by looking at the broader issues at play in Venice: the conclusion of a separate peace treaty with the Ottomans, tensions with the Jesuits and conflicts with the pope had all led the rest of the world to believe that Venice had betrayed their faith and had become a religionless state. Consequently, Venice felt the need to highlight their loyalty to Christianity.

⁶⁰ In the records of the *Cerimoniali* for the period under study, only three references regarding the use of carpets could be found: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 8r (5 March 1603): [...] nell'anticamera

adornment of the Doge's Palace already illustrates how the *Serenissima* wished to portray itself as a powerful, righteous and affluent Republic.⁶¹ While waiting for and conducting their audience, ambassadors had ample time to take in this message.

Contemporary paintings depicting the diplomatic audience allow us to get a better understanding of the overall layout of the *Sala del Collegio* (Figures 13 to 16). Unfortunately, no depictions could be found dating from the sixteenth century; these representations only seemed to have appeared starting from the first decennium of the seventeenth century, when they apparently became a traditional genre. The images all follow the same model and structure: whereas they differ in accuracy, the general composition of the room and people is almost identical.⁶² Since the dating of some paintings cannot be determined with certainty, I will not try to investigate which composition informed subsequent images. For my study, it is just relevant to note that a standard model existed for the subject of the diplomatic audience, which demonstrates the great demand for these paintings and the importance of the occasion, as it was worthy of a commemoration.⁶³

With regard to the arrangement of the *Sala del Collegio*, the paintings elucidate that the principal benches were placed against the narrow wall of the chamber. In the central position, we see the doge, with the ambassador seated at his right side, and on each side of the doge we can distinguish three ducal councillors. The other members of the *Pien Collegio* were placed on the left and right sides of the chamber, with the benches of the five *Savi di Terra Ferma* at

dell'Eccellissimo Collegio gli fu posto sopra la banca vicina alla porta dell'ingresso nel detto Eccellissimo Collegio il tapedo solito mettersi a tutti gli Ambasciatori [...]; *ibid.*, f. 12v (14 January 1604): [...] nell'anticamera preparato il tapedo secondo l'uso osservato nella venuta d'ogni Ambasciatore [...]; *ibid.*, f. 34v (23 November 1611): [...] gli fu posto nell'anticamera il solito tapedo [...]. Maria Pia Pedani and Giorgio Rota discovered that in the case of the audiences of Ottoman and Persian ambassadors a precious carpet was placed in the *Sala dell'Anticollegio* and the *Sala del Collegio*: Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 71; Rota, "Safavid Envoys in Venice", 227. The placing of a carpet is also mentioned in: Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna, *Delle Iscrizioni Veneziane Raccolte ed Illustrate da Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna Cittadino Veneto*, vol. 5 (Venice: Giuseppe Molinari stampatore, 1824), 645.

⁶¹ Of course, also in the other chambers of the Doge's Palace the pictorial programme was meticulously devised as to communicate a well-constructed image of Venice. See, for example: Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes*; Wolfgang Wolters, *Der Dogenpalast in Venedig: Ein Rundgang durch Kunst und Geschichte* (Berlin, Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010); Evelyn Korsch, *Bilder der Macht: Venezianische Repräsentationsstrategien beim Staatsbesuch Heinrichs III. (1574)* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 179-188.

⁶² Odoardo Fialetti's painting contains much more anomalies than the others: drapes cover Veronese's wall paintings, the friezes are not accurately decorated, the clock on the right wall is omitted, the door is actually a chimneypiece and the architectural design of the room is incorrect. The depiction by an unknown artist of the audience of Dutch Ambassador Cornelis van der Mijle is already more detailed in the pictorial and architectural decoration of the room. Finally, Pietro Malombra's version is very accurate in the depiction of the decor and paintings. See also: Laura M. Walters, "Odoardo Fialetti (1573 - c. 1638): The Interrelation of Venetian Art and Anatomy, and his Importance in England" (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2009), 161-169.

⁶³ I only give some examples of these paintings in the attachment of images; Laura M. Walters describes additional paintings in her PhD dissertation and also offers some theories about their dating, attribution and similarities: *Ibid.*, 161-169. Also for the second half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, depictions of the diplomatic audience have survived. See, for example, the paintings by Joseph Heintz il Giovane and Gabriel Bella.

a slightly lower level.⁶⁴ Lastly, the secretaries were taking notes and transcribing the proceedings of the meeting on small worktables positioned near the entrance of the *Sala del Collegio*. Furthermore, the paintings convey a clear image of the dress worn by both the Venetian officials and the ambassador himself. The doge and his three ducal councillors were dressed in long robes in bright red or *paonazzo*. In the case of the doge, the vestimentary knowledge derived from this depiction can be complemented with a description of his clothing found in the records of the *Cerimoniali*: he wore a *veste ducale*, a long robe with large open sleeves, of damask in *paonazzo* patterned with leaves and lined with ermine, and his crown.⁶⁵ The other members of the *Pien Collegio* and the secretaries were clothed in entirely black robes, reaching to the ground, with wide and long sleeves. In all the paintings, the ambassador, who was clearly distinguished from the Venetian officials by his wardrobe and physiognomy, was likewise wearing black garments. We can also perceive some national clothing characteristics in the wardrobes of the ambassadors. This is the most apparent in the case of Dutch Ambassador Cornelis van der Mijle, who is portrayed wearing the typical neck ruff and hat that were fashionable in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century (Figure 16).

It has by now become clear that during the first audience between the ambassador and the *Collegio*, it was not the content of the diplomatic mission that mattered, but the staging of a spectacle and the exhibition of prestige. During the diplomatic entry and audience, location, people and decorations all worked together to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which the Most Serene Republic was glorified. The Venetian government especially controlled and employed all the aspects of political spaces in a conscious way to project a calculated image of the Republic. Moreover, it also took much pride in the city's architectural and material wonders. An analysis of the specific places of the city that were disclosed to foreign visitors allows me to investigate even more the importance of the urban dimensions of the ambassadorial visit.

⁶⁴ An eighteenth-century depiction by Gabriel Bella (today preserved in the *Pinacoteca Querini Stampalia* in Venice) of the reception of an ambassador in the *Collegio* shows a slightly different composition of the members of the *Pien Collegio*, indicating an evolution of the seating arrangement in the eighteenth century. This painting has been analysed by Bianca Tamassia Mazzarotto. Her interpretation is that the doge was still seated in the middle, surrounded by his ducal councillors and, additionally, the three heads of the Council of Forty were now placed to the left and right of the doge. On the left flank of the room, she distinguishes the six *Savi Grandi*, and on the right side, the five *Savi di Terra Ferma* with the five *Savi agli Ordini* on the lower benches. See: Mazzarotto, *Le Feste Veneziane*, 271. Following Mazzarotto's reasoning, it might also be possible that it were the *Savi agli Ordini* who were seated below the other members in the depictions of the seventeenth century. However, I am more inclined to follow the information found in the written sources.

⁶⁵ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 8r (5 March 1603); *ibid.*, f. 34v (23 November 1611).

Promoting the City

Upon arriving in Venice, ambassadors were immediately struck by its beauty and its uniqueness as a city built upon water. An envoy from Friuli, Cornelio Frangipane, praised Venice as being the best place in the universe, after paradise.⁶⁶ During the entry ceremony and the audience, Venice was already introduced to foreign dignitaries, and a quote by French Ambassador Philippe de Commynes illustrates the impact that the spectacular Venetian architecture had on him during his ceremonial entry into the city:

[...] they took me along the main street, which they call the Grand Canal, and which is quite wide. Galleys pass along it, and I have seen ships weighing four hundred tons and more near the houses there. I believe that it is the most beautiful street in the whole world and the one with the most beautiful buildings. It goes all the way through the town. The houses are very large and high, and the old ones are made of fine stone and are all painted. The others have been made in the last hundred years and all have a façade of white marble which comes to them from Istria, one hundred miles from there, and they also have many large slabs of porphyry and serpentine in the front. On the inside most of them have at least two rooms which have gilded ceilings, rich mantle-pieces of cut marble, gilded bedsteads, and painted and gilded screens, and very fine furniture inside. It is the most sumptuous city which I have ever seen and the one that treats ambassadors and foreigners with most honor and the one that is governed most wisely and the one in which the service of God is celebrated most solemnly.⁶⁷

A detour along the Grand Canal was deliberately chosen during public entries as to immediately dazzle the guests with Venice's splendour and richness. Prominent visitors, such as French King Henry III, were guided on a more elaborate tour of the city during their first entry. On his way to Murano, Henry III was taken alongside the islands of San Giuliano, San Secondo, Sant'Alvise and San Cristoforo. The next day, the excursion continued with a stop

⁶⁶ Quoted in: Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 14 and note 3. For more examples on the dazzling effect that Venice's beauty had on visitors, see: Korsch, *Bilder der Macht*, 29-31; Casini, *I Gesti del Principe*, 196-203.

⁶⁷ Translation taken from: Commynes, *The Memoirs*, vol. 2, 490. The original quote in French can be found in: Commynes, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 405-406: "[...] me menerent au long de la grant rue, qu'ilz appellent le Canal grant, et est bien large. Les gallees y passent à travers, e y ay veu navire de quatre cens tonneaux ou plus pres des maisons: et est la plus belle rue que je croy qui soit en tout le monde, et la mieulx maisonnee, et va le long de la ville. Les maisons sont fort grandes et haultes, et de bonne pierre, et les anciennes toutes painctes; les aultres faictes depuis cent ans: toutes ont le devant de marbre blanc, qui leur vient d'Istrie, à cent mils de là, et encores maincte grant piece de porphire et de serpentine sur le devant. Au dedans ont pour le moins, pour la pluspart, deux chambres qui ont les planchez dorez, riches manteaulx de cheminees de marbre taillez, les chalitz des lits dorez, et les ostevens painctz et dorez, et fort bien meublees dedans. C'est la plus triumpante cité que j'aye jamais veue et qui plus faict d'honneur à ambassadeurs et estrangiers, et qui plus saignement se gouverne, et où le service de Dieu est le plus sollempnellement faict."

at the Lido, from where the king was escorted to his residence, Ca' Foscari, with panoramas of various islands along the route: Sant'Elena, San Servolo and San Giorgio Maggiore.⁶⁸

Besides disclosing the unique landscape of the city, a standard component of the diplomatic visit was a tour of the most notable sites that the Venetian Republic had to offer.⁶⁹ Some years before Comynes' reflections on Venice's magnificence, diarist Marin Sanudo had already started writing down the marvels of the *Serenissima* that ought to be shown to foreign visitors in his guide of Venice.⁷⁰ According to Sanudo, a typical visit of the city had to include, amongst other things, the Doge's Palace; St. Mark's Basilica; the Arsenal; and the shopping districts, such as the Rialto market, St. Mark's Square, and the thoroughfare connecting the two, the *Mercerie*. The records of the *Cerimoniali* reveal that these four sites, which represented the four centres of Venetian power (political, religious, military and commercial) were indeed disclosed to highly ranked guests, such as dukes and kings, but also to ambassadors. Both extraordinary envoys and ordinary residents were escorted to see these significant places.⁷¹

The rooms of the Doge's Palace that were shown were consciously chosen as part of the strategy to promote Venice's grandeur and impress the ambassador. With its measurements of 53 meters long and 25 meters wide, the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio* (Chamber of the Great Council) was very astounding. Moreover, it reminded visitors of the peculiar form of government of the Republic, which involved the whole aristocracy in the deliberations on important decisions. A tour of the room could thus have been used by Venice to portray itself as a virtuous and righteous state characterised by its self-proclaimed loyalty and solidarity, which in turn had led to a long-lived stability. A second chamber that was opened up to ambassadors was the armoury supervised by the Council of Ten. Here, the Republic's arsenal of weaponry was stored together with Turkish pieces, which were taken as victory trophies. The armoury emitted a message of military power and triumph.

⁶⁸ Korsch, *Bilder der Macht*, 43.

⁶⁹ Tassini, *Feste, Spettacoli, Divertimenti, e Piaceri degli Antichi Veneziani*, 103; Mazzarotto, *Le Feste Veneziane*, 307; Fortini Brown, "Measured Friendship, Calculated Pomp", 149-150.

⁷⁰ Marin Sanudo, *De Origine, Situ et Magistratibus Urbis Venetae, ovvero, La Città di Venetia (1493-1530)*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò (Venice: Centro di Studi Medievali e Rinascimentali "E. A. Cicogna", 2011). In this book, Sanudo recounts Venice's mythical and historiographical origins, the noteworthy places of the city and the functioning of the Venetian government.

⁷¹ Several examples of specific ambassadors with various nationalities for the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries can be found in: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 62v (21 October 1577); *ibid.*, f. 71v (6 September 1578); *ibid.*, f. 72v (25 November 1578); *ibid.*, f. 76r (2 July 1579); *ibid.*, f. 78v (3 May 1580); *ibid.*, f. 83v (17 February 1581); *ibid.*, f. 91r (14 October 1581); *ibid.*, f. 103r (1 April 1585); *ibid.*, f. 104r (25 June 1585); *ibid.*, f. 105v (7 July 1585); *ibid.*, f. 107v (27 January 1585); *ibid.*, f. 108v (15 August 1586); *ibid.*, f. 109r (31 October 1586); *ibid.*, f. 144r (20 June 1598); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 20r (26 March 1606); *ibid.*, f. 29r (8 November 1609); *ibid.*, f. 34r (31 July 1611); *ibid.*, f. 35r (23 January 1612). Philippe de Comynes also gives an overview of the sights he was shown in *Mémoires: Comynes, Mémoires*, vol. 2, 407-409.

Besides an introduction to the political life of Venice, the religious, mythical treasures were revealed to the ambassadors during a visit to the sanctuary of St. Mark's Basilica. Religious and material objectives had driven Venice to compose this collection, a source of pride for the city. Visitors were in awe of the splendid jewels, Byzantine objects, relics and so much more. When the Queen of Hungary, Anne de Foix, visited the sanctuary in 1502, she was so amazed by the treasures that when her entourage informed her that it was time for dinner, she supposedly replied: "Who would not go without eating in order to see such precious things?"⁷² Another stop on the traditional tour of Venice was the Arsenal, where arms were stored and ships were built and repaired. A visit to the heart of Venice's naval industry is the most frequently mentioned in the ceremonial records. In some cases, the ambassador was even accompanied by his wife. Again, this location was intentionally chosen, as it was a way for Venice to boast with their industrial and military power and claim esteem from foreigners. Lastly, the commercial centre of Venice was publicised by guiding ambassadors along the shops of the *Mercerie* and the Rialto, where shopkeepers displayed their finest local and exotic goods, so as to showcase the Republic's economic and trade successes.

Obviously, Sanudo's list of notable things to visit included many other sites. For instance, he recommended various convents and churches and advised a stop on Murano to enter a glass-making workshop. Resident ambassadors must surely have profited from their time in the city to frequent all of Venice's treasures and, occasionally, also for extraordinary ambassadors, a more extended tour was arranged. Whereas Ottoman Ambassador Hasan Agà was escorted to diverse places on Murano and in Cannaregio, other Ottoman dignitaries climbed to the top of the bell tower of St. Mark's Basilica or discovered the interior of female convents.⁷³ A very special diplomatic occasion in Venice was the stopover of Japanese ambassadors in 1585. The Venetian government wished to introduce them to every marvel that their city had to offer. Besides the Doge's Palace, the treasury of St. Mark's Basilica and the Arsenal, a visit was arranged to see the Lido, the glassblowers on Murano and various churches and *Scuole*, which were confraternities or sodality institutions in Venice.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Sanudo advised his readers to attend the festivities taking place in the city. When a Tuscan ambassador came to rejoice about the wedding of Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici with Venetian noblewoman Bianca Cappello, he was accompanied to feasts and

⁷² Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 4, col. 295: "E chi non resteria de manzar, per veder queste cosse si preziose?"

⁷³ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 91r (14 October 1581); Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 79.

⁷⁴ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 105v (7 July 1585); Adriana Boscaro, "La Visita a Venezia della Prima Ambasceria Giapponese in Europa," *Il Giappone* 5 (1965), 30.

regattas organised by the Florentine community in Venice.⁷⁵ The aim of the Republic was to give ambassadors a complete picture of Venetian society and at the same time astonish the ambassadors. It was an aspiration that they certainly accomplished, since the sight of all these marvels led French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye to conclude: “The richness of this city is abundant; the provisions of the Arsenal are admirable; the fortresses are greatly provided with all kinds of munitions, so that nothing is missing here [...]”.⁷⁶

Politics of the Gift

A crucial aspect during the above outlined performance of diplomacy was the exchange of gifts. In his treatise *De la Charge et Dignité de l’Ambassadeur* (1603), French Ambassador Jean Hotman warned of the obligatory nature of gifts and was of the opinion that ambassadors should only accept presents from foreign princes when they departed the city, not during the time of their residency:

Another effect of his moderation will be not to receive any gifts and presents, neither from the prince to whom he is sent, nor from anyone of the king’s entourage, for any reason whatsoever; except when he has taken his leave and is ready to depart. [...] Gifts oblige and blind the clear-sighted, says the Law of Moses, and those who receive them become slaves of those who give them [...].⁷⁷

Nonetheless, in practice, the exchange of gifts was a constant feature during public rituals and diplomatic visits.⁷⁸ Gift-giving was not just motivated by the rules of courtesy; rather, it

⁷⁵ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 76r (2 July 1579). See Pedani for some examples of the festivities in which Ottoman ambassadors participated: Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 81.

⁷⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Louis Lefèvre de Caumartin, 11 August 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 162: “Les richesses de cette ville sont tres-grandes; les provisions de cet Arsenal admirables; les forteresses sont tellement pourveuës de toutes sortes de munitions, que rien n’y manque [...]”. However, it should also be noted that not everyone was impressed by Venice’s public spectacles or their organisational skills. For instance, Benedetto Agnello, Mantuan ambassador to Venice, often criticised these festivities in his letters. David S. Chambers, “Benedetto Agnello, Mantuan Ambassador in Venice, 1530-56,” in *War, Culture, and Society in Renaissance Venice: Essays in Honour of John Hale*, eds. David Chambers, Cecil H. Clough, and Michael E. Mallett (London, Rio Grande: The Hambleton Press, 1993), 141.

⁷⁷ The first edition was published in 1603, but the treatise was immensely popular and many reprints with additional chapters, written by Hotman himself, appeared. I consulted the edition from 1613: Jean Hotman, *De la Charge et Dignité de l’Ambassadeur* (Düsseldorf: Bernard Busius, 1613), 60-61: “Encore un effet de sa temperance sera à ne recevoir dons et presens, ni du Prince auquel il est envoyé, ni d’aucun des siens pour quelque cause que ce soit; si non lors qu’ayant prins son congé il est prest à monter à cheval. [...] Les dons obligent, et aveuglent les clairvoyans, dit la loy de Moise: et ceux qui les reçoivent, deviennent serfs de ceux qui les donnent [...]”.

⁷⁸ Some examples of recent studies on the gift in various European diplomatic contexts include: Maija Jansson, “Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 9, no. 3 (2005), 348-370; Diana Carrio-Invernizzi, “Gift and Diplomacy in

served a clear political agenda. Particular to Venice was that it was the entire Republic, and not the doge, the ceremonial head of the state, who offered gifts to ambassadors.⁷⁹ Therefore, the Venetian Republic had developed a carefully contrived gift-giving strategy and the donations functioned as a form of diplomatic investment; the gifts had to represent the power and wealth of the Venetian state as a whole, and at the same time promote the export of artisanal and industrial products. Consequently, gift-giving practices were strictly regulated and the presents offered to ambassadors were controlled by law.

Since the frequency of diplomatic missions increased during the fourteenth century, the costs of hosting ambassadors augmented tremendously. As a result, the Venetian government declared numerous laws that aimed at limiting the expenses incurred for foreign ambassadors. In line with this policy, any gift of money to ambassadors was prohibited. The ban of these gifts was, however, in contradiction to European diplomatic culture, where generosity was considered an intrinsic part of diplomatic etiquette. The lack of a gift could easily cause a rupture in diplomatic relations and, therefore, the Venetian laws with regard to gifts were quickly revised. For example, in a new law of 1441, gifts were exempted from the further restrictions placed upon diplomatic expenditure: on presents for ambassadors, members of their entourage and messengers, a maximum of 25 ducats could be spent.⁸⁰ During the following years, this amount rose considerably, indicating the great significance of diplomatic gifts. By combining the sources of the *Rason Vecchie* with the descriptions of ceremonies found in the *Cerimoniali* and the decisions of the Senate concerning diplomatic protocol, the Venetian diplomatic gift practices can be reconstructed.

Food and Banquets

Every ambassador arriving in Venice was welcomed with a gift of *refrescamenti* or refreshments, which comprised small foodstuffs, beverages and often also wax or candles. The office of the *Rason Vecchie* was responsible for locating and purchasing these gifts.

Seventeenth-Century Spanish Italy,” *The Historical Journal* 51, no. 4 (2008), 881-899; Russell E. Martin, “Gifts for the Bride: Dowries, Diplomacy, and Marriage Politics in Muscovy,” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008), 119-146; Catherine Fletcher, “‘Those Who Give Are Not All Generous’: Tips and Bribes at the Sixteenth-Century Papal Court,” EUI Working Papers MWP 2011/15, European University Institute, 2011, 1-10; Marieke von Bernstorff and Susanne Kubersky-Piredda, eds., *L’Arte del Dono: Scambi Artistici e Diplomazia tra Italia e Spagna, 1550-1650* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2013). For a good overview of gift exchange in the Islamic world, see: Linda Komaroff, ed., *Gifts of the Sultan: The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

⁷⁹ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 254-256.

⁸⁰ Donald E. Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), 54. Also in other nations, the rise of embassies led to the necessity of retrenchment. For England, see: Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 174-175.

Their accounts illustrate the development of a certain shopping pattern, since they repeatedly frequented the same shops and street vendors to procure foodstuffs. By building this network with shopkeepers, they were able to quickly obtain quality goods. Additionally, the *Rason Vecchie* could fall back on their own stock of products. Furthermore, boats and porters were arranged for the transportation of the acquired goods. The next step was the arranging of the gifts into small packages, since a respectable presentation was an essential component of the gift: the spices and nuts were always presented in *scatole*, *piteri*, *vasetti* – general terms for jars and boxes – or in an *albarello*, a maiolica earthenware jar used by apothecaries to store their medicines and delicacies.⁸¹

Some recurring patterns in the allocation of these refreshments can be perceived. Both residential and extraordinary ambassadors, and even envoys sent by rulers of small territories, were bestowed with gifts of food.⁸² Extraordinary agents, who came to execute a specific assignment and only resided in the city for a restricted time period, often received several packages during the time of their stay. Even though it has been stated that the Venetian Republic granted a fixed sum of money for the refreshments of ambassadors, my research has uncovered that this was not the case.⁸³ During the second half of the sixteenth century, the average amount spent on one package of refreshments was 25 ducats. However, this sum fluctuated, and the sources reveal that a connection existed between the sum issued on refreshments and the status of the nation that the ambassador was embodying.

⁸¹ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 378, passim; *ibid.*, b. 379, passim.

⁸² For example, the representative from the grand master of the Knights Hospitaller received refreshments with a value of 25 ducats: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 70v (19 June 1578).

⁸³ Stefanie Cossalter has stated that *refrescamenti* with a value of 50 ducats were given to all ambassadors who were sent by a crowned king: Cossalter, “Dai Porti alle Isole”, 146.

Amount spent on refreshments for European ambassadors during the 1570s

Date	State	Amount
21 June 1572	Mantua	d. [ducati] 26 £ [lire] 1 s. [soldi] 6
29 March 1573	Navarre	d. 100 £ 2 s. 3
3 July 1573	Rome	d. 31 £ 4 s. 16
2 December 1573	Poland	d. 50 £ 5 s. 4
13 January 1574	Savoy	d. 25 £ 2 s. 6
4 May 1574	Florence	d. 25 £ 4 s. 15
22 June 1574	Savoy	d. 27 £ 2 s. 20
1 June 1577	Florence	d. 26 £ – s. 6
6 July 1577	Grisons	d. 27 £ 5 s. 2
17 July 1577	Urbino	d. 25 £ 3 s. 11
9 September 1577	Savoy	d. 24 £ 6 s. –
24 September 1577	Parma	d. 28 £ 5 s. 6
27 September 1577	Parma	d. 24 £ 2 s. 13
13 October 1577	Mantua	d. 27 £ 4 s. 2
18 October 1577	Mantua	d. 26 £ 4 s. 4
20 October 1577	Ferrara	d. 23 £ 5 s. 30
21 October 1577	Florence	d. 24 £ 3 s. 12
23 October 1577	Ferrara	d. 28 £ 5 s. 14
25 October 1577	Florence	d. 29 £ 4 s. 1
15 November 1577	Sweden	d. 26 £ 5 s. 6
18 November 1577	Sweden	d. 24 £ 5 s. 14

This table showing the various amounts of money spent on the refreshments for foreign envoys during the 1570s is indicative of the entire sixteenth century.⁸⁴ Ambassadors from smaller courts, such as Ferrara, Florence, Parma, Mantua, Milan, Urbino, Genoa, Savoy and the Swiss cantons of Grisons, always received a gift basket with a value of between 23 and 29 ducats.⁸⁵ Two states that stand out are Poland and Navarre for the year 1573, when ambassadors of both kings visited Venice. The fact that the standard amount was doubled with regard to the Polish embassy can be explained by the fact that the brother of French King Charles IX, Henry, had been crowned as Polish king. The ambassadors representing the king of Navarre, Henry III of Bourbon, later French King Henry IV, received food gifts with an even higher value of 100 ducats. Even though Navarre was a small kingdom, Henry of Bourbon was an important king and a prominent figure on the international scene as leader of

⁸⁴ This table is based on the accounts of the *Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie* (b. 378 and 379). I could only trace detailed lists with specific food gifts and their costs for the 1570s. The reason for the high number of ambassadors visiting Venice in 1577 was the appointment of Doge Sebastiano Venier, who the ambassadors came to congratulate.

⁸⁵ This estimate was made based not only on the sources left by the *Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie* (b. 378 and 379), but also on the records of the *Collegio, Cerimoniali* (reg. 1 and 3) and the *Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra* (reg. 36 up to 80).

the French Huguenot party. His status is probably the reason why Venice honoured his ambassador with a more expensive and lavish package of foodstuffs.

For ambassadors representing states that exerted more power on the international scene, such as France and Rome, a higher sum of money was allotted. With regard to a legate from Rome, only one detailed list of *refrescamenti* with a value of 31 ducats is handed down.⁸⁶ For France, more examples can be given. Extraordinary Ambassador François de Luxembourg received refreshments valued at 150 ducats in 1586 and André Hurault de Maisse was honoured with daily food gifts amounting up to 500 ducats for the period of his extraordinary mission in 1596. Similarly, the French ambassador to Rome, Charles de Neufville, who was passing through Venice in 1608, was bestowed with refreshments for the sum of 400 ducats.⁸⁷ Thus, even ambassadors coming from the same country could not count on an equal amount of foodstuffs. Furthermore, envoys of eastern territories, whose missions were scarcer and very prestigious, were welcomed with more expensive food gifts. For example, an agent of the king of Persia, who visited the city in January 1610, received refreshments worth 100 ducats.⁸⁸

Whereas the amount spent on refreshments varied, the type of foodstuffs offered was usually the same. Firstly, fine sugar was given to practically every agent residing in Venice. Secondly, various types of nuts were a typical Venetian offering: pistachios, almonds, pine nuts and walnuts. A third constant feature of the *refrescamenti* were herbs and spices, such as cinnamon and pepper in its various forms (rough, grinded, crushed); coriander; and cloves. Fourthly, fresh fruits were often added to the gift package: pears, pumpkins, peaches, apples, cherry plums, jujubes, lemons, limes and citrons. And lastly, in some cases, a variety of fish or meat was offered. These foodstuffs were always accompanied by a barrel of Moscato wine.⁸⁹

Besides these unprocessed products, Venetians also gifted various *zucchari*, sugar confections, to their diplomatic guests. Due to the fairly high price of sugar and the labour-intensive preparation of sweets, sugar confections were expensive. Therefore, during dinner parties and official feasts, sweets were prominently served as a separate course so as to underline their social function: the exhibition of the host's status and splendour. Moreover, a medicinal working was attributed to sugar: it was believed that, amongst other things, it

⁸⁶ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (3 July 1573).

⁸⁷ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 132v (28 July 1595); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 26r (7 June 1608); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 57, f. 18r (21 October 1586).

⁸⁸ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 30r (22 January 1610).

⁸⁹ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 378, *passim*; *ibid.*, b. 379, *passim*.

strengthened the heart, offered protection for rheumatism and was good for the stomach and digestion.⁹⁰ It is thus not surprising that Venice used sugar candies as gifts to ambassadors, as they tasted of the Republic's magnificence and wealth, and at the same time showcased a more private concern for the ambassador's health.

Venetians were masters in refining sugar and making all kinds of delicacies. *Confetti* or comfits, sugar-coated confectionery made with nuts, spices and fruits, are a typical example of these Venetian sweets.⁹¹ Also in other Italian city-states, *confetti* were a standard component of the menus served at banquets, and they were used as gifts during various rituals and ceremonies.⁹² The same was true for *conditi*, which are candied fruits, nuts and condiments. In the lists of refreshments that were presented to arriving ambassadors, we see that both *confetti* (of pistachio, almond, cinnamon and coriander) and *conditi* (of diverse fruits and almonds) were a standard diplomatic gift. Additionally, other sweets were a typical feature of the *refrescamenti*: *pinochiati*, cakes from pine nuts and sugar; pastries and biscuits made with pistachio nuts; and *cotognato*, or quince jelly.⁹³

As these examples of costly sugared goods already suggest, the foodstuffs offered to ambassadors were mostly products with a prestigious and ceremonial connotation, which symbolised the prosperity of the Republic. This can be further deduced from the other typical food gifts outlined above. Firstly, the Levantine spices, such as cinnamon and cloves, were considered spices for the rich. Secondly, amongst the meats presented to foreign envoys, we can distinguish partridge, duck, hares, pheasants and turkeys, all luxurious foodstuffs and standard features on fashionable noble tables.⁹⁴ Thirdly, pistachios and almonds were relatively expensive nuts, which were consequently considered as delicacies.⁹⁵

In some cases, the gift of food extended beyond the proffering of the customary refreshments. The Republic could send entire meals, every morning and evening, to extraordinary ambassadors. An interesting case study is that of the Spanish and French extraordinary ambassadors, Francisco di Castro and Cardinal François de Joyeuse, who have already been introduced. They came to the city during the time of the Venetian Interdict, and

⁹⁰ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 93; James Shaw and Evelyn Welch, *Making and Marketing Medicine in Renaissance Florence* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2011), 200-209.

⁹¹ For more information on the making of *confetti*, see: Shaw and Welch, *Making and Marketing Medicine*, 200.

⁹² Elizabeth S. Cohen, "Miscarriages of Apothecary Injustice: Un-Separate Spaces of Work and Family in Early Modern Rome," in *Spaces, Objects and Identities in Early Modern Italian Medicine*, eds. Sandra Cavallo and David Gentilcore (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 15.

⁹³ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 378, passim; *ibid.*, b. 379, passim.

⁹⁴ Joanne Marie Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 44-45; Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 2003), 68-69.

⁹⁵ Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 55-57.

both of them were offered daily repasts of 200 *écu* or 100 ducats, which only Francisco di Castro accepted. When he left Venice after a residency of almost seven months, the Republic had spent, according to French Ordinary Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye, the immense sum of 18.000 ducats on his food provisions. The same generous offer was made to Cardinal Joyeuse.⁹⁶ Even though he strongly declined any gift, the Venetian government cunningly circumvented his wishes by sending him an unspecified honourable gift every four or five days with a value of approximately 100 to 120 ducats.⁹⁷

Philippe de la Canaye found Joyeuse's decision to refuse quotidian provisions very praiseworthy; he believed that there was more virtue in giving presents than in receiving them:

My said Sir the Cardinal [Joyeuse] will inform you about the great day he had yesterday; I hope that another day he will send you a rapport of everything that he has to do here at this moment, as it is not of his dignity to dawdle like Count Castro. Moreover, the very next day of his arrival, he [Cardinal Joyeuse] declared that he does not intend to imitate him [Castro], since he has refused the daily dish worth 200 *écu* that the Republic wished to send him every evening and morning. Even though the said Count [Castro] received it daily during the nearly four months that he has been here, causing great amazement amongst all of those who are unaware that the Spanish have never received the doctrine of Aristotle, which states that there is more grandeur in giving than in receiving.⁹⁸

From this letter, it becomes clear that Canaye disapproved of Castro's abuse of Venice's generosity. Canaye probably saw this exploitation as a reflection of Castro's ineffective diplomatic work. Therefore, it might be that he exaggerated when stating that Castro had eagerly accepted daily food gifts amounting up to 18.000 ducats, which truly is an extremely high sum. Canaye was, moreover, of the opinion that the Venetian government wished to distract the Spanish ambassador with these daily offerings. According to Canaye, the more that the Venetian officials were generous with their compliments and gifts, the less willing

⁹⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Pierre Brûlart [from now on referred to as Secretary of State Brûlart], 21 February 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 464; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Pierre Brûlart, 3 May 1607 in *ibid.*, 555.

⁹⁷ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 23r (15 February 1607).

⁹⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Brûlart, 21 February 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 464: "Mondit Seigneur le Cardinal vous rendra compte de la grande journée qu'il fit hier; j'espere qu'en une autre il expediera tout ce qu'il a à faire icy pour cette heure, n'estant pas de sa dignité d'y trainasser comme le Comte *di Castro*, aussi a-il commencé dès le lendemain de son arrivée a faire cognoistre qu'il n'entend pas l'imiter: car il a refusé le plat de deux cens escus par jour que la Republique luy vouloit envoyer soir et matin, quoy que ledit Comte le reçoive journellement depuis prez de quatre mois qu'il est icy, avec grand esbahissement de tous ceux qui ignorent que les Espagnols n'ont jamais receu la doctrine d'Aristote, qui tient qu'il y ait plus de grandeur à donner qu'à recevoir."

they were to discuss political matters.⁹⁹ Hence, gifts were not always considered as a necessity or as a symbol of honour, and the refusal of a gift could demonstrate the ambassador's devotion to his task. Although this example is an exception, it offers an alternative perspective on how ambassadors themselves could interpret gifts.

A festive public meal was the third type of food gift offered to foreign dignitaries. State visits of emperors, monarchs and princes prompted Venice to organise splendid banquets where culinary creations and spectacle were employed to amaze their guests. These dinners were meticulously organised: the setting of the table, the duration of the feast and the foodstuffs offered all communicated a calculated message of wealth and power. The meal also served as an instrument for informal political mediation and as an economic tool to promote national products.¹⁰⁰ Just as was the case with the food gifts, sugared confections and *trionfi*, elaborate sculptures made in most cases with sugar, were indispensable to these sumptuous meals.¹⁰¹ For example, at the banquet organised for French King Henry III during his visit in 1574, 300 *trionfi* in the shape of various figures such as gods, goddesses, lions, nymphs, dwarfs, griffons, but also castles and ships, were displayed at the tables. The king greatly appreciated these statues and commissioned someone of his retinue to take some confections home as souvenirs.¹⁰² Furthermore, during the splendid breakfast thrown in the king's honour, sugar sculptures were made resembling plates, forks, knives and table napkins. Henry III, who believed they were all real objects, was genuinely impressed when he tried to use a napkin and it broke in his hands.¹⁰³

Likewise, in order to celebrate an ambassador's arrival or leave-taking, a banquet or a collation, a light meal, could be arranged. Entertaining ambassadors with dinner parties was a fundamental feature of diplomatic ceremonial. This tradition dated back at least to the beginning of the sixteenth century, when sumptuous dinners were already organised for

⁹⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Charles de Neufville [from now on referred to as Alincourt], 18 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 289: "Nous verrons ce que Dom Francesco produira là dessus: il reçoit tant de bon traitement, et tant de beaux presens tous les jours, que cela l'empêchera de s'ennuyer en ce séjour. Mais croyez, Monsieur, que plus la Republique est liberale de compliments et regalemens en son endroit, plus elle ira retenuë en matiere d'affaires, et pouvez vous asseurer que non seulement il n'obtiendra rein par dessus nous, mais que jamais la Republique ne fera pour autrui, ce que je vous ay escrit avoir esté accordé à l'instance de sa Majesté."

¹⁰⁰ Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

¹⁰¹ For a brief overview of Venetian banquets, see: Lina Urban, *Banchetti Veneziani dal Rinascimento al 1797* (Belluno: Strategy & People, 2007). For the widespread use of sugar sculptures during Venetian dinner parties, see: Casini, *I Gesti del Principe*, 291-293.

¹⁰² Pino Agostini and Alvise Zorzi, *A Tavola con i Dogi: Storia con Ricette della Grande Cucina Veneziana* (Verona: Arsenale Editrice, 1991), 23-24; Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 210; Urban, *Banchetti Veneziani*, 73-74.

¹⁰³ Pompeo Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia nella Vita Privata dalle Origini alla Caduta della Repubblica*, vol. 2: *Lo Splendore* (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1906), 469.

ambassadors.¹⁰⁴ The examples of the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century demonstrate the continuation of these festive buffets and underline their ubiquity. These meals were prepared for a variety of national ambassadors: French, Spanish, Polish, Dutch, Scottish, Swiss, Parmese, Navarrese and Ottoman diplomatic agents were all invited to a splendid repast.¹⁰⁵ In the majority of the instances found, the meal was hosted in the Arsenal, the most prominent symbol of Venice's maritime and military authority.¹⁰⁶ This location was without any doubt deliberately chosen, as it was a chance to orchestrate an image of strength. Therefore, this is a very good illustration of the symbolic role that lavish banquets could play in diplomatic culture.

A detailed account of both daily food gifts and the celebration of a banquet can be given with regard to the Muscovite embassy, accompanied by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino, that frequented Venice on its way to Rome in August 1582.¹⁰⁷ The party consisted of 30 people: first of all, Muscovite Ambassador Iakov Molvianinov and his entourage: one secretary, one translator and four servants; secondly, Possevino and his suite: two of his nephews (who were Jesuit priests), one secular secretary, one young Polish boy, Giovanni Battista Pallavicini from the famous Pallavicini family of Milan and an unclear reference to five *schiaivi*, *spagnoli* and *marchiani*;¹⁰⁸ and thirdly, servants were put at the disposal of the

¹⁰⁴ Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 17, col. 543.

¹⁰⁵ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 71v (6 September 1578); *ibid.*, f. 73r (25 November 1578); *ibid.*, f. 91r (14 October 1581); *ibid.*, f. 103r (1 April 1585); *ibid.*, f. 117v (5 December 1589); *ibid.*, f. 129v (12 December 1594); *ibid.*, f. 144r (20 June 1598); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 11v (30 August 1603); *ibid.*, f. 29r (8 November 1609); *ibid.*, f. 34r (31 July 1611); *ibid.* f. 35r (23 January 1612); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg., 57, f. 18r (21 October 1586).

¹⁰⁶ This was the case for the Ottoman, Navarrese, French, Scottish, and Dutch (extra)ordinary ambassadors: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 91r (14 October 1581); *ibid.*, f. 117v (5 December 1589); *ibid.*, f. 144r (20 June 1598); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 11v (30 August 1603); *ibid.*, f. 29r (8 November 1609); *ibid.*, f. 34r (31 July 1611); *ibid.*, f. 35r (23 January 1612); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 57, f. 18r (21 October 1586). This varied national group of ambassadors suggests that probably also for many other ambassadors, the dinners were hosted in the Arsenal.

¹⁰⁷ Jesuit Antonio Possevino was sent to Muscovy from 1581 to 1582 as the papal emissary of Pope Gregory XIII to negotiate a truce between Ivan the Terrible, tsar of Muscovy, and Stefan Batory, king of Poland. Papal mediation came after the formal request for help by the tsar in 1581. The pope aspired that his interference would lead to the formation of regular diplomatic relations between Rome and Muscovy, the latter's adherence to the Christian league against the Turks and the union of the Muscovite Church with Rome. None of these goals were materialised, but Possevino did arrange the peace treaty of Jam Zapolski, which was signed on 15 January 1582. In March 1582, Possevino departed from Moscow and escorted the tsar's representative to Rome. This ambassador would accomplish nothing in Rome, which was the intention of the tsar as he no longer had a need for the pope after the signing of the truce. On their way to Rome, Possevino and the Muscovite ambassador stopped in various cities, such as Venice; however, Possevino only mentions their stay in the Venetian Republic very briefly in the account of his journey. Antonio Possevino, *The Moscovia of Antonio Possevino*, S.J., ed. and trans. Hugh F. Graham (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1977), ix; xxiv; 22-23.

¹⁰⁸ In this context, *schiaivi* can refer both to slaves and the Slavs, people belonging to the Slavic ethno-linguistic group. It would be peculiar if Possevino had Spanish slaves, so perhaps all these terms refer to the nationalities of these five individuals: Slavs, Spaniards and *Marchiani*, inhabitants from the Marches (a region in central Italy).

diplomatic party by the Venetian government, including four gondoliers, two *despensieri* (who were responsible for the food and kitchen), one porter and four chefs and sous-chefs. Furthermore, there were some additional members in the entourage: friars who served in the house and attended to the ill, a Scottish gentleman and more people in the train of Possevino. For the duration of their sojourn, which lasted 23 days, the Venetian Republic provided the entire company with daily food gifts.¹⁰⁹

Daily food gifts offered to the Muscovite embassy (1582)

Basic necessities	Vinegar (<i>asedo</i> , it. <i>aceto</i>); oil (<i>olio</i>); bread (<i>pani</i>); rice (<i>risi</i>); black and white salt (<i>sal negro e bianco</i> , it. <i>sale nero e bianco</i>)
Dairy products	Mozzarella (<i>cai di late</i> , it. <i>fior di latte, mozzarella</i>); <i>marzolino</i> , cheese made from the spring season's first milk; <i>zonchiada</i> or <i>giuncata</i> , a light, fresh cheese; <i>formazo piacentin</i> (it. <i>formaggio piacentino</i>), cheese from the region of Piacenza; butter (<i>onto sotil</i> , it. <i>burro</i>) ¹¹⁰
Fish	Sea basses (<i>brancini</i> , it. <i>branzini</i>); young sea basses (<i>varuoli</i> , it. <i>branzini, spigole</i>); sturgeons (<i>porcelle</i> , it. <i>storioni</i>); croakers (<i>corbi</i> , it. <i>ombrine</i>); mullets (<i>cievali</i> , it. <i>cefali</i>); gilthead bream (<i>orae</i> , it. <i>orate</i>); surmulletts (<i>barboni</i> , it. <i>triglie</i>); soles (<i>sfogi</i> , it. <i>sogliole</i>)
Meat	Salami (<i>salumi</i>); <i>mortadelle</i> , a type of Italian sausages; lard (<i>lardo</i>); capons (<i>caponi</i> , it. <i>capponi</i>); pigeons (<i>colombini</i> , it. <i>piccioni, colombi</i>); <i>polastri</i> , young poultry such as pigeons; <i>polanche</i> , a type of poultry; ducks (<i>anere</i> , it. <i>anatre</i>); turkeys (<i>gali di india</i> , it. <i>tacchini</i>); loins (<i>nomboli</i> , it. <i>lombi</i>); tongues (<i>lengue</i>); veal (<i>vedelli</i> , it. <i>vitelli</i>); beef (<i>manzo</i>)
Fruit and vegetables	Oranges (<i>narance</i> , it. <i>arancie</i>); citrons (<i>cedri</i>); plums (<i>susini</i> , it. <i>prugne</i>); melons (<i>meloni</i>); watermelons (<i>angurie</i>); figs (<i>fighe</i> , it. <i>fichi</i>); peaches (<i>perseghe</i> , it. <i>pesche</i>); grapes (<i>uva</i>); herbs, greenery (<i>erbazi</i>); salad (<i>salad</i> , it. <i>insalata</i>)
Spices	Coriander (<i>tamaro</i> , it. <i>coriandolo</i>); <i>spitiarie</i> , various spices
Sweets	Confections (<i>confetioni</i>)
Wine	White wine (<i>vin bianco</i> , it. <i>vino bianco</i>); malmsey wine (<i>malvasia</i>); sweet Greek wine (<i>romania</i>); sweet Tuscan wine (<i>liatico</i> , it. <i>aleatico</i>)
Medicines	<i>Cassia</i> , a medicinal plant; syrups (<i>siropi</i> , it. <i>sciropi</i>); distilled water (<i>agua stilada</i> , it. <i>acqua distillata</i>); distilled spirits, healing water (<i>agua de vitta</i> , it. <i>acqua di vita</i>)

¹⁰⁹ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, fz. 85 (25 September 1582).

¹¹⁰ *Onto sotil* can refer to butter, cheese, cream and also pig's fat or lard. I have opted for the most general translation: butter.

Furthermore, a banquet was hosted in the Arsenal in honour of the Muscovite visitors. The meal consisted of four courses, for which the officers of the *Rason Vecchie* bought the basic ingredients, such as vinegar, oil, sugar, 140 breads and white and malmsey wine. The dishes were composed of mainly fish and fruit, in great numbers and varieties. The fish menu consisted of typical fishes found in the Venetian lagoon and the northern Adriatic Sea, denoted in Venetian dialect: sea basses (*brancini*, it. *branzini*); young sea basses (*varuoli*, it. *branzini*, *spigole*); sturgeons (*porcelle*, it. *storioni*); croakers (*corbi*, it. *ombrine*); mullets (*cievali*, it. *cefali*); gilthead bream (*orae*, it. *orate*); surmulletts (*barboni*, it. *triglie*); soles (*sfogi*, it. *sogliole*); caviar (*caviaro*, it. *caviale*); fish eggs (*bottarghe*); anchovy (*inchio*, it. *sardoni*, *acciuge*); gills of the Mediterranean moray (*baise di morena*); *tarantello*, the stomach of tuna.¹¹¹ Fruits were also abundantly present: oranges (*narance*, it. *arancie*); citrons (*cedri*); melons (*meloni*); watermelons (*angurie*); figs (*fighe*, it. *fichi*); peaches (*perseghe*, it. *pesche*); three types of grapes (*uva*); raisins (*uvapasa*, it. *uva passa*); and more unspecified fruit. Lastly, cakes, pastries, typical Venetian sugar confections and various spices were displayed and served during the banquet. Additionally, the *Rason Vecchie* supplied suitable furnishings, hired cooks and a *scalco* (the chief steward who oversaw the kitchen staff, food and finances, and managed every detail of dinner parties), and arranged a musical performance by fourteen singers and musicians.¹¹²

A final consideration must be made with regard to the food gifts prepared for Ottoman ambassadors, as these were of a very abundant nature. The Venetians always treated the envoys of the sultan with the utmost respect, and this was reflected in the amount of foodstuffs offered. In addition to the usual *refrescamenti*, Ottoman ambassadors were overwhelmed with daily provisions for the duration of their stay.¹¹³ In the case of the *chiaus*, an Ottoman emissary, who was residing in the city for almost the entire month of April in 1573 to negotiate the peace treaty after the Battle of Lepanto, all the necessary food supplies were delivered on a day-to-day basis. This cost Venice a total of 800 *lire* and 15 *soldi* (approximately 133 ducats).¹¹⁴ Ten years later, in 1595, *çesnigir*, the taster of the sultan,

¹¹¹ Fish were plentiful in Venice and an important component of the Venetian diet. Francesco Sansovino recounted in his *Venetia Città Nobilissima* that at the fish markets of St. Mark and the Rialto you could find twice a day, all year round, a wide variety of fish: Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia Città Nobilissima et Singolare, con Aggiunta da D. Giustiniano Martinioni*, vol. 1 (Venice: Stefano Curti, 1663), 316. The translation of the Venetian terms for the various types of fish is based on: Marcello Brusegan, “*Cisame de Pesse Quale Tu Voy*”: *Il Pesce nelle Tavole Veneziane nei Secoli XIV-XVI* (Venice: Centro Internazionale della Grafica di Venezia, 1992), 86-88.

¹¹² ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, fz. 85 (25 September 1582).

¹¹³ This has also been discussed by Maria Pia Pedani in: Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 61-62; 92-93.

¹¹⁴ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (8 April 1573).

Hüseyin Ağâ, was honoured with the same type of quotidian food gifts, indicating that it indeed was the general custom to arrange all the food provisions for Ottoman ambassadors.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, a source containing the gifts for a dragoman, an official interpreter of the Turkish language, shows that he similarly was provided with two meals per day, which were delivered at his house.¹¹⁶ In some cases, even cooks and *scalchi* were nominated to serve in the ambassador's household.¹¹⁷

Daily food gifts offered to the Ottoman embassy (1573)

Basic necessities	Vinegar (<i>asedo</i> , it. <i>aceto</i>); oil (<i>ogio</i> , it. <i>olio</i>); flour (<i>farina</i>); bread (<i>pan</i> , it. <i>pani</i>); rice (<i>risi</i>); pepper (<i>pevere</i> , it. <i>pepe</i>); salt (<i>sal negro e bianco</i> , it. <i>sale nero e bianco</i>); eggs (<i>ove</i> , it. <i>uova</i>); honey (<i>miel</i> , it. <i>miele</i>)
Dairy products	Butter (<i>onto sotil</i> , it. <i>burro</i>); <i>formazo di piegola</i> , a type of cheese
Fish	Mackerels (<i>sconbri</i> , it. <i>scombri</i>); flounders (<i>pasere</i> , it. <i>passere</i>); twait shad (<i>chiepe</i> , it. <i>cheppia</i>); horse mackerel (<i>suri</i>); mullets (<i>cievali</i> , it. <i>cefali</i>); goby (<i>go</i> , it. <i>ghiozzo</i>); crabs (<i>granceole</i> ; it. <i>granciporri</i>)
Meat	General meat (<i>carne</i>); hens (<i>galine</i> , it. <i>galline</i>); pigeons (<i>colombini</i> , it. <i>piccioni</i> , <i>colombi</i>); <i>polastri</i> , young poultry such as pigeons; <i>castrado vivo</i> , a living, castrated animal, most probably mutton
Fruit and vegetables	Pomegranate juice (<i>vin di pomo ingrana</i> ; it. <i>melagrana</i>); oranges (<i>narance</i> , it. <i>arancie</i>); lemons (<i>limoni</i>); citrons (<i>cedri</i>); plums (<i>susini</i> , it. <i>prugne</i>); raisins (<i>uvapasa</i> , it. <i>uva passa</i>); <i>cebibo</i> (it. <i>zibibbo</i>), a type of grape; apple (<i>pomo</i> , it. <i>mela</i>); salad (<i>salata</i> , it. <i>insalata</i>); spinach (<i>spinaci</i>); herbs, greenery (<i>erbazi</i>); onions (<i>ceole</i> , it. <i>cipolle</i>)
Spices and herbs	General spices (<i>specie</i> , it. <i>spezie</i>); parsley (<i>persemolo</i> , it. <i>prezzemolo</i>); saffron (<i>zafaran</i> , it. <i>zafferano</i>)
Nuts	Chestnuts (<i>castagne</i>); almonds (<i>mandole</i> , it. <i>mandorle</i>)

The second possibility was bestowing a daily allowance to the sultan's ambassadors so that they could replenish their stock themselves. Maria Pia Pedani has uncovered that for the sixteenth century, the amount given varied between two and ten ducats per day, the nature of the generosity depending on the importance of the mission and the status of the

¹¹⁵ The list of food contains exactly the same foodstuffs as in 1573: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, fz. 9 (5 August 1595).

¹¹⁶ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (17 March 1574).

¹¹⁷ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 61.

ambassador.¹¹⁸ Even Ottoman ambassadors travelling through Venice on their way to other European courts could rely on daily allowances. For example, Hasan Agà halted in the city en route to the French court with the mission to invite the French king to the feast of circumcision of the sultan's son. Just like his colleague of the same name, who came to Venice to invite the *Signoria* to this celebration, he was presented with ten *zecchini* per day.¹¹⁹ However, the case of Hasan Agà also demonstrates the limits of Venetian liberality. When the Ottoman ambassador to Venice returned to Constantinople after a sojourn of 26 days, Venice no longer rewarded the daily allowance to the remaining Ottoman ambassador to France.¹²⁰ The fact that they had provided him with the funds to buy his foodstuffs for such a long period was already a very generous gesture towards both the Ottoman Empire and France, and must be seen as a clear sign of the amicable relations that Venice wished to uphold.

Gold Chains

Since food was of ephemeral nature and was not a strong visual reminder of Venice's wealth and power, the Venetian government moreover employed material gifts to honour ambassadors. Whereas a newly arrived ambassador was always greeted with a present of *refrescamenti*, every ambassador also received the same leave-taking gift when he departed from the city after the completion of his residency or extraordinary mission: a gold chain. Diplomatic theorist Jean Hotman, who had performed diplomatic missions himself, listed a gold chain amongst the typical presents that were offered by any nation to an ambassador upon his departure.¹²¹ This was indeed the case; as the table composed by Gary M. Bell illustrates, during the second half of the sixteenth century, the French, Spanish and Scottish king rewarded foreign ambassadors with a gold chain at the end of their assignment.¹²² Also at the English and Italian courts, numerous examples can be found of ambassadors receiving this gift.¹²³ The sources preserved in the Venetian State Archive only provide fragmented

¹¹⁸ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 61.

¹¹⁹ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 31 August 1581: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 368, ff. 301-302.

¹²⁰ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 15 September 1581: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 368, f. 320.

¹²¹ Hotman, *De la Charge et Dignité de l'Ambassadeur*, 221.

¹²² Gary M. Bell, "Elizabethan Diplomatic Compensation: Its Nature and Variety," *Journal of British Studies* 20, no. 2 (1981), 25.

¹²³ Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy", 33; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 153-154; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 173. The series in the Venetian State Archive of the *Senato, Terra* for the period under study are filled with references to the gifts Venetian ambassadors received at various courts; in most cases, this was a

information concerning the gold chains and their value, which makes it problematic to reconstruct a complete picture. Still, they allow me to draw some first conclusions and uncover some patterns over time.

Just as was the case with the *refrescamenti*, the price of the gold chain could differ greatly. This was due, first of all, to the fact that the value of the chain was closely related to the status of the ambassador's nation. Ambassadors sent on behalf of the prosperous Italian Duchies of Tuscany and Mantua and the Duchy of Savoy collected a gold chain worth 200 to 500 *scudi*. For the other Italian city-states, Ferrara, Parma, Urbino and Piacenza, the value fluctuated between 100 and 300 *scudi*. The same was true for the representatives of the Swiss cantons of Grisons and Zurich. Ambassadors of crowned heads were awarded with a more expensive chain; however, we can perceive a gradation between kingdoms. Whereas the normal price for envoys of smaller kingdoms, such as Sweden and Scotland, was around 500 *scudi*, ambassadors representing the more powerful players on the international scene, such as the Holy Roman Empire, France, Spain and England, were honoured with a gold chain worth 1.000 *scudi*.¹²⁴ Besides the ambassadors themselves, their secretaries also were offered a gold chain as a departure gift, although with a lower value than that of the ambassador. The Venetian sources only contain information with regard to the diplomatic secretaries of the embassies of Savoy, France, Spain and England: while the first one could count on a chain of 100 *scudi*, for the three secretaries of kingdoms, the price was higher, 200 *scudi*.¹²⁵

A second observation regarding the value of the gold chain is that, besides the reputation of the king, the purpose of the mission influenced the price of the gift. For example, in 1603, ambassadors from the Grisons came to Venice to negotiate a treaty with the Republic. This alliance was of crucial importance to Venice since this canton was the only non-Habsburg land connecting Venice with the rest of Europe. Venice especially needed a free passage to southern Germany since mercenaries could easily be recruited there.¹²⁶ As a result, the ambassadors from the Grisons were generously treated and dazzled with gifts. The gold

gold chain, which they were often allowed to keep, despite the Venetian law stating that ambassadors had to hand over all their gifts.

¹²⁴ This overview was made based on the sources left by the *Collegio, Cerimoniali* (reg. 1 and 3) and *Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra* (reg. 36 up to 80). With regard to the French ambassadors, this information could be verified in their correspondence, in which some of them also mentioned the customary gift of a gold chain worth 1.000 *scudi*: Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 26 December 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, f. 460; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to King Henry III, 20 November 1582: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venice, vol. 29, f. 13r.

¹²⁵ This estimation was made based on the sources left by the *Collegio, Cerimoniali* (reg. 1 and 3) and *Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra* (reg. 36 up to 80).

¹²⁶ Eventually, Venice and the Grisons signed a ten-year alliance. Randolph Conrad Head, *Early Modern Democracy in the Grisons: Social Order and Political Language in a Swiss Mountain Canton, 1470-1620* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 178-179.

chains that they received were embellished with a gold medal with the depiction of Saint Mark, on the one side, and the arms of the three leagues, on the other.¹²⁷ This personalised chain had a strong symbolic value, as it represented the alliance between the two states. In this case, the political importance of the mission determined the cost and thought that was put into the gift.

A third conclusion that can be put forward is that during the time frame of about half a century, between approximately 1550 until 1610, Venice did not systematically increase the amount of money spent on gold chains. The case of the Tuscan ambassadors can serve as an example. In both 1577 and 1578, the representatives of the grand duke of Tuscany received a chain worth 300 *scudi*. In 1587 and 1595, the value was 500 *scudi*, but in 1606, it decreased again to 300 *scudi*. In 1608, the gold chain was once more priced at 500 *scudi*; however, a year later, it was only worth 200 *scudi*. Nevertheless, it must be said that this is an extreme example of fluctuations. For most of the other states, the value remained more or less stable, without any significant rise or decrease.

Historians, such as Marcello Fantoni, have suggested that the value of gold chains was always mentioned in detail since the chains were often converted into cash.¹²⁸ The Venetian examples reveal that the chains were indeed mostly valued for their monetary worth, and it was not unusual that ambassadors could choose to have a chain or its worth in coins. Besides this money, Venice also awarded some ambassadors with an additional sum in cash. Just as was true for the gold chains, the attributed amount fluctuated. The fact that for both gifts no fixed rules seem to have existed with regard to their value makes it clear that Venice also took into account the personal status and diplomatic accomplishments of the foreign ambassador. Whilst it is undeniable that the political rank of the sovereign and the importance of the mission were determining factors in the calculation of the value of the gift, the esteem in which the ambassador was held was also decisive. A guideline registered in a Venetian ceremonial book supports this theory, as it is stated that the worth of the gift varied “[...] according to the dignity of the Princes by whom they are sent, according to the merits of the individuals [ambassadors] and according to the occasions for which they come.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 26 September 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part, 1, 145. The Grisons was a freestate that existed out of a union of three Swiss leagues.

¹²⁸ Marcello Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca: Forme e Simboli del Potere Mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994), 105.

¹²⁹ Quoted in: Casini, *I Gesti del Principe*, 293: “[...] secondo la dignità de Principi da chi sono invitati [inviati], secondo i meriti delle persone et secondo le occasioni per le quali vengono.”

Objects and Textiles

The analysis of Venetian gift-giving has revealed that two types of gifts, *refrescamenti* and gold chains, were bestowed upon every ambassador visiting Venice. However, these were not the only gifts offered to foreign envoys. A third category, comprising objects and textiles, was also an important component of the culture of diplomatic gifts in early modern Venice. A look at these gifts provides interesting insights into the broader mechanisms at work in the Venetian diplomatic practice. On the one hand, the more personal aspect of diplomacy comes to the surface, as the personal tastes of the ambassador could be taken into account when allocating a gift; on the other hand, especially in the case of textiles, the gift was used to promote Venetian products and showcase Venetian craftsmanship.

Although objects of Venetian manufacture must have been regularly awarded to foreign delegates, they are difficult to trace in the sources. This is probably more due to incomplete accounts than to a scarce use of these gifts. For the period under study, especially silverware could be found in the Venetian records. A gift of silver plate was not peculiar to Venice, as it was also offered at other European courts to departing ambassadors.¹³⁰ The Venetian Republic did not reserve these silver gifts for high standing ambassadors; on the contrary, it was an ideal gift for every type of diplomatic agent: an ambassador of Piacenza received various gilded silver cups and an agent of Urbino a silver basin and vase.¹³¹

Nevertheless, eminent ambassadors received more extensive gifts of silver, such as French extraordinary ambassador and cardinal, François de Joyeuse. By now it has become clear that during the entire duration of his stay in Venice, to negotiate the rapprochement between the papacy and Venice during the time of the Interdict, Joyeuse was treated with the highest respects. When he succeeded in revoking the Interdict and the papal excommunications, he was greatly awarded by the Venetian government with various forms of silverware with a total value of 6.000 *scudi*. This silverware consisted of: large *refrescatori* with water vases, a *refrescadora* was a large vase that carried water which was used to refresh the wine, and to adorn the *credenza*, or sideboard; a beautiful inkwell; various sorts of gilded saltcellars; and magnificent cups and saucers.¹³² The very high value of the cardinal's gifts is a direct

¹³⁰ Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy", 32-33. See also some of the gifts offered to Venetian ambassadors recorded in the *Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra*.

¹³¹ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 42, f. 76r (17 November 1559); *ibid.*, reg. 75, f. 54v (20 May 1605); Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 15 June 1605 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 4, 623.

¹³² ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg., 3, f. 23r (15 February 1607).

reflection of his great diplomatic achievements. This is also expressed in a letter from French Ordinary Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye:

His Eminence the Cardinal [Joyeuse] took his leave yesterday from the *Signoria*, and after dinner he will receive his present, which I heard will have a value of at least six thousand *écu*; moreover, there is no one here who does not recognise that the pain that he has taken for this Republic is priceless.¹³³

Likewise, the Spanish extraordinary ambassador who had come to Venice to discuss the Venetian Interdict, but without much success, received six baskets full of silverware with a value of 3.000 *scudi*.¹³⁴

Maria Pia Pedani points to the fact that Ottoman ambassadors were sometimes honoured in a more personal way. The officers of the *Rason Vecchie* covertly inquired about the tastes of the ambassador and then procured the goods that these ambassadors strongly desired. She gives the examples of a dragoman who received various kinds of glass and an ambassador who was given handguns: a carbine and two *terzette*.¹³⁵ Even foreign ambassadors not residing in Venice but at other courts could be honoured with a gift from the Republic when they had shown their desire for a Venetian product. In 1604, the French ambassador at the Swiss canton of Grisons, Dominique du Vic, had communicated his wish to possess a large mirror to the Venetian ambassador stationed there, Giovanni Battista Padavino. When Padavino informed his government about this, the Senate decided to offer a mirror (*un specchio delli più grandi*) worth 60 *scudi* to Vic as a gift. With this present, the Senate wished to convey their gratefulness for Vic's support in the Venetian negotiations with the Grisons. Moreover, the gift had to show the high regard in which Vic, and by extension the French king, was held.¹³⁶

Additionally, gifts also offered the opportunity to stimulate the popularity of locally manufactured products. This might have been the reasoning behind some of the gifts offered to the Japanese ambassadors. Their presence offered a rare opportunity to Venice to establish commercial contacts with Japan. One of the strong crafts in Venice was glassmaking; the Venetian technique was praised for its virtuosity and Venetian glass was a major export

¹³³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Brûlart, 3 May 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 555: "Monseigneur le Cardinal se licentia hier de ces Seigneurs, et recevra cet apres-disné son present, que j'entends devoir estre de valeur de six mille escus au moins, aussi n'y a celuy, qui ne reconnoisse que la peine, qu'il a prise pour cette Republique est inestimable."

¹³⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 28 April 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 544.

¹³⁵ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 93.

¹³⁶ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 74, ff. 25r-25v (15 May 1604).

product. Amongst the presents awarded to the Japanese ambassadors, we find a large array of glass objects: eight mirrors and two boxes with more than 500 pieces of fragile crystal tableware.¹³⁷ Perhaps these artefacts had to captivate the curiosity of Japan and prompt demand.

A second category of material gifts are various types and forms of textiles. Venice had a strongly developed textile industry and fabrics were an important product of their foreign trade. Therefore, it is not surprising that splendid textiles were often used as diplomatic gifts. Their magnificence had to dazzle the ambassador and symbolise Venice's economic wealth. Stella Newton has stated that foreign envoys in Venice, at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, received textiles for themselves and their entourage upon arrival to make gowns: silk was reserved for the head of the delegation, whilst the members of his suite received scarlet. Regularly, the ambassador would appear in this clothing during meetings with the councils. The act of parading the gifted clothes was a sign of courtesy and a way to show respect for the local culture.¹³⁸ The account of French Ambassador Philippe de Commines confirms this practice: when he assisted in the procession on Palm Sunday, which coincided with the celebration of the league between Venice, Milan, Spain, the pope and the emperor, he noticed that all the ambassadors were splendidly dressed in crimson velvet robes that they had received from the *Signoria*.¹³⁹

Furthermore, lengths of cloth were often given as a departing gift. For the late fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries, the sources in the Venetian archive contain many examples regarding textile gifts to ambassadors from several nations. Most frequently offered were velvets, cloths of gold, black satins and damasks.¹⁴⁰ However, for the second half of the sixteenth century, the descriptions of textile gifts are less detailed and the sources only make mention of a small amount of European delegates receiving *panni di seda*.¹⁴¹ A more detailed account is given regarding the expenses made by the *Rason Vecchie* to dress two ambassadors from Pastrovich, a coastal region in today's Montenegro. They received clothing made of *panno*, *damasco* and *tela di San Gallo*, all in *paonazzo* obtained from *grana*. The textiles and costs of manufacture amounted to 42 ducats, 3 *lire*, 9 *soldi*.¹⁴² Additionally, it appears to have been the tradition to bequeath the papal courier, who came to

¹³⁷ Boscaro, "La Visita a Venezia della Prima Ambasceria Giapponese in Europa", 32.

¹³⁸ Stella Mary Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians, 1495-1525* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), 2; 30; 77-81.

¹³⁹ Commines, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, 424; Casini, *I Gesti del Principe*, 173.

¹⁴⁰ Examples can be found for diplomatic agents from France, the Holy Roman Empire, Transylvania, Bavaria, Tunis, Ragusa and the Grisons. See: Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, 93 note 8.

¹⁴¹ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 40, f. 154v (13 January 1557); *ibid.*, f. 164v (27 February 1557).

¹⁴² ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 378 (10 October 1572).

announce the election of a new pope, with new clothes.¹⁴³ It is not clear if we should interpret the general absence of textile gifts as a decline of the practice or as an incomplete registration of gifts.

However, in the case of the Ottoman ambassadors, it is certain that they were always honoured with abundant textile gifts, a custom that commenced certainly starting from the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁴ This liberality was part of the broader Venetian strategy to cherish Ottoman representatives, as they wished to uphold favourable political and trade relations with the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Venice also had a specific opportunistic goal in mind: they aimed to impress the Ottoman court with their local products in order to intensify distribution. This technique seemed to have worked, since the Ottoman court purchased vast quantities of Venetian textiles.¹⁴⁶ Just as was the case with any other gift, the amount of clothing and their value depended on the objective of the diplomatic mission and the standing of the ambassador. All these textiles and accessories were procured in Venetian shops and skilled tailors created, lined and decorated the garments. A great variety of luxurious fabrics and colours were employed: silk, satin, *ormesino*, velvet and damask in crimson, scarlet, green, *paonazzo*, yellow, blue and *latà* (milky). The garments were further garnished with gold and silver buttons, gold trimmings, ribbons and fur linings of the richest materials, such as sable.¹⁴⁷

The amount spent on the offered clothing increased substantially over the course of a century: whereas at the end of the fifteenth century the standard amount was approximately 100 ducats, this rose to around 500 ducats by 1530, and during the second half of the sixteenth century, sums as high as 1.500 ducats were issued for the procurement of textiles and accessories and the manufacture of clothing.¹⁴⁸ Even the members of the ambassador's

¹⁴³ In 1590, the amount spent on new clothing for the courier was 40 ducats: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 60, f. 105v (20 September 1590).

¹⁴⁴ For some examples, see: Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 90 note 106.

¹⁴⁵ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, 93.

¹⁴⁶ Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 24.

¹⁴⁷ Examples of these gifts of clothing to Ottoman ambassadors, and their entourage, can be found in: ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (17 March 1574); ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 79v (10 July 1580); *ibid.*, f. 91r (14 October 1581); *ibid.*, f. 131v (1 June 1595); *ibid.*, f. 137v (18 January 1596); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 14r (24 May 1604); *ibid.*, f. 16r (22 March 1605); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, fz. 5 (21 August 1581); *ibid.*, fz. 9 (5 August 1595); Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 75; 90-91 and note 106. Persian ambassadors likewise received lavish clothing: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 8r (5 March 1603).

¹⁴⁸ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 75; ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 91r (14 October 1581): “[...] furono presentati quello destinato per qua de mille cinquecento cechini, di nove vesti, cioe una d’oro fodrata di raso cremesina con botoni d’argento dorati, una di color latà, et d’oro fodrata di ormesin cremesin, veludo cremesin bracia 13 ¼ veludo verde bracia 13 ¼ damasco cremesin bracia 13 ¼ damasco pavonazzo bracia 13 ¼ raso cremesin bracia 13 ¼ scarlato de 80 bracia 4 ¼ pano pavonazzo de 80, bracia 4 ¼ a sei delli suoi homini una veste per uno de damasco cremesin, et una sotto veste de damasco pavonazzo, et alli altri tre una veste per

delegation were offered new garments. Ottoman delegates occasionally took advantage of the Venetian generosity and tried to accumulate as much clothing gifts as possible. On their way to Venice, some Ottoman envoys halted in Dalmatia or Albania, where they recruited poor men who had to pretend to be part of the diplomatic entourage. Just as the other members of the ambassador's household, they were presented with costly silk garments. However, when the Ottomans returned to Constantinople, they demanded that these destitute people hand over all the received garments and appropriated it for their own use.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in spite of Venice's liberality, Ottoman ambassadors could be very fastidious and they occasionally complained about the inadequacy of the offered gifts. For instance, a certain diplomatic agent named Murad demanded an exchange of the vest of crimson velvet that he had received because it was initially intended for another ambassador. Murad perceived this as a disgrace and lack of respect towards his persona; however, it was the custom in Venice to re-use gifts that were made for, but not delivered to, the intended ambassador.¹⁵⁰

Gifts were clearly ubiquitous and of crucial importance to diplomatic relations. This comes to light even more when we consider the ceremonial treatment of ambassadors who did not respect local customs or even committed crimes on Venetian territory. This was the case with Imperial Ambassador François Perrenot de Granvelle, who resided in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century and was accused of various murders and other transgressions during his stay in the city.¹⁵¹ Due to his scandalous behaviour, the Venetian government urged the emperor to recall his ambassador, however, Venice still wished to award him with the customary gifts upon his departure – a proof of the standardised and obligatory nature of diplomatic gifts.¹⁵²

Exequies of an Ambassador

In addition to the welcoming and departing ceremonies, where the ambassador stood at the centre of the ritual, diplomatic agents assisted in religious processions and annual festivities

uno de scarlatin de 70 [...]”. The Japanese ambassadors that came to Venice in 1585 were also offered *panni d'oro e seda* with a value of 1.000 ducats, see: Boscaro, “La Visita a Venezia della Prima Ambasceria Giapponese in Europa”, 27.

¹⁴⁹ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreta, reg. 63, f. 123r (3 April 1547); Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, 93.

¹⁵⁰ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Secreta, reg. 63, f. 82r (28 november 1547); Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 33.

¹⁵¹ Granvelle's life in Venice will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁵² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 July 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 119-120; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 13 July 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 126.

taking place in the city. Edward Muir has already undertaken a comprehensive study of the government-sponsored ceremonies in Venice during the early modern period.¹⁵³ The ambassador's role was one of observer; they could only really interfere with the course of the ceremony when quarrels over precedence led them to demand a more superior position than other ambassadors or to withdraw from participating in the procession.¹⁵⁴ Since the ambassador's role in public ceremonies was mostly passive, the broad spectrum of Venetian festivities will not be discussed here. It is more interesting to focus on one very specific type of ceremony, during which the ambassador again stood at the centre: his funeral.

Funeral rites of ambassadors have not yet been subjected to investigation, even though it was an important ceremonial occasion. Funerals were always a performance characterised by elaborate processions and dramatised scenery in churches; in the case of the exequies of an ambassador, it was a performance of both piety and state power. This will be illustrated by analysing the funerals arranged by the Venetian government for foreign ambassadors during the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Four examples could be found in the records of the *Collegio* and Senate of funeral rites organised for high-standing Catholic ambassadors: two Spanish, one Savoyard and one papal nuncio.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, descriptions could be traced of the obsequies of agents and ambassadors representing smaller states such as Urbino, Mantua and the representative of the King of the Romans,¹⁵⁶ a title that in this period was used to refer to the heir of the throne of the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁵⁷ In the

¹⁵³ Edward Muir, "Images of Power: Art and Pageantry in Renaissance Venice," *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (1979), 16-52; Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*.

¹⁵⁴ Especially France and Spain constantly challenged each other for precedence during public occasions at every European court where both countries had a representative. François de Noailles achieved an important victory in 1558, when the Venetian Senate acknowledged that from then onwards, the French ambassador would precede the Spanish. The Spanish ambassador, Francisco de Vargas, was called back from Venice and transferred to Rome, where Spain would likewise suffer a defeat as the pope also recognised the right of precedence of the French ambassador. See the correspondence of François de Noailles: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, passim; Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 26-29; 73-81.

¹⁵⁵ Spanish Ambassador Diego Guzmán de Silva, died in 1578: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, ff. 65v-67v (28 January 1578); ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (3 February 1578). Savoyard Ambassador Bernardo Rovero, died in 1578: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 73v (2 December 1578); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 52, f. 117r (1 December 1578); *ibid.*, 164r (9 May 1579). Spanish Ambassador Francisco de Vera y Aragon, died in 1603: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, ff. 8v-10r (10 April 1603); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 73, f. 22r (10 April 1603). Papal legate Offredo Offredi, died in 1605: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, ff. 17v-18r (23 June 1605); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 75, f. 76r (23 June 1605).

¹⁵⁶ The agent of the king of the Romans [Domenico Castellu], died in 1557: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 40, f. 154r (12 January 1557). Mantuan Ambassador Ludovico Tridapale, died in 1563: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 44, f. 144v (31 July 1563). The agent from Urbino, Francesco Agatone, died in 1581: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 86r (31 July 1581).

¹⁵⁷ The title "King of the Romans" was used during the Middle Ages to refer to the elected German king who would become the future emperor once he was crowned by the pope. However, in the early modern period, the pope allowed the new emperor to call himself emperor immediately after his election. King of the Romans was now solely used for the heir apparent, in most cases the son of the emperor. For more information on this

examination of the funerals of these two groups of ambassadors, special attention will be paid to the different ceremonial strategy that was employed, indicating that the hierarchical differentiations in diplomatic ceremonies extended to an ambassador's final accolade.

The Ritual Management of Funeral Ceremonies

While early modern treatises on the function of the ambassador covered various aspects of the diplomatic mission, not much has been published on the management of obsequies organised to honour foreign ambassadors who succumbed while on mission. We do have some insight into the practices at the Renaissance papal court thanks to the treatise by Paris de Grassis, the master of ceremonies. He stipulated in his *De Oratoribus Romanae Curiae*, which was for the greater part written between 1505 and 1509 but still amended until at least 1516, that foreign ambassadors who died on mission in Rome had to receive a memorial service that was surrounded by more or less the same pomp as the funeral of their king.¹⁵⁸ A perfect example of this is the exequies organised for French Ambassador Paul de Foix, who passed away during his embassy in Rome in 1584. Pope Gregory XIII commissioned the organisation of a festive funeral celebration and the construction of a *castrum doloris*, a structure surrounding the bier decorated with candles, cloths and coat of arms. The *castrum doloris* was modelled on the exemplar used during papal funerals, which received great protest from the master of ceremonies, Paolo Alaleone. He was of the opinion that the *castrum doloris* was only allowed during the exequies of popes, emperors, kings, cardinals and prince electors.¹⁵⁹ The fact that the French ambassador's body was placed in this glorious construction indicates the royal character of his funeral and shows how Foix was commemorated similarly to how his king would have been.

For Venice, no such general ceremonial guidelines could be traced in the records. However, since the funerals of eminent ambassadors were all modelled on that of the first ambassador who died during the second half of the sixteenth century, Spanish canon Diego Guzmán de Silva, who passed away in January 1578, I can expose the overall structure and progression of diplomatic funeral rites in the Venetian Republic.¹⁶⁰ When the news of the

matter, see: Benedikt Jakob Römer-Büchner, *Die Wahl und Krönung der Deutschen Kaiser zu Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt: Keller, 1858), 4-5. In 1557, the heir was Maximilian II, son of Emperor Ferdinand I.

¹⁵⁸ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 37.

¹⁵⁹ Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy*, 126-127.

¹⁶⁰ In the accounts of the funeral of both Francisco de Vera y Aragon, Spanish ambassador, and Offredo Offredi, papal nuncio, it is literally stated that their funerals were based on that of Diego Guzmán de Silva. The same number of cloaks was offered to the domestics of the ambassador, an equal amount of wax was provided and a similar oration was recited during the funeral ceremony. ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 9r (10 April

death of an ambassador reached the Doge's Palace, the Senate ordered that the bell of the bell tower of St. Mark's Basilica had to be rung three times. Moreover, if the ambassador had brought his wife on his mission, a Venetian official was sent to the embassy to convey condolences.¹⁶¹ Customarily for three days, the body of the deceased ambassador was displayed in one of the chambers of the ambassador's house, illuminated with four great torches. The room was completely covered in black mourning cloth and the members of the diplomatic household guarded the corpse day and night. During the period of the vigil, when the body lay in the diplomatic residence, the bell tower of the church of the embassy's *contrada* would strike three times per day: at morning, midday and evening.

A description of how the body of Diego Guzmán de Silva was displayed, conveys a clear image of the ornamentation of the room. The ambassador was placed on a table with a beautiful gilded silver cross on his chest and with eight candles in silver candlesticks positioned around him. On a second table, decorated with carpets, gold cloth and velvet stood the *sbarra*, or bier, garnished with lavish gold *soprarizzo* on the sides, the ambassador's coat of arms and a cap of the *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista*.¹⁶² Since Guzmán had been an excellent practitioner of the law, books of civil and canonical law were exhibited around the coffin, which symbolised his status and identity in society.¹⁶³ In the case of the papal legate, the casket was covered with *panno d'oro* belonging to the *Scuola Grande di*

1603); *ibid.*, f. 17v (23 June 1605); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 73, f. 22r (10 April 1603). A brief note on Diego Guzmán de Silva's embassy in Venice: he was an ecclesiastic who had already served as Spanish ambassador to England and Genoa before his residency in Venice. He arrived in Venice in March 1571 and gradually developed good relations with the *Signoria*. However, the period after Lepanto (October 1571) saw a deterioration of Spanish-Venetian relations since King Philip II withdrew his military support in the East. Even though Guzmán disagreed with his king's decision, he had to support and communicate Spain's policy to the Venetian government. In 1573, the Holy League against the Ottoman Empire disintegrated and Venice signed a separate peace treaty with the Ottomans, which meant the failure of what had been Guzmán's main diplomatic objective: to establish and sustain a military alliance with the Venetian Republic. Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 30-38.

¹⁶¹ See, as an example: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 73v (2 December 1578).

¹⁶² Venetian nobles could become a member of the *scuole* and take part in the religious works; however, the administrative functions were reserved for the citizen class. Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 72-74; David D'Andrea, "Charity and Confraternities," in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 425. From the accounts of the funerals of diplomatic agents we learn that apparently also ambassadors could join the *scuole*: a cap of the *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista* was placed on Guzmán's coffin, indicating that he was a member of this confraternity, and in the funeral of Spanish embassy secretary Cristoforo Salazar members of the same confraternity, "nella quale esso Secretario era", participated. ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 66r (28 January 1578); *ibid.*, f. 110v (3 June 1587). The cap of a *scuola* was not an unusual attribute during funerals in Venice: during the first day that the body of Doge Andrea Gritti was on display, one of his attributes was a cap of his *Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia*. Tracy E. Cooper, "On the Death of Great Men: A Note on Doge Andrea Gritti," in *Venice and the Veneto during the Renaissance: The Legacy of Benjamin Kohl*, eds. Michael Knapton, John E. Law, and Alison A. Smith (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2014), 109.

¹⁶³ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 66r (28 January 1578).

San Marco and placed upon a platform covered with tapestries.¹⁶⁴ It is not completely clear if the diplomatic family or the Venetian government would arrange this honourable tribute to the ambassador. However, considering the very expensive textiles that were used as embellishments, it is very likely that the Republic offered these decorative items.

After the period of the vigil, public exequies were organised by an official appointed by the Senate. This organisational task fell upon the master of the choir of St. Mark's Basilica, who was always in charge of all the liturgical facets of ducal processions.¹⁶⁵ The sequence of the funeral rite of an esteemed Catholic ambassador was always threefold. The first component consisted of the transportation of the ambassador's body on a catafalque, supported by the members of his household, to the parish church, where the corpse was consecrated with holy water. From there, the body was transferred by foot or by boat to St. Mark's Square, accompanied by the diplomatic family and the chapter of the parish church, all carrying torches. Once arrived at St. Mark's Square, the deceased ambassador was welcomed by the chapter and canons of St. Mark's Basilica and carried through the main entrance into the basilica, where it was placed inside the baldachin prepared for this occasion. In the case of Guzmán, his body would rest here until the following day, guarded by the priests of St. Mark's and the members of the *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista*. The second phase of the rite took place on the day of the public funeral, when the vicar of St. Mark's Basilica celebrated a solemn mass in commemoration of the ambassador, with the participation of all the canons of St. Mark's. Similarly, in all the other churches of the city, a mass was dedicated to the ambassador's memory. In the evening, an impressive funeral cortege was assembled that went inside the basilica, where another Mass was sung.

Order and position of the participants in the funeral procession of Diego Guzmán de Silva (towards St. Mark's Basilica)

Ambassador of the emperor	Doge (Sebastiano Venier)	Spanish embassy secretary
Ambassador of France	Consul of the Spanish nation	
Ambassador of Savoye	Nephew of the deceased Spanish ambassador	
Alternating ducal councillors and procurators	Other family members of the deceased ambassador	
Members of the Senate	Subjects of Spain present in Venice	
Members of the Senate	Friends of the deceased ambassador	

¹⁶⁴ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 17v (23 June 1605).

¹⁶⁵ Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 188-189.

The third step was the conveyance of the body from St. Mark's Basilica to the Basilica of San Giovanni e Paolo. Ecclesiastical officials, members of the six *Scuole Grandi* and all the *Scuole Piccole*, the high Venetian officers and foreign ambassadors all took part in the procession, holding torches and candles.¹⁶⁶ Everyone knew their role and place in the ceremony and, this way, reaffirmed their position in society. Furthermore, a great crowd of Venetian mourners gathered around and spectated the solemnities.¹⁶⁷ It was believed in early modern times that the higher the number of attendees, the superior the reputation of the deceased. An enormous crowd thus had to enhance the status and pomp of the funeral celebrations.¹⁶⁸ During this great ceremonial procession, the bell tower of St. Mark's Basilica rang together with all the other bell towers they passed on their way. For this occasion, as was the case of other public funerals, all the shops, both in the *Mercerie* and in the squares, were closed. When they arrived in San Giovanni e Paolo, a final eulogy was given and the coffin was sealed and installed behind the great altar, where it would remain until it was transferred to the home country of the ambassador.

¹⁶⁶ The clerics and officials participating in an ambassador's funeral rite were for the greater part the same as those present during funerals of high-standing Venetian officers, such as that of the doge himself. For an example of the people attending the funeral of a doge, see: Mazzarotto, *Le Feste Veneziane*, 224-228. Other examples of funerals of Venetian officials can be found in the records of the *Cerimoniali*.

¹⁶⁷ The report of the Mantuan embassy secretary states that for the funeral of his master, the Mantuan ambassador, 3.000 people gathered to watch the exequies, see: Chambers, "Benedetto Agnello", 145.

¹⁶⁸ Sarah Schell, "Death and Disruption: Social Identity and Representation in the Medieval English Funeral," in *Art and Identity: Visual Culture, Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Sandra Cardarelli, Emily Jane Anderson, and John Richards (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 78.

Order and position of the participants in the funeral procession of Diego Guzmán de Silva (towards Basilica di San Giovanni e Paolo)

<i>Scuola Piccola del Santissimo Sacramento</i>
Other <i>Scuole Piccole</i>
Five <i>Scuole Grandi</i>
Friars
Congregations of secular priests
Chapter of Castello
Chapter of St. Mark's Basilica
Half of the members of the <i>Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista</i> with 124 <i>aste</i> ¹⁶⁹
Half of the Jesuits
Half of the <i>Marinari</i>
Body of the deceased ambassador (carried by six canons of St. Mark's Basilica)
Other half of the Jesuits
Other half of the <i>Marinari</i>
Captains
Other half of the <i>Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista</i> with 24 <i>aste</i>
Commanders ¹⁷⁰
Squires of the doge
Squires of the papal legate and ambassadors
Squires of the patriarchs, archbishops, bishops and prelates
<i>Gastaldi ducali</i> ¹⁷¹
Secretaries
Chancellors
Great chancellors
Doge (Sebastiano Venier)
Ambassadors
Members of the <i>Signoria</i>
Procurators
Magistrates
Senators
Family members of the deceased ambassador
Family members of the deceased ambassador
Family members of the deceased ambassador
Family members of the deceased ambassador
Family members of the deceased ambassador
Poor people from the <i>Ospedali</i> ¹⁷²
Venetian civilians

¹⁶⁹ *Aste* were poles with candles or symbols on top.

¹⁷⁰ Commanders are low-ranking juridical officials who had the duty of publishing the decisions of the courts and announcing edicts.

¹⁷¹ *Gastaldi ducali* were the executors of the judicial sentences of the doge.

¹⁷² *Ospedali* were charitable institutions that admitted old people, widows, orphans, destitute people and the sick.

When members of the diplomatic family passed away in Venice, their commemoration was likewise honoured during a public funeral celebration. Nevertheless, the ceremony was toned down to match the social status of the deceased. Two examples could be traced of members of the diplomatic household who had died during the time of the embassy: a secretary of the Spanish embassy and the wife of a Spanish ambassador.¹⁷³ Contrary to the funeral rites of the ambassador, their wake only took place in one church, that of the parish where they had lived. Still, a person of quality would recite a eulogy and many ecclesiastical dignitaries attended the ceremony. During the service, the body was positioned inside a baldachin. In the case of the death of the ambassador's wife, her body was subsequently placed upon a catafalque, adorned with beautiful sheets and *panno d'oro*, and carried in a procession through the city to St. Mark's Square and the *Mercerie*, with every bell tower ringing when they passed through a piazza. After the procession, the body was returned to her parish church, Santa Maria del Giglio, where it was kept until it was sent to Spain.¹⁷⁴

As this overview has elucidated, space and movement were important components during the exequies of an ambassador: starting from the more intimate surroundings of the ambassador's house, the body was paraded to St. Mark's Square, the political centre of the Republic, and finally put to rest in one of the major religious centres. Since both the political and religious spaces of Venice were traversed during the procession, the funeral attained both a public and solemn character. The same can be concluded from looking at the people who composed the cortege: both Venetian political officers and the highest ecclesiastics of the city were present. Their position in the processions exposes the social structure in Venetian society and visualises the hierarchy imposed on office holders.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the public character of the ritual and the grandeur of the procession offered Venice the opportunity to parade their magnificence and wealth. Just as in the rest of Europe, the funeral procession was in the first place a political rite, a spectacle wherein hierarchy was visualised and politics were performed.

It can be concluded that the progression of the diplomatic funeral ceremony was in line with the traditional medieval and early modern obsequies of the European aristocracy. The first step was always a public lying in state in the domestic environment. Secondly, a funeral

¹⁷³ Spanish secretary Cristoforo Salazar, died in 1587: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 110v (3 June 1587). The wife of Spanish ambassador Innico di Mendoza, died in 1596: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, ff. 136v-137r (19 September 1596); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 66, ff. 104v-105r (17 September 1596).

¹⁷⁴ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 137r (19 September 1596). The records of the *Cerimoniali* contain two images of a deceased dogressa placed upon a catafalque. Perhaps the ambassador's wife was dressed in a similar manner (Figures 17 and 18).

¹⁷⁵ For more information on this, see: Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 189-211.

procession transported the body to the burial church, where it stayed for one night for the death wake. Thirdly, the next day, solemn masses and funeral orations commemorated and honoured the deceased.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, the funeral of the doge and other important Venetian officials followed this sequence.¹⁷⁷ The case of the ambassador is somewhat more special, as his body would not be buried in the country where he had died, but was transported back to his home state, where most probably another funeral ceremony was organised.

The examination of diplomatic funeral rites has clearly demonstrated the lavishness of these events; ambassadors of important kings were mourned in a way that was appropriate for men of their standing. French Ambassador Arnaud du Ferrier, who participated in the exequies organised for Diego Guzmán de Silva, indeed described his funeral as sumptuous and pompous. Philippe de la Canaye, in turn, witnessed the funeral of Francisco de Vera y Aragon in 1603. He was deeply impressed by the solemnity and magnificence of the ceremony and the good ritual management of the Venetian government. Both ambassadors even alluded to the fact that a foreign ambassador was fortunate to die while on mission in Venice, as they would be honoured in a very admirable way and the Republic paid for all the expenses.¹⁷⁸ Unfortunately, the nature of the funeral ceremony of lower-ranked ambassadors is not described in the archival accounts. The absence of detailed outlines might be indicative of the fact that nothing grand was set up by the Venetian Republic. In order to further investigate this question, the funeral expenses need to be considered closely. The churches in which the rituals took place had to be solemnly adorned with black cloth and splendidly illuminated with a myriad of candles and torches. Consequently, all the material and the workmen involved had to be remunerated. This special expenditure for a foreign embassy has always been forgotten when considering the costs of diplomatic sojourns.

The Adornment and Costs of Commemoration

In order to efficiently organise the financial and practical matters of a foreign ambassador's funeral, the Senate immediately summoned and appointed the officers of the *Rason Vecchie* to procure the necessary equipment and clothing for the funeral rite. The major part of the

¹⁷⁶ B. Cecchetti, "Funerali e Sepulture dei Veneziani Antichi," *Archivio Veneto* XXXIV (1887), 265-284; Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy*, 9.

¹⁷⁷ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, passim.

¹⁷⁸ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 13 February 1578: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, ff. 451-452; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 April 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 145; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 11 April 1603 in *ibid.*, 146; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 12 April 1603 in *ibid.*, 152.

budget was spent on candle wax, which was purchased from an apothecary (*spezier*). Other standard costs included the purchase of torches, the making or altering of baldachins, the preparation of the churches and the tailoring of the mantle for the cleric who would recite the final eulogy and of the mourning garments for the diplomatic family.¹⁷⁹ These *scorozzosi* or *corocciosi*, long mourning garbs worn by family members to honour the dead, were provided for every member of the diplomatic household taking part in the obsequies.¹⁸⁰

The *scorozzosi* were always entirely in black, with hoods and mostly made with silk fabrics. The account of the funeral rite organised for Diego Guzmán de Silva contains the most vivid portrayal of the clothing offered to the members of his household. The officials of the *Rason Vecchie* bought *panno* and *ormesino* and paid a tailor to make 21 mantles with hoods, lined with *canevazza* and silk, and garnished with cords of Naples to close the robes.¹⁸¹ Additional information can be found in the description of the garments made for the household of the nuncio. This account reveals that a distinction was made in the procured clothing according to the status of the embassy members. Whereas the nuncio's family received mantles of serge, a kind of wool, from Florence with hoods of *scotto*, also a type of wool, the servants of lower standing were offered cotton robes.¹⁸² Besides the diplomatic family, every participant in the funeral rite had to be dressed appropriately: foreign ambassadors and members of the Senate appeared entirely in black, other Venetian officials wore either black or *paonazzo*,¹⁸³ and the doge's attire altered between a scarlet mantle or a crimson velvet robe.¹⁸⁴

It cannot be derived with certainty from the sources if the *Rason Vecchie* also purveyed the garments in which the deceased ambassador was dressed during his obsequies; however, this seems very likely, considering that they equipped his whole household with mourning apparel. Guzmán was dressed in a black satin *sottana* lined with *dossi*, a term used to refer to fur made of the back of squirrels; a black velvet *vesta* in Roman style with a long collar and sleeves and lined with sables; a cap with a cross on it; and velvet *zoccoli*, a type of clogs or mules.¹⁸⁵ This description illustrates the richness and luxuriousness of an ambassador's

¹⁷⁹ The most detailed account of funeral expenses is, again, related to the funeral of Diego Guzmán de Silva: ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (3 February 1578).

¹⁸⁰ Mazzarotto, *Le Feste Veneziane*, 227-228.

¹⁸¹ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (3 February 1578).

¹⁸² ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 17v (23 June 1605).

¹⁸³ In the Venetian society, *paonazzo* was also considered as a colour representing sorrow and mourning, see: Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 19-20.

¹⁸⁴ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 66v (28 January 1578); *ibid.*, f. 73v (2 December 1578); *ibid.*, reg. 3, ff. 17v-18r (23 June 1605).

¹⁸⁵ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 66r (28 January 1578).

shrouds. Expensive and fashionable materials were used which were in line with the standing of a Spanish ambassador. In the case of the nuncio, his status and clerical identity was represented through the episcopal habit in which he was buried.¹⁸⁶ The lavishness of these burial garments might seem excessive and futile, and this is indeed what a sumptuary law in Venice judged in 1334. The law declared that people should be buried in basic vestments with minor value as to avoid useless expenses. According to Giulio Bistort, this was the only sumptuary law in Venice devoted to the subject, and no new laws concerning shrouds, or any other aspect of funerals, were declared after 1334. Contrarily, in other Italian states, numerous laws prohibited sumptuous garments for the deceased and tried to curb funeral expenses.¹⁸⁷

That a funeral entailed many expenses can be gleaned from the list of the costs made for the funeral of Guzmán, which offers a detailed overview of the common expenditures. Everyone involved in the procession was paid for their services: the choir master in charge of the organisation, the priest giving the eulogy, the bell-ringer, the porters who transported the necessary goods and those who carried the body. Moreover, the Venetian government provided the essential decorations for the churches in which the funeral rite occurred: carpets were rented from Jewish merchants in the ghetto, two gold cushions were made, the columns and choir were adorned with black cloth and a carpenter was commissioned to make some alterations to the baldachin. In the Basilica of San Giovanni e Paolo, numerous candles were placed on every altar and four great torches on every column. Likewise, in St. Mark's Basilica, candles and *candellotti*, short and thick candles, decorated the altars. Lastly, and importantly, 66 escutcheons of both the ambassador and the Spanish king were manufactured to garnish his casket and the baldachins.¹⁸⁸ These coats of arms were an indispensable feature of noble funerals, since they showcased and reaffirmed one's status in society, dynastic identity and political affiliations.¹⁸⁹

The most important ceremonial object was the baldachin, under which the body of the ambassador was displayed during the ecclesiastical celebrations. For the exequies of the Spanish, Savoyard and papal ambassadors, the same baldachin was employed in St. Mark's Basilica. It was the one that was normally reserved for the annual celebrations of Cardinal Zen, a nephew of Pope Paul II, who had died in 1501 and had left his vast fortune to the

¹⁸⁶ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 3, f. 17v (23 June 1605).

¹⁸⁷ Giulio Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe nella Repubblica di Venezia: Studio Storico* (Bologna: Forni, 1969), 292-293.

¹⁸⁸ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (3 February 1578).

¹⁸⁹ Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy*, 9-10.

Venetian Republic.¹⁹⁰ In order to honour the ambassador's memory, the baldachin's four pillars were garnished with black curtains, crosses and escutcheons of the king and the ambassador. The top was covered with exquisite tapestries, and inside the baldachin, a table was decorated with a lavish carpet, whereupon the body of the ambassador rested. In the case of Guzmán, we also know that on the upper parts of the construction, 800 candles and 30 *candellotti* were placed. In San Giovanni e Paolo a second baldachin was prepared. For the obsequies of Guzmán this exemplar was provided by the *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista* and was ornamented with black draperies, carpets, crosses, escutcheons and candles.¹⁹¹

All these payment entries testify to the fact that a lot of thought was put into every detail of the material surroundings of the funeral rite. The Venetian government understood that the embellishment of churches, biers and catafalques was indispensable in order to envelop the ceremony in a majestic atmosphere. Obviously, all these preparations could cost the Republic a great amount of money, and it appears that in the case of royal ambassadors, the only costs paid for by the home country was the transportation of the body of the deceased ambassador to his country.¹⁹² In some cases the total sums defrayed by the Venetian government are listed, which provides me with a clear sense of how much they wished to spend on these occasions and it also shows an augmentation over time.

In 1521, the sum of 163 ducats, 20 *lire*, 19 *soldi* was spent on the exequies of the French ambassador.¹⁹³ Almost sixty years later, in 1578, the funeral expenses of Diego Guzmán de Silva amounted up to 884 ducats, 4 *lire*, 11 *soldi*, a remarkable higher sum.¹⁹⁴ For the organisation of the funeral of the ambassador of Savoy in the same year, a considerably lower amount was provided: 514 ducats, 4 *lire*, 16 *soldi*. However, additionally, a gift of 500

¹⁹⁰ For a description of the funeral of Cardinal Zen, see: Patricia Fortini Brown, "Le Scuole," in *Il Rinascimento: Società ed Economia*, eds. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci, vol. 5 of *Storia di Venezia: Dalle Origini alla Caduta della Serenissima*, eds. Gino Benzoni and Antonio Menniti Ippolito (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1996), 331.

¹⁹¹ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, ff. 65v-66r (28 January 1578); *ibid.*, f. 73v (2 December 1578); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 17v (23 June 1605). These types of baldachins were commonly used during early modern funerals in Europe. They were better known under the name *chappelle ardente* or *cappella ardente*: wooden baldachins painted in black, covered with precious textiles and coats of arms, and decorated with hundreds of burning candles. Inside the *chappelle ardente* the bier was placed whereupon the body of the deceased was displayed. Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy*, 10.

¹⁹² This cost is not listed in the Venetian accounts and the preparations made by the Venetian officials ended with the sealing and safekeeping of the coffin until it would be transported back to the home country. Moreover, with regard to English ambassadors, it was the monarch who paid for the transportation costs, see: Bell, "Elizabethan Diplomatic Compensation", 8.

¹⁹³ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 22, f. 63v (24 October 1521).

¹⁹⁴ ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, b. 379 (3 February 1578).

scudi was offered to his wife and 100 *scudi* to the embassy secretary.¹⁹⁵ Perhaps this money was offered to cover additional costs or to pay for their travel back home. With regard to the funeral of Spanish Ambassador Francisco de Vera y Aragon in 1603, his French colleague Canaye stated that the Republic had made very high expenses of 3.000 ducats, which he equated in another letter with 3.000 *écu*.¹⁹⁶ If correct, then this was an extremely high amount and a tremendous increase compared to the allotted money a century earlier. Additionally, we know that the price of the memorial service organised for the Spanish embassy secretary arrived at 101 ducats, 5 *lire*, 2 *soldi*, 6 *piccoli*.¹⁹⁷ No total amount is listed for the obsequies prepared to tribute the death of the Spanish ambassador's wife, but the characteristics of the ceremony, already described above, showcase the great honours bestowed upon her. Just as for an ambassador's funeral, the *Rason Vecchie* had procured mourning garments for the diplomatic family, candles and torches, and a baldachin had been prepared.¹⁹⁸

However, when an ambassador or diplomatic agent of a state that was considered as only a minor actor on the international scene passed away, Venice did not treat them with the same ceremonial honours than those reserved for the higher esteemed ambassadors. For the funeral of an agent from Urbino, it appears that nothing was organised by the Venetian government. They only assigned 25 ducats to the nephew of the deceased agent, which was supposed to aid the family with the costs of the necessary arrangements.¹⁹⁹ Upon the death of a diplomatic agent representing the King of the Romans, the sole provision made by the sacristan of St. Mark's Basilica was the purchasing of wax for the candles: 585 candles for 56 ducats, 13 *lire*.²⁰⁰ Lastly, when an ambassador of the duke of Mantua died, the Venetian Republic honoured his great work by offering 200 ducats to his wife and children, but no mention is made of the organisation of exequies.²⁰¹ These observations confirm the idea that Venice imposed a hierarchy upon the ambassadors present in the city.

The Venetian practice was in line with the general differences in treatment of ambassadors representing states with a higher or lower rank on the political ladder. Similarly, in Spain, the

¹⁹⁵ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 52, f. 177r (1 December 1578); *ibid.*, 164r (9 May 1579).

¹⁹⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 April 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 145; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 11 April 1603 in *ibid.*, 146; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 12 April 1603 in *ibid.*, 152.

¹⁹⁷ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 110v (3 June 1587).

¹⁹⁸ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, ff. 136v-137r (19 September 1596); ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 66, ff. 104v-105r (17 September 1596).

¹⁹⁹ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 86r (31 July 1581).

²⁰⁰ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 40, f. 154r (12 January 1557).

²⁰¹ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 44, f. 144v (31 July 1563). David S. Chambers describes the funeral of another Mantuan ambassador who died in Venice in 1556. In his case, the Venetian government paid for the wax and the clergy's expenses, see: Chambers, "Benedetto Agnello", 145.

government did not pay the exequies organised for ambassadors representing smaller states. This is indicated by the account of expenses for the funeral of the Florentine Ambassador Vincenzo Alamanni, who died in January 1590. The embassy secretary Cammilo Guidi made all the necessary arrangements and bore the costs. He frequently wrote to Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici requesting a reimbursement.²⁰² The type of expenditure he listed is comparable to those made for the funerals of ambassadors in Venice: the coffin; the mourning garments for the diplomatic family; the decoration of the church; and the friars, canons and musicians.²⁰³

Another interesting funeral to analyse is that of English diplomatic agent Edmund, or Sigismund, Harvel, as it highlights another status differentiation made by Venice, this time based on the accreditation of representatives. Harvel was granted the nomination of envoy, but he was never formally appointed as the official English ambassador. In fact, during the sixteenth century, England and Venice solely maintained sporadic diplomatic contacts. Only with the accession to the English throne of James I in 1603, an English resident embassy was established in Venice.²⁰⁴ Harvel's exequies attest to the fact that Venice did not bestow the same honours on mere envoys. Whereas the members of the *Signoria* always participated in an ambassador's obsequies, a note, appended to the list of expenses of Harvel's funeral, stated that the *Signoria* did not attend this time since he was not considered a real ambassador, but only as a *nontio* and vice ambassador.²⁰⁵

In line with this thinking, Venice only defrayed a part of the funeral costs, by offering the necessary candles, and Harvel's family was responsible for the bulk of the expenses made on: torches; silk fabrics and the manufacture of the *scorozzosi*; wood for the adjustments to the baldachins; a bier adorned with velvet, crosses, escutcheons and gilded handles; and velvet decorations for the churches. Moreover, they compensated the people involved in the organisation: the *bagnadori in lutto*, who were members of the *Scuole Grandi* and had the responsibility to prepare the body of the deceased for the funeral;²⁰⁶ the master of the choir

²⁰² Letter from Cammilo Guidi to Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 3 February 1590: ASF, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Spagna, b. 4920, f. 424v; Letter from Cammilo Guidi to Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 10 February 1590: *ibid.*, f. 426v; Letter from Cammilo Guidi to Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 7 February 1590: *ibid.*, f. 435v.

²⁰³ Conto del essequie, n.d. [January 1590]: ASF, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Spagna, b. 4920, f. 413r.

²⁰⁴ Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 114.

²⁰⁵ Expended for the funeral of the most noble Lord Ambassador of England, the Lord Sigismund Harvell, 7 January 1550: CSP, Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, vol. 5: 1534-1554, no. 615; Horatio F. Brown, "The Marriage Contract, Inventory, and Funeral Expenses of Edmund Harvel," *The English Historical Review* 20, no. 77 (1905), 71.

²⁰⁶ Fortini Brown, "Le Scuole", 351 note 84.

for arranging a boat and singing boys; the chapter and clergy of the parish Church San Geremia; the ecclesiastic giving the eulogy; the bell-ringer; and the masons and carpenters.²⁰⁷

All these various examples have elucidated that, just as diplomatic entries and audiences, the funeral of an ambassador was a ceremony staged in a theatrical setting. The exequies reflected the place of the ambassador's sovereign in the international political society. Therefore, analysing a diplomatic funeral has offered yet another, perhaps more original, way to measure the importance of status, identity and a nation's power and esteem. To date, this ceremony has been overlooked when discussing diplomatic ceremonial, even though a consideration of this ritual widens our knowledge of the functioning of state ceremonies.

The analysis of the rituals of diplomacy in the Venetian Republic between roughly 1550 and 1610 has made clear that diplomatic ceremonies communicated a message about the nature of diplomatic culture and politics in Venice that can only be properly deciphered when taking into account its various components. The urban surroundings, the movements and gestures taking place within spaces and the material adornment of architecture and people all worked together to stage an elaborate ritual. These ceremonies did not undergo significant changes throughout the period under study, besides the fact that they become more lavish and expensive. During the further advancement of the seventeenth century, the ceremonial strategy still remained for the greater part unaltered.²⁰⁸

When approaching ritual life in Venice, especially the importance of space came to light. In the first place, the specific urban feature that distinguished Venice from other Italian states, its peculiar geographical location anchored in a lagoon, determined the progression of ceremonies. During the welcome reception, the selection of specific islands offered the Venetian government the opportunity to employ space as a tool to visualise hierarchical differentiations between states. Moreover, throughout the ambassador's sojourn, the political, religious, military and commercial spaces of the city were disclosed during the visits to all the notable things that Venice had to offer, which was aimed at emphasising the Republic's wealth and supremacy. Secondly, movements between spaces or within a specific room during diplomatic audiences and funeral rites of ambassadors were used to enhance the

²⁰⁷ ASV, Giudici del Proprio, Mobili, reg. 8, ff. 154v-155r (3 February 1550). The list of expenses is attached to the inventory of the goods of Harvel's wife, Apollonia Uttinger. For the publication of this list of funeral expenses, see: Brown, "The Marriage Contract", 77. For the English translation of another list of funeral expenses, see: Expended for the funeral of the most noble Lord Ambassador of England, the Lord Sigismund Harvell, 7 January 1550: CSP, Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, vol. 5: 1534-1554, no. 615.

²⁰⁸ For a description of the reception ceremonies of French ambassadors during the second half of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, see: Cossalter, "Dai Porti alle Isole", 137-146.

solemn atmosphere of the ceremony. In particular, during audiences, the physical advancement of both the Venetian ruling elite and the ambassador conveyed political messages that were easily understood by everyone involved. Another important facet of diplomatic rituals was the intrinsic connection between material culture and ceremonies. The materiality of the ritual was of great importance for a correct representation of the purposes of the ceremony. Furthermore, luxurious clothing, pictorial programmes and the embellishment of rooms and churches functioned as a strong visual indicator of status and power.

An important subcategory of the material culture of ceremonies were gifts. In Venice, three overarching categories could be distinguished: foodstuffs, gold chains and objects and textiles. On the one hand, an analysis of the variety of gifts has provided me with a key to decipher the hierarchy between states, since the gifts had to equate with both the rank of the ambassador's sovereign and the significance of an embassy. On the other hand, the consideration of the achievements and tastes of the ambassador additionally has shown the more personal, intimate character of diplomacy. Here, we encounter for the first time the dual identity of early modern ambassadors. Both material culture and the entanglement of identities determined all the facets of diplomatic life, something that the subsequent chapters will make abundantly clear.

PART I
THE AMBASSADOR'S COURT

The primary function of an early modern court was to serve the king; it was composed of his confidantes and servants whose activities were centred around his persona. Besides comprising a household with servants attending to the monarch's personal needs, the court was, moreover, the governmental core of administration of public affairs: political, economic, cultural and religious concerns all coincided in the king's household. Consequently, the court institution had multiple functions and practices, which varied according to geographical region. Furthermore, it was not a single unit, but consisted of diverse households organised around queens, heirs, ministers and other powerful individuals. Therefore, the court should be approached as a polycentric entity.¹ These various domestic centres necessitate studies of both their links with the king's court and their individual identity as a political and cultural hub.² Similarly, in the lively field of new diplomatic history, the characteristics of the court constructed by ambassadors while on mission is receiving more and more scholarly attention.

As royal representatives and embodiments of the king's honour in a foreign country, ambassadors established court structures similar to those of their sovereigns. Although in the strict sense of the word we cannot speak of a court, since the term was reserved to refer to the residence and family of worldly and spiritual rulers, in practice, the ambassadorial household can be regarded as a small-scale and downsized reproduction of the royal residence. However, contemporary treatises advised against trying to imitate the glory of the monarch:

[...] with regard to his dress, accommodation and the adornment of the family, he definitely has to exceed the duties of a private person, with a remarkable difference and magnificent splendour; however, he should not equal the actions that are reserved to kings (even if his wealth would allow him to do so); since just as it would be a sign of low and common condition if he would appear stingy on grand occasions, he would be judged as vain if he would

¹ Some good comparative studies on the early modern court include: A. G. Dickens, ed., *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400-1800* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977); Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke, eds., *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); John Adamson, ed., *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime, 1500-1750* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999); Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Major Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, eds., *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective* (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2011).

² Some studies on the female court include: Jan Hirschbiegel and Werner Paravicini, eds., *Das Frauentzimmer: Die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2000); Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Queenship in Europe, 1660-1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Anne Walthall, *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Sarah Bercusson, "Gift-Giving, Consumption and the Female Court in Sixteenth-Century Italy" (PhD diss., University of London, 2009); Giulia Calvi and Isabelle Chabot, eds., "Moving Elites: Women and Cultural Transfers in the European Court System. Proceedings of an International Workshop (Florence, 12-13 December 2008)", EUI Working Papers HEC 2010/02, European University Institute, 2010. For the importance of agents, such as governors and viceroys, see: Jeroen Duindam and Sabine Dabringhaus, eds., *The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces: Agents and Interactions* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

exceed his rank too much by trying to equal or imitate the royal grandeur, even if it is only for one time. Moreover, it would provoke indignation at the court where he is residing, and cause the envy of other royal ministers, especially of those that are of the same condition but had performed it in a less splendid way [...]³

Even though, as a royal envoy, the ambassador personified his prince and was to appear more magnificent than a private person, he was never the king's true embodiment and should not wish to equal the royal court's grandeur. When approaching the diplomatic home, another basic assumption that should always be kept in mind is that it was both a private house and work place. Consequently, living quarters were never detached from official life, while servants were employed as both personal and public agents.⁴ The early modern embassy was thus, as Natalie Rothman has called it, a composite household: a space where residential and business life coincided.⁵

This first part of the thesis will expand our current knowledge by analysing the physical, social and domestic dimensions of the diplomatic court of sixteenth-century French ambassadors stationed in Venice. In European dynastic settings, the term "court" included both spatial and social dimensions: on the one hand, it referred to the physical location of the residence; on the other hand, it was used to denote the group of people living and working there. As court historian Jeroen Duindam has formulated it: "a court is the enclosed space as well as the social circle around the ruler: his abode as well as his retinue of kin, consort, guards, domestics, advisors, purveyors."⁶ The same was true for the court of the early modern ambassador. Therefore, the following two chapters will focus on both connotations of the term: whereas the first chapter examines the physical embassy building and the sociability practices taking place within the house, the second chapter investigates the composition and management of the family members who were present in the ambassadorial home. In so doing, this part will shed light on some of the realities behind the political world

³ Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa Ávila y Zúñiga [from now on cited as de Vera], *El Embaxador*, discourse 2 (Seville: Francisco de Lyra, 1620), 117v: "[...] que en el modo de vestir, ospedar, i adorno de la familia, sin duda deve eceder la obligacion privada, con diferencia conocida, i esplendor manifico; pero no igualar (aunque por gran patrimonio lo pueda una vez hazer) alguna acion de las reservadas a los Reies; porque assi como se mostraria de animo vil, i plebeio, si cortamente procediesse en las ocasiones grandes, vano, i sobervio pareceria, si lo tan apartado de su estado, como la grandeza Real, quisiesse en nada igualar, o imitar, aunque fuesse por una vez, i causará indinacion a la Corte del Principe que assiste, i envidia a los ministros de su Rei, particularmente a aquellos que en los mismos oficios uviessen servido menos lustrosamente [...]"

⁴ The necessity of abandoning the customary distinctions between public and private life when studying diplomacy and the importance of the diplomatic house(hold) have already been highlighted in the publications of, amongst others, Catherine Fletcher and Jennifer Mori, which will be discussed later on in Chapters 2 and 3.

⁵ Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 17.

⁶ Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 158.

of diplomacy and reveal social complexities. The principal case study of these chapters is constituted by the domestic life in Venice of the main character of my dissertation: French Ambassador François de Noailles.

CHAPTER 2

THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS RESIDENCE

The first step of establishing an embassy abroad was finding an appropriate residence. Upon arrival, early modern ambassadors were thus immediately faced with the burdensome charge of locating a house in a foreign, unknown city. When François de Noailles arrived in Venice, he lamented a week after his arrival that he was still “[...] without a house, without furniture and without any provision.”¹ He was therefore obliged to lodge temporarily in the chambers of his predecessor, Dominique du Gabre, which made him feel very uncomfortable.² Half a century later, Philippe de la Canaye complained that he had to spend the first weeks of his residency searching for a house that best befitted him.³ Ambassadors were clearly aware of the importance of inhabiting a splendid palace that was in line with the needs and functions of the embassy. This is accurately summarised by a Venetian extraordinary ambassador to Constantinople, future doge Leonardo Donà, who in 1595 described his residence as “[...] very convenient for its daily use and very suitable to the reputation of the representatives of your *Serenità* [...]”.⁴

In recent years, diplomatic historians have realised that a consideration of both the architectural and social aspects of ambassadorial lodgings generates a deeper understanding of the daily workings of early modern diplomacy.⁵ A focus on the ambassador and his residence offers a rich field of investigation, since it incorporates many different topics: architecture, material culture, urban history, social practices and food studies. However, a systematic analysis for the sixteenth century is still absent. Therefore, by analysing diplomatic lodgings in Venice, I will underline how knowledge of the allocation of housing,

¹ Letter from François de Noailles to Charles de Guise [from now on referred to as Cardinal of Lorraine], 21 October 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 81r: “[...] sans logis, sans meubles et sans aucunes provisions.”

² Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 21 October 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 81r; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean du Bellay, 4 December 1557: *ibid.*, f. 145r.

³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Ambassador Philippe de Béthune, 30 October 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 13; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 2 November 1601 in *ibid.*, 20.

⁴ Quoted in: Tommaso Bertelè, *Il Palazzo degli Ambasciatori di Venezia a Costantinopoli e le Sue Antiche Memorie* (Bologna: Casa Editrice Apollo, 1932), 95: “[...] nel far aprir la porta della medesima casa, che è stato servitio molto commodo all’uso ordinario di essa et assai conveniente alla reputatione delli rappresentanti di Vostra Serenità [...]”.

⁵ Alessandra Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell’Ambasciata di Spagna presso la Santa Sede* (Rome: De Luca, 2001); Géraud Poumarède, ed., *Résidences d’Ambassadeurs et Immunités Diplomatiques (XVIe-XXe Siècle). Special Edition of Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 119, no. 1 (2007), 5-123; Catherine Fletcher, “‘Furnished with Gentlemen’: The Ambassador’s House in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” *Renaissance Studies* 24, no. 4 (2009), 519-535; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, ch. 6.

the characteristics of the embassy building and the sociability practices taking place within the residence expose a lot of valuable information about both the political and social functioning of early modern embassies. This approach is in line with recent historiographies of the early modern home that have broken with the traditional view of the house as a private domain, completely isolated from the public world. Instead, they emphasise that the domestic sphere was a place of hospitality, business, production and consumption.⁶

The practices surrounding ambassadorial lodgings evolved greatly over time. During the medieval period, it was still the host country that allocated a house and met the costs. With the spread of resident embassies during the sixteenth century, and the consequent rising costs of living expenditures, this practice eroded.⁷ Sovereigns began to set down their own rules regarding the reception of visiting ambassadors: whereas some still prepared lodgings and covered housing expenses, others refused any form of financial aid. The correspondence of European ambassadors indeed reveals that the modern system of a permanent building for the embassy generally did not yet exist during the sixteenth century.⁸ Ambassadors were thus forced to locate their own lodgings, and the dual purpose of the building complicated the hunt for suitable housing: the embassy functioned as the private house of the ambassador, but was simultaneously also the work place of the diplomatic corps.

The embassy space was not only charged with an institutional identity, but also with a social one. In line with Renaissance advice literature that emphasised the virtues and advantages of liberality, contemporary diplomatic treatises pointed to the necessity of always having an open house and lavishly entertaining guests. In doing so, his king's magnificence would be rightfully represented and sustainable ties with local elites and foreign ministers would be created. In practice, the embassy indeed functioned as an intimate environment of social interaction; however, this does not mean that it was a private sphere. Every movement

⁶ Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, eds., *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V&A Publications, 2006); Jeremy Aynsley, Charlotte Grant, and Harriet McKay, eds., *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance* (London: V&A Publications, 2006).

⁷ de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 260-261; Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 37.

⁸ There are some exceptions, such as the Venetian ambassadors, who had a stable residence in both Rome and Constantinople starting from the sixteenth century, see: Bertelè, *Il Palazzo degli Ambasciatori di Venezia a Costantinopoli*; Maria Letizia Casanova, *Palazzo Venezia* (Rome: Editalia, 1992); Giuseppe Bonaccorso, "I Veneziani a Roma da Paolo II alla Caduta della Serenissima: L'Ambasciata, le Fabbriche, il Quartiere," in *La Città Italiana e i Luoghi degli Stranieri (XIV-XVIII Secolo)*, eds. Donatella Calabi and Paola Lanaro (Rome: Laterza, 1998), 192-205; Maria Giulia Barberini, Matilde De Angelis d'Ossat, and Alessandra Schiavon, eds., *La Storia del Palazzo di Venezia: Dalle Collezioni Barbo e Grimani a Sede dell'Ambasciata Veneta e Austriaca* (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2011); Maria Pia Pedani, ed., *Il Palazzo di Venezia a Istanbul e i Suoi Antichi Abitanti / İstanbul'daki Venedik Sarayı ve Eski Yaşayanları* (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2013). During the course of the seventeenth century, more permanent embassy buildings were established. For a brief overview of when different nations erected a stable embassy, especially in Rome, but also beyond, see: Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 16-18.

and gesture was imbedded in a political and ceremonial context, governed by protocol. For an ambassador, acts of sociability and hospitality were ritualised and needed to conform to ceremonial rules. By analysing the sociability taking place within the French embassy, this chapter aims to reveal how the ambassador's palace functioned as a stage for, on the one hand, the display of status and, on the other hand, the power struggles between nations, in particular the French-Habsburg contest for political supremacy.

The diplomatic table played an important instrumental role supporting these social occasions. Food figured prominently during banquets and feasts organised in the embassy to celebrate significant national victories and accomplishments, or to socialise with high-ranking individuals. Because of its symbolic value, foodstuffs could affirm the power and reputation of the host. Furthermore, in the case of the ambassador, the served food and the pomp surrounding the meal also reflected the strength of his nation, and were an important tool to loosen the tongues of visitors and gain valuable information.⁹ Since these dinners were elaborate political acts, they needed to be framed appropriately. Not only was the number and diversity of courses carefully considered but also how the food was presented. To this end, every early modern ambassador was equipped with a collection of precious silver tableware, provided by his king before departing on mission. Both the consumption and display of food were indissolubly connected to politics.

The Architecture of Diplomacy

The basic necessity of every early modern ambassador was a house suitable to his private standing and the prestige of his embassy. By taking into account the architectural characteristics of this important institution, it will become apparent that the physical structure of an ambassador's living quarters had political and social implications. As a case study, the houses inhabited by François de Noailles and his successors will be examined closely in order to reveal whether the diplomatic residence properly displayed princely magnificence. Furthermore, Noailles' housing arrangements in Venice will be juxtaposed with the practices in a very different setting, London, so as to place the issue of diplomatic housing in a European perspective and point to the strong influence of the political context. While in Venice, Noailles experienced how the gift of housing could be a strong token of friendship

⁹ Eric R. Dursteler, "Food and Politics," in *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, ed. Ken Albala, vol. 3 of *A Cultural History of Food*, eds. Fabio Parasecoli and Peter Scholliers (London, New York: Berg, 2012), 95-97; Eric R. Dursteler, "'A Continual Tavern in My House': Food and Diplomacy in Early Modern Constantinople," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors*, eds. Machtelt Israëls and Louis A. Waldman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 166-171.

from one realm to another; in London, on the contrary, the animosity between England and France was expressed in the living conditions of the French ambassadors.

The Network of Embassy Buildings in Venice

Venetians attributed great importance to the house, since they thought of it as an embodiment of family identity. It was the prime locus where family values and status were displayed and it was believed that the location, size and appearance of the house communicated messages about the identity and rank of the owner. Therefore, Venetian patricians had the urge to finance grand building initiatives resulting in the erection of numerous imposing palaces in the city.¹⁰ When the English traveller Thomas Coryat visited Venice in 1608, he was greatly impressed by the beauty of its houses:

[...] many sumptuous and magnificent Palaces that stand very neare to the water, and make a very glorious and beautifull shew. For many of them are of a great height three or foure stories high, most being built with bricke, and some few with faire free stone. Besides, they are adorned with a great multitude of stately pillers made partly of white stone, and partly of Istrian marble. Their roofes doe much differ from those of our English buildings. For they are all flat and built in that manner as men may walke upon them, as I have often observed.¹¹

Ambassadors, who constituted a significant group in early modern Venice, would similarly strive to inhabit a splendid *palazzo*. The medieval practice of the Venetian Republic had been to offer a foreign ambassador food, shelter and clothing. During the fourteenth century, before the appearance of resident embassies, a decree was passed stating that every innkeeper should have two separate rooms available, honourably furnished and with four beds, to offer to ambassadors or other foreign officials visiting Venice. However, as has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, with the dawn of the modern age and the increase in diplomatic activity, the Venetians worked hard to limit the costs of embassies. Many laws were passed in relation to the control over expenses made for their own and foreign ambassadors. The Senate was of the opinion that costs of housing were a burden that should be carried by the princes who sent out diplomats. Therefore, a law dating from 1403

¹⁰ Patricia Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture, and the Family* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004), 23-50.

¹¹ Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 306.

prohibited Venetian ambassadors from accepting a house in the guest country, and a decree of 1499 forbade the allocation of housing to foreign ambassadors staying in Venice.¹²

From the fifteenth century onwards, resident ambassadors thus had to look and pay for their own accommodation. However, many other foreigners continuously frequented Venice and were in need of housing. This high demand for houses complicated the ambassador's search for a befitting and affordable residence. In 1560, Mantuan Ambassador Lodovico Tridapale reflected on the difficulties he encountered in finding appropriate accommodation for the special Mantuan delegation that would come to Venice to congratulate the newly elected doge. Since it was the period of the festivities of the Sensa, numerous foreigners wished to reside in the city, which reduced the number of available rooms. Landlords were aware of this competition in the housing market and knew that they could profit from the great interest in rooms and ask for excessive rental prices.¹³

Even though ambassadors rented a house from private individuals, the Venetian government tried to influence the selection of the location of a diplomatic residence. They wished to confine all embassies to the more marginal *sestiere* of Cannaregio, since the remoteness of this area made it easier to inspect both the ambassadors themselves and the people with whom they had contact.¹⁴ This way, their activities could be controlled and they were kept at a certain distance from St. Mark's Square, the centre of political power. Just as any other European power, Venice wished to curtail espionage practises by keeping an eye on the movements of the ambassadors.¹⁵ Still, the diplomatic residence enjoyed the privilege of immunity and extraterritoriality, preventing Venetian officials from entering the embassy without the ambassador's permission.¹⁶

¹² Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, 43; 54; 56.

¹³ Letter from Lodovico Tridapale to the Castellan of Mantua, 13 May 1560: ASMa, Archivio Gonzaga, Affari Esteri, Venezia, b. 1493; Letter from Lodovico Tridapale to the Castellan of Mantua, 20 July 1560: *ibid.* Thanks to Prof. Luca Molà for providing me with these references.

¹⁴ Mario Infelise, "Conflitti tra Ambasciate a Venezia alla Fine del '600," *Résidences d'Ambassadeurs et Immunités Diplomatiques*, 68; 70; de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 75. The correspondence of the French ambassadors indeed reveals that they resided in Cannaregio (see below). However, although Cannaregio was the most common *sestiere* for ordinary ambassadors to live in, not all of them erected their embassy there. For example, the papal nuncios appear to have had a house in Castello, near the Church of San Francesco della Vigna, where, during the second half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, many of them resided: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 63r (8 November 1577); *ibid.*, f. 118r (23 January 1590); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 60v (10 December 1618); Infelise, "Conflitti tra Ambasciate a Venezia", 70. For the Spanish ambassadors, examples could be found of houses in Santa Croce and St. Mark: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 65v (28 January 1578, Sant'Eustachio, Santa Croce); *ibid.*, f. 137r (19 September 1596, Santa Maria del Giglio, St. Mark). Cannaregio was also the district where foreigners in general were lodged, see: Philippe Braunstein, "Cannaregio, Zona di Transito?," in *La Città Italiana e i Luoghi degli Stranieri*, 52-62.

¹⁵ For an all-encompassing overview of espionage practices in Venice, see: Paolo Preto, *I Servizi Segreti di Venezia* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1994).

¹⁶ Some studies on diplomatic immunity include: Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1999); Poumarède ed., *Résidences d'Ambassadeurs et Immunités*

Whereas ordinary ambassadors were responsible for making their own housing arrangements, the Republic offered free accommodation to extraordinary ambassadors. Envoys sent for a special occasion only resided in the city for a brief period of time and, thus, Venice was willing to bear the costs.¹⁷ The houses prepared for their sojourn by the office of the *Rason Vecchie* were not confined to the Cannaregio district, but scattered across the city.¹⁸ This token of generosity and hospitality was well-received by foreign states. Even when extraordinary ambassadors came with an entourage of more than 100 people, they were all lodged free of charge. This was the case with the envoys from the Swiss canton of Grisons, who frequented the city in 1603 to ratify a new alliance with Venice. According to the accounts of Philippe de la Canaye, these extraordinary ambassadors, together with their suite of 150 people, were accommodated in a *palazzo* located on the Giudecca island. The house was honourably furnished by Jewish merchants, who equipped it with 80 beds, amongst other furniture, for which the *Signoria* paid a rent of 600 *écu*.¹⁹

The Giudecca island was also the standard location to house Ottoman ambassadors.²⁰ In the sixteenth century, Ottoman envoys were always extraordinary ambassadors sent out for

Diplomatiques. For case studies of diplomatic immunity in respectively Rome and Madrid, see: Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, ch. 7; Sarah Pelletier-Pech, "Les Maisons des Ambassadeurs à travers les Archives de la Sala de Alcaldes de Casa y Corte: Des Nids de Criminels au Coeur de la Capitale Espagnole?," in *Ambassadeurs, Apprentis Espions et Maîtres Comploteurs: Les Systèmes de Renseignement en Espagne à l'Époque Moderne*, ed. Béatrice Perez (Paris: PUPS, 2010), 343-358. Over the course of the seventeenth century, the concepts of diplomatic immunity and extraterritoriality evolved. In Rome, for example, ambassadors started to claim that their immunity was not limited to their residence, but stretched out over adjacent streets and neighbourhoods. This way, different areas in Rome were placed under their authority, which greatly irritated the pope who tried to abolish this practice. Laurie Nussdorfer, "The Politics of Space in Early Modern Rome," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 42 (1997), 175-176; Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, ch. 7.

¹⁷ The letters of Philippe de la Canaye make several references to this practice: extraordinary ambassadors from the Grisons, England and France were all accommodated in lodgings prepared by the *Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie*.

¹⁸ To give just a few examples of where extraordinary ambassadors were lodged: ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, f. 59v (10 July 1577, ambassador from Urbino in Santa Fosca, Cannaregio); *ibid.*, f. 61v (8 September 1577, ambassador from Savoy in San Geremia, Cannaregio); *ibid.*, f. 63r (November 1577, Swedish ambassador in San Luca, St. Mark); *ibid.*, f. 83v (17 February 1581, Muscovite ambassador in the Monastery of San Giovanni e Paolo, Castello); *ibid.*, f. 130r (9 May 1595, ambassador from Urbino in Santa Fosca, Cannaregio); *ibid.*, f. 132v (28 July 1595, French ambassador in San Severo, Castello); *ibid.*, f. 145v (28 July 1598, representative of the Spanish Netherlands in the house of Flemish merchant Carlo Helman in Santa Maria Formosa, Castello); *ibid.*, reg. 3, f. 22r (15 February 1607, French ambassador in Ca' Priuli, Santa Croce).

¹⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 5 September 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 121; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 10 September 1603 in *ibid.*, 129; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique du Vic, 19 September 1603 in *ibid.*, 133-134. Another example can be given of an ambassador from the Grisons. In 1607, Hercole Salice was lodged at the costs of the Republic; six rooms were rented for him and his large entourage, in addition to the expenses made on his food and boats: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 76, f. 159v (30 January 1607). Numerous other examples of ambassadors lodged at the costs of the Venetian government could be added.

²⁰ ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, reg. 1, *passim*; *ibid.*, reg. 3, *passim*; Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 60. However, there are also various examples of Ottoman ambassadors housed on the main island of Venice. The envoys themselves preferred the Santa Maria Formosa district, where the Turkish merchants traditionally

ad hoc missions since the sultan did not establish residential embassies until the end of the eighteenth century.²¹ The *Rason Vecchie* paid for all the costs surrounding their housing: the rent of the house and of the furnishings, the transport of these goods and the guarding of the building. In August 1581, ambassador and *çesnigir* Hasan Agà, who came to invite the doge to the circumcision of the sultan's son, was accommodated in *Palazzo Mocenigo*, situated on Giudecca.²² The Mocenigo family was a very prominent noble dynasty that produced various doges and other statesmen. They had built this *palazzo* in the sixteenth century as their summer vacation residence.²³ The fact that Hasan Agà was lodged in the residence of such a prestigious family is very telling of the regard in which Ottoman ambassadors were held. When a second Ottoman envoy, Ali Agà, arrived in Venice in 1581, he refused to be accommodated in the same house as Hasan Agà, the latter being of a lower status, but demanded to have his own residence, which was respected by the Venetian authorities.²⁴ Later documents reveal that *Palazzo Mocenigo* was regularly used to lodge Ottoman envoys: in 1595, *çesnigir* Hüseyin Agà likewise stayed here when he came to Venice to announce the accession of Sultan Mehmed III to the throne and to renew the peace treaty.²⁵ Again, this Ottoman ambassador was treated with great respect as he was first housed in a different residence but when Hüseyin Agà complained that his house was too small, he was relocated to the said *Palazzo Mocenigo*.²⁶

Returning to the housing of residential ambassadors, a factor that needs to be analysed is the continuity of the embassy building. Whereas the embassy was established occasionally in the same building for a considerable amount of time, it was more often the case that the diplomatic residence altered with the coming of a new ambassador. While ambassadors regularly took over furnishings from their predecessor, they did not always take over the lease of the house, even though this would have saved them from the strenuous hunt for appropriate lodgings. A newly appointed ambassador frequently lamented the discomforts caused by this, sometimes, long search.²⁷ These complaints about housing issues were a European-wide phenomenon. For instance, in 1606, Alonso Manrique de Lara, a Spanish

resided, see: Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 59-66. Safavid envoys apparently had more freedom in choosing their accommodation, see: Rota, "Safavid Envoys in Venice", 238.

²¹ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 2-4; 19.

²² ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, fz. 5 (21 August 1581).

²³ Elena Bassi, *Palazzi di Venezia: Admiranda Urbis Venetae* (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1987), 524-527.

²⁴ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 15 September 1581: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 368, ff. 320-323.

²⁵ Other *palazzi* on the Giudecca island that were regularly used to house Ottoman envoys are listed in: Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 60-61.

²⁶ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, fz. 9 (5 August 1595).

²⁷ See footnotes one to three in the introduction to this chapter.

clergyman who had served as ambassador ad interim in Rome in 1603, underlined the inconveniences of the absence of a stable residence for Spanish ambassadors at the papal court. He pointed to the high rental costs, which put a strain on the ambassador's finances, and the dangers of being evicted. Therefore, Manrique suggested the purchase of a Roman *palazzo* that would permanently house the Spanish embassy.²⁸

The question that arises is why new ambassadors were reluctant to stay in the house of the previous ambassador. Canaye is the only French ambassador in Venice that mentioned his motive by stating that the house of his predecessor was not appropriate: "I am trying to house and accommodate myself, not finding the house of my predecessor suitable for me."²⁹ Although he does not elaborate on the reasons why the house was not adequate, we can assume that he judged the building as not according to his status. The same issue of safeguarding one's status can be detected in the actions of the English ambassador in Venice, Henry Wotton, during his second residency in the city (1616-1619).³⁰ Wotton's predecessor, Dudley Carleton, had invested a lot of care and money in establishing a glorious embassy with the idea in mind that Wotton would take over his lodgings.³¹ Even though this residence must have been according to an ambassador's standing, Wotton did not concede to Carleton's wish of taking over his home, asserting that:

I refused (or rather my secretary before my arrival) your house in Canal Regio, not so much for the greatness of the rent (which the landlord would unconscionably have increased), as for the farness from the *piazze*, wherein, when I was lodged on the other side by St. Hieronimo, I found in truth much inconvenience. I am now singularly fitted, having concluded with Signor Gussoni for his house on the Canal Grande, which is one of the fairest in Venice, and withal for his villa at Noventa, which I had before. I pay 460 ducats for both; the villa finely furnished,

²⁸ Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 15. Anselmi also gives examples of the difficulties Spanish ambassadors faced in locating an appropriate residence in Rome until 1647, when Spain finally bought a *palazzo* to permanently house the Spanish embassy.

²⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 20 October 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 13: "[...] je travaille à me loger et accommoder, ne trouvant pas la demeure de Monsieur mon predecesseur à propos pour moy."

³⁰ Wotton completed three missions in Venice: 1604-1610; 1616-1619; 1621-1623.

³¹ Letter from Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 16 June 1614 in Dudley Carleton, *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603-1624: Jacobean Letters*, ed. Maurice Lee Jr. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 168-169: "Sir Henry Wotton doth somewhat confound me here in that he writes nothing about his house. I am very loath this where I now dwell (the fairest, most convenient and cheapest of any of the ambassadors') should go to any but the English. The French offers me largely to buy all my stuff at a good rate, to reimburse me the rest of a whole year's rent and to rest with much obligation; yet, I reserve it for my successor, which is more than I owe him considering his dealing with me when he was my predecessor, whereof all the stratagems were not known whilst you were here, and now it will be my luck to fall foul upon him again, both here and where he remains; for I forget private interest when I think what belongs to the public service, in which regard I have a care to accommodate him to my own loss and incommodity."

and the *castaldo* paid by him. There your Lordship may imagine me towards the end of this month, pressing of my grapes.³²

While price and location are both legitimate justifications for dismissing Carleton's house, a closer investigation divulges that something more must have influenced Wotton's decision. First of all, the rent for the house he selected, *Palazzo Gussoni Grimani*, was certainly more elevated than Carleton's residence. Wotton stated that he paid 460 ducats a year for both this *palazzo* and a villa in Noventa Padovana, which means that he spent probably around 200 ducats or more on his Venetian residence. However, more than 200 ducats on an annual basis was an unusually high rental cost, so it is very unlikely that Carleton's house would have been even more expensive. At the end of the sixteenth century, only 2,5 percent of the Venetian patricians paid this amount on rent. The majority, a bit more than 40 percent, paid between 50 and 100 ducats for their house, 33 percent paid less than 50 ducats and around 20 percent spent 100 ducats or more.³³ This rent turned out to be too high for Wotton, as he already had to vacate *Palazzo Gussoni Grimani* after six weeks.³⁴ In short, money issues could not have been the main reason for turning down Carleton's residence.

The raised concern regarding location is more credible, since for an ambassador, it was of vital importance to be close to the squares and markets where news circulated. *Palazzo Gussoni Grimani* was positioned on the Grand Canal, the most central and prestigious waterway in Venice. However, the *palazzo* was still located in the Cannaregio quarter, the same *sestiere* where Carleton's residence was situated.³⁵ Wotton would thus not have been much closer to St. Mark's Square and the Rialto, where the main information on Venetian and international politics could be gathered. Consequently, the only plausible motivation that could have driven Wotton's actions was his desire to outshine Carleton in matters of status. It is known that by 1616, when Wotton started his second mission to Venice, the relationship between the two statesmen had deteriorated, since they were both rivalling for the same diplomatic posts. Mark Netzloff, who has analysed Wotton's and Carleton's correspondence,

³² Letter from Henry Wotton to Dudley Carleton, 2 September 1616 in Wotton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 2, 101-102. See also: Letter from Henry Wotton to Ralph Winwood, 7 June 1616 in *ibid.*, 95-96.

³³ Laura Megna, "Comportamenti Abitativi del Patriziato Veneziano (1582-1740)," *Studi Veneziani* 22 (1991), 278-281; Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 196.

³⁴ Daniel McReynolds, "Lying Abroad for the Good of His Country: Sir Henry Wotton and Venice in the Age of the Interdict," in *The Image of Venice: Fialetti's View and Sir Henry Wotton*, eds. Deborah Howard and Henrietta McBurney (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2014), 116.

³⁵ During his first term as ambassador in Venice, Wotton had likewise lived in the *sestiere* of Cannaregio, probably in *Palazzo Silva* at the *Ponte degli Ormesini*, which consisted of fifteen rooms. McReynolds, "Lying Abroad for the Good of His Country", 116.

likewise concluded that there clearly existed an enmity between the two and that this was also reflected in the domestic sphere.³⁶ Wotton wanted to show that he could construct a more prestigious embassy than his rival. Apparently, besides the aspiration to appropriately represent the sovereign, the desire of enhancing and displaying one's private reputation pushed ambassadors to locate the most suitable lodging. This individual link between the ambassador and the embassy building highlights the personal dimension of early modern diplomacy.

A final general characteristic of the embassy building that has to be presented is the importance of its spatial dimensions, as the house needed to be suitable for ceremonial events. The ambassadors thus had to select an aristocratic *palazzo* equipped with a typical Venetian *portego*, which was the ideal space to host dinners and banquets. The adjacent smaller rooms offered a more intimate environment to discuss delicate state business and to accommodate the diplomatic entourage. The number of rooms and presence of stairs and doorways was also of importance, as they constituted crucial components in the display of rank and hierarchy during the reception of visitors. A house that did not comply with these ceremonial necessities could be adjusted to conform to the ambassador's status. For instance, the rental contract signed by the ambassador of the duke of Bavaria, Andrea Minucio, in 1598, concerning a house he rented on Murano, illustrates that the ambassador was allowed to make changes with regard to the kitchen in order to transform the room in line with his needs. The kitchen was located at a lower level in the house and Minucio wished to move it to a higher floor. It was stipulated in the contract that at the end of his lease, Minucio had to return the kitchen to its original location and restore the room he had used as a kitchen by removing the sink and replacing the chimney.³⁷

French Diplomatic Lodgings

Notwithstanding that it is a challenging task to identify the various houses inhabited by the French ambassadors, it is worth the effort, since the characteristics of a residence offer valuable insights into matters of reputation and self-fashioning, and into some features of diplomatic culture. French ambassadors arriving in Venice could not count on any support from the French or Venetian government in their search for accommodation. As a result, they

³⁶ Mark Netzloff, "The Ambassador's Household: Sir Henry Wotton, Domesticity, and Diplomatic Writing," in *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, eds. Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 165-166.

³⁷ ASV, Notarile, Atti, b. 475, ff. 73r-74r (5 April 1598). Thanks to Prof. Luca Molà for providing me with this reference.

were obliged to fall back on their own devices and contacts. Frequently, a servant was sent ahead to explore the city and locate possible residences. However, the above-quoted complaints and concerns of French ambassadors regarding the selection of an embassy building have already clarified that it was an arduous undertaking to locate a palace worthy of their status.

François de Noailles initially rented his house from Francesco and Filippo Vendramin, members of a rich and noble merchant family especially famous for their soap production, who had vacated a lodging for him on request of the *Collegio*. This house was located in the *contrada* Santa Fosca, *sestiere* Cannaregio.³⁸ The Vendramin family owned numerous properties in Santa Fosca situated alongside each other on the *Fondamenta de Ca' Vendramin*, enclosed by three canals: the *Rio di Santa Fosca*, *Rio Trapolin* and *Rio di Noale* (Figures 19 to 23).³⁹ It could, so far, not be identified which exact building was inhabited by Noailles, but all these palaces were typical Venetian noble buildings with vast rooms, high ceilings and large windows, which was absolutely in accordance with a French ambassador's esteem and, consequently, a suitable extension of his king's court. Furthermore, these buildings were definitely in line with the ceremonial needs of the embassy: they could house the family members in the ambassador's retinue and honourably entertain and accommodate visitors.

A letter from the Vendramin informs us that Noailles did not pay his rent regularly and that the Vendramin family was obliged to force him to make a reimbursement of 1.000 ducats, as they urgently needed the money to refund their creditors.⁴⁰ Assuming that Noailles had stayed in their house since his arrival in the autumn of 1557, a sum of 1.000 ducats for a lease of two and a half years is an extremely high amount, considering the standard Venetian renting costs outlined above. Thus, Noailles' *palazzo* certainly must have been very splendid and luxurious. It should be studied whether Noailles had to pay this rent with his private funds, or if the French crown allotted money for this. This is not a question with a clear-cut answer, since clear rules about the functioning of the diplomatic corps were not yet outlined in the sixteenth century. A message from Noailles' embassy secretary, Daniel Duran, sheds light on the matter. Duran was dispatched to the French court to arrange his master's affairs and to obtain the payment of the ambassador's salary and extraordinary expenditures.

³⁸ Letter from Francesco and Filippo Vendramin to François de Noailles, 21 April 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 11; ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, Deliberazioni, Comuni, reg. 24, ff. 105v-106r (29 May 1560).

³⁹ Today, one building is transformed into a hotel and another in luxurious apartments.

⁴⁰ Letter from Francesco and Filippo Vendramin to François de Noailles, 21 April 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, ff. 11-13.

Noailles had included his rental costs in his list of expenses; however, Duran removed this request since, according to him, ambassadors normally did not ask for a reimbursement of rent.⁴¹ This comment of Duran demonstrates that French ambassadors were, in theory, expected to provide the rent themselves. Probably, the French king thought that the salary was high enough to cover housing expenses. Nevertheless, this general prescription did not prevent ambassadors from trying to receive a separate refund. Even though his secretary advised against it, Noailles would include his rental costs again in his accounts of 1561.⁴² Similarly, during his English mission, Noailles had added his rent to his list of extraordinary expenses.⁴³ It cannot be traced if he was granted this compensation, but the most important fact that these examples indicate is that while ambassadors were expected to pay their rent out of their own salary, in practice, their allowance did not cover all the expenses and they at least tried to receive more funds.⁴⁴

Money issues were not the only difficulties ambassadors faced with regard to housing. In April 1560, the Vendramin family demanded their property back as they had already promised it to Andrea Corner, making Noailles homeless. The house of a certain Cristofolo de la Gata was recommended to him since it was well-suited to his standing. Moreover, it had a splendid garden, which was considered a high status symbol.⁴⁵ In the same year, the ambassador from Mantua, Lodovico Tridapale, was forced to leave his residence, as his landlord wished to use the property. According to Tridapale, there was a law in force in Venice that obliged renters to vacate the premise whenever the owner needed the house for himself. This compelled Tridapale to look for other lodgings, which was an arduous task due to the high rental costs. Moreover, he referred to a bad practice (*mal usanza*) that existed amongst Venetian landlords to demand an additional sum of money from renters that they

⁴¹ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 20 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 37.

⁴² Noailles requested a reimbursement of 115 *écu* for the rent of his house for an undefined period: Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venise, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 163r.

⁴³ Noailles listed his rent for nine months, which amounted to 250 *écu*, amongst his extraordinary expenses: Estat des partyes extraordinairement fournyes pour la service du Roy par Moy de Noailles Evesque d'Acqs durant le temps que j'ay residé ambassadeur pour ledit Seigneur en Angleterre, 15 July 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 18, ff. 458v-459r.

⁴⁴ Ambassadors from other nations similarly tried to receive money with regard to their housing. For instance, the Venetian ambassador in Turin in 1606 had to make several restorations to his house as it was in a bad state (*cattivo stato*). He received a sum of 300 ducats in order to make the necessary adjustments: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 76, ff. 67r-67v (12 August 1606).

⁴⁵ Letter from Francesco and Filippo Vendramin to François de Noailles, 21 April 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 12.

invested and gave back at the of the rental contract. In his case, he had to pay 300 *scudi* on top of the yearly rent of 130 *scudi*.⁴⁶

Luckily for Noailles, the Council of Ten spared him these inconveniences by offering and paying for a house, a deed that surprised everyone as, according to Noailles, Venice had never before provided an ordinary ambassador with housing.

Your Eminence, it has been approximately three weeks ago when the *Signoria* has bestowed me with such a great and extraordinary honour regarding my lodgings, which has surprised the whole world as it is such a novelty, especially since it was made by the authority of the Sovereign Magistrate, which is the Council of Ten. Even though I had not hoped or aspired to it. I appreciate it all the more because I know that this honour reflects the greatness of the King, to whom I belong. I have communicated the whole history to Sir Richier, the present courier, and I am sure that you will assess that it deserves a particular word of thanks from the King to the [Venetian] resident ambassador near his majesty.⁴⁷

Whether or not no precedent existed, this decision needs to be understood in all its importance: the gift was the mark of recognition of Noailles' extremely skilful accomplishments; it underlined the high regard in which his personal abilities were held. Moreover, with this act, the Venetian state delivered a clear message of friendship to France. The numerous congratulations that Noailles received also underline the political importance of this demonstration of generosity.⁴⁸

This gesture of hospitality towards France seems to have been a unique occurrence, since Noailles' successors were yet again in search for lodgings. During his first residency in Venice, Arnaud du Ferrier visited all the houses that were for rent in Venice but in the end he

⁴⁶ Letter from Lodovico Tridapale to the Castellan of Mantua, 1 October 1559: ASMa, Archivio Gonzaga, Affari Esteri, Venezia, b. 1492; Letter from Lodovico Tridapale to the Castellan of Mantua, 20 July 1560: *ibid.*, b. 1493; Letter from Lodovico Tridapale to the Castellan of Mantua, 27 July 1560: *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 21 June 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 369: "Monseigneur, il y a environ troys sepmaines que ceste Seigneurie m'a faict pour le regard de mon Logis une faveur si grande et extraordinaire, que tout le monde s'en est estonné comme de chose nouvelle, et tant plus qu'elle fut faite par l'auctorité du Souverain Magistrat qui est le Conseil de dix. Ce que neantmoins je n'avois ny esperé ny recherché. [Missing word] me faict l'en estimer d'advantage, et pour ce que je scay bien que ceste honesteté se faict a la grandeur du Maistre a qui je suis, j'en ay communiqué toute l'histoire au sieur Richier present porteur pour l'assurance que j'ay que vous la jugerez meriter ung particulier remerciement de la part du Roy a l'endroit de leur ambassadeur resident pres sa Majesté."

⁴⁸ For example: Letter from Cardinal François de Tournon to François de Noailles, 22 June 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 212: "[...] [j'ai] bien prins plaisir de la tant honeste demonstration qu'a faite ceste Seigneurie la, pour vous garder de l'incommodité d'ung remuement de menage de logis sur vostre partement, En quoy ils ont bien fait congnoistre a ung chacun l'estime que non sans raison ils font du Roy et de vous et la bonne volonté [...]"

decided to take over the house of his predecessor, Jean Hurault de Boistaillé.⁴⁹ When Ferrier returned for a second embassy to Venice, he lived in *Palazzo Michiel*, located in Cannaregio, certainly as early as 1574, when the newly elected French King Henry III visited Venice (Figures 24 and 25). After attending Mass in the nearby Church of Sant'Alvise, Henry III dined at the house of his ambassador.⁵⁰ Francesco Sansovino, a versatile Italian scholar and writer, also mentioned Ferrier's stay in *Palazzo Michiel* and designated the building as very noble.⁵¹ When the French ambassador inhabited the house it was still a fairly new *palazzo* as the construction was only started at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The house made a grand impression due to the richness of the materials used, the architectural features and the frescoes on the façade. Furthermore, it had a large garden befitting the aristocratic lifestyle. The garden reached up to the *Rio della Madonna dell'Orto*, where it was completed with a frescoed *casino*, a small garden house.⁵² Just as was the case with *Palazzo Vendramin*, the palace was also well-equipped for the social and ceremonial events that necessarily took place inside the embassy.

Ferrier's successor, André Hurault de Maisse, likewise took up residence in *Palazzo Michiel* when he arrived in 1582. At that time, the building was owned by Alvise Michiel, archbishop of Split, in today's Croatia, and the rental fee was 180 ducats, which was a high amount since only 20 percent of the Venetian patricians paid this sum for rent.⁵³ The great price confirms again the vastness and grandeur of the building; it was definitely suitable for the ambassador's standing. Here, we have an example of a more permanent structure for the French embassy; if both Ferrier and Hurault de Maisse stayed in *Palazzo Michiel* during their entire mission, it would have been the French embassy for 26 years. When Hurault de Maisse's successor, Antoine de Séguier, arrived in Venice in 1598, his secretary had an encounter with Maffio Michiel, the later governor of Zante (one of the Ionian Islands), who proposed his house to the ambassador, which was most probably again *Palazzo Michiel*.⁵⁴ This can be derived from the overview of dispensations granted to Venetians to visit

⁴⁹ Letter from Camille de la Croix to François de Noailles, 17 April 1564: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venice, vol. 28, f. 330r.

⁵⁰ Giuseppe Tassini, *Alcuni Palazzi ed Antichi Edificii di Venezia* (Venice: Tipografia M. Fontana, 1879), 272.

⁵¹ Sansovino, *Venetia Città Nobilissima*, vol. 1, 386.

⁵² Tassini, *Alcuni Palazzi*, 271-272; Bassi, *Palazzi di Venezia*, 444-446; John Dixon Hunt, *The Venetian City Garden: Place, Typology, and Perception* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2009), 73.

⁵³ Megna, "Comportamenti Abitativi del Patriziato Veneziano", 279.

⁵⁴ ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Licenze per visitare ambasciatori e personaggi esteri, 1562-1603, reg. 2 (23 September 1598): "Il Nobile Homo Signor Maffio Michiel ha havuto licentia di trattare con il secretario di Franza in proposito della sua casa."

ambassadors.⁵⁵ However, I believe that Séguier did not inhabit *Palazzo Michiel* during his mission, since the same source reveals that in February 1601, Francesco Contarini was granted a dispensation to visit the French ambassador *che è stato à sua casa*.⁵⁶ This leads me to suspect that Séguier was lodged in one of the many properties of the Contarini family in Venice. In May 1602, Maffio Michiel again tried to rent out his *Palazzo Michiel* to the newly appointed French ambassador, Philippe de la Canaye.⁵⁷ However, the correspondence of Canaye divulges that he had already selected his lodgings in the autumn of 1601, and no mention of a relocation is made in his letters the following year. Not much is known about the house that Canaye selected, which he denoted as a *cassine*, meaning a small house.⁵⁸ What pleased him especially about it was that it had “[...] the most beautiful garden in town [...]”. He could enjoy nature without having to escape from the city, and it offered him some refreshment during the heat of the summer.⁵⁹

It has by now become clear that references to a garden can frequently be detected in French diplomatic dispatches. Travellers in Venice during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often concluded that gardens were rare in Venice. However, the city actually has always had many gardens, but they were mostly private affairs, concealed behind high walls and not accessible to visitors. Especially the *sestiere* Cannaregio was a prime site for gardens, stretching between canals with a long and narrow shape and often enclosed with a *casino* at the far end.⁶⁰ Having a garden was in line with what treatises on civility and honourable life prescribed, such as the guidebook by the Venetian patrician and philosopher Giovanni Maria Memmo:

Try to have a large and spacious courtyard, and a beautiful garden adorned with various and delicate fruits, herbs, and flowers of many kinds, qualities, and fragrances, because for the

⁵⁵ It was forbidden for Venetian officials to interact with ambassadors in private environments. Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, 53.

⁵⁶ ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Licenze per visitare ambasciatori e personaggi esteri, 1562-1603, reg. 2 (17 February 1601): “Il Clarissimo Signor Francesco Contarini cavaliere ha havuto licentia de visitar l’Illustrissimo Signor Ambasciator di Francia che è stato à sua casa.”

⁵⁷ ASV, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Licenze per visitare ambasciatori e personaggi esteri, 1562-1603, reg. 2 (14 May 1602): “Gli Eccellissimi Signori Capi hanno dato licentia al Clarissimo Signor Maffio Michiel di poter andar à casa dell’Illustrissimo Signor Ambasciator di Francia per trattar di darle ad affitto la sua casa de Santo Alvise.” From this reference we can with certainty establish that it indeed concerns *Palazzo Michiel* as this building was located near the Church of Sant’Alvise.

⁵⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 30 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 54.

⁵⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Beaulieu, 29 January 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 120: “J’ay encore un autre contentement, c’est que j’ay le plus beau Jardin de la ville: de sorte que j’ay moyen de me promener sans aller chercher la terre ferme, et espere à la belle saison m’y porter mieux que je n’ay fait par ce facheux hyver.”

⁶⁰ A good reference work on Venetian gardens is: Dixon Hunt, *The Venetian City Garden*.

citizen, who spends a good part of his life in the palace, such things will be of no small enjoyment and recreation, and he will be especially delighted in agriculture so located, appreciated and used by the ancient sages: the garden, the loggia, and the courtyard will take away a great part of worries and boredom that are part of human affairs. And delighting in the study of good literature, [the citizen] will find infinite recreation each time, when tired from study, he enters the garden and with a little knife in his hand will choose some fragrant and delicate flower; he will capture a salad leaf in his own hand, he will pick a mature fruit; and enjoying such a pastime and recreation, he will create the highest and divine concepts, with which he will then fill learned and honoured pages upon returning to his study.⁶¹

Memmo's designation of the garden as a place that offers solace from the boredom of daily business is echoed in Philippe de la Canaye's reflections on his domestic life in Venice:

God wishes that Italy is more fortunate for me, at least the air is more pleasant, and I think that this charge allows me some rest. It is true, however, that this big city is very lonely, something I would not have thought, but my studies, garden and wife entertain me in the lost hours, and take away my boredom of indolence.⁶²

Besides referring to his garden as a place of leisure, Canaye also took pride in showcasing it to important visitors to underscore his prestigious lifestyle. When the duke of Mantua, Vincenzo Gonzaga, honoured him with a visit, Canaye intentionally left the garden door open, both to please the duke with the garden's beauty and to demonstrate his standing:

[...] he [Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga] glances at the entrance of my garden, which I had left open intentionally to give him pleasure with its sight. He asks me if I have a beautiful garden, and if this is rare in Venice. I answer him that it is the most beautiful one of the city, and that if he

⁶¹ Translation taken from: Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 48. Original quote in: Giovanni Maria Memmo, *Dialogo del Magn. Cavaliere M. Gio. Maria Memmo, nel quale dopò Alcune Filosofiche Dispute, si Forma un Perfetto Principe, et una Perfetta Repubblica, e Parimente un Senatore, un Cittadino, un Soldato, et un Mercatante* (Venice: Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari, 1563), 80-81: "Cerchi di havere una corte grande et spatiosa, et un bel giardino ornato di vari et delicati frutti, herbe, et fiori di molte sorti, qualità et odori: perché stando il Cittadino una gran parte della vita sua nel palagio, di non poco giovamento et ricreatione gli saranno cotai cose, et massimamenta diletlandosi dell'agricoltura tanto locata, apprezzata, et usata da i saggi antiche: il giardino, la loggia, et la corte gli levaranno una gran parte de i pensieri, et delle noie, che apportano seco i negotij humani. Et diletlandosi de gli studi delle buone lettere, troverà una infinita ricreatione ogni fiata, che stanco dallo studio entrerà nel giardino, et con un coletellino in mano anderà scegliendo qualche odorifero et delicato fiore; coglierà una insalatuccia di sua propria mano, torrà un maturo frutto: et stando in tal diporti et ricreatione, farà altissimi et divine concetti: de' quali poi ritornando allo studio riempierà le dotte et honorate carte."

⁶² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 9 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 30: "Dieu vueille que l'Italie me soit plus fortunée; au moins l'air m'en est plus agreable, et me semble que ceste charge me promet du repos: vray est, que ceste grande ville est plus solitaire, que je n'eusse pensé: mais mon estude, et mon jardin, et ma femme m'entretiennent aux heures perduës, et m'ostent l'ennuy de l'oysiveté."

wishes he can go in to enjoy it; he consequently leaves the stairs and heads towards the garden.⁶³

The importance attached to open-air life is similarly reflected in the custom of wealthy Venetian patricians to possess a second property outside the city in order to escape the summer heat, a habit that the French ambassadors embraced. It appears that they did not rent their own country house, but used the networks they had established in the city so as to gain access to magnificent palaces in the Veneto.⁶⁴ Hence, the place where an ambassador stayed tells us something about his networking capabilities and the extent of his local integration, and it reveals who exactly the French ambassador's contacts were. A popular location for the country house was Noventa Padovana, a commune near Padua, where François de Noailles occasionally frequented a villa owned by Daniele Barbaro, patriarch of Aquileia and an important scholar.⁶⁵ Barbaro's token of generosity illustrates Noailles' abilities as ambassador: although it was officially forbidden for foreign ambassadors to have regular contacts with members of the upper social and cultural circles of Venice, Noailles had anyway succeeded in establishing a stable relationship with Barbaro and could employ this for his own private benefit.⁶⁶

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Philippe de la Canaye likewise established contacts with a Venetian official, Captain Vincenzo Gradenigo, who had retired in Padua. Their close relationship can be gleaned from a letter of Canaye to French Cardinal Arnaud d'Ossat, where he recommended Gradenigo for the post of archbishop of the Kingdom of Candia, nowadays Crete, and designated him as one of his dear friends.⁶⁷ When Canaye

⁶³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 27 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 201-202: "[...] il jette l'oeil sur l'entrée de mon jardin, que j'avois fait tenir ouvert exprès pour luy donner le plaisir de la veuë: il me demande si j'avois beau jardin, et que cela estoit rare à Venise. Je luy dis que c'estoit le plus beau de la ville, et que s'il y vouloit aller il y prendroit plaisir; il quite donc le degré et prend le chemin du jardin." A garden remained a standard feature of the French embassy in Venice; both *Palazzo Rizzo-Patarol*, on the *Fondamento Madonna dell'Orto* (Figure 26), and *Palazzo Surian*, on the *Fondamento di Cannaregio*, where the French ambassadors stayed in the eighteenth century, had an extensive and renowned garden. Ambassador François-Joachim de Pierre, Cardinal de Bernis, described his garden at *Palazzo Surian* as very enjoyable, filled with 34 orange and citron trees and oleander flowers. Richert, ed., *Ambasciatori di Francia a Venezia*, 16-18; Maria Pia Cunico, *Il Giardino Veneziano: La Storia, l'Architettura, la Botanica* (Venice: Albrizzi, 1989), 127-130; 176; Dixon Hunt, *The Venetian City Garden*, 70; 74.

⁶⁴ Other ambassadors did pay rent for a villa in the countryside, such as Henry Wotton, who rented a fully furnished villa in Ponte di Brenta, a commune in Padua, during his third residency in the city (1621-1623). Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, 150.

⁶⁵ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Lorenzo Strozzi, 17 June 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 183; Letter from Daniele Barbaro to François de Noailles: *ibid.*, f. 307.

⁶⁶ The figure of Daniele Barbaro will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

⁶⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal Arnaud d'Ossat, 13 March 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 163.

wished to escape the city, he stayed in Gradenigo's *palazzo* in Padua, which, according to Canaye, had a vast number of chambers, the most beautiful garden of Padua and direct access to the city walls, which was the most pleasant place to enjoy a walk.⁶⁸ Furthermore, French ambassadors frequently visited Conegliano, a town in the countryside of the Veneto. Noailles stayed here with Cardinal François de Tournon, a close friend and advisor. Again, Canaye likewise chose Conegliano to enjoy the fresh air of the countryside and to avoid the heat of Venice during the summer.⁶⁹

Overall, the French ambassadors took pleasure in their stay in their Venetian residences. Canaye stated that: "I am here in a house that is much convenient for my humour [...]".⁷⁰ Also, generally speaking, Frenchmen held the city of Venice in high esteem. A French friend, who congratulated Noailles for his appointment, compared Venice to paradise (*paradis*) and was happy that Noailles was liberated from England, which he qualified as purgatory (*purgatoire*).⁷¹ The embassy of Noailles and his brothers, Antoine and Gilles, in London had indeed been very arduous and challenging due to the continuous political tensions between France and England. This anxiety exerted a lot of pressure on the standards of living of the French ambassadors. Therefore, an examination of the complications surrounding the accommodation of the Noailles brothers provides valuable insight into the interplay between politics and diplomatic housing. Although it exceeds the geographical boundaries of my dissertation, this case study offers an interesting comparison and allows for a broader approach to the topic of ambassadorial residences.

The Weight of Politics on the Allocation of Housing

The political aspects of the missions of Antoine, and to a lesser extent of François and Gilles de Noailles, in England have already been analysed by Elmore Harris Harbison in his book *Rival Ambassadors in the Court of Queen Mary*. He investigated the position of England during the Habsburg-Valois Wars in the 1550s through the correspondence of Imperial Ambassador Simon Renard and French Ambassador Antoine de Noailles. Harbison presented an extensive overview of the political struggle between the French and English crowns and

⁶⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, 31 January 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 425.

⁶⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 23 August 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 185; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 1 September 1606 in *ibid.*, 194.

⁷⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to de Fages, 20 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 149: "Je suis icy en une demeure autant commode pour mon humeur [...]".

⁷¹ Letter from Antoine Escalin des Aimars to François de Noailles, 26 October 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 32.

referred briefly to the impact that this had on the accommodation of ambassadors.⁷² The thread of his narrative will be taken up and his findings will be enhanced by a closer examination of the Noailles brothers' ambassadorial lodgings.⁷³

Although the English monarchy traditionally offered accommodation to ambassadors, this gesture of hospitality gradually was revised during the mid-sixteenth century. A letter dating from 1553 written by Jehan Scheyfve, the imperial ambassador in England, reported that King Edward VI had decided not to provide lodgings for ambassadors any longer. They ought to rent a house at their own expense, since English envoys were likewise required to do so, thereby suggesting that it was the common practice of European courts to refuse to pay for the residence of foreign agents.⁷⁴ The transition from old to new practices in the 1550s is clearly reflected in the reception of the Noailles brothers, whose correspondence demonstrates the trends in England's hospitality towards foreign ambassadors. Despite Scheyfve's report, Antoine's accommodation was still paid for by the English crown. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he was not faced with the difficulties of housing; he was constantly moved from one house to another and his itinerary can be regarded as a reflection of the fluctuating political relations between France and England.

When Antoine arrived in London in the spring of 1553, John Dudley, first duke of Northumberland, led the government of King Edward VI. However, the king's health was declining and Dudley feared the king's sister, Mary, rise to the throne, in which she was supported by her Habsburg allies, since this would end his leading position in the English government. He therefore wished to strengthen his relations with France in the hope of gaining French support, and offered Antoine one of his houses. Antoine chose Charterhouse, a large courtyard house which Northumberland had bought from Sir Edward North, an English politician, in May 1553. North had converted this house, originally a Carthusian monastery, into a mansion in 1545. The estate made an imposing impression because of its location and dimensions. Situated just outside London, its inhabitants enjoyed fresh and healthy air and were removed from the masses of the city. Moreover, the mansion could be reached without passing through London, which made it a perfect spot for secret meetings, something that Antoine took full advantage of as he organised covert gatherings in his

⁷² Amy Cowan also has briefly touched upon the housing issues of the Noailles brothers in London in her unpublished master's dissertation on the diplomatic culture of the brothers' English missions: Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy", 12-14.

⁷³ See Source 2 with a selection of transcriptions of letters written by Antoine de Noailles, illustrating his constant housing problems in London.

⁷⁴ Letter from Jehan Scheyfve to Bishop Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, 30 May 1553: CSP, Spain, vol. 11: 1553.

extensive gardens.⁷⁵ Charterhouse also met expectations regarding size: an inventory of 1565 lists the numerous chambers, including a wine cellar, bakery, and even a bowling alley.⁷⁶

Due to Antoine's involvement in a political intrigue in 1553-1554, his pleasant stay at the isolated Charterhouse was abruptly terminated. Driven by patriotic and religious motives and hatred towards the Spaniards, a group of conspirators had conceived a plot aimed at preventing the marriage of the newly crowned English monarch, Queen Mary, with Spanish King Philip II. Since the French monarchy likewise wished to prevent an Anglo-Spanish marriage at all costs, Antoine was given instructions to aid the schemers. Due to their lack of military expertise and the decisive action taken by the queen to undermine the plot, the intrigue was averted.⁷⁷ After the discovery of France's involvement in the uprising, referred to as Wyatt's Rebellion, Queen Mary moved Antoine to Bridewell Palace at the end of March 1554. This way, she could keep a better eye on him because the palace was situated in central London.⁷⁸

Bridewell Palace, on the banks of Fleet River, had been a residence of King Henry VIII and was a spacious complex with three large courtyards. When the king abandoned the palace around 1530, it was used to entertain important visitors such as Emperor Charles V, and it became the main location where French ambassadors were accommodated until the 1550s. For example, in the 1530s, it had been leased to French Ambassador Jean de Dinteville and was the setting of Hans Holbein's famous painting *The Ambassadors*.⁷⁹ Despite the building's status, Antoine initially complained about his relocation, since the Imperial Ambassador Renard, who maintained an intimate relationship with Queen Mary and had previously inhabited the palace, had taken not only his personal possessions with him, but also the doors, windows and locks. Additionally, Renard left one of his servants behind, who was ordered to stay at the entrance so as to control Antoine.⁸⁰ Still, Bridewell Palace can be qualified as a suitable lodging for an ambassador, something that Antoine would admit

⁷⁵ Philip Temple, *The Charterhouse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 39-43; Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy", 12-13.

⁷⁶ Even though the house was remodelled between Antoine's stay and the registration of the inventory, the general structure remained the same. The garden and bowling alley were certainly present during Antoine's residency. For the inventory of 1565, see: Temple, *The Charterhouse*, 198-251.

⁷⁷ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, ch. 5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁷⁹ Simon Thurley, "The Palaces of Henry VIII," in *Architecture et Vie Sociale à la Renaissance: L'Organisation Intérieure des Grandes Demeures à la Fin du Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance. Actes du Colloque Tenu à Tours du 6 au 10 Juin 1988*, ed. Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 1994), 99-100; Robert O. Bucholz and Joseph O. Ward, *London: A Social and Cultural History, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 52.

⁸⁰ Double du mémoire baillé a La Marque s'en allant en France, 29 May 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 362.

later on since he enjoyed the huge garden and tennis court and would qualify it as the most beautiful palace the royal family owned in London.⁸¹

Already in September 1554, Antoine was moved to a new residence, according to him, already his fifth relocation.⁸² He was given a choice between the house of the late duke of Suffolk and the Deanery of St. Paul's.⁸³ He preferred the first residence as it was magnificent, large and equipped with a garden. However, it was being used as a shelter for poor women and orphans, and it would have been too problematic to vacate the premises.⁸⁴ Therefore, Antoine had to accept the second option, the Deanery, which he experienced as a great inconvenience and humiliation; first of all since the queen only gave him a few days' notice and, secondly, because he had already stocked his winter provisions and was now forced to transfer everything.⁸⁵ The reason for yet another relocation is not completely clear, since even though the tensions between France and England were still very high, both countries wished to prevent the outbreak of war. In his dispatches, Antoine related that the official reason given by King Philip II and Queen Mary was that the king wished to use Bridewell Palace to store some furnishings that he had brought from Spain. However, Antoine himself believed that he was obliged to depart because the palace would be used to accommodate Spanish troops and munitions.⁸⁶ The history of the palace reveals yet another story: the previous English monarch, Edward VI, had already promised to give it to the city of London, which would turn it into a house for vagrants, orphans and use it to punish misdemeanours.⁸⁷

During the summer of 1555, the English masses' sense of discontent and hatred towards the Spaniards grew to new heights. The Council of Queen Mary was aware that new schemes against her were being devised and wanted to avoid French assistance. As a result, Antoine was pampered, and the queen ordered that he be moved to better lodgings. Mary also wanted him to be closer to Cardinal Pole, the papal nuncio who acted as mediator in the peace

⁸¹ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 160-161; Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 21 September 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 500; Letter from Antoine de Noailles to King Henry II, 22 September 1554: *ibid.*, ff. 503-504.

⁸² It could not be clarified if Antoine was exaggerating to underscore his inconvenience, or whether this really was his fifth, instead of third, relocation.

⁸³ Henry Grey, duke of Suffolk, was convicted of high treason and beheaded in February 1554 on account of his involvement in Wyatt's Rebellion.

⁸⁴ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 21 September 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 500.

⁸⁵ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to Constable Anne de Montmorency, 22 September 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 505.

⁸⁶ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to King Henry II, 22 September 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, ff. 503-504.

⁸⁷ Bucholz and Ward, *London*, 52; 230.

negotiations between France and Spain, so that they could frequently discuss the plans for French-Spanish reconciliation.⁸⁸ Antoine was offered a house in Southwark, a district in South London on the south side of the Thames, which was appropriate for an ambassador of his standing. Antoine himself was pleased with this accommodation; he referred to it as *beau logis* and really wished to bequeath this lodging to his brother François, who would come to relieve him from his duties.⁸⁹ However, relations deteriorated very rapidly once more, since Antoine again became involved in a conspiracy, this time led by Henry Dudley, which aimed at replacing Queen Mary with her sister Elizabeth. After his exposure, Antoine left London, leaving his brothers behind in a very tense and unpleasant climate.⁹⁰

After this turbulent period and Antoine's treacherous behaviour, Mary no longer wished to pay for the French ambassadors' accommodation, a clear illustration that the decline in Anglo-French relations had been transposed to the treatment of ambassadors. Despite this, Gilles, who had succeeded his brother in anticipation of the arrival of François, refused to pay his rent, which led his landlord to appeal to the Council of the queen. The circumstances are recounted in a letter from the Council to English Ambassador to France Henry Wotton:

The owner of the house wherein the French Agent [Gilles de Noailles] was lodged, hearing that the Bishop of Acqs [François de Noailles] had arrived and the Agent was on the point of departure, had demanded his rent; but the Agent answered him in round terms that it was the custom of England that Ambassadors should be lodged free, and therefore willed him to require the rent from her Majesty, who he thought would see the same discharged, for he would pay him none. The owner accordingly applied to the Council, requesting that as he could not have the rent by fair means, he might be at liberty to arrest the Agent for it. Had sent to the Agent to explain that while the Queen had houses of her own she was content to lodge the Ambassadors free; but now, these being otherwise bestowed for public uses, and her Majesty having scarce houses to serve her own and the King's turn, they thought it no reason that either she should forbear her own necessary houses to lodge him, or pay for his lodging in any other place. If she had had the commodity to show him the like graciousity as to others of his sort heretofore, she would willingly have done so; but having no means thereto, he must be content to be used as Ambassadors both are in all other realms and have been also in this, till now of late years.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 275.

⁸⁹ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 10 November 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 1053; Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 20 November 1554: *ibid.*, f. 1085.

⁹⁰ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 270-294.

⁹¹ Letter from the Council of Queen Mary to Henry Wotton, 9 November 1556: CSP, Foreign, Mary: 1553-1558, no. 555.

How the dispute ended is not completely clear; even if Gilles still refused to pay, his landlord would not have been able to conduct harsh actions against him because of the immunity that diplomats enjoyed abroad.

When François arrived in London, he was likewise obliged to look for private lodgings and pay his own rent. As a result, François found himself in a very difficult position, as he was not able to live according to the prestige and status of his king. The first months of his embassy were spent in an inn, where he feared for his life every night. Because of this, and in order to enhance his position at the English court, he was forced to resort to bribery. He won his way back into the queen's favour by giving her gifts and, once this was accomplished, she helped him to lease a house from Robert Southwell in Bermondsey, again a district in South London, south of the Thames.⁹² This was a suitable lodging for a French ambassador, as it was an extensive property with gardens, orchards and stables. Furthermore, it was fully equipped with furnishings that François was allowed to use.⁹³ Nevertheless, Noailles still needed to pay for the rental costs that amounted to 250 *écu* for a period of nine months.⁹⁴

The narrative of the housing allocation of the Noailles brothers in London has clearly illustrated how the establishment of the embassy was deeply rooted in the political context. The fluctuating diplomatic relations between France and England were reflected in the hospitality rewarded to the ambassadors. Furthermore, this case study has yet again proven how the embassy building functioned as a status symbol for the ambassador and his nation. However, early modern diplomatic residences were not only intertwined with politics and rank, they also served a ceremonial purpose: the architecture of the ambassador's house provided the framework within which the etiquette of diplomacy and the reception of guests, so crucial for early modern diplomacy, were acted out.

The House as Socio-Political Arena

“Every Mans proper *Mansion House* and *Home* being the *Theatre* of his *Hospitality*.”⁹⁵ This quote from *The Elements of Architecture* published in 1624 and written by English Ambassador Henry Wotton, who had completed his last residency in Venice in 1623,

⁹² Cowan, “The Culture of Diplomacy”, 14.

⁹³ Louage de la maison de monsieur l'ambassadeur, 25 December 1556: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 18, f. 259r.

⁹⁴ Estat des partyes extraordinairement fournies pour le service du Roy par Moy de Noailles Evesque d'Acqs durant le temps que j'ay residé ambassadeur pour ledit Seigneur en Angleterre, 15 July 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 18, ff. 458v-459r.

⁹⁵ Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), 65.

captures one of the most important roles of the house: sociability and hospitality. Similarly, the embassy building was meant to be an open home, a locus of encounter and socialisation, through which visitors of many sorts moved. This section aims at revealing that sociability had important instrumental functions for an ambassador: receiving guests and accommodating visitors were indispensable to performing his diplomatic tasks. Furthermore, sociability was used as a criterion to measure rank and precedence in the international political arena. The diplomatic residence operated as the decor for continuous ceremonial battles, wherein rituals were manipulated and rivals overpowered.

Sociability and Hospitality

Historical investigations have argued that sociability and hospitably were key functions of the early modern house. The household was a social organism in which domestic largess and good entertainment were not at all mere private events, but a matter of public concern from which political advantages could be gained.⁹⁶ Social occasions functioned as instruments of symbolic communication, whereby a set of coded gestures was used to articulate the power and honour of the host.⁹⁷ Diplomatic historians following the trend of the new diplomatic history have similarly started to examine the social rituals of the embassy. A first characteristic of the sociability taking place in the diplomatic residence was that it had to be surrounded by magnificence. When inviting and entertaining guests, the ambassador strove to match princely liberality, since the evocation of a splendid atmosphere would reflect positively on his sovereign. Secondly, cultivating social ties with the local elite and other foreign ministers while on mission was of crucial importance in order to tactfully discover “[...] the affairs of the court, the news of the world and the important business of other princes.”⁹⁸ These two functions of sociability were closely interwoven with each other and contributed to the ambassador’s capabilities of maintaining a lavish and efficient court.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ This has especially been investigated for the English context: Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Maurice Howard, “Hospitality and Lodging in Sixteenth-Century England: The Evidence of the Drawings of John Thorpe,” in *Architecture et Vie Sociale à la Renaissance*, 257-264.

⁹⁷ For a general outline of the power of symbolic communication in historical, political phenomena, see: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, “The Impact of Communication Theory on the Analysis of the Early Modern Statebuilding Processes,” in *Empowering Interactions: Political Cultures and the Emergence of the State in Europe, 1300-1900*, eds. Wim Blockmans, André Holenstein, and Jon Mathieu (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 313-318.

⁹⁸ Quoted from *Ricordi per li Ambasciatori* in: de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 72.

⁹⁹ Fletcher, “Furnished with Gentlemen”, 519-535; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 137-144.

However, the possibilities of liberality could be challenged by financial restraints or government restrictions.

It was of the utmost importance that, when entertaining guests, an ambassador did so befitting his rank. Advice on how to uphold the values that were in line with his status and reputation could be found in contemporary guidelines for household management and, more specifically, in diplomatic treatises. Practically every treatise on the figure of the early modern ambassador devoted a section to the importance of socialising.¹⁰⁰ However, Étienne Dolet, who had held the post of secretary of the French ambassador in Venice from 1528 to 1529, also warned of the dangers of sociability in his *De Officio Legati* (1541). An ambassador had to be prudent with his extravagant entertainment so as not to fall into the pitfall of exhausting his funds before the end of his embassy, which would reflect poorly upon the character of the ambassador:

He will also be on his guard that his magnificence end as it began; lest a cessation or reduction of his liberality at the end be taken as evidence that, at the beginning, he had not sufficiently weighed the question whether or not he could bear the expense he was incurring. And what other result could such a mistake have than to give one the reputation of being a rash and imprudent man?¹⁰¹

The correspondence of early modern ambassadors indeed reveals the great strain that entertaining put on their funds, which was one of their main financial grievances.¹⁰²

Besides the economic difficulties that went hand in hand with sociability, ambassadors located in Venice were confronted with another obstacle. In the Venetian Republic, the ambassador's task of entertaining was greatly restricted by Venetian laws that prohibited foreign ambassadors to have contact with Venetian officials and patricians. Ambassadors were considered as lawful spies and, therefore, Venice wanted to limit their access to Venetian citizens and the information the latter possessed. Already in 1451, the Council of Ten passed a law that forbade Venetians from inviting ambassadors into their house. Thirty years later, in 1481, a more severe law was declared, stating that members of the Senate,

¹⁰⁰ This remained a typical advice throughout the early modern period and was also expressed in unpublished manuals with guidelines for ambassadors, such as the booklet written most probably by Louis Rousseau de Chamoy in 1697: Louis Rousseau de Chamoy, *L'Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, ed. M.L. Delavaud (Paris: A. Pédone, 1912), 32-34.

¹⁰¹ The original treatise was written in Latin, here, I used the translation by Jesse S. Reeves: Jesse S. Reeves, "Étienne Dolet of Orleans, France", *The American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 1 (1933), 87.

¹⁰² A general overview of the financial complaints of early modern ambassadors can be found in: Paul M. Dover, "The Economic Predicament of Italian Renaissance Ambassadors," *Journal of Early Modern History* 12, no. 4 (2008), 137-167.

Secret Councils and *Collegio* were prohibited from discussing state matters with ambassadors in their home or anywhere else. If they would not obey this decree, the punishment was a fine of 1.000 ducats and a two-year banishment from the city. Similar regulations were introduced over the following years, so that foreign ambassadors stationed in the Venetian Republic complained that they felt isolated and longed to mingle with men of their own standing.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, in practice, ambassadors recurrently had contact with high-standing Venetians through informal channels and secret encounters in private homes, churches, squares and street-corners, which were impossible to control and limit by the government. For example, Spanish Ambassador Francisco de Vera y Aragon strategically placed himself in the stall next to *Savio* Giulio Michiel while attending Mass in *San Giovanni e Paolo*. Michiel recounted to the *Collegio* that he could not prevent the ambassador from sharing his thoughts and posing questions. Both the ambassadors and the Venetian elites considered each other as precious information sources, and conversations would expand their knowledge of state affairs and, additionally, provide access to patronage.¹⁰⁴

Amongst the numerous ambassadors who resided in Venice, there existed a much more open and shared culture of sociability and liberality.¹⁰⁵ During these encounters, both parties strove to appear as splendid as possible. Therefore, when French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye met with the special envoys from the Grisons, who had come to the city with a grand entourage of 150 people in 1603, he likewise assembled all the members of the French nobility present in Venice, and even some Polish gentlemen who loyally served the French king, in order to appear with an equally magnificent retinue before these extraordinary ambassadors.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, when inviting or being invited into an ambassador's home, a highly articulated protocol that took into account the rank of the hosts and guests was to be respected so as not to disturb the harmony of the political arena.¹⁰⁷ The most important prescriptions were to always return the favour of a visit and to maintain a balance between meetings with agents of various states. If not, the failing to appear could be considered as a

¹⁰³ Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, 53-54; Richert, ed., *Ambasciatori di Francia a Venezia*, 26-28; de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 71.

¹⁰⁴ de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 70-74. Especially during games organised in diplomatic residences, many Venetian officials and nobles were present. Also the wearing of masks allowed ambassadors and Venetian patricians to have secret meetings, see: Infelise, "Conflitti tra Ambasciate a Venezia alla Fine del '600", 71.

¹⁰⁵ For the court of Rome, see: Fletcher, "'Furnished with Gentlemen'", 522-523.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 25 September 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 141.

¹⁰⁷ Detailed accounts, outlining the etiquette that ambassadors needed to respect during visits in the embassy, were composed. See, for example, the report dating from around 1644, which prescribed the Tuscan ambassador in Rome how to receive guests, published in: Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (Cambridge, New York: The MIT Press, 1990), Appendix 1.

political message, which could damage the relationship between nations. Canaye, for instance, felt offended when English Ambassador Henry Wotton did not visit him for more than three months. Wotton gave the, according to Canaye, weak excuse of not having a gondola at his disposal and did not find it suitable to employ a rented model. Canaye accepted Wotton's justification, but he did not believe one word of it.¹⁰⁸ Even though the affairs between France and England were stable and peaceful at this point, the negligence of the English ambassador could be reason enough to start to doubt the political relations.¹⁰⁹ Canaye himself also made some ceremonial mistakes: he had visited the agent of Mantua in Venice but not the representative of Urbino, who consequently felt neglected.¹¹⁰

Another general rule at European courts was that newly arrived ambassadors were first visited in their home by the agents and ambassadors already present in the city, before starting their own visits. Nonetheless, ceremonial agreements were not always respected, which led to honour disputes between ambassadors and their respective sovereigns.¹¹¹ This was the case when Philippe de la Canaye arrived in Venice in 1601. At a first instance, the papal nuncio bestowed upon Canaye the appropriate privileges and sent his secretary to salute Canaye on his route to Venice, after which Canaye returned the honour by dispatching his nephew to transmit graceful words of admiration.¹¹² However, once Canaye had arrived in Venice, the papal nuncio refused to meet him in person, as the pope had instructed him to never visit diplomatic agents who had not first come to see him in his house. Canaye understood that regular contacts with the papal legate were indispensable because, as he formulated it in a letter to the secretary of state, "[...] I have need for his communication as to learn from him many affairs that I cannot obtain elsewhere."¹¹³

Luckily, intelligent ambassadors had a talent for bypassing ceremonial rules and both the nuncio and Canaye came up with a strategy that would allow them to interact without

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 28 January 1605 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 4, 487-488.

¹⁰⁹ Glenn Richardson, introduction to *"The Contending Kingdoms": France and England, 1430-1700*, ed. Glenn Richardson (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 14.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 27 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 203. Looking at the political context, this does not seem to have been a politically charged decision, but rather a ceremonial misjudgement.

¹¹¹ Abraham de Wicquefort has discussed the first visits between ambassadors and gave many examples of where this rule was not respected: de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 285-298.

¹¹² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 19 October 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 7.

¹¹³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 6 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 59: "[...] si je n'avoy besoin de sa communication pour apprendre de luy beaucoup de choses que je ne puis sçavoir d'ailleurs".

violating their masters' rules.¹¹⁴ The nuncio proposed that he would come to Canaye's residence to greet his wife, which ran counter to the standard practices, as wives were never visited before their husbands, the ambassador. However, Canaye's chamber was next to that of his wife, so while, in theory, it would be a private encounter between the nuncio and the ambassador's wife, in practice, Canaye would participate in the meeting. Canaye and his wife accepted the offer knowing that this was the only way to circumvent the official ceremony and build a trust relationship with the nuncio, who would be an asset to the ambassador's information network. Canaye did not regard this as a defeat in issues of precedence because when the nuncio came to his house, he bestowed him with many honours.¹¹⁵

In addition to these social visits that only lasted for a few hours, extended hospitality occurred regularly in ambassadorial lodgings. Offering a bed, warmth and food to French officials passing through Venice was something with which French ambassadors in Venice were well acquainted. The embassy always needed to have a room available to host and entertain French guests. We especially find various French ambassadors, such as diplomatic agents on their way to Constantinople and the ambassador for the Transylvanian court, amongst the visitors whom François de Noailles accommodated in his Venetian residence. These stays obviously entailed considerable expenditures, which were even higher than the costs of occasional entertainment, and put a lot of pressure on the diplomat's financial situation. Consequently, Noailles tried to avoid stopovers in Venice whenever possible. For example, the newly appointed Polish ambassador to France wished to sojourn for fifteen days in the house of Noailles while arranging his entourage in Venice. Although Cardinal de Tournon, who had already represented the French king in Italy for some time, advised Noailles to honourably lodge the Polish gentleman, Noailles appealed to the king to be exempted from this obligation due to "[...] the great necessity [for money] which I have already for eight months."¹¹⁶ Here, Noailles implicitly established a connection between hospitality and its symbolic function, enhancing the honour of the monarch. His lack of funds would prevent him from lavishly entertaining his guest, which in turn would reflect poorly on his king.

¹¹⁴ Philippe de la Canaye also skilfully played with his clothing to circumvent ceremonial rules surrounding official visits. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

¹¹⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 16 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 41; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 23 November 1601 in *ibid.*, 51; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 7 December 1601 in *ibid.*, 64. This incident was also recounted by Abraham de Wicquefort: de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 287.

¹¹⁶ Letter from François de Noailles to King Francis II, 27 January 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 453r: "[...] la nécessité grande en laquelle je suis depuis huit mois."

Noailles' successors likewise complained about the great costs of hospitality and constantly referred to the negative influence that this had on their ability to respectably represent the king. In doing so, they also used it as leverage to convince the crown to deposit their salaries. In particular Arnaud du Ferrier was under a lot of financial stress during his embassy, which was aggravated by the stopover of the newly elected French King Henry III in Venice in 1574 during his journey from Poland to France. In the king's suite, there were many Polish noblemen who had to be accommodated in Ferrier's residence.¹¹⁷ Some years later, Ferrier, who was still under great distress, criticised the open house obligation that French ambassadors had to maintain towards French citizens visiting Venice. This hospitality could easily be abused by unworthy individuals in need of a free bed and food.¹¹⁸

Domestic Rituals as Political Instruments: France versus Spain

A consideration of the liberality taking place inside the diplomatic residence has provided diplomatic historians with a fresh perspective to approach the functioning of early modern embassies. Additionally, a close examination of the rituals surrounding these domestic encounters offers a renewed point of view to study the political relationships between states.¹¹⁹ Especially the never-ending competition between France and Spain to attain precedence at the European courts throughout the entire early modern period constantly comes to light in the ambassador's sociability strategies.¹²⁰ The residency of Philippe de la Canaye in Venice can serve as an interesting case study to reveal the symbolic communication inherent to visiting and being visited, and the intertwining of social and political messages. In order to accurately interpret these events, first, the state of French-Spanish affairs at the beginning of the seventeenth century has to be presented briefly.

The peace treaty of Vervins, signed between French King Henry IV and Spanish King Philip II in 1598, inaugurated a temporary truce in the continuous political and military

¹¹⁷ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 11 June 1574: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, ff. 627-628.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 12 June 1579: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, ff. 655-656.

¹¹⁹ With regard to the Roman context, an interesting analysis of how social events and hospitality were used by the Roman elite to show political allegiance to or Spain or France can be found in: Thomas Dandeleit, "Setting the Noble Stage in Baroque Rome: Roman Palaces, Political Contests, and Social Theater, 1600-1700," in *Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome*, eds. Frederick Hammond and Stefanie Walker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 39-51.

¹²⁰ For a general theoretical analysis of conflicts about rank, and how this also translated itself into social and ceremonial occasions, see: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Logik und Semantik des Ranges in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Konkurrenz in der Geschichte: Praktiken - Werte - Institutionalisierungen*, ed. Ralph Jessen (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2014), 197-227.

conflicts between the French monarchy and the Habsburg dynasty. Traditionally, the treaty of Vervins is considered a symbol of Spain's decline and France's revival. Even though this statement should be nuanced, it is indeed the case that Spain underwent a period of national crisis with financial and economic troubles plaguing the country. Consequently, after the peace of Vervins, Spain opted for a defensive consolidation policy by making arrangements and signing treaties with the Southern Netherlands (1598), England (1604) and the United Provinces (1609). Nevertheless, despite the truce with France, French-Spanish affairs remained tense at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the two countries' relationship was characterised by mutual distrust.¹²¹

This cold war and the unceasing provocations between France and Spain were reflected in the interactions between their ambassadors in Venice, who used the ceremonies surrounding social encounters to distinguish themselves from one another. These rituals were connected to the spatial setting of the embassy building: the architectural framework was closely intertwined with hierarchical distinctions and, thus, the place where a visitor was greeted revealed his status and the atmosphere of the meeting. Consequently, space and movement during visits in the embassy were carefully regulated.¹²²

As a first example, I can again refer to the encounter between Philippe de la Canaye and the papal nuncio in 1601. Whereas Canaye had accepted the nuncio's offer to visit his wife first, the wife of Spanish Ambassador Francisco de Vera y Aragon declined the requested visit of the nuncio, stating that she refused to greet someone who had not first met with her husband. Nevertheless, according to Canaye, even though it was an informal visit, the Spanish ambassador was jealous of his French colleague.¹²³ Vera had been right to demand an appropriate ceremonial treatment that would correctly honour his king, however, Canaye had been able to establish a relationship with the nuncio, which had more practical

¹²¹ Some historiography on the condition of France and Spain at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century include: I. A. A Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain, 1560-1620* (London: Athlone Press, 1976); Henry Kamen, *Spain, 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict* (London, New York: Longman, 1983); I. A. A Thompson and Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, eds., *The Castilian Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: New Perspectives on the Economic and Social History of Seventeenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Michel Grandjean and Bernard Roussel, eds., *Coexister dans l'Intolérance: L'Édit de Nantes (1598)* (Geneva: Labor & Fides, 1998); Claudine Vidal and Frédérique Pilleboue, eds., *La Paix de Vervins: 1598* (Amiens: Fédération des Sociétés d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de l'Aisne, 1998); Jean-François Labourdette, Jean-Pierre Poussou, and Marie-Catherine Vignal, eds., *Le Traité de Vervins* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000); Robert J. Knecht, *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France: 1483-1610* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

¹²² For more information on the importance of the organisation of space for matters of etiquette and ceremony, see: Patricia Waddy, "Inside the Palace: People and Furnishings," in *Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome*, 21-37; Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, especially ch. 1 and 8; Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 26-28.

¹²³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 7 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 64.

advantages compared to a prolonged continuation of ceremonial disputes. Moreover, the room selected for this visit, the chamber of the ambassador's wife, exposes the etiquette of the meeting as it points to the non-ceremonial nature of the encounter. Thanks to this informal setting, Canaye could justify his decision, since it was not an official occasion.

One year later, Francisco de Vera y Aragon outshined Philippe de la Canaye in matters of ceremony. Both ambassadors welcomed Vincenzo Gonzaga, duke of Mantua, into their house during the duke's state visit to Venice in the spring of 1602. These private meetings with foreign sovereigns in the ambassador's home were very admirable and ritualised. Duke Gonzaga first visited Canaye, whose gentlemen and family members welcomed the duke at the entrance of the embassy, where the duke arrived in his gondola. Canaye himself saluted him, surrounded by high-standing friends, in his *portico*, three or five steps away from the doorway. However, the Spanish ambassador, whom the duke granted a visit later that day, not only approached him much closer than Canaye, but even went inside the duke's gondola to help him disembark. Vera thus treated the duke of Mantua with unusually high honours and surpassed his French colleague with the esteem he received in return. When Vincenzo Gonzaga departed from Venice, he even complained to the *Signoria* about the French ambassador's reception of him. Canaye defended his actions by stating that his predecessors had welcomed the dukes of Mantua in the past only at the foot of the stairway, therefore, by waiting closer to the entrance door, Canaye had already advanced 30 steps more than what was the protocol.¹²⁴ Clearly, both ambassadors carefully selected the space where to welcome the visitor and conscientiously considered their gestures and movements during important encounters. These aspects were perceived as a reflection of the dignity their sovereign wished to bestow upon the visitor. By exceeding Canaye in the amount of steps taken, Vera tried to outclass France in matters of ceremonial protocol and hierarchy.

The French and Spanish ambassadors also needed to visit each other in their respective embassies, during which the already outlined standard etiquette had to be observed. Hence, when a new Spanish ordinary ambassador, Inigo de Cardenas, arrived in the spring of 1604, Canaye honoured him with the first visit and went to greet him in his home. Though it was the custom that they encountered each other at the top of the stairs, Cardenas received his French colleague immediately upon his arrival to his house, where Canaye disembarked from

¹²⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 23 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 191; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 27 March 1602 in *ibid.*, 201-203.

his gondola.¹²⁵ This act of receiving Canaye with more courtesy than was obliged was probably not only prompted by the wish to maintain cordial relationships, but also to impress the French ambassador. In 1607, Canaye applied a similar strategy. When the extraordinary Spanish ambassador, Francisco di Castro, came to Venice, he continuously approached Canaye's daughter with the request of organising a feast for him and inviting Venetian noblewomen. She granted Castro's wish whereupon her father, the ambassador, invited Castro to dinner with a subsequent ball. Canaye took much pride in his feast, where he entertained his guests with a selection of the best meat, music and two beautiful ballets, which the Spaniards and Neapolitans present judged as the most pleasant they had ever witnessed. However, as always, the feast weighed heavily on Canaye's finances, as he had spent 500 *écu* on organising the banquet and ball befitting his king's prestige. Nevertheless, the fact that he had dazzled the Spanish company and honoured his king were more important to him.¹²⁶

The competitive nature of these social visits is summarised in a letter by Canaye in which he stated that the Spaniards were preparing their revenge as an answer to his feast, clearly pointing to the endless rivalry between France and Spain that had deeply penetrated the domestic sphere of the embassy:

I have honoured my obligation to host a feast yesterday, which was good according to the judgement of those who saw it. I hear that the Spanish are preparing their revenge. I do not fear that they will do better than me in Venice.¹²⁷

Castro indeed countered Canaye's banquet by inviting him to a dinner at his house. Canaye could not help but mention that this did not equal the lustre of his feast, yet again a proof of the pride he took in his magnificent feast and the political importance of these events as symbols of their nation's prestige:

¹²⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 19 May 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 220.

¹²⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, 16 January 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 391; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, 17 January 1607 in *ibid.*, 395; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jean de Gontaut Brion, 18 January 1607 in *ibid.*, 397; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Emeric Gobier de Barrault, 24 January 1607 in *ibid.*, 408; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Brûlart, viscount of Puisieux, 24 January 1607 in *ibid.*, 409.

¹²⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, 17 January 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 395: "Je m'acquity hier de mon festin assez bien au jugement de ceux qui le virent. J'entends que les Espagnols se preparent pour en prendre leur revange. Je ne crains point qu'ils fassent mieux que moy à Venise."

Don Francesco offered me dinner on Thursday, I am very satisfied with his courtesy, and even more with the fact that he has not diminished the lustre of my dinner, according to the judgement of all of those who can speak about it first-hand.¹²⁸

Not only were the ceremonial prestige and grandeur of social events measured against each other, the frequency of dinner parties also reflected standing. When Canaye stayed in Vicenza, he was honourably received and visited by numerous officials. Although this led to high expenses on the ambassador's part, he was once again more than willing to invite guests into his house, since this exposed the great esteem in which the French king was held. According to Canaye, bystanders said that a foreign ambassador had never been so highly privileged, and that he had welcomed more visitors in one day than the Spanish ambassador had received in the two months of his stay in Vicenza.¹²⁹

All the anecdotes recounted by Philippe de la Canaye are very telling with regard to the rituals and importance of visiting and being visited. At times, Canaye probably exaggerated when reporting the glory of social occasions, since recounting these events was also a way to promote the self. By underlining his accomplishments, Canaye could stress his diplomatic skills and his capacity to rightfully serve and represent the king. However, it is not that significant whether everything Canaye reported was completely true or not, since the fact that a lot of attention was devoted to these topics in diplomatic dispatches is already a great proof of the important role sociability played in embassy life. The ancient rivalry for political supremacy between France and Spain has already been meticulously analysed by looking at the conduct of the ambassadors in public ceremonies; nonetheless, focusing on their strategies of sociability proved to be a more original approach that has been equally enlightening.¹³⁰

The Diplomatic Table

Sociability and hospitality were clearly important elements of diplomatic communication and constantly used as political tools. The most important element supporting sociability

¹²⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, 21 January 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 423: “Dom Francesco me rendit le disner Jeudy, je suis fort satisfait de sa courtoisie, et tant plus qu’il n’a point osté le lustre à la miene au jugement de tous ceux qui en peuvent parler *de visu*.”

¹²⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 September 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 412-413.

¹³⁰ Another interesting approach is to look at how French and Spanish ambassadors competed with each other when establishing their presence in the urban context of the city where they resided by hosting grand festivities and constructing architectural structures. For Rome, this has already been analysed in: Dandele, “Setting the Noble Stage in Baroque Rome”, 39-51; Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell’Ambasciata*, ch. 7.

strategies was food. The great importance of the diplomatic table for the functioning of the embassy is accurately formulated in the treatise by Étienne Dolet: “Now by liberality I mean magnificence and splendour in his manner of living, and an abundance of food sufficient for the entertainment of many persons at the ambassador’s table.”¹³¹ During the sixteenth century, these foodstuffs were always displayed on glorious silver dishes and, therefore, the possession of rich tableware became a prerequisite of any diplomatic mission. These sets of silver plate did not only serve a practical, decorative and aesthetic role but, moreover, underscored the ceremonial context of the event and shaped the performance of eating and banqueting.

Food and Diplomacy

In the world of the early modern elite, every movement and every object was a signifier of social standing and economic prosperity. This was no less true with regard to food: identities were shaped through the exhibition and consumption of food, since foodstuffs were connected to social class and people were expected to eat according to their rank. The consumption of quality and rare products was thus seen as an expression of one’s high status and power. As a result, the nobility ate refined and elaborate dishes. Furthermore, they organised banquets to publicly display their affluence and social elevation. During the Renaissance, banquets had transformed into meticulously organised spectacles that had to awe the participants through ceremonial, pomp and magnanimity.¹³²

Similarly, food was a prominent feature in the political strategies of the embassy. The important link between food and diplomacy can be derived from contemporary advice books for ambassadors, in which the hosting of lavish dinners was pointed out as one of the most important responsibilities of the ambassador. The costs that this entailed were considered a necessary expense for the embassy, since it offered many advantages.¹³³ Firstly, the display of a sumptuous meal publicised the strength of the nation that the ambassador was representing. Secondly, during dinners with other ambassadors and local officials, amicable relations were moulded, important matters were discussed and crucial information was

¹³¹ Reeves, “Étienne Dolet”, 87.

¹³² Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words*, 49-57; David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe: Diet, Medicine and Society, 1450-1800* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), ch. 3.

¹³³ See, for example, the quote by Louis Rousseau de Chamoy in Rousseau de Chamoy, *L’Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 35: “Cette dépense de tenir table est une de plus grandes de l’Ambassadeur, et c’est ordinairement celle qui luy fait le plus d’honneur.”

gathered. Sixteenth-century Polish ambassador and political theorist, Christopher Varsevicius, summarised these two functions by stating:

[...] at table there is even a desire for discussing the greatest things. For many voluntarily profess at table more than they would confess under torture. Thus, this practice will not only give much glory to our princes but it provides us with a shortcut to the favour of others.¹³⁴

Likewise, Venetian sixteenth-century Ambassador Marino Cavalli, in his treatise *Informatione dell'Offitio dell'Ambasciatore* (1561), which functioned as practical advice for his son who was leaving on a diplomatic mission to the court of Savoy, underlined that maintaining an abundant table was the second most important task of an ambassador.¹³⁵ Still at the end of the seventeenth century, liberality with food was designated as indispensable to the embassy:

What has always been considered as a necessary expense, and conform to the dignity and rank of the ambassador, is that of maintaining the table. [...] He can draw several advantages from it if he knows how to profit from social relations with people of distinction that it [the table] will attract at his home, and it is an opportunity to see and to interact with those that he would not encounter otherwise.¹³⁶

Governments were aware of how occasional meals together could instigate friendly relations between the local upper class and diplomatic agents. Therefore, as already stated, Venice forbade any contact between Venetian administrators and ambassadors in order to avoid open conversations during banquets and feasts, which could lead to the uncovering of secret state matters. Even though François de Noailles could not openly invite Venetians into

¹³⁴ Quoted in: Dursteler, “A Continual Tavern in My House”, 166-167.

¹³⁵ Marino Cavalli, *Informatione dell'Offitio dell'Ambasciatore di Marino de Cavalli, il Vecchio*, ed. Tommaso Bertelè (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1935), 5-29, 33-35, 59; Dursteler, “A Continual Tavern in My House”, 167.

¹³⁶ Rousseau de Chamoy, *L'Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 35: “On a toujours regardé comme une dépense nécessaire, et conforme à la dignité et au rang d'Ambassadeur, celle de tenir table. [...] Il peut en tirer plusieurs avantages s'il sait profiter du commerce des personnes de distinction qu'elle luy attire chez luy, et c'est une occasion d'en voir et d'en ménager quelques-uns qu'il n'aurait pu être pas autrement.” Rousseau de Chamoy also pointed to the discomforts attached to inviting various people to dinners: the ambassador would have to socialise with people he did not like, or who were not particularly interesting, and these dinners could be time-wasting occasions: Rousseau de Chamoy, *L'Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 36. The importance of food stayed a central feature in diplomatic treatises, for the eighteenth century, see, for example: François de Callières, *De la Manière de Négocier avec les Souverains: De l'Utilité des Négociations, du Choix des Ambassadeurs et des Envoyez, et des Qualitez Necessaires pour Réussir dans ces Emplois* (Amsterdam: Pour la Compagnie, 1716), 98: “S'il est dans un Etat populaire [...] qu'il y tienne grande table pour y attirer les Deputez [...] Une bonne table facilite les moyens de savoir ce qui se passe, lorsque les gens du pays ont la liberté d'aller manger chez l'Ambassadeur, et la dépense qu'il y fait est non seulement honorable, mais encore très-utile à son Maître lorsque le Négociateur la sait bien mettre en oeuvre.”

his home, dinners with representatives of other states took place frequently. His predecessor Dominique du Gabre had expressed the importance of these dinners in his memoir for Noailles. He advised his successor to frequently dine with the ambassador from Ferrara, as he had made it his personal goal to uncover all the secrets of the Venetian state. As he was an important source of information, Noailles had to win over his favour:

You have here the ambassador from Ferrara, who is by nature devoted to our affairs and he is mistreated and not content of the Doge, and has made it his goal to uncover all the secret intentions of the *Signoria* and its enemies. You must give him good cheer and sometimes call him for a domestic dinner, praise his knowledge of letters and arms, in which he made a great profession, and praise his discourse, but be reserved to give him knowledge of yours.¹³⁷

Moreover, Gabre stressed the merit of regular private dinners with the secretary of the embassy. A shared meal provided the ideal setting for a discussion of all the information the secretary had gathered during his daily wanderings through the city.¹³⁸

Besides these intimate dinners, significant accomplishments of the ambassador's sovereign had to be celebrated with grand and lavish banquets. The documents concerning Noailles make mention of two important events in French history that were lauded with a dinner party at the French embassy. In January 1558, France conquered Calais from the English, and in order to commemorate this glorious victory, Noailles organised a large banquet.¹³⁹ Similarly, to rejoice about the peace treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, signed between France and Spain on 3 April 1559, Noailles threw a feast to which he invited foreign ambassadors, prelates, Venetian gentlemen and members of the French nation in Venice. Although, unfortunately, no information is provided about the food served, we do know that it had cost Noailles 100 *écu*.¹⁴⁰ These kinds of banquets served as propaganda, exhibiting the power of France.

¹³⁷ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r: "Vous avez cest ambassadeur de Ferrare qui est de son naturel affexionne a nos affaires et est fort mal traite et mal content du Duc et fait profession de descouvrir toutes secrettes intentions de la Seigneurie et des ennemys, il luy fault faire bonne chere et quelques fois l'appeller domestiquement a disner louer son scavoir aux lettres et aux armes dont il fait grande profession et louer ses discours, mais estre fort reserve a luy faire les vostres."

¹³⁸ Ibid., f. 8v.

¹³⁹ François de Tournon, *Correspondance du Cardinal François de Tournon, 1521-1562*, ed. Michel François (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1946), no. 567: "Pour fêter la prise de Calais, l'évêque de Dax a donné un grand banquet."

¹⁴⁰ Parties extraordinaires fournies et avancées pour le service du Roy par l'Evesque d'Acqs son Conseiller et Ambassadeur à Venise, depuis le 1^{er} jour d'avril 1559 jusques au dernier de septembre 1560, n.d. [30 September 1560]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 403.

Evidently, it was of crucial importance that the embassy was always stocked with appropriate foodstuffs. A letter by La Marque, former secretary of François' brother Antoine during the latter's embassy in London, confirms that Noailles' table was always well-supplied, however, without begin too lavish. La Marque was a guest in Noailles' Venetian house for twelve days and stated that:

Both his affairs and the management of his expenses are high due to the high costs of living and not because of affluence, and, moreover, his table has only one dish but this is very abundant and opulent, with all the good food that one can find and he cannot remove something without causing damage to the rank he holds.¹⁴¹

La Marque thus made a judgement of Noailles' capacities as ambassador by considering the quality of his diplomatic table, and he linked the display of food to the honourable representation of the king. Furthermore, he stressed that Noailles' table only contained what was necessary to uphold the diplomatic rank and that no unnecessary costs were made. Correctly managing expenses was considered an important skill of a competent ambassador.

The food that Noailles offered to his guests was of a refined quality: especially fresh fruits and meat were served at his table. To this end, François de Noailles had recruited a certain Thelligny who delivered a constant supply of food and wine from the Venetian countryside, in particular Conegliano. Thelligny purchased and gifted poultry, turkey, partridge and woodcock, which were all considered to be superior fowl and were greatly praised at upper class tables during the Middle Ages and the early modern period.¹⁴² Fowl was regarded as the food most strongly associated with nobility.¹⁴³ During special occasions and ceremonies, birds were always part of the menu. Fowl also had important symbolic connotations, which were diffused and widely known through the contemporary dietary literature. The humoral theories based on classical philosophies, which people used to define the effect that foodstuffs had on their body, characterised birds as "hot", meaning that they gave strength to the eaters. Therefore, it was thought of as ideal food for people in powerful positions, since

¹⁴¹ Letter from La Marque to Antoine de Noailles, 4 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 527: "Soit pour les affaires ou pour la conduite de sa depence qui me semble bien grande pour l'extreme cherté qu'il y a en toutes choses de dela et non pour l'abondance car encores que sa table pour ung plat soit bien fornée et opulente, de tout ce que se peult trouver de bons vivres si non pourroit l'on rien ouster sans faire tort au lieu qu'il tient."

¹⁴² Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 26 September 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 291v; Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 28 September 1558: *ibid.*, f. 300r; Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 12 October 1558: *ibid.*, f. 320r; Letter from Emilian Camus [from now on referred to as Milan] to François de Noailles, 22 October 1558: *ibid.*, f. 339r; Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 28 December 1558: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 65r.

¹⁴³ Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 9; 67-69.

their work demanded a lot of energy.¹⁴⁴ Consuming poultry and birds was thus considered as an outward sign of power and was befitting the prestige of early modern ambassadors.

Thelligny additionally supplied the embassy with wines from the Veneto. During the harvest season, he went to taste wines at various vineyards in order to judge their clarity, purity and sweetness, and he sent detailed reports about his findings, together with the prices, to Noailles. For example, in September 1558, he visited at least twelve different places where he sampled more than 20 types of wine. Of the wines that had pleased him the most, he delivered samples to Noailles so that he could decide for himself which wines to purchase. Once Noailles had selected his preferences, Thelligny shipped several crates to Venice.¹⁴⁵ On occasion, Noailles even travelled to Conegliano in person to take part in the harvest.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, besides roaming the vineyards in the Veneto, Noailles' servants replenished the supply of wine by locally buying crates from Venetian merchants.¹⁴⁷ Very popular in Venice at that time was the malmsey (*malvasia*) wine, which was imported from the territories near the Aegean Sea, especially Greece, and cultivated in the Republic of Ragusa. Venetian shops were filled with this variety of wine and Noailles additionally bought it directly from Ragusa.¹⁴⁸ Lastly, wine was also gifted to the ambassador. For instance, the provost of St. Martin of Tours offered good wines to Noailles as an attempt to enter his good graces.¹⁴⁹ And at the beginning of the seventeenth century, French ambassadors in Venice received wine as a traditional annual gift from the duke of Mantua, which ambassador Richard de Champigny offered to his French guests during the *Festa della Sensa*, Feast of the Ascension.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Allen J. Grieco, "Les Plantes, les Régimes Végétariens et la Mélancolie à la Fin du Moyen Âge et au Début de la Renaissance Italienne," in *Le Monde Végétal (XIIe-XVIIe Siècles): Savoirs et Usages Sociaux*, eds. Allen J. Grieco, Odile Redon, and Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1993), 12-13; Allen J. Grieco, "From Roosters to Cocks: Italian Renaissance Fowl and Sexuality," in *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 110-116.

¹⁴⁵ Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 22 September 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, ff. 273r-273v; Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 26 September 1558: *ibid.*, ff. 291r-292r; Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 28 September 1558: *ibid.*, ff. 300r-300v.

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 12 October 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 320r; Letter from François de Noailles to Murat, 9 August 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 92r; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 545.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 27 January 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 134r.

¹⁴⁸ Copy of a letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, 23 December 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 285r; Letter from Gozzi to François de Noailles: 8 December 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 615.

¹⁴⁹ Letter from Philibert Babou de La Bourdaisière [from now on referred to as Bishop of Angoulême] to François de Noailles, 20 February 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 540r.

¹⁵⁰ Michaela Sermidi, ed., *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2003), n. 1038; n. 1088.

It goes without saying that wine was a central component of the daily consumption of every elite household and indispensable during feasts.¹⁵¹ When guests were entertained at the embassy, wine was always served in large quantities in order to loosen the tongue of the visitor. This way, secret political information could come to the surface, which in turn could benefit the affairs of the ambassador's sovereign. Noailles' correspondence reveals that he indeed used wine to lure visitors. For example, he tried to convince the papal legate in Venice, Pier Francesco Ferrero, to visit him in his villa in Noventa Padovana and enjoy some conversations with good wine.¹⁵² Noailles clearly understood that an informal setting could have a positive influence on the discussion and disclosure of important state business. François de Callières, French diplomat and writer, likewise stated in his treatise about the figure of the ambassador that "[...] the heat of the wine often facilitates the discovery of important secrets."¹⁵³ Therefore, diplomatic discourses warned ambassadors about their own consumption of too much wine by pointing out the dangers. Juan Antonio de Vera advised ambassadors against the drinking of wine during banquets in his *El Embaxador*, saying that "wine has been a medium in which many ambassadors have lost themselves and through which enemies have gained a lot."¹⁵⁴ He listed various examples of intoxicated ambassadors who disclosed delicate information.¹⁵⁵ However, Abraham de Wicquefort nuanced these anxieties in his treatise on the ideal ambassador, as he believed in the strength and loyalty of an ambassador. According to Wicquefort, ambassadors were not that easily corrupted, and one bottle of wine would not make them betray their country.¹⁵⁶

Ambassadorial Plate

Food was not the only conveyer of status and power, the plate and accessories on which the foodstuffs were presented were equally important. Therefore, a set of precious silver tableware was indispensable in a high-standing household of the sixteenth century and was displayed on *credenze*, sideboards, during social occasions to communicate the splendour and honour of the owner. Everywhere in Europe, it was immediately recognised as a symbol of

¹⁵¹ On the high consumption and importance of wine in the early modern period, see: Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, 162-166.

¹⁵² Letter from Pier Francesco Ferrero to François de Noailles, 29 July 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 273.

¹⁵³ Callières, *De la Manière de Négociier*, 157: "[...] la chaleur du vin fait souvent découvrir des secrets importants."

¹⁵⁴ de Vera, *El Embaxador*, discourse 2, 139r: "El vino à fido el medio por donde muchos Legados se han perdido, i por quien a muchos an ganado los enemigos."

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 139r-140r.

¹⁵⁶ de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 456.

prosperity, and it constituted an important element of courtly performance.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, ambassadorial plate formed an elementary component of the early modern diplomatic residence: it enhanced the standing of the ambassador and it was a necessary tool to carry out diplomatic assignments. On the one hand, silver tableware had the practical purpose of serving the food; on the other hand, and more importantly, the elaborate design and value of the plate had to impress other diplomatic agents and visitors, and showcase the economic and artistic strength of the ambassador's nation.¹⁵⁸ Consequently, ambassadors complained if they were not equipped with a set of silver plate, as this reflected poorly upon themselves and their sovereign.¹⁵⁹

Besides an ostentatious display of wealth, the silverware also served as a visual representation of the king. The king's coat of arms was engraved on it to remind visitors where the ambassador's loyalties lay and to underline that he employed the wealth of the monarch to entertain his guests. In addition to the king's plate, ambassadors often took their private collection of silverware, which was decorated with their family's coat of arms, with them on mission. The display of their own vast ensemble of silver demonstrated their financial abilities and their private, aristocratic status.¹⁶⁰ François de Noailles indeed possessed a set of tableware engraved with his family's arms. When he sent his secretary Daniel Duran to Paris for a political mission, he additionally commissioned him to engrave the Noailles' family escutcheon onto a set of silverware.¹⁶¹ This way, not only was his king's prosperity represented during dinners and feasts, but Noailles' elite status also was made apparent. The possession and presentation of two vast sets of luxurious silverware is one of the many examples in which the dual identity of the ambassador comes to the surface.

Our knowledge about ambassadorial plate has grown in recent years; nevertheless, we still know very little about the exact nature of these collections. Extensive research has only been conducted on the silver plate of English envoys.¹⁶² This has uncovered that in England, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the same amount of plate was issued to both

¹⁵⁷ Olin, "Diplomatic Performances", 29-30.

¹⁵⁸ Helen Jacobsen, "Ambassadorial Plate of the Later Stuart Period and the Collection of the Earl of Strafford," *Journal of the History of Collections* 19, no. 1 (2007), 1-2.

¹⁵⁹ Catherine Fletcher gives the example of English Ambassador Nicholas Hawkins, who attended the meeting of Pope Clement VII and Emperor Charles V in Bologna in 1532. Hawkins complained that he had not received any silver tableware, whereas his guests expected to be served on silver plates. Without this silver, people would hold him and the English king in low esteem. See: Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 143.

¹⁶⁰ Jacobsen, "Ambassadorial Plate", 2.

¹⁶¹ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 14 February 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 528bis.

¹⁶² Jacobsen, "Ambassadorial Plate", 1-13; Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 13-22; Tracey Sowerby, "Modes of Diplomatic Representation and Cultural Practice" (Presented at the Sixty-First Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Berlin, March 26, 2015).

resident ambassadors and extraordinary envoys, regardless of the country to which they were sent. Furthermore, although the Royal Jewel House gave the plate as a loan to the ambassador, Helen Jacobsen's research on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English ambassadors has revealed that they started to regard the king's plate more and more as their private property and were closely involved in its design. After their mission, ambassadors were reluctant to return it to the crown since they did not want to separate from the prestige it emitted and they wished to exhibit it as a lasting sign of their accomplishments as ambassador.¹⁶³

The records of the Venetian Senate likewise divulge the practice of supplying Venetian ambassadors with silver plate before their departure. Customarily, this silver had a value of around 400 ducats and was provided by the *Ufficiali alle Rason Nuove*, who supported the work of the *Rason Vecchie* and who were responsible for the risks that the transporting of such valuable goods entailed.¹⁶⁴ An inventory of Pietro Priuli, who died while on mission in Spain in 1613, contains a detailed list of his silver objects, which exposes the nature of a Venetian ambassador's silverware: 3 basins (*bacili*, it. *bacini*), including 1 small one (*bacinella*) and 1 pitcher (*boccale*); 10 medium plates and 24 small plates (*piatti*); 1 *refrescadora* or *cantimplora*; 3 cups (*coppe*), of which 2 were white and one was gilded; 2 saltcellars (*saliere*); 1 normal-sized and 6 small candlesticks (*candelieri*) and 1 candlesnuffer (*mocadoro*, it. *smoccolatoio*); 3 wine bottles (*fiaschi*) and 1 small one (*fiaschetto*); 1 engraved fruit bowl (*frutera*, it. *fruttiera*); 2 vases for oil and vinegar (*vasetti*); and 5 spoons (*cucchiare*, it. *cucchiari*), 5 forks (*pironi*, it. *forchette*) and 1 knife handle (*manico di coltello*).

Besides tableware, Priuli also possessed various other valuable silver items: 1 small box (*cassetta*); 2 *zuchette da aqua d'odor*;¹⁶⁵ 3 inkwells (*bussoli per caramal*, it. *calamaio*); 1 *bossolo*, a type of jar, in this case it was used for creams; 1 ampoule or cruet (*impoletta per sbrufare*, it. *ampoletta*);¹⁶⁶ 1 bell (*campanella*); 3 *manichi per scovete*, handles for small brushes; 1 small box for needles (*scatoletta per aghi*); 1 puncher (*pontariol*, it. *punteruolo*) and 1 set of pincers (*tenaglieta*, it. *tenaglia*); 1 soap dish (*bala d'argento da tener sapon*); 1 feather holder (*bossolo d'argento da tener pene*); and 1 mirror (*spec[c]hio*).¹⁶⁷ The inventory does not specify the price of the objects listed, but seeing the great amount of silver, Priuli's

¹⁶³ Jacobsen, "Ambassadorial Plate", 1-13.

¹⁶⁴ See the records of the *Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra*; to give some examples for the year 1592: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 61, f. 148v (15 February 1592); *ibid.*, f. 152r (22 February 1592).

¹⁶⁵ *Zuchette* were curious objects in the shape of pumpkins made in most cases out of glass or silver, which were filled with perfumed water or oils that were most probably used to spread a nice perfume in the house.

¹⁶⁶ This can refer to a type of ampoule used to spray perfumes or a cruet used in the kitchen to hold and pour liquid condiments, such as oil and vinegar.

¹⁶⁷ ASV, Giudici di Petizion, reg. 345/10 no. 61, ff. 4r-5v (16 March 1614).

assortment must have been of high value. This overview testifies to the great diversity of silverware that could be found on the diplomatic table and displayed in other chambers of the house. Priuli even owned some curious silver objects, such as the *zuchette* and containers and sprayers for perfumes, which moreover tells us something about the preoccupation with odours in early modern houses.

François de Noailles' documents do not elaborate on the exact composition of his ambassadorial plate; however, the manuscripts left by his colleague in Constantinople, Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, do contain precise information regarding the nature of his silverware. Since Noailles and Vigne were French ambassadors simultaneously, their collections of silver tableware offered by the crown were probably of a similar style.¹⁶⁸ Vigne's post mortem inventory of 1559, listing the furnishing he was transporting back to France after the end of his mission, describes the plate that was used and displayed during his mission: 2 sets with a basin (*bacini*) and pitcher (*boccale*), one normal and one with a basin in the shape of a ship; 12 plates of big and medium size and 18 plates of medium size (*piatti*); 23 small saucers (*piattelli*); 12 spoons (*cucchiai*); 6 cups (*coppe*) with their saucers (*piatti*); 1 drinking cup (*coppa*) for the *majordomo*; 1 mug (*tazza*); 1 goblet (*boccavo*); 2 saltcellars (*saliere*); and 4 candlesticks (*candelieri*).¹⁶⁹ Unfortunately, again, the value of the silver is not mentioned.

Vigne's collection was big enough to host a large dinner consisting of various courses but, in spite of the high number of plates, the assortment and quantity of his tableware is not particularly impressive. This is in contrast to the general trend that can be perceived in sixteenth-century French kitchen utensils towards more diversity and luxury as a response to the fact that menus were getting more sophisticated and complex.¹⁷⁰ Vigne's ambassadorial plate did, however, contain some noteworthy objects. Firstly, the presence of numerous plates and spoons in his collection illustrates the changes in table etiquette that occurred in the sixteenth century: eating with cutlery instead of hands and using individual plates rather than large shared dishes.¹⁷¹ Secondly, in particular the basin in the shape of a ship is a peculiar item, which could have been procured in Constantinople to conform to Ottoman styles in tableware. The Ottoman Empire took pride in their powerful navy and thus

¹⁶⁸ Noailles' documents only make mention of a trencher (*tranchoir*), a plate for serving food, made of silver and gold, which he had cleaned in Venice: *Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venize*, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 166v.

¹⁶⁹ AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 16, f. 324r (n.d. [October 1559]). The inventory was composed in the Republic of Ragusa, where Vigne had died, and is therefore written in Italian.

¹⁷⁰ Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words*, 56.

¹⁷¹ Valerie Taylor, "Banquet Plate and Renaissance Culture: A Day in the Life," *Renaissance Studies* 19, no. 5 (2005), 623.

references to ships were common in their iconography. By adding such an item to his collection, Vigne possibly wished to please his Ottoman dining guests.

The general limitation of Vigne's silver collection can be explained by his constant suffering from debts and lack of a regular salary. His financial distress had probably forced him to pawn or melt part of the royal silver in order to have cash available to make urgent payments, a recurring fashion amongst early modern ambassadors.¹⁷² Generally speaking, the monarchy was always late with paying the salary of their diplomatic agents or providing the funds necessary to fulfil diplomatic tasks. Consequently, when the expenses got too high, an ambassador felt forced to sell his plate. This is exactly what François de Noailles decided to do near the end of his mission in December 1560. He had exhausted his reserves, and since no financial relief came from the king, he was forced to pawn his silver tableware to Jewish merchants:

[...] my necessity greatly increases day after day and I have no funds anymore to support my *boutique* [embassy] since I have already given my silverware to the Jews. I am forced to send my servant to the King and Queen Mother who will throw himself at their feet and strongly complain about the extreme necessity in which I find myself for their service.¹⁷³

Likewise, Arnaud du Ferrier sold part of his ambassadorial plate already in the middle of his residency in Venice.¹⁷⁴ The same can be concluded when looking at the inventory of the aforementioned Venetian Ambassador Pietro Priuli, as it also contains a list of silverware that was pawned *per far le ultime spese di casa*: 1 small and 5 medium-sized plates (*piatti*); 4 small basins (*bacili*, it. *bacini*); 1 *refrescadora* or *cantimplora*; and 1 *broca da acqua* with lid, which is a pitcher that contained water for washing the hands.¹⁷⁵

That diplomatic silverware was indeed of considerable worth and could temporarily relieve an ambassador's distress when melted or pawned can be gleaned from the inventory

¹⁷² Jacobsen, "Ambassadorial Plate", 2-3. Similarly, noblemen melted their silverware in times of financial distress: Marjorie Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Parâtre* (Tours, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de François-Rabelais de Tours, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013), 179. On the pawning of goods as an aristocratic practice, see: Furlotti, *A Renaissance Baron and His Possessions*, ch. 5.

¹⁷³ Letter from François de Noailles to Duchess Margaret of France, 1 December 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 589: "[...] ma nécessité s'augmente grandement de jour a autre et que je n'ay plus moyen d'entretenir la boutique pour avoir desja ma vaisselle aux Juifz, je suis contrainct d'envoyer ce mien serviteur en poste devers le Roy et la Royne mere pour s'aller jeter a leurs piedz et leur faire vive remonstrance de l'extreme nécessité en laquelle je me trouve pour leur service." Noailles' inventory, with the goods he transported back to France after the end of his mission, does not contain any silverware, suggesting that he had indeed sold it in Venice.

¹⁷⁴ When Ferrier's furnishings were stolen during the plague of 1576-1577, he stated that what was left of his silverware was robbed, indicating that a part of his silver had already been sold: Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 21 September 1576: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, f. 262.

¹⁷⁵ ASV, Giudici di Petizion, reg. 345/10 no. 61, f. 5v (16 March 1614).

of Spanish Ambassador Francisco de Vera y Aragon in Venice, who died during his embassy in 1603. The total sum of his silver plate amounted to the tremendously high sum of 1.247 ducats and 12 *lire*, making it the most valuable set of objects in his possession. His collection was composed of: 2 sets with a basin and pitcher (*bacili*, it. *bacini* and *boccali*); 4 big, 6 medium and 30 small plates (*piatti*); 3 saucers (*sottocoppe*); 1 bowl or cup (*scudella*, it. *scodella*); 1 small mug (*boccaletto*); 10 spoons (*cucchiare*, it. *cucchiai*) and 10 forks (*pironi*, it. *forchette*); 2 saltcellars (*saliere*); 1 small jar to hold pepper and 1 for sugar (*vasetto*); and 8 candlesticks (*candelieri*) and 2 candlesnuffers (*mocadori*, it. *smoccolatoi*).¹⁷⁶ Just as the previous examples, the diversity and high value of an ambassador's silverware collection illustrates once more that food needed to be presented in an exquisite way in order to equal the esteem of the ambassador.

This chapter has taken comments related to the ambassador's home found in diplomatic dispatches as a starting point to approach the life and work of sixteenth-century ambassadors. Although these kinds of remarks might seem trivial at first sight, I have illustrated the wealth of information we can extract from them concerning diplomatic culture and the political realm and, therefore, these statements should be considered seriously. In the first place, the survey of ambassadorial residences has indicated that issues of housing were closely tied to the political world. The ambassadorial residence was an extension of the royal court, and thus an examination of the treatment that ambassadors received from the host country in terms of lodgings and hospitality offers insight into the relations between states.

Secondly, the architecture of the embassy was closely bound to the social events taking place inside the building. The possession of virtues such as hospitality and liberality were necessary for an ambassador in order to accurately represent the splendour and merits of his prince. Diplomatic domestic sociability was governed by formal rules and measured ostentation, which reaffirmed social and political rank. Additionally, I have argued that descriptions of social meetings, ceremonial protocol and the display and consumption of food tell us something about political manoeuvres. The diplomatic home functioned as the setting for the elaborate etiquette that was an important driving force of diplomacy. Starting from these social usages of the domestic space has produced a fresh perspective on the practice of diplomacy.

¹⁷⁶ ASV, Giudici di Petizion, reg. 342/7 no. 63, f. 2v (26 May 1603).

CHAPTER 3

THE DIPLOMATIC FAMILY

In his *De Officio Legati*, Étienne Dolet defined the household as “[...] the subject to which I give the first place in the office of an ambassador [...] which contributes largely to the good or ill esteem in which we are held.”¹ This quote clearly reveals both the significant place assumed by the domestic space in embassy life and its representational role. The household was one of the first visual signs of rank and a reflection of the ambassador’s magnificence. Consequently, in the first place, it needed to comprise a large enough retinue and much care had to be devoted to select righteous servants who were loyal and trustworthy. Secondly, since lawless and malicious behaviour of servants would reflect poorly on the demeanour and skills of the ambassador, an appropriate and efficient management was an absolute necessity.² Both topics will be tackled in this chapter, but in order to accurately analyse the diplomatic family or household, I will first need to define how I understand these concepts and employ them as interchangeable terms.

In the early modern world, the term “family” was used more broadly than how we perceive it nowadays, as it did not only refer to blood relatives. On the contrary, a family was established through kin, patronage and professional ties. The term was used to denote both the loyal cluster of individuals who lived and served alongside kings, princes and cardinals, and the composite families that characterised the homes of various professions, such as judges, shoemakers and bakers.³ Sixteenth-century French ambassadors likewise employed the general word *famille* to designate all the people that were present in the embassy. No distinction was made between his kin, high standing gentlemen or low ranking servants.⁴ Therefore, this is also how I approach the diplomatic family: a nucleus of people with various social, economic and national backgrounds, all assisting the ambassador and living under his roof. The same is true for how I apply the overarching term “household”, which can be

¹ Reeves, “Étienne Dolet”, 85.

² Ibid., 85-86.

³ See, for example: Guido Guerzoni, “‘Familia’, ‘Corte’, ‘Casa’: The Este Case in Fifteenth-Sixteenth Century,” in *La Cour de Bourgogne et l’Europe: Le Rayonnement et les Limites d’un Modèle Culturel. Actes du Colloque Internationale Tenu à Paris les 9, 10 et 11 Octobre 2007*, ed. Werner Paravicini (Paris: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2013), 515-541; Laurie Nussdorfer, “Men at Home in Baroque Rome,” *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17, no. 1 (2014), 103-129.

⁴ This is also the case for later periods and other countries; see, for example: Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 54.

understood as a collection of servants, friends and kin living and working together in the same house as a community, centred around the master.⁵

In recent years, enlightening analyses have already been conducted of the extended diplomatic family. In her work on diplomatic practices in Rome between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries, Catherine Fletcher has devoted a section to the household organisation of foreign embassies located in the Eternal City. Her investigation has contributed to our knowledge of the size, composition and management of the ambassadorial family. By approaching the ambassador's house as a microcosm of the state, Fletcher illustrates how the household can teach us something about early modern politics.⁶ For a later period, Jennifer Mori's innovative study on British diplomatic culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries contains a chapter about family, sex and marriage. Although Mori underlines the important function of the ambassador's wife, she overlooks the role of the extended diplomatic family comprising servants and kin.⁷ A last significant contribution that has to be mentioned here is Helen Jacobsen's discussion of domestic servants in her research on the material surroundings of British embassies. Again, however, her attention is directed towards a later period: 1660 to 1714.⁸

Building on their findings, the ambassadorial family will now be defined with regard to French ambassadors. The questions raised by the economic and social historian Guido Guerzoni for a better understanding of courtiers can be implemented in this study of the dynamics of the diplomatic household: how many members did it include, what were their duties, how did they relate to each other and how were they hired, paid and discharged?⁹ Additionally, close collaborators of the ambassador who did not reside in the embassy will be subjected to an analysis. This way, the minor actors of diplomacy come to the foreground, which deepens our understanding of the local integration of the embassy and the mechanisms of early modern diplomacy. Lastly, a consideration of the management of the household will shed light on questions regarding status, representation and identity. By sketching a very detailed picture of the domestic environment of an early modern embassy, this chapter

⁵ See, for instance, the definitions of the domestic group and the household given in: E.A. Hammel and Peter Laslett, "Comparing Household Structure over Time and between Cultures," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 1 (1974), 75-79; Kate Mertes, *The English Noble Household, 1250-1600: Good Governance and Politic Rule* (Oxford, New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 5-6.

⁶ Fletcher, "Furnished with Gentlemen", 519-535; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, ch. 4. For a brief overview of diplomatic servants in seventeenth-century Rome, see: Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 18-26.

⁷ Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy*, 62-77.

⁸ Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 54-64.

⁹ Guido Guerzoni and Guido Alfani, "Court History and Career Analysis: A Prosopographic Approach to the Court of Renaissance Ferrara", *The Court Historian* 12, no. 1 (2007), 1-4.

illustrates how the history of an organisation concurs with the history of its members, and that knowledge about them offers insight into the functioning of the institution.

Composition of the Ambassador's Court

The diplomatic family was the core of embassy life: a vast number of both servants and relatives were operating side by side as administrators and advisors of the ambassador. Since the embassy was also a place of education and of social and political advancement, people from different backgrounds wished to be part of the diplomatic retinue. Therefore, knowledge of the social status and geographical origin of the domestics is necessary in order to understand their position within the household. Furthermore, an analysis of the domestic structure reveals not only the number and variety of people present, but also the role of its members in the political life of the embassy. Whereas, in theory, the functions of family members were clearly defined, in practice, they performed ambiguous tasks related to both household management and high politics.

Finding the Appropriate Size: Splendour versus Extravagance

The size of noble households witnessed a sharp increase during the early fifteenth century. The household had been a mobile institution during the Middle Ages and this constant travel necessitated a relatively small group of domestic servants. When noble living became more stable at the dawn of the early modern period, the dimensions of the household quickly expanded. Maintaining a vast entourage was moreover considered as a sign of noble status, as it showcased the master's patronage capabilities. As a result, the composition of the household became a matter of honour.¹⁰ Since the bulk of royal ambassadors were selected amongst the nobility, we would expect them to uphold a domestic structure in line with the status of their provenance. However, although it is difficult to accurately determine the actual size of diplomatic families, in most cases, European ambassadors sustained a surprisingly compressed household.¹¹ Only a consideration of the economic costs of the embassy, the

¹⁰ Mertes, *The English Noble Household*, 11-15; Kristen Brooke Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), especially ch. 5.

¹¹ For some examples of small diplomatic households in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see: Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 95-96. For the later period, Helen Jacobsen's research on English ambassadors in the late seventeenth century has revealed that a standard diplomatic household comprised around 30 people. She also points to some ambassadors who wished to lead a more ostentatious life, such as an English ambassador in Rome who had an entourage of more than 100 people: Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 54-64. For Spanish ambassadors in seventeenth-century Rome, Alessandra Anselmi concluded that 100 household

existing theoretical prescriptions and the ambassador's representational role can expose the reasons behind the retinue's dimensions and generate an impression about the standard appearance of the diplomatic household.

First of all, financial considerations influenced the composition of the entourage: even though an extended diplomatic household was a clear indicator of the sovereign's status, monarchs were often reluctant to pay the expenses that a vast household entailed. Rulers expected their ambassadors to take responsibility vis-à-vis domestic costs and to provide a portion of the servants' salaries out of their own pocket. Consequently, for both parties, a more compact size was desirable. Financial problems could thus lead ambassadors to scale down their family. Arnaud du Ferrier, who was constantly plagued by a lack of money, was obliged to restrict his entourage only to the absolutely necessary people; he did not even have a chaplain in his service. However, this should also be understood in light of Ferrier's religious beliefs, since he harboured sympathies for the Protestant faith and after the end of his diplomatic career, he openly professed Calvinism. The fact that he did not maintain a chaplain was perceived as proof of his religious indifference.¹²

Donald E. Queller's survey of Venetian legislation concerning ambassadors from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century offers an overview of the attempts made to control the diplomatic entourage in order to diminish the costs of embassies. A law dating from 1257 stated that a Venetian ambassador was only allowed to have two servants and one cook. One century later, in 1371, the group was extended to four servants, two stable boys and one notary and his servant. Another increase in number occurred in 1461, when a new regulation allowed the embassy to consist of eight servants and eight horses, which was augmented to thirteen people and eleven horses 30 years later. However, excessive staffing, in the eyes of the Senate, remained an issue, which was continuously subjected to stricter rules and higher penalties.¹³ In the years when diplomatic relations were still very much evolving, the Venetian state apparently put economic concerns before ceremonial grandeur.

During the sixteenth century, the size of the diplomatic entourage continued to be under constant revision. In his treatise *De Legationibus Libri Tres* (1585), Italian jurist Alberico Gentili stated that, in antiquity, the number of members of the diplomatic suite was fixed, but this practice was abandoned in his time. Consequently, there was some confusion about who

members was the standard amount at the beginning of the century, and between approximately 55 and 155 in the second half of the century, which is a very high amount of servants: Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 20.

¹² Frémy, *Un Ambassadeur Libéral*, 73.

¹³ Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, 15-25.

exactly belonged to the entourage, for example, if attendants, menials and stable boys should be considered as part of the diplomatic family.¹⁴ Jean Hotman, in *De la Charge et Dignité de l'Ambassadeur* (1603), declared that every ambassador could choose how many servants and family members he wished to include in his household.¹⁵ Over the course of the further seventeenth century, the size of the diplomatic retinue remained a widely debated issue. The general guideline provided in treatises on the figure of the ambassador was that there must be a balance between splendour and excessiveness.¹⁶ They advised against grand families, since, besides the financial issue, an ambassador should not try to equal his sovereign but maintain a harmony between his private and public identity.

The ambassadorial court of François de Noailles in Venice is a good example of a standard, and balanced, sixteenth-century diplomatic household. His family comprised around 20 people, and a French visitor at Noailles' Venetian house stated that “[...] he may be accused of having too few people instead of too many.”¹⁷ Likewise, while he was in London, Noailles had maintained a household of a similar size; when he eventually left England in June 1557, his retinue numbered around 20 people.¹⁸ The fact that Noailles opted for a small court was regarded as a positive feature, since it was a sign of efficient government, whereas an ostentatious family could be a symbol of the contrary and reflect badly on the rule of his sovereign.

Nevertheless, during ceremonial occasions, such as wedding celebrations or peace ratifications, the ambassador's role as a visible image of his king grew in importance. These were noble events in which a sovereign aspired to demonstrate his power and status; correspondingly, it was believed that the suite of the ambassador ought to reflect dignity and prestige. Therefore, ordinary ambassadors who conducted ceremonial visits to other states during the time of their residency, increased the number of people in their entourage for the journey. For instance, when André Hurault de Maisse was commissioned to travel from

¹⁴ Alberico Gentili, *Three Books on Embassies*, trans. Gordon J. Laing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), 104.

¹⁵ Hotman, *De la Charge et Dignité de l'Ambassadeur*, 209.

¹⁶ This was a repeated advice in diplomatic treatises throughout the early modern period, see, for example, the late seventeenth-century treatise: Rousseau de Chamoy, *L'Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 27: “[...] il doit éviter de donner lieu par un trop grand ménage d'estre accusé de n'en pas faire une proportionnée au personnage qu'il fait, et en gardant un juste milieu entre la profusion et l'avarice [...]”.

¹⁷ Letter from La Marque to Antoine de Noailles, 4 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 527: “[...] se pourroit il accuser d'avoir peu de gens que trop.” References to the size of François de Noailles' household can be found in: Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 11 August 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 115; Letter from François de Noailles to Bernardin Bochetel [from now on referred to as Bishop of Rennes], 11 January 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 709.

¹⁸ AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 18, f. 433r (14 June 1557); *ibid.*, f. 434r (14 June 1557).

Venice to Mantua to participate in the baptism of the duke of Mantua's son, he gathered a suite of 40 people, including pages, grooms, trumpeters and tambourine players, in order to represent his king in the most honourable way possible.¹⁹ This is also the reason why, generally speaking, the retinue of an extraordinary ambassador was more extensive than that of an ordinary ambassador, as they were always sent to negotiate or celebrate special events. I can again refer here to the example already discussed in the previous two chapters concerning the extraordinary legation from the Swiss canton of Grisons, which came to Venice in 1603 to confirm a new alliance, comprising 150 people.²⁰ Similarly, the aforementioned Spanish extraordinary ambassador, Francisco di Castro, who came to negotiate the Venetian Interdict, entered the city with an entourage of more than 120 members.²¹ Whereas in the first case the elevated status of the mission demanded a large retinue, in the second example, the composition of a vast suite was guided by the wish to outshine their French rivals.

Household Members

Despite the fact that the number of family members was restricted, the group residing in the embassy was very diversified. A first cluster that can be identified is that of domestic servants, a term that should be considered in the broadest sense of the word, meaning, all those people assisting the ambassador in his daily life. In correspondence with most early modern households, the servants present in the embassy were predominately male, with different backgrounds and diverse talents, performing both higher and lower professions.²² This is reflected in Noailles' Venetian household where, amongst others, we find: secretaries; pages; gondoliers; a priest; a tailor; a barber; a porter; a *homme de chambre*; a *crédencier* or *credenziero* (who was in charge of the cold dishes, the furnishing of the table, the sideboard and the silverware); and an *argentier* (a term used to refer to both a silversmith and the person in charge of finances, as in Noailles' case it is mentioned in the context of expenses it

¹⁹ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, 1 June 1587: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, ff. 223r-227v; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to King Henry III, 30 June 1587: *ibid.*, f. 252r; Estat de la despence faicte au voyage de Mantoue, 30 June 1587: *ibid.*, f. 266r.

²⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 5 September 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 121.

²¹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Louis Lefèvre de Caumartin, 17 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 286-287.

²² For similar examples of ecclesiastical households, see: Nussdorfer, "Men at Home", 124-125; Laurie Nussdorfer, "Masculine Hierarchies in Roman Ecclesiastical Households," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 22, no. 4 (2015), 620-642.

refers to the servant responsible for managing the money).²³ Furthermore, Noailles had recruited a stable boy to take care of the horses that he had left behind in Conegliano.²⁴

Except for gondoliers, who were household members particular to Venetian homes, Noailles' group of servants was representative for any ambassadorial court in Europe. For example, when François' brother Antoine de Noailles departed from England in 1556, he listed a similar cluster of servants that he had left behind for François, who took up the post of ordinary ambassador in November 1556:²⁵ two secretaries; two priests; two singers; a page and another young gentleman; his best cook; a baker; two Scottish stable boys; and a porter.²⁶ A long list of domestics present in the house of the Tuscan extraordinary ambassador in France, Alessandro del Nero, in the mid-seventeenth century, again points to the similarity of the types of servants: the master of the household (*maestro di casa*); a chaplain (*cappellano*); a cup-bearer (*coppiere*); harbingers (*foriere*); personal waiters for the various gentlemen in the household (*cameriere*); several pages (*paggio*); a *credenziero*; a *spenditore* or buyer, who was responsible for purchases; an *argentiere* (in the Italian context this always refers to a silversmith, but since it here concerns a servant in the service of a Tuscan ambassador in France, it can again also refer to the person in charge of finances); a *bottigliere*, who was in charge of the drinking vessels and wine; two cooks (*cuoco*); a kitchen help (*aiutante di cucina*); two coachman (*cocchiere*); five grooms (*staffiere*); ten footmen serving the ambassador and the gentlemen in his suite (*lacche*); three servants to clean the dishes and other utensils in the kitchen and to sweep the house; a scullion (*guattero di cucina*); a servant to bring the wood and light the fire in all the rooms of the house; and two stable boys (*garzoni di stalla*).²⁷ Clearly, the ambassador erected a small court within his country of

²³ Letter from count palatine of Sendomir to François de Noailles, 7 August 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 105; Letter from King Francis II to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: *ibid.*, f. 497; Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: *ibid.*, vol. 23, f. 8v; Mémoire et instruction de ce que Raymondie aura a depescher pour les affaires et service de Monseigneur L'Evesque d'Acqs, estant en France ou il l'envoye présentement pour faire les choses qui s'ensuyvent, 25 March 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 268r; Letter from Jean Dolu to François de Noailles: 26 May 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 129; Letter François de Noailles to Bishop of Rennes, 3 October 1560: *ibid.*, f. 411; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Louis, 1 March 1560: *ibid.*, f. 921.

²⁴ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 15 October 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 327r.

²⁵ In the meantime, the youngest brother Gilles acted as diplomatic agent and had the same staff at his disposal.

²⁶ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 1556: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 1231.

²⁷ Lista delle persone che sono in casa del Signor Baron del Nero Ambasciatore di Toscane in Corte Cristianissima Maestà, n.d. [November 1639]: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Francia, b. 4648. More lists with embassy servants can easily be added; for example, for an overview of the domestics in the service of the French nuncio in Rome, see a memoir dating from 1664 published in: Henry Biaudet, *Les Nonciatures Apostoliques Permanentes jusqu'en 1648* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1910), 316-320.

residence, comprising a heterogeneous group of servants and characterised by the three core staff members of European royal courts: the chamber, table and stable.²⁸

Besides the division of labour, a recurrent feature of the diplomatic household was the international origin of its members. French ambassadors always recruited a proportion of their domestics already in France before leaving on their mission. Even during his residency in Venice, Noailles commissioned one of his men, Raymondie, to hire additional servants while he visited France.²⁹ Ambassadors residing for a long period at a certain place, moreover, appointed locals as servants, who often functioned as footmen, errand boys or administrators. Their usefulness lay in the fact that they were acquainted with the native language, customs and markets.³⁰ However, native servants could also be potential spies, reporting back to the local government about the activities of the ambassador. Therefore, contemporary prescriptions advised to monitor them very closely.³¹

In the case of the French embassy in Venice, the employing of local citizens of higher rank in the ambassador's household was challenging. Since it was forbidden for Venetian patricians and officials to have contact with foreign envoys without express permission, becoming a member of the diplomatic staff was out of the question. Nevertheless, in practice, the French ambassadors did call on the services of locals. For example, Philippe de la Canaye employed a Venetian secretary called Antonio Maggi. Although Canaye insinuates that Maggi was a member of the Venetian nobility, other sources reveal that he was more likely a *cittadino*.³² In any case, Canaye stated that it was forbidden for Maggi to reside in his house

²⁸ However, royal courts were composed of a more extensive retinue. Generally speaking, European royal courts shared a similar structure and composition of staff; for an overview of these staff members, see, amongst others, the work of Jeroen Duindam: Jeroen Duindam, "Versailles, Vienna, and Beyond: Changing Views of Household and Government in Early Modern Europe," in *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, 401-431; Jeroen Duindam, "Royal Courts," in *Cultures and Power*, ed. Hamish Scott, vol. 2 of *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750*, ed. Hamish Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 440-477.

²⁹ Mémoire et instruction de ce que Raymondie aura a depescher pour les affaires et service de Monseigneur L'Evesque d'Acqs, estant en France ou il l'envoye présentement pour faire les choses qui s'ensuyvent, 25 March 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 268r.

³⁰ Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 61.

³¹ de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 3, 18r.

³² According to Pompeo Molmenti, the patrician Maggi family died out in 1307. Another branch of the family belonged to the *cittadino* class, of which Antonio's father, Carlo Maggi, was a famous member. Carlo Maggi is known for his journeys in the Levant. He had been sent to the Republic of Cyprus in 1570 to control the fortresses, but was taken prisoner by the Ottoman sultan's troops and sold to Christian merchants, who brought him back to Venice in 1571. Afterwards, he commissioned a book, today kept in the BNF, entitled *Description Historique des Voyages et Aventures de Charles Magius*, with a collection of city views and plans of fortresses that he had visited in Dalmatia, Cyprus, Syria and Egypt. Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2, 25 note 1. Still, there remains some confusion about the provenance of Carlo Maggi, who is sometimes also described as a nobleman, such as in the biographical lemma in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*: Roberto Almagia, "Maggi, Carlo," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1934). It might be possible that Antonio Maggi belonged to the same family line as Ottaviano Maggi, writer of the famous

and, therefore, he performed his duties in his own home.³³ Venetian personnel was a real asset for the diplomatic network as for them it was easier to secretly blend in and gather intelligence.

The international mixture of the diplomatic family is reflected in the house of Noailles. Apart from his priest, tailor and barber, who were certainly French, people from the Italian peninsula constituted a large group: his *credenziero* came from Ferrara and his predecessor, Dominique du Gabre, had recommended the services of some local men who could assist him with his finances and provisions.³⁴ Likewise, the family of the English ambassador in Venice, Edmund Harvel, was composed of many Italians. An overview of his servants dating from 1542, who received a license to carry weapons, illustrates that only four out of the thirteen domestics listed were English; all the others originated from Italian cities: Turin, Modena, Pavia, Pesaro, Oderzo, Asolo and Venice.³⁵ Tuscan Extraordinary Ambassador Alessandro del Nero similarly had both Italians and Frenchmen in his service while performing his mission at the French court. Also his two cooks were French, indicating that there was a French cultural influence in the embassy.³⁶ Alessandra Anselmi, however, came to a different conclusion with regard to seventeenth-century Spanish ambassadors in Rome. She found that their households were for the greater part composed of Spaniards and that foreigners were mostly absent.³⁷ Still, generally speaking, most diplomatic households were characterised by their international nature.

Of the heterogeneous group of domestics, two individuals in particular were generally defined as the most important for the embassy: the master of the household and the secretary.³⁸ In French noble households, the master of the household (*maître d'hôtel*) was the head steward, accountable for the finances and the management of the household, of whom it was expected that he would keep an eye on the behaviour of the other servants. Moreover, he was in charge of supervising the kitchen and its staff and overseeing the logistics of banquets.

diplomatic treatise *De Legato Libri Duo* (1566), who did not belong to the Venetian patriciate; however, it is not clear from where his family originated. Douglas Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 106.

³³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 21 May 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 196-197.

³⁴ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, ff. 8r-8v; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Louis, 1 March 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 921.

³⁵ ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, Deliberazioni, Comuni, reg. 15, f. 6r (15 March 1542).

³⁶ Lista delle persone che sono in casa del Signor Baron del Nero Ambasciatore di Toscane in Corte Cristianissima Maestà, n.d. [November 1639]: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Francia, b. 4648.

³⁷ Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 23.

³⁸ Hotman, *De la Charge et Dignité de l'Ambassadeur*, 39.

At Italian courts, these two duties were divided between two individuals: whereas the master of the household (*maestro di casa*) was responsible for managing the household, the *scalco* was entrusted with everything related to food.³⁹ Surprisingly enough, the sources relating to the French ambassadors in Venice remain silent about the master of the household. Therefore, a thorough analysis of their function within the embassy has not been possible.

Secretaries, on the other hand, are frequently mentioned in the French diplomatic correspondence.⁴⁰ They were offered their own chambers in the diplomatic residence, equipped with their private furniture.⁴¹ Their main task consisted of writing and preserving the correspondence of the embassy, consequently, they were entrusted with valuable state matters. Hence, diplomatic treatises instructed that the ambassador ought to devote special care and attention to the employment of experienced, righteous and secretive individuals who could not be bribed by enemies or leak intelligence.⁴² Furthermore, embassy secretaries needed to be able to blend in and adapt to the local culture and, this way, extract knowledge about the disposition, customs and functioning of the foreign court. This would enable them to conduct negotiations on behalf of the ambassador.⁴³

Seeing the secretary's significant duties, ambassadors occasionally resorted to senior ambassadors for advice and solicited each other's services in finding qualified men. The French ambassador to Constantinople, François Savary de Brèves, asked Canaye to hire a secretary for him. Canaye was very honoured that he was entrusted with this task and recommended a Frenchman who was living in Padua.⁴⁴ From Canaye's description of the qualities that this young gentleman mastered, we learn what were considered the necessary skills of a secretary: modest and respectful in his demeanour, patient, arduous, with good

³⁹ Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 140; Nussdorfer, "Masculine Hierarchies", 630-633.

⁴⁰ Some studies that look into the figure of the embassy secretary: Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 23-25; Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, ch. 6; Hélène Soldini, "Les Républiques de Donato Giannotti: Une Biographie d'un Républicain Florentin du XVIe Siècle" (Phd diss., European University Institute, 2014), 43-64; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, ch. 4.

⁴¹ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 20 January 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 763.

⁴² Reeves, "Étienne Dolet", 86: "In the same way, he should take careful precaution in the selection of his amanuenses [secretaries] that they be thoroughly loyal and uncommunicative, for these are servants with whom we cannot dispense unless we are willing to write everything with our own hands." Treatises on the general profession of the secretary also stressed the importance of secrecy, see: Douglas Biow, "From Machiavelli to Torquato Accetto: The Secretarial Art of Dissimulation," in *Educare il Corpo, Educare la Parola: Nella Trattatistica del Rinascimento*, eds. Giorgio Patrizi and Amedeo Quondam (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1998), 219-238; Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, ch. 6.

⁴³ Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 23-24.

⁴⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 23 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 195.

writing skills, an aptitude for languages and obedient towards the ambassador.⁴⁵ Especially this last quality was of crucial importance to Canaye; he even found their obedience more important than their capabilities: “At least it seems to me that with regard to secretaries, the most able are not always the best, and it is sufficient that they have the capacity to do what they are commanded.”⁴⁶

Canaye’s view about the necessity of a subservient secretary is in line with the traditional early modern appreciation of secretaries. A good visual expression of this viewpoint can be found in the famous painting by Sebastiano del Piombo of Ferry Carondelet, the Imperial ambassador to Rome, with two of his secretaries (Figure 27). Whereas Ferry dominates the picture and is depicted very largely and glamorously, the secretaries appear in a submissive position. The first secretary, sitting next to Ferry, is positioned so low that it seems as if he is kneeling on the floor, and he literally needs to look up to the ambassador, which powerfully alludes to the lower standing of his profession. He awaits the ambassador’s instructions to continue his work, as he himself is not thinking but, instead, humbly executing his master’s commands. The second secretary is portrayed even more in the shadow of the ambassador, as he is positioned in the back of the painting, hardly visible. Clearly, the occupation of secretary was depicted without much status or authority.⁴⁷ A similar portrayal of an embassy secretary can be found in Titian’s portrait of the French ambassador in Venice in the 1530s, Georges d’Armagnac, and his secretary Guillaume Philandrier (Figure 28). Although the secretary is more illuminated and included in the depiction, and consequently attributed with more dignity of his own, he still assumes a subservient position.⁴⁸

Of all the servants in the diplomatic staff, the secretary exposes the strongest the twofold identity of the diplomatic house as private residence and public office, which is reflected in the secretary’s dual loyalty to both his master, the ambassador, and to the king. On the one hand, it was commonly the case that secretaries remained at their post while ambassadors were replaced regularly, indicating their attachment to the embassy instead of to the ambassador personally. It even frequently occurred that the secretary operated as ambassador ad interim until the new ambassador arrived. Other servants were also more permanently employed, and inhabited the embassy under various ambassadors. For example, Dominique

⁴⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 28 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 205.

⁴⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 28 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 205: “Au moins il me semble qu’en matiere de Secretaires les plus habiles ne sont pas tousjou[r]s les meilleurs, et suffit qu’ils ayent la capacité de faire ce qu’on leur commande.”

⁴⁷ Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, 155-158; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 94.

⁴⁸ Michael Jaffé, “The Picture of the Secretary of Titian,” *The Burlington Magazine* 108, no. 756 (1966), 114-127; Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, 158-159.

du Gabre's porter had already served three French ambassadors in Venice and would most probably also have stayed in the service of Noailles.⁴⁹ Ambassadors realised that the continuity of servants contributed to the efficiency and the smooth functioning of the embassy as it was staffed with experienced, knowledgeable individuals.⁵⁰ Here, we notice the gradual professionalisation of the embassy.

On the other hand, a more intimate affiliation could exist between the secretary and the ambassador. In France, it was generally the case that secretaries were appointed by the ambassador, not by the state.⁵¹ This can be exemplified by the case of one of François de Noailles' secretaries in Venice named Daniel Duran. Duran had a close attachment with Noailles because he had already served him and his brothers in London. As a result, Duran had built up a fair amount of expertise, which is probably the reason why Noailles wanted him to remain in his service when he disembarked for Venice.⁵² The same can be said for another secretary of his Venetian embassy named Emilian Camus, but referred to as Milan. Milan would additionally serve Noailles during his residency in Constantinople ten years later.⁵³ This is a very clear illustration of how French ambassadors personally nominated their secretaries. Additionally, it testifies to the fact that Noailles highly valued experience in the selection of his staff members. He apparently understood that a learned corps would bring him more successes and lighten the heavy burden of administrative work.

In the further career of Daniel Duran, the dual loyalty of an embassy secretary emerges. While he was still serving the Venetian embassy, Duran was offered the position of secretary to the daughter of French King Henry II, Elisabeth of Valois, when she became queen of Spain. Duran accepted this post without asking the permission of Noailles, something that greatly angered the ambassador, since he felt betrayed by his most valuable servant:

I have kept all your letters in which you will find that you have constantly promised me your return. Nevertheless, I am aware of the fact that you have resolutely assured princes and princesses and in particular your friends that you will go directly to Spain, and yet you give me

⁴⁹ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8v.

⁵⁰ Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 25.

⁵¹ Maurice Keens-Soper, "François de Callières and Diplomatic Theory," *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 3 (1973), 505.

⁵² Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 20 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 461.

⁵³ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 6 August 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, f. 275.

a vain hope, while nourishing in your stomach a secret intention to inflict me something worse than what you have already done to me.⁵⁴

Noailles clearly expected his secretaries to be in the first place loyal to him. In the end, he decided to forgive Duran for his disobedience, as he did not want to cast any doubt on Duran's reputation; this would only have reflected poorly on Noailles' own skills because it was assumed that an ambassador needed to provide their secretaries with a fine education.⁵⁵

The secretary's ambiguous position also comes to light when we consider the mechanisms of payment. In theory, the secretary's salary was paid for by the crown, often included in the extraordinary allowance that the ambassador received for his embassy.⁵⁶ André Hurault de Maise stated in 1583 that the French embassy secretary was accustomed to collect a salary of 200 *livres*, around 66 *écu*, a year.⁵⁷ Considering that Hurault de Maise himself claimed an annual salary of 4.400 *écu* – but some years later he would only receive 4.800 *écu* for two years of service – and spent 300 *écu* on a monthly basis while in Venice, the secretary's remuneration would be extremely low.⁵⁸ Therefore, in practice, the secretary probably received an additional sum from the ambassador. Moreover, his accommodation and victuals were most likely offered to him free of charge, and, as chapter one has shown, he received diplomatic gifts from the Venetian government at the end of his term.

The treatise by Venetian Ambassador Marino Cavalli, *Informatione dell' Offitio dell'Ambasciatore*, underlines the crucial function of two other servants of the diplomatic

⁵⁴ Letter from François de Noailles to Daniel Duran, 21 September 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 389: “Je vous ay bien voulu garder encores toutes voz lettres par lesquelles vous trouverez que vous me promettiez incessamment votre retour et neantmoins je scay bien que vous assurieez resolutement aux princes et princesses et particulierement a voz amys que vous alliez droict en Espagne, et cependant vous m’entreteniez d’une vaine esperance, nourrissant en votre estomac une secrette intention de me faire peult estre pis que vous m’aviez fait.”

⁵⁵ Letter from François de Noailles to Daniel Duran, 21 September 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 390.

⁵⁶ Likewise, under the rule of English Queen Elizabeth, the embassy secretary's salary was paid for by the crown, see: Bell, “Elizabethan Diplomatic Compensation”, 6.

⁵⁷ Letter from André Hurault de Maise to Secretary of State Villeroy, 9 April 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, f. 358v. Calculated on the ratio of 1575, when one *écu* was worth three *livres*.

⁵⁸ Letter from André Hurault de Maise to Secretary of State Villeroy, November 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 30, f. 330v; Letter from André Hurault de Maise to French King Henry IV, 14 November 1590: AMAE, Mémoires et Documents, Venise, vol. 46, ff. 609-610; State of expenses sent to the French King, 1591: *ibid.*, vol. 47, ff. 479-480. Arnaud du Ferrier claimed a salary of 5.600 *livres*, around 1.866 *écu*, but he stated that the actual standard annual salary of a French ambassador in Venice was 7.200 *livres*, approximately 2.400 *écu* (Ferrier himself calculated that this amount would be around 3.000 when converted to *écu*): Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 15 March 1575: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, ff. 711-712; Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 1 November 1578: *ibid.*, vol. 367, ff. 543-544. Around 2.400 *écu* seems to be the standard remuneration as it corresponds to what Hurault de Maise received a decennium later.

staff: the *credenziere* and the chef.⁵⁹ The *credenziere* was customarily present in every diplomatic household. As already stated above, he was in charge of the cold dishes that were displayed on the *credenza*, sideboard, from which his name derives. The *credenziere* was also responsible for the decoration of the sideboard with silver plates and with elaborate sugar sculptures.⁶⁰ According to Cavalli, the chef was even more important, as he could enhance his master's reputation by providing the embassy guests with delicious food. The more people who were attracted to dine with the ambassador, the more networks he could mould and, consequently, use to extract vital information.⁶¹ Therefore, both the *credenziere* and the chef were crucial for the social functioning of the diplomatic house.

The importance of sociability was also the main reason why another group of individuals was present in the embassy: gentlemen of high standing. This brings us to a second cluster of domestics which were not servants, but people of rank. This group could be very diverse, ranging from kin to young clients of the ambassador, and with various nationalities. The elevated status of these gentlemen was a necessary condition, as it had to correspond to the prestige of the embassy itself. In the household of the Tuscan extraordinary ambassador to France, Alessandro del Nero, outlined above, we find seven gentlemen, amongst whom were some family members of both the ordinary and extraordinary ambassador, who all had their own personal waiters and footmen.⁶² Similarly, in the entourage of Antoine and François de Noailles in London, there were three gentlemen with their own servants, a clear sign of the status of these men.⁶³ These aristocrats dined together with the ambassador and aided him with the entertainment of guests.⁶⁴ For example, when the duke of Mantua visited the residence of Philippe de la Canaye, his gentlemen played a ceremonial role in receiving the duke: they formed the welcoming committee and appropriate company during the visit.⁶⁵

The close relatives of the ambassador constituted a third group of household members. With the appearance of resident embassies, wives often escorted their husbands on their missions, depending on the duration of the stay, the cultural surroundings of the embassy and the military situation. By the seventeenth century, the presence of ambassadors' wives had

⁵⁹ Cavalli, *Informatione dell' Offitio dell' Ambasciatore*.

⁶⁰ Albala, *The Banquet*, 140; 146-148; Dursteler, "A Continual Tavern in My House", 167.

⁶¹ Dursteler, "A Continual Tavern in My House", 167-169.

⁶² Lista delle persone che sono in casa del Signor Baron del Nero Ambasciatore di Toscane in Corte Cristianissima Maestà, n.d. [November 1639]: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Francia, b. 4648.

⁶³ Extract from a letter from Antoine de Noailles to Simon Renard, 13 October 1554: CSP, Spain, vol. 13: 1554-1558, no. 78.

⁶⁴ Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 61.

⁶⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 23 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 191; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 27 March 1602 in *ibid.*, 201-203.

become so widespread that they were even given the title of “ambadress” and their roles were discussed in contemporary diplomatic treatises.⁶⁶ These treatises considered both the negative and positive aspects of the companionship of women. For instance, theorists were of the opinion that, on the one hand, women’s fondness for gossip could lead to the disclosure of political secrets but, on the other hand, their presence, together with their own suite, could elevate the brilliance and splendour of the embassy.⁶⁷ Practically speaking, the first task of the wife was the management of the household, which included the purchasing of food and clothing. This required skills, as she had to manoeuvre in a foreign cultural setting and communicate in an alien language. Secondly, just as her husband, the wife needed to honourably represent her country, which meant displaying civil manners at all times. Thirdly, she stood at the centre of the social life of the embassy and arranged the entertainment of guests. By bringing together various people, she contributed to the networking and information gathering activities of the embassy. Additionally, the wife often built her own network of informants by creating contacts with important women in the city. Fourthly, she functioned as an unofficial secretary and attended to financial and business affairs.⁶⁸

The French ambassadors in Venice who were married, most probably all took their wives with them on mission, who were accompanied by their personal entourage of domestic servants.⁶⁹ For instance, Philippe de la Canaye could strongly rely on the assistance of his

⁶⁶ de Wicquefort, *L’Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 7-8; 283-285; de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 2, 102v-107r; Rousseau de Chamoy, *L’Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 29. In the eighteenth century, a separate treatise was entirely devoted to the figure of the ambadress: Frédéric-Charles Moser, *L’Ambadrice et Ses Droits* (Berlin: Etienne de Bourdeaux, 1754).

⁶⁷ Rousseau de Chamoy, *L’Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 29.

⁶⁸ Some works on the ambassador’s wife in the early modern period include: Lucien Bély, *L’Art de la Paix en Europe: Naissance de la Diplomatie Moderne XVIe-XVIII Siècle* (Paris: PUF, 2007), ch. 10; Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 54-60; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 97-102; Laura Oliván Santaliestra, “Lady Anne Fanshawe, Ambadress of England at the Court of Madrid (1664-1666),” in *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500*, eds. Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 68-85. Similar studies have been conducted for later periods: Joseph Turquan and Jules Eugène d’Auriac, *Une Aventurière de Haut Vol, Lady Hamilton, Ambadrice d’Angleterre, et la Révolution de Naples, d’après des Documents Inédits (1763-1815)* (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1913); Yves Denéchère, ed., *Femmes et Diplomatie: France, XXe Siècle* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004); Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy*, ch. 3; Kenneth Weisbrode, “Vangie Bruce’s Diplomatic Salon: A Mid-Twentieth-Century Portrait,” in *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics*, 240-253; Nevra Biltekin, “The Performance of Diplomacy: The Residence, Gender and Diplomatic Wives in Late Twentieth-Century Sweden,” in *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics*, 254-268. For essays on the role of women in general in diplomacy, see: James Daybell, “Gender, Politics and Diplomacy: Women, News and Intelligence Networks in Elizabethan England,” in *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, 101-119; Julie Anne Demel, *Regard Historique sur la Diplomatie Feminine en Autriche et en France: De la Paix des Dames 3 Août 1529 au Traité de Lisbonne 13 Decembre 2007* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013); Helen McCarthy, *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014); Sluga and James eds., *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics*. Lastly, see also the project “Weibliche Diplomatie? Frauen als Aussenpolitische Akteure (18. Jahrhundert)” led by Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler.

⁶⁹ Not every ambassador mentions his wife in his letters, but this does not mean that she did not accompany him. For the wife, embassy life could sometimes be unbearable. This was the case with André Hurault de

wife, Renée de Courcillon, who was the general executor of the commissions carried out for friends, patrons and the French monarchy.⁷⁰ Moreover, she maintained a network of female contacts and secured friendships with the wives of other French ambassadors.⁷¹ Lastly, during her travels in Italy, she always observed local politics and kept her husband well-informed. For example, when Renée went to Turin, she reported about the marriage politics of the duke of Savoy.⁷² The responsibilities and accomplishments of Renée exemplify how even the wife of the ambassador played an important role in the official functioning of the embassy.⁷³

In fact, the only members of the diplomatic household that did not directly contribute to the representational role and stately functions of the house were the ambassador's children. Their presence reminds us of the fact that the embassy was also the private home of the ambassador. Again, Philippe de la Canaye can serve as an example. When embarking for Venice, he took only his two eldest sons, ten and eight years old, and one daughter with him on mission, since his other two daughters were already married and the youngest son was only three years old.⁷⁴ Eventually, the youngest child was also brought to be raised in the embassy, since Canaye thought of his children as a perfect distraction from the boredom of political affairs, and his other sons were constantly absent. Canaye's two eldest sons did not reside in the embassy for long, as they were sent to Bologna to receive an education in Italian, Latin and Greek.⁷⁵ Afterwards, Canaye wrote to his contacts in Rome, the French ambassador and four cardinals, with the intention of finding a suitable household where his sons could serve an apprenticeship and, this way, receive practical schooling both in the

Maisse's wife, who returned to Paris before him since the intensity of diplomatic life had taken a toll on her health and she had become blind: Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, 17 January 1587: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, f. 41v; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to King Henry III, 26 March 1588: *ibid.*, vol. 34, f. 246r.

⁷⁰ Renée de Courcillon's strong involvement in broker activities will be discussed at length in Chapter 6.

⁷¹ From Canaye's correspondence it becomes clear that his wife was certainly friends with the wife of both Dominique du Vic, ambassador in the Swiss cantons, and Charles de Neufville, marquis of Alincourt, ambassador in Rome.

⁷² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 6 November 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 472.

⁷³ Similar examples can be found at other embassies, for example, Noailles' brother Antoine was accompanied by his wife, Jeanne de Gontaut, on his embassy to England. As organiser of the household activities in their residence in London, she fulfilled the role of diplomatic hostess and wrote about the splendid dinners with the Portuguese and Venetian ambassadors. Furthermore, her homemade jam was used to consolidate private networks, as it was sent as a gift to Stephen Gardiner, lord chancellor to Queen Mary, during his illness, which he very much appreciated: Letter from Jeanne de Gontaut to François de Noailles: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 985; Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles: *ibid.*, f. 1017; Letter from Jeanne de Gontaut to François de Noailles: *ibid.*, f. 1020.

⁷⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 7 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 65.

⁷⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 29 March 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 207.

cultural world, by studying Roman antiquities, and the political arena.⁷⁶ His sons would indeed reside in the embassy of French Ambassador Charles de Neufville who even introduced them to the pope, and in the household of French Cardinal Jacques Davy du Perron.⁷⁷ Furthermore, they travelled to Naples, where the boys studied the art of equestrianism, and Florence, where they were welcomed by the grand duke of Tuscany.⁷⁸

Besides receiving a varied education in Italy, these voyages also assisted in maintaining Canaye's network. Even though his sons did not perform official tasks for the embassy, they did help to sustain the private networks of the ambassador. Since Canaye had no time to travel to Rome himself in order to offer his services to prominent cardinals, his sons served as a medium to remind them of his existence and transfer compliments:

Your Eminence, since I fear that I will be forced to leave this country without having had the honour of kissing your hands, I have commanded my children to perform this duty on my behalf, and to offer you their and mine very humble services. They are still young students, but I hope that they are worthy of being employed in your service; please give them the honour of receiving your protection and good graces, and believe in me until my end.⁷⁹

Furthermore, this grand tour through the Italian states was the perfect way for the cadet members of the Canaye family to get acquainted with the institutional and artistic context of Europe, and the acquired insights and experiences would greatly aid their later search for a career in public service. For the same reason, other kin accompanied the ambassador on his mission; recurrent individuals present in practically all the French embassies in Venice under study were brothers, nephews or cousins of the ambassador.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 3 May 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 556; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal Gimnasio, 3 May 1607 in *ibid.*, 557; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal de Givry, 3 May 1607 in *ibid.*, 557; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal Serafin, 3 May 1607 in *ibid.*, 558; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal du Perron, 3 May 1607 in *ibid.*, 558-559.

⁷⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal du Perron, 26 May 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 604; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 1 June 1607 in *ibid.*, 618; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 13 June 1607 in *ibid.*, 635.

⁷⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal du Perron, 5 May 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 562; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal du Perron, 26 May 1607 in *ibid.*, 604; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, 7 July 1607 in *ibid.*, 653.

⁷⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal de Givry, 3 May 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 557: "Monseigneur, Craignant d'estre contrainct de partir de ce païs sans avoir l'honneur de vous baiser les mains, je commande à mes enfans de vous rendre ce devoir pour moy, et vous offrir leur tres-humble service avec le mien. Ils sont encores petits escholiers: mais j'espere qu'ils mettront peine de se rendre dignes d'estre employez en vostre service: faictes leur donc l'honneur de les recevoir en vostre protection et bonne grace, et me croyez jusqu'à ma fin."

⁸⁰ See Chapter 7 for a detailed analysis of their presence in the embassy in the context of the diplomatic family network.

Also non-related young aristocrats and pages wished to enjoy a political training at the embassy. These apprentices are a final important cluster of the diplomatic family. Their presence showcases the importance of the embassy as a type of college. Young Frenchmen travelling through Italy as part of their grand tour halted at the French embassy in Venice. Between 1569 and 1571, Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, who was nineteen years old at the time of his arrival in Venice and who would later become a famous Protestant writer, sojourned at the residence of ambassadors Paul de Foix and Arnaud du Ferrier. Ambassadors were often regarded as strong father figures to whom younger people looked up. This was certainly the case for Mornay, who admired Ferrier, and Ferrier, in turn, took on the role of educator. He guided Mornay in matters of religion and taught him the Hebrew language. Moreover, the two men belonged to the same social environment, and since Ferrier was well-connected, he was a good contact for Mornay, as he could introduce him to the right people.⁸¹ Similarly, in 1572, the later French ambassador to Venice, Philippe de la Canaye, stayed at the embassy of Ferrier during his Italian travels.⁸²

Additionally, pages were recruited at the embassy, who had solicited the ambassador to be taken under his care in order to get educated in various materials, such as languages and foreign affairs policies. The acceptance of a page could also be a favour to a friend who had recommended the boy.⁸³ Pages occasionally remained in the embassy under various ambassadors, again pointing to the attachment of some domestics to the embassy instead of the ambassador. François de Noailles, for instance, took over a French page, who was a copyist, from his predecessor Dominique du Gabre.⁸⁴ The provenance of these aides could be very diverse; Noailles took a French, Polish and Greek page under his wing.⁸⁵

The embassy was clearly a studious environment in which one could become familiar with public affairs and receive an education in the world of politics in a more intimate and secure environment than the royal court. Since the formation in an embassy offered a broad training

⁸¹ Anna Bettoni, “Duplessis-Mornay et la “Famille” de l’Ambassade d’Arnaud Du Ferrier à Venise,” *Albineana, Cahiers d’Aubigné* 18, no. 1 (2006), 381-407.

⁸² de la Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant*, xii.

⁸³ Philippe de la Canaye, for example, was asked by Guillaume Ancel, the king’s *maître d’hôtel* at this point, if he could do him the favour of recommending the service of one of his pages to the French ambassador in Constantinople, François Savary de Brèves. Ancel had nourished him, but the boy wished to learn the Turkish language: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 18 May 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 187.

⁸⁴ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8v.

⁸⁵ Letter from count palatine of Sendomir to François de Noailles, 7 August 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 105; Letter from King Francis II to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: *ibid.*, f. 497; Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: *ibid.*, vol. 23, f. 8v.

and cultivated suitable candidates for future political professions, the state actively encouraged young citizens to partake in diplomatic missions. In Florence, a law was even declared in 1498 to promote the participation of young citizens in embassies, entitled *Istituzione dell'Ufficio di Giovane d'Ambasciatore*.⁸⁶ Likewise, early modern diplomatic treatises pointed to the importance of educating young people in the embassy:

Following the same approach, we should always send a certain amount of young men of quality with the ambassadors, with whom the latter have to share everything that they can about their affairs that is without great impact. And they should grant them with honour and distinction the place of embassy secretaries, and oblige them to learn the language and the affairs of the country [where they reside] and to stay with the ambassador for the entire time of his employment, as opposed to the majority who, driven by a desire for change, stay only until they start to get bored, long to return home or wish to go elsewhere, without having learned anything useful from their travel, neither for themselves, nor for their country.⁸⁷

Versatile Actors of Diplomacy

The overview of diplomatic family members has stressed the important contribution of every member to the efficient functioning of the diplomatic machinery. Furthermore, I have already hinted at the fact that, despite their traditional roles, domestics did not always have a clear-cut function, and their responsibilities varied. Noailles exemplified this when he stated that his staff members ought to have several skills: the tailor should be able to sing or play an instrument and the barber had to possess undefined additional talents.⁸⁸ As other early modern households, the embassy was a fluid institution where the inhabitants adapted themselves to the needs of the home and, most importantly, were employed in the political

⁸⁶ Giorgio Cadoni and Franco Maria Di Sciullo, eds., *Provvisoni Concernenti l'Ordinamento della Repubblica Fiorentina 1494-1512*, vol. 2: *12 maggio 1497-29 dicembre 1502* (Rome: Nella Sede dell'Istituto Palazzo Borromini, 2000), 74-80. On the employment of young citizens in embassies, see also: Giuseppe Vedovato, "La Preparazione dei Giovani alla Diplomazia nella Repubblica Fiorentina," *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato* XXII, no. 1 (1962), 83-96.

⁸⁷ Rousseau de Chamoy, *L'Idée du Parfait Ambassadeur*, 18-19: "Dans cette mesme veue, on devoit aussy envoyer toujours avec les Ambassadeurs un certain nombre de jeunes gens de qualité auxquels ils auroient ordre de faire part de tout ce qu'ils pourroient leur dire de leurs affaires sans conséquence, et en ce cas il faudroit leur faire envisager comme un honneur et une distinction les places de Secretaires des Ambassades et les obliger à apprendre la langue et les affaires du pays, et à demeurer avec l'Ambassadeur pendant tout le temps de son employ, au lieu que, par un esprit de changement, la plupart n'y restent que jusqu'à ce que, commençant à s'ennuyer, le désir du retour ou de passer ailleurs les fasse partir, sans avoir tiré aucune utilité de leur voyage ny pour eux ny pour leur patrie."

⁸⁸ Mémoire et instruction de ce que Raymondie aura a despescher pour les affaires et service de Monseigneur L'Evesque d'Acqs, estant en France ou il l'envoye présentement pour faire les choses qui s'ensuyvent, 25 March 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 268r.

activities of the ambassador. All the people connected to the embassy were strongly involved in the mechanisms behind the performance of high politics, and can be regarded as invisible agents of diplomacy.⁸⁹

The participation of servants in the official duties of the ambassador mainly meant that they operated as informants: collecting intelligence, establishing local connections and delivering messages to both the local government and the home court. These are precisely the actions performed by the members of the diplomatic staff of the French embassy in Venice: they roamed the main squares and markets on a daily basis to intercept gossip and news, and they frequented the political centres of power to convey reports on behalf of the ambassador. Dominique du Gabre advised Noailles to appoint one of his secretaries as an information collector, who had to frequent St. Mark's Square every morning to overhear the conversations of ambassadors and secretaries that gathered there. Afterwards, the secretary needed to linger at the Rialto, another important square in the city where information circulated. He should then dine with the ambassador and communicate everything he had learned.⁹⁰ The applying of domestics to the information network was a widespread, international practice; for example, Antoine de Noailles' cook in England, named Étienne, was married to an English woman and acquired useful information through her local networks.⁹¹ Contemporary diplomatic treatises likewise recommended the employment of domestics as information brokers. Étienne Dolet in his *De Officio Legati* sharply articulated this practice:

Furthermore, an ambassador should have among his servants some one man who is cautious and versatile, who will wander about the city, joining in conversations and courting familiarity with a large number of persons, to gather every breath of rumour, so that some conjecture can be drawn from them concerning the purposes of those with whom the ambassador is dealing.⁹²

Although not formally part of the diplomatic family, as they did not reside under the same roof as the ambassador, also those individuals who served the embassy outside the confines

⁸⁹ Investigations into medieval and early modern noble households have similarly revealed that domestics played an active role in their master's administrative duties, governmental undertakings, and so forth; see, for example: Mertes, *The English Noble Household*, ch. 4. Also in royal European courts, dignitaries combined their domestic roles with political responsibilities: Duindam, *Dynasties*, 193.

⁹⁰ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8v. On the importance of the Rialto and St. Mark's square for the circulation of information, see: de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*.

⁹¹ Elmore Harris Harbison, "French Intrigue at the Court of Queen Mary," *The American Historical Review* 45, no. 3 (1940), 538.

⁹² Reeves, "Étienne Dolet", 86.

of the house deserve a close examination. Whereas the ambassador stood at the heart of the diplomatic machinery, he was not the sole actor. As Abraham de Wicquefort accurately stated in his treatise: “[...] the greatest part of the most important Affairs have been transacted or prepar’d by unknown Persons [...]”.⁹³ An investigation of these local servants of the French crown generates an understanding of the smaller players on the diplomatic scene, who greatly contributed to the effective operating of the French embassy. By considering these low-profile actors, who are often overlooked when studying embassy life, a micro-history of diplomacy becomes possible.

An important family in French service stationed in Venice during the second half of the sixteenth century were the Vidals. Marc Vidal, who originated from Montpellier and who probably initially worked as a merchant in Venice, already collaborated with French ambassadors Jean de Morvillier (1546-1550) and Dominique du Gabre (1554-1557).⁹⁴ Under the residency of François de Noailles, he was employed as an informant, since Vidal knew all the novelties of the Rialto and the St. Mark district.⁹⁵ Noailles’ letters also reveal that Vidal maintained contacts with, amongst others, German and Genoese merchants to acquire intelligence.⁹⁶ He even was involved in some undefined secret practices to undermine and damage the affairs and interests of England.⁹⁷ Besides his role as intelligence gatherer, Vidal additionally assisted French ambassadors in financial matters, since he knew where money could be found in Venice and, consequently, arranged loans for the French crown.⁹⁸

Furthermore, Noailles employed Vidal for the delivery of postal packages and, certainly before 1564, he was promoted to *maître des courriers*, responsible for the organisation of the French postal service in Venice.⁹⁹ Starting from the early 1570s, Vidal combined this charge

⁹³ Translation taken from: de Wicquefort, *The Ambassador and His Functions*, book 2, 314. Original quote in: de Wicquefort, *L’Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 2, 35: “[...] la plupart des grandes affaires ont esté faites, ou préparées par des personnes inconnües [...]”.

⁹⁴ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 20 May 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 330; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 10 December 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 273r.

⁹⁵ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r.

⁹⁶ Letter from Cardinal of Lorraine to François de Noailles, 19 June 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 194.

⁹⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 20 May 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 331.

⁹⁸ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 10 December 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 273r.

⁹⁹ François de Noailles had arranged the establishment of a permanent French postal service in Venice in 1561. At the French embassy, a postal office was erected, which was headed by a *maître de courriers*. This new postal service assured a continuous communication between Venice and Lyon by six couriers, of which four were French and two Venetian. For more information on this postal service see the correspondence of François de

with that of French agent in Ragusa. However, his advanced age prevented him from physically going to Ragusa himself, so he sent another Frenchman in his place.¹⁰⁰ He remained *maître de courriers*, a function that was inherited by his son, Alexandre Vidal, after his death.¹⁰¹ A last particular charge executed by Vidal in his varied career that should be mentioned here was his appointment as *garde des munitions*. He was entrusted with the monitoring and safeguarding of cannonballs that were temporarily stored in a warehouse in Venice. These cannonballs had been made by order of François de Guise, lieutenant-general of France, in Friuli, which was part of the Venetian Terraferma.¹⁰² The French ambassadors lauded Vidal as a loyal and affectionate servant of France, and his constant assistance in multiple fields was crucial for the executing of their diplomatic tasks.¹⁰³ During Philippe de la Canaye's residency, a member of the Vidal family was still working together with the French embassy.¹⁰⁴

Another equally interesting and versatile servant of the French ambassadors in Venice throughout the entire second half of the sixteenth century was Camillo della Croce, better known under his French name, Camille de la Croix. He originated from a Milanese family, and both his father and brother had died in the service of the French king. He is described in various sources as a very diligent and loyal servant of France who assisted many French gentlemen and ministers in Venice.¹⁰⁵ Croix especially worked very closely with the French

Noailles: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, passim; *ibid.*, vol. 28, passim. See also: Eugène Vaillé, *Histoire Générale des Postes Françaises*, vol. 2: *De Louis XI à la Création de la Surintendance Générale des Postes (1477-1630)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), 301-317. For information on the role of Marc Vidal as *maître de courriers*, see: Letter from Cardinal François de Tournon to François de Noailles, 27 June 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 655r; Vaillé, *Histoire Générale des Postes Françaises*, vol. 2, 309-310.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Charles IX, 1 May 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, f. 151.

¹⁰¹ Vaillé, *Histoire Générale des Postes Françaises*, vol. 2, 312-313.

¹⁰² Estat des fraiz faitz par moy Marc Vidal commis et député par Monseigneur l'Evesque de Lodesve ambassadeur pour le Roy à Venise, à la garde de certaine quantité de bouletz [...], 14 December 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, ff. 31r-31v.

¹⁰³ See, for example: Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 5 March 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 576r: "[...] le quel s'est tousjours monstré si fidelle et affectionné au service du Roy [...]".

¹⁰⁴ A certain Vidal is mentioned as courier of a package of damask: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 26 February 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 88. Unfortunately, no more references to him were found in Canaye's letters.

¹⁰⁵ Compte de la recepte et despence faicte par moy Arnoul du Ferrier, Conseiller du Roy en son privé Conseil, et son Ambassadeur à Venize des deniers que la Royne mère du Roy Regente m'a envoiez pardeça pour le service de Sa Majesté, et autres que j'ay empruntez, par le commandement d'icelle sur son passage et entrée à Venize au mois de juillet 1574, July 1574, published in: Evelyn Korsch, "Diplomatic Gifts on Henri III's Visit to Venice in 1574," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 15, no. 1 (2007), Appendix 1; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 8 December 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 163r; Remontrances faites par le secrétaire de Monsieur d'Acqs, à nos Seigneurs du Conseil Privé, pour faire payer ledit Seigneur de ses appointemens d'Ambassadeur à Venise, 21 March 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, ff. 18r-18v.

ambassador, and he might have even resided in the embassy building at certain points of his career. François de Noailles described him as his Italian secretary, who had already worked for many of his predecessors: Guillaume de Pélicier (1539-1542), Jean de Morvillier (1546-1550), the Cardinal of Tournon (1551) and Odet de Selve (1550-1554).¹⁰⁶ André Hurault de Maisse likewise designated Croix as an employee of *la secrétairerie Italienne*.¹⁰⁷ This title of Italian secretary refers to the fact that Croix was in charge of writing, copying and translating letters in Italian, which made him, as Philippe de la Canaye put it, “[...] not only useful but necessary for ministers who did not master the Italian language [...]”.¹⁰⁸

Besides secretarial work and assisting the French ambassadors with his Italian language skills, Croix executed many other tasks for the embassy. Most importantly, similar to Marc Vidal, he acted as information collector; under Noailles’ residency, he even was the most important secret agent who gathered intelligence from both the Levant and Italy. Whereas Vidal was aware of the news that circulated within Venice, Croix maintained international information networks. The value of his services for the embassy is summarised by one of Noailles’ secretaries:

Camille de la Croix receives a pension of ten *écu* per month, which is money well and usefully spent considering the secret services that he has performed regarding intelligence gathering, and the collecting of various news from the Levant and from all the parts in Italy from where he regularly receives more letters than anyone else of his quality in Europe. And he makes countless solicitations and translations in the Italian language, and, moreover, he is the most important, and almost the only minister, performing the abovementioned offices and other important and necessary services [...]¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 8 December 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 163r; Remontrances faites par le secrétaire de Monsieur d’Acqs, à nos Seigneurs du Conseil Privé, pour faire payer ledit Seigneur de ses appointemens d’Ambassadeur à Venise, 21 March 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 18v. Considering the fact that he was still a young boy under these ambassadors, he probably first served the embassy as an apprentice.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to King Henry IV, 28 December 1590: AMAE, Mémoires et Documents, Venise, vol. 46, f. 674.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 9 October 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 443-444: “Il estoit non seulement utile mais presque necessaire à vos Ministres qui n’avoient pas la langue Italienne [...]”.

¹⁰⁹ Remontrances faites par le secrétaire de Monsieur d’Acqs, à nos Seigneurs du Conseil Privé, pour faire payer ledit Seigneur de ses appointemens d’Ambassadeur à Venise, 21 March 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 18r-18v: “Quant a la pension de Camille de la Croix qui est de dix escutz par mois [...] qui est ung argent fort bien et utilement employé pour les services secretz qu’il faict tant pour le regard des intelligentz que pour recueillir plusieurs advs de Levant et de toutes les parties de l’Italie d’ou il reçoit ordinairement lettres plus qu’autre de sa qualité qui soit en l’Europe faisant infinies sollicitations, traductions servant de truchement en la langue italienne, et au reste principal et quasi seul ministre en tous les susdits offices et autres services importants et necessaires [...]”.

François de Noailles and Camille de la Croix would continue to maintain a correspondence years after Noailles' Venetian residency. When Noailles frequented Italy in 1564, Croix informed him about the novelties and sent him transcriptions of Roman pamphlets.¹¹⁰ A decade later, he was still in touch with the Noailles family, as can be gleaned from a letter written by Charles de Noailles, son of Antoine, who was travelling in Italy and sent a dispatch from Padua to François' brother Gilles in 1579: "I did not fail to give your letters to sir Camille de la Croix, who, together with Pierre Vidal, showed himself very affectionate for all my affairs."¹¹¹ It is interesting to note that Gilles de Noailles perhaps collaborated with another member of the Croix family during his residency in London; his lists of expenses dating from 1559 namely mentioned one of his servants with the same family name, whom he had sent to the French king to deliver messages.¹¹² Clearly, the Noailles family had established a long-lasting relationship and a fruitful information channel with the Croix clan. Charles' quote likewise mentions a member of the aforementioned Vidal family with whom the Noailles apparently also still maintained contact.

Additional services that Camille de la Croix performed for the French ambassadors were the dispatching of letters and packages, the acquiring of patents from the *Signoria*, acting as a middleman in purchases and executing financial tasks such as the paying of a notary.¹¹³ It is therefore not surprising that the letters of all the French ambassadors in Venice over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century stress that Croix was an indispensable asset for the embassy, and they all constantly urged the king to compensate him for his valuable labours.¹¹⁴ André Hurault de Maisse even recommended that Croix take up the charge of

¹¹⁰ Letter from Camille de la Croix to François de Noailles, 17 April 1564: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 330r-330v; Letter from Camille de la Croix to François de Noailles, 24 April 1564: *ibid.*, ff. 336r-336v. See also: Chiara Lastraioli, "Le Pasquinate Italiane del Ms. N.A.F. 3107 della Bibliothèque Nationale di Parigi," *Filologia e Critica* 23, no. 1 (1988), 72-116.

¹¹¹ Letter from Charles de Noailles to Gilles de Noailles, 20 December 1579 in *Les Papiers des Noailles*, vol. 2, 180: "Je n'ay pas failli de rendre vos lettres au sieur Camille de la Croix, lequel, avesques mestre Pierre Vidal, s'est montré fort affectionné en toutes mes affaires."

¹¹² Etat des parties extraordinaires fournies pour le service du Roy depuis le commencement de moys de may 1559 jusques en mars ensuyvant, et avancées par moy Gilles de Noailles, Conseiller, Maître des requêtes, [Maître] de l'hôtel dudit Seigneur, estant lors son Ambassadeur en Angleterre, n.d. [31 March 1560]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 14, f. 170v.

¹¹³ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, ff. 8r-8v; Letter from Matthieu Coignet to François de Noailles, 9 January 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 86r; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Jean du Bellay, 7 April 1559: *ibid.*, f. 341r; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 545; Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venize, n.d. [August 1561]: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 165v.

¹¹⁴ Croix also made some mistakes, such as forgetting to send packages with objects or letters: Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Jean du Bellay, 7 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 341r; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 545.

ambassador ad interim, since Hurault de Maisse himself desperately desired to return to France. He thought of Croix as fully capable of performing that responsibility, since he was already experienced and well-known in Venetian circles.¹¹⁵ According to French historian Armand Baschet, Hurault de Maisse would indeed entrust the embassy to Croix when he left Venice in April 1594.¹¹⁶ Croix eventually died at the age of 69, after more than half a century of service to the French crown, which deeply saddened the French ambassador at that time, Philippe de la Canaye.¹¹⁷ Croix was replaced by the aforementioned Antonio Maggi, who likewise stayed in the service of the French embassy for several decades.¹¹⁸

Both Marc Vidal and Camille de la Croix were multitalented individuals, and a consideration of their various services has illuminated both the multifaceted nature of ambassadorial duties and the significant role played by local contacts in the diplomatic machinery.¹¹⁹ Together with the members of the embassy staff, these agents had to be versatile and contribute to the political functioning of the embassy. Furthermore, they highlight the fact that the French embassy had strongly integrated in the local environment with a long continuity of service by the same agents. Seeing the indispensable work that actors such as Vidal and Croix conducted for the embassy, Dominique du Gabre advised his successor, François de Noailles, to always treat both men with courtesy and affection.¹²⁰ Furthermore, they needed to be paid by the French crown for their services; however, their remuneration was extremely low compared to their numerous contributions to the smooth operation of French affairs in Venice, and the ambassadors repeatedly needed to remind the French government of overdue payments.

Throughout François de Noailles' residency, Camille de la Croix was entitled to a monthly stipend of 10 *écu*, which was already the arrangement under several of Noailles' predecessors.¹²¹ Under the embassy of Arnaud du Ferrier in the 1580s, the amount had

¹¹⁵ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to King Henry IV, 19 September 1593: AMAE, Mémoires et documents, Venise, vol. 48, f. 733.

¹¹⁶ Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise*, 432 note 1.

¹¹⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 5 October 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 439; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 9 October 1602 in *ibid.*, 443.

¹¹⁸ In 1620, Antonio Maggi was still acting as a secretary of the French ambassador, but he did not reside in the embassy, see: Claudio Madricardo, "Sesso e Religione nel Seicento a Venezia: La Sollecitazione in Confessionale," *Studi Veneziani* XVI (1988), 140.

¹¹⁹ It should be kept in mind that I have only highlighted two individuals out of a vast web of local agents. Filippo de Vivo also mentions the Porto family from Vicenza, who were strongly attached to France and served the French ambassadors in Venice: de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 77.

¹²⁰ Mémoire des piéces qu'il faut retirer de Monsieur de Lodève et de ce qu'il faut apprendre et estre instruit de luy, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 10v.

¹²¹ Parties extraordinaires fournies et avancées pour le service du Roy par l'Evesque d'Acqs son Conseiller et Ambassadeur à Venise, depuis le 1^{er} jour d'avril 1559 jusques au dernier de septembre 1560, n.d. [30 September 1560]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 403; Remontrances faites par le

decreased slightly because Croix now received an annual salary of 100 *écu*, and another 100 *écu* for travel expenses.¹²² In 1602, Croix, already 69 years old, was awarded a pension of 400 *écu* as a reward for all the hard work that he had carried out for France over the past more than forty years.¹²³ This seems to be a small amount compared to Croix' faithful services.¹²⁴ Croix' replacement Antonio Maggi, would receive 300 *écu* per year, a cost that was calculated into the payment of the ambassador.¹²⁵ Not much information could be extracted from the sources with regard to the salary of Marc Vidal. In 1573, he was entitled to 500 *écu* per year for his functions of both *maître des courriers* and agent in Ragusa.¹²⁶

Clearly, these diplomatic actors were poorly compensated, however, there apparently did exist a logical hierarchy in the salaries of the diplomatic staff. Whereas embassy secretaries and valuable agents were in the same salary scale, domestic servants received a much lower remuneration. The advice given by Dominique du Gabre to François de Noailles contains some information about the salary of certain domestics: the porter was paid a monthly salary of 1 *écu* and a young page, who mostly acted as a copyist, received 2 *écu* per month. Likewise, Noailles' stable boy in Conegliano received only around 1 *écu* per month.¹²⁷ This is not to deny, however, that the servants received all kind of extras, such as food and accommodation. Whereas the French treasury bore a part of the employment costs of the high-ranking servants and agents, included in the ambassador's stipend or paid directly, often

secrétaire de Monsieur d'Acqs, à nos Seigneurs du Conseil Privé, pour faire payer ledit Seigneur de ses appointemens d'Ambassadeur à Venise, 21 March 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 18r; Parties extraordinaires avancées pour le service du Roy par l'evesque Dacqs son ambassadeur à Venise depuis le premier jour d'octobre 1560 jusques au dernier jour de septembre 1561, n.d. [30 September 1561]: *ibid.*, f. 116r.

¹²² Compte de la recepte et despence faicte par moy Arnoul du Ferrier, Conseiller du Roy en son privé Conseil, et son Ambassadeur à Venise des deniers que la Royne mère du Roy Regente m'a envoiez pardeça pour le service de Sa Majesté, et autres que j'ay empruntez, par le commandement d'icelle sur son passage et entrée à Venise au mois de juillet 1574, July 1574, published in: Korsch, "Diplomatic Gifts", Appendix 1; Letter from King Henry III to Arnaud du Ferrier, 11 May 1582: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 368, f. 481.

¹²³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 6 September 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 405; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal Arnaud d'Ossat, 6 September 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 405.

¹²⁴ The French ambassadors repeatedly complained to the king that Camille de la Croix was not compensated sufficiently and that he had to live a poor life. See, for example: Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, 13 January 1587: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, ff. 26r-26v; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, 13 January 1587: AMAE, Mémoires et Documents, Venise, vol. 48, ff. 177-179.

¹²⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 21 May 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 196-197.

¹²⁶ However, as said before, Marc Vidal himself did not go to Ragusa and, therefore, he gave 200 *écu* of his stipend to the agent that he sent in his place: Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Charles IX, 1 May 1573: Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, f. 151.

¹²⁷ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8v; Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 15 October 1558: *ibid.*, vol. 24, f. 327r.

with many years of delay, it was most probably the ambassador himself who had to warrant for most of the staff's salary.

Household Management

As illustrated, the members of an ambassador's court constituted an indispensable component of the embassy. Apart from the practical questions concerning dimensions, composition, payment, and so forth, moral issues with regard to the supervision of the household should also be discussed here. An ambassador, as any nobleman, had to master the art of householding. This meant righteously managing his servants and imposing a clear hierarchical structure on the family. Furthermore, since the social and political life created in the embassy mirrored the world at large, a good organisation was necessary in order to rightfully represent his sovereign's realm. In the eyes of early modern people, the actions of one's servants were a reflection of the virtues of their master, in this case of both the ambassador and the sovereign he was representing. Therefore, strict action had to be taken against misbehaving servants.

The Ambassador as Pater Familias

A household functioned as a support relationship characterised by mutual reciprocities and dependencies between masters and servants: whereas servants depended on their masters for their livelihood and training, masters relied on the loyalty, honesty and cooperation of their domestics in order to maintain stability within the house. Masters also had moral obligations towards their servants: they were expected to take care of them and support them in harder times.¹²⁸ The significance of good family management is stressed in early modern treatises on the household. Fifteenth-century Renaissance humanists believed that the household was a reflection of the state, and that the efficient organisation of the house and virtuous relations with one's domestics symbolised good government. Hence, writing on household management allowed them to comment on the political domain. However, as Dennis Romano has shown, during the sixteenth century, the idea of the household as a microcosm of the state became secondary to the notion of the domestic world as a model for social order.

¹²⁸ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 58-64.

Instead of the political stance, the theme became related to nobility and hierarchical status.¹²⁹ Due to the specificity of the ambassadorial house as an extension of the sovereigns' court and realm, treatises on diplomacy dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries still related the household management of the embassy to the performance of politics. Consequently, a well-managed household was an explicit duty of the ambassador: he had to be an authoritarian and responsible head of the family who rigorously oversaw the conduct of his servants.¹³⁰

It was, moreover, important in the eyes of the world at that time that a hierarchical order within the household was respected and male status was clearly defined.¹³¹ The gentlemen present in a diplomatic family functioned as courtiers and took up the first and most privileged position. They were, as a result, granted the most comfortable chambers in the house, which were equipped with luxurious furnishings befitting their standing. Lower down the social ladder, the comfort of rooms and accoutrements diminished. Household officials, such as the *spenditore*, who conducted important organisational tasks and could make financial transactions, and servants responsible for taking care of the master's personal needs, constituted an intermediate group. Inferior in rank were servants such as coachmen, footmen and grooms. Lastly, stable boys occupied the lowest position: whereas the rest of the family was allowed to dine with their master, stable boys were both physically and socially isolated, as they slept and ate outside the house.¹³²

Noailles understood the necessity of domestic order and paid careful attention to household administration. His efficient management can be deduced from a judgement made by a French guest at his house in Venice who stated that "with regard to his home and family, it is not possible to be better organised as how I have seen it [...] everyone knows his tasks without being redundant."¹³³ The comment about not having any unnecessary servants raised an important issue, as unnecessary servants would cost the ambassador and the crown too much money. Therefore, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Philippe de la Canaye

¹²⁹ Dennis Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft: Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice, 1400-1600* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 1-21.

¹³⁰ Fletcher, "Furnished with Gentlemen", 530-531; Fletcher *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 96-97.

¹³¹ Nussdorfer, "Men at Home", 126.

¹³² Mary Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition, and Everyday Life in the Court of a Borgias Prince* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 33-36; Nussdorfer, "Men at Home", 126; Nussdorfer, "Masculine Hierarchies", 627-630.

¹³³ Letter from La Marque to Antoine de Noailles, 4 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 527: "Quant a sa maison et famille, il n'est point possible d'estre mieulx réglée que je l'ay veue [...] chacun sachant ce qu'il a a faire sans demeurer inutile."

criticised the French ambassador on his way to the Ottoman Empire for having “[...] a great amount of useless mouths [...]”, and he advised his colleague to dismiss them.¹³⁴

Seeing Noailles’ well-managed household, we can be relatively certain that he was considered a good *pater familias*.¹³⁵ Other ambassadors, in contrast, acquired the reputation of managing their household in an oppressive and scandalous manner, such as François Perrenot de Granvelle, duke of Cantecroy and Imperial ambassador in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century. His French colleague, Philippe de la Canaye, recounted various rumours in his letters that circulated about Granvelle’s appalling comportment towards his family members. All of a sudden, Granvelle’s Venetian *maestro di casa* (or *maître d’hôtel*) was nowhere to be found. According to the brother and wife of the *maestro di casa*, Granvelle had strangled him because he wished to leave the ambassador’s service but knew too many of his secrets. The wife of the *maestro di casa*, who was left behind with four small children, pled to the Venetian Senate to trail Granvelle as a murderer. However, the Venetian Republic wanted to avoid the ire of the emperor and, therefore, did not act against the ambassador. As the wife was from Lorraine and did not speak any Italian, she subsequently resorted to Canaye for help. While Canaye could not support her overtly, so as to avoid political ramifications, he apparently did believe her accusations since he assisted her privately in any way that he could.¹³⁶

Additionally, Granvelle was suspected to have murdered another member of his household: a refugee from Bologna who had stayed in his embassy but was found dead in a canal.¹³⁷ Granvelle even ordered the assassination of his own wife, who was residing in Bergamo with another man. Yet, she was not killed, but only injured by the shot of an arquebus.¹³⁸ Due to all these scandals, which were aggravated by many other alleged immoral activities of the ambassador – such as magic, *soufflerie*, in this context probably also

¹³⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 21 October 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 356: “Je le voy accompagné d’un grand nombre de bouches inutiles dont je luy conseille de se décharger devant que les mener plus loin, autrement les dents luy pourroient faire mal, si d’avanture le mauvais temps le fait longuement sejourner par chemin, comme il en est en danger.”

¹³⁵ French historian Brantôme also recounted an anecdote about Noailles’ residency in Constantinople, where he bought a young beautiful Cypriot girl as a slave. No one else wanted to buy her since she was not a virgin anymore. Brantôme considered the fact that Noailles did purchase her as a sign of his honourable character and his empathy towards people with different backgrounds: Pierre de Bourdeille, *Oeuvres Complètes de Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantôme, Publiées d’après les Manuscrits avec Variantes et Fragments Inédits pour la Société de l’Histoire de France par Ludovic Lalanne*, ed. Ludovic Lalanne, vol. 5 (Paris: Veuve Jules Renouard, 1864-1882), 67.

¹³⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 14 June 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 78; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 30 June 1606 in *ibid.*, 103.

¹³⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 14 June 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 78.

¹³⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 July 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 119-120; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 26 July 1606 in *ibid.*, 140.

referring to magical or alchemical activities, fraud and the kidnapping of women and girls – Granvelle’s position as representative of the emperor became unsustainable.¹³⁹ Consequently, Venice urged the emperor to recall his ambassador but, eventually, Granvelle would flee the city without taking his official leave after the failed assassination of his wife.¹⁴⁰

Misdemeanours of Domestic

Not only could the ambassador fall short in his duties as head of the household; the servants themselves also could disappoint and misbehave, which strongly tested the ambassador’s skills as *pater familias*. The good organisation of the household depended heavily on the loyalty of its members. A common theme in diplomatic treatises was to point to the necessity of hiring faithful, prudent and tight-lipped servants, who would not disclose embassy secrets or offend the ambassador, and by extension their kingdom, as is accurately formulated by Étienne Dolet:

It must be understood furthermore that in this matter the estimate of our characters will be largely based upon the lives of our servants, especially in the minds of persons who are not in daily contact with us, and suppose that whatever our servants do is patterned on our example. For this reason diligent care must be taken that a vicious and lawless manner of life on the part of our servants may not be interpreted as a vice and disgrace of our own. Therefore, they should be continent, and sober and self-controlled, not arrogant, nor impudent, nor inclined to do anyone harm, not given to any form of wickedness, to lust, to gluttony, to gambling; they should look after their master, honour him, love him, and serve him faithfully. They should not try by indirection or overcurious inquiry to learn his counsels, which they may make known in some other quarter, for an ambassador, of all men, ought to employ none but faithful and close-mouthed servants. For what involves more risk than the disclosure of your aims through disloyal servants, bribed by the enemy of your prince, or the frustration of your efforts by their drunken garrulity?¹⁴¹

In the seventeenth century, the theme of honourable and discreet servants remained a recurring literary topic. The two most popular treatises, *El Enbaxador* by Juan Antonio de Vera and *L’Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions* by Abraham de Wicquefort, each devoted a

¹³⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 14 June 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 78; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 13 July 1606 in *ibid.*, 126.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 July 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 120; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 26 July 1606 in *ibid.*, 140.

¹⁴¹ Reeves, “Étienne Dolet”, 85-86.

substantial section to the importance of having reliable servants. Being written in the seventeenth century, these treatises showed an interest for legal issues and, hence, one of the main themes was the idea that the ambassador could be held responsible for the actions of his servants.¹⁴² Thus, the honour of the ambassador could be elevated or diminished by the comportment of his diplomatic servants.¹⁴³

Noailles understood the gravity of proper conduct by the diplomatic staff, which is revealed in a letter to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, French ambassador in Constantinople, whom he advised to closely watch the demeanour of his entourage:

And in the first place I will tell you that the biggest concern that you will have is not to keep an eye on your openly declared enemies, since the wise know to never rely on them, but the most important thing is to recognise who your covered and concealed enemies are because they can do more harm to you in one day than the others can do in a year. Therefore, I must tell you that his Eminence the Cardinal of Tournon and myself are of the opinion that you should go out of your way to get to know the temperaments of the people whom you have brought with you, and those whom you have hired in that city [Constantinople], yet, do not trust anyone and communicate the King's affairs to no one but your secretary who holds the cipher, reminding him about the fidelity that he owes to the King and yourself, and his obligation to be secretive. With regard to your Dragoman, do not inform him about anything before the right time.¹⁴⁴

This advice was given following an incident regarding one of Vigne's servants, a certain Jehan Durant. Noailles accused Vigne of not taking firm action in abominating Durant's malicious behaviour, which he felt was necessary in order to make an example out of him and to warn the rest of his staff.¹⁴⁵ This lack of severity in dealing with unruly servants came back to haunt Vigne when another member of his family, Daubray, collaborated with former French ambassador in Constantinople, Michel de Codignac, who had committed treason by offering his services to the Spanish king. Noailles had uncovered their conspiracy through

¹⁴² de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 3, 28r-30r; de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 414-426.

¹⁴³ For a general overview of this topic, see: Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 95-97.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, 8 December 1557: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896)*, Venise, vol. 21, f. 70: "Et en premier lieu je vous diray que le plus grand soing que vous devies avoir ce n'est pas de vous garder de vos ennemis ouverts et declarez, car a ceulx la les sages ne s'y fient jamais, mais le plus important est de scavoir connoistre les couverts et dissimulez par ce que ceulx cy font plus de mal en un jour que les aultres en un an. Et a ce propos, il faut que je vous die que Monseigneur le Cardinal de Tournon et moy sommes bien d'avis que vous debvez mettre peyne de cognoistre les humeurs des gens que vous avez menez avecq vous et par expres de ceulx que vous prinstez en ceste ville, cependant, ne vous fiez en personne, et ne communicquez les affaires du Roy a quelque homme que ce soit qu'a vostre secretaire qui en tient le chiffre et luy recommandez bien la fidelité qu'il doit au Roy et a vous, et l'obligation qu'il vous a d'estre secret. Quant a vostre Droguement ne luy faictes jamais rien sçavoir devant le temps."

¹⁴⁵ No specific details about his misdemeanour could be discovered so far.

intercepted correspondence. By cooperating with a traitor, Daubray had committed a serious act of disloyalty and ungratefulness and, therefore, Vigne was expected to hand his deceiving servant over to the authorities.¹⁴⁶ A year later, Vigne had finally learned his lesson: out of the fear that members of his staff were dissimulators, he expelled one dragoman and eight secretaries.¹⁴⁷

Noailles himself disciplined his domestics when devotion and respect had been breached. When a young servant, Girard, disobeyed his orders and mutinied, Noailles immediately dismissed him since he realised that incidents like these could harm his reputation and personal honour, and consequently that of his king.¹⁴⁸ However, when a servant showed remorse for his errors, Noailles evinced his noble character. One of his couriers, the aforementioned Marc Vidal, had made the mistake of entrusting the delivery of some letters to his son, who failed to carry out this task. Vidal repeatedly apologised for his misdemeanour and underlined the great affection he felt for his master. His faults were forgiven and he remained in Noailles' service.¹⁴⁹ Overall, Noailles' servants were reliable subjects, as can be deduced from the loyalty of his family members as they all served him until the end of his mission.¹⁵⁰ Again, Vigne can function as an opposing illustration. A couple of days before his return to France, his squire, *valet de chambre*, stable boy and two *argentier* converted to Islam.¹⁵¹ Vigne would never return to France as he died during his journey in Ragusa. After his death, only two servants remained faithful to him and saw to it that their master's last wishes were carried out.¹⁵²

Members of the diplomatic staff could not only misbehave towards their master, the ambassador, but they could also transgress public rules of the country in which they were

¹⁴⁶ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, 8 December 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, ff. 70-71.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, n.d. [July 1558]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 81r.

¹⁴⁸ Letter from La Marque to Antoine de Noailles, 4 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 530.

¹⁴⁹ Letter from Cardinal François de Tournon to François de Noailles, 27 June 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 655r; Letter from Villars to François de Noailles, 27 June 1558: *ibid.*, f. 656r.

¹⁵⁰ After three years, Noailles was still surrounded by the same men whom he had taken with him when he had come to Venice in 1557: Letter from Milan to Antoine de Noailles, 19 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 446.

¹⁵¹ Letter from Jean Cavenac de Vigne to François de Noailles, 7 September 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 145. Vigne mentions that he had acquired one of these *argentier* from the French treasurer in Venice, again pointing to the connection of this *argentier* with finances, not silver. Although Vigne points to their devotion as the reason for their conversion, they were most probably motivated by the prospect of material benefits, not by religious sincerity. On this topic, see: Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, ch. 3.

¹⁵² Letter from François de Noailles to Dowager Duchess Renée de France, 11 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 176.

residing. Here, the issue of the extraterritoriality and immunity of the embassy comes to the foreground. The space of the embassy and the figure of the ambassador claimed several types of immunity: personal immunity for the ambassador's person and for the people residing in his house, material immunity for his goods and those belonging to his family members and territorial immunity for the embassy building, meaning that the embassy was an extraterritorial space not subjected to local laws.¹⁵³ Thus, in the eyes of many contemporaries, the entourage of the ambassador enjoyed the privilege of immunity and exemption from the rules of the country in which the embassy was housed. However, in practice, the state wished to keep a close eye on the activities and movements of the staff of foreign agents.

This was also the case in Venice, where concerns about too much freedom of movement for the members of the embassy were connected to the constant fear that sensitive political information would be leaked. The Venetian government vigorously attempted to control the flow of information and wished to prevent unlawful communication. Therefore, in 1539, the *Inquisitori di Stato*, initially called the *Inquisitori contro i propagatori del segreto*, was established, which needed to detect and punish those who disclosed intelligence outside the official channels. Over the course of the seventeenth century, more and more moles were commissioned to observe foreign diplomatic personnel.¹⁵⁴ The diplomatic staff was indeed not shy of using all the necessary tools to acquire information; to give just one example, the staff of the already discussed Spanish Extraordinary Ambassador Francisco di Castro bribed both citizens and ecclesiastics and were, consequently, monitored day and night by Venetian officials.¹⁵⁵

In this chapter, I have unravelled the household of an ambassador and examined its various components in order to understand how it worked as a whole. This allowed me to present a clear picture of the mechanisms behind diplomatic household life, the relationship between household members and, importantly, its official, public function. The consideration of the versatile tasks performed by servants, both those who lived in the ambassador's house and those strongly connected to the ambassador, has underlined how they assisted in the embassy's political operation. These servants were especially indispensable with regard to

¹⁵³ Frey and Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity*.

¹⁵⁴ de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 5; 76.

¹⁵⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Brûlart, 29 November 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 306. These events took place during the period of the Venetian Interdict, which marked an increase of Venice's distrust. Also the house of the nuncio was constantly monitored during these years. de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 76.

the gathering and dissemination of information resulting from the establishment of secret networks and translation skills.

Furthermore, the household played a crucial role in the representational role of the embassy; the domestic environment had to contribute to upholding a good national image abroad. With regard to the composition of the household, a splendid entourage with an appropriate amount of servants performing a great variety of duties was necessary to underline the nation's strength and magnificence on the international scene. However, appearing too vain had to be avoided at all costs, as this could be perceived as a sign of weak government. The same was true concerning the organisation of the household: the embassy had to function as a dignified and well-run court in order to be worthy of its prince's status and symbolise his strong government.

Even today, the household remains a crucial aspect of the ambassador's public image and is used to express power. Consequently, ambassadors are still very much dependant on their wives, cooks and even cleaners for an effective functioning of diplomacy. The diplomatic residence continues to be a place where the public and private spheres are not clearly delineated: the home of the ambassador functions as both the space where important state negotiations are conducted and where the ambassador lives together with his family.¹⁵⁶ François de Noailles' modern counterparts are still in a way erecting a small-scale court befitting an ambassador's status in a suitable house with an affluent table and appropriate retinue.

¹⁵⁶ For example, Nevra Biltekin sketches very well the great responsibilities and sacrifices of twentieth-century ambassadors' wives and their quest for more recognition for all the important, yet unpaid, work they provide for their nation, in: Biltekin, "The Performance of Diplomacy", 254-268.

PART II
CONSUMING LUXURY,
DISPLAYING SPLENDOUR

As to financial circumstances, if ample wealth be wanting, the prince who wishes to employ the services of an ambassador ought to mend this injustice of fortune. Furthermore, he should appropriate a proper sum of money to defray expenses. In so doing he should give careful consideration to persons with whom the ambassador will have to deal, for if he is to perform the functions of an ambassador at the court of the Turkish Emperor, or the Christian Emperor, or that of the King of England or any other king, or at that of either the people of Venice or the Pope at Rome, he will find himself in the midst of greater splendour and at the necessity of greater expenditures. Accordingly you should appropriate money for an ambassador in proportion to the magnificence of the court at which he holds the ambassadorship, so that he may not be charged with disrespect for majesty because of the lack of appropriate funds, if his manner of living is more humble or economical than it should be.¹

This quote by Étienne Dolet accurately highlights the importance of granting an ambassador an appropriate stipend, adjusted to the court to which he was sent, so that he could uphold a magnificent lifestyle. If the ambassador was forced to lead a thrifty life, this diminished his ability to majestically represent his sovereign. During his office as diplomatic secretary in Venice, Dolet had the opportunity to experience first-hand the importance of maintaining a wealthy life and creating a luxurious court inside the embassy.² The documentation handed down from other sixteenth-century diplomatic representatives likewise exposes that when ambassadors departed to fulfil their diplomatic assignments, consuming splendour was one of the first things on their mind. Ambassadors understood that dazzling domestic interiors and lavish clothing were a necessity in order to project the wealth and power of the sovereign. Thus, before leaving on their missions and immediately upon arrival, splendid furnishings and rich apparel were purchased.³ As the following two chapters will show, Venice had a rich luxury scene and endless possibilities with regard to material culture. Therefore, the city offers the perfect location to investigate an ambassador's consumption practices, that is, the purchase and display of fashionable goods.

Early historiographical literature on the characteristics of material culture and the functioning of consumption patterns in the early modern world, built on the observations made by Fernand Braudel in his magnum opus, *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et*

¹ Reeves, "Étienne Dolet", 84.

² Jesse S. Reeves, "Étienne Dolet on the Functions of the Ambassador, 1541," *The American Journal of International Law* 27, no. 1 (1933), 80-81.

³ For example, Linda Levy Peck describes the shopping practices of a seventeenth-century English diplomat, Lord Robert Spencer, who prepared himself for his diplomatic mission to Stuttgart: Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25-30.

Capitalisme: XVe-XVIIIe Siècle.⁴ Braudel approached material life as the key foundation of human civilisation. His study triggered the expansion of investigations into the nature of consumption in various historical and geographical frameworks. One of the most influential studies from this perspective is still Richard Goldthwaite's research on consumption practices and material culture in Renaissance Italy, which has provided the essential framework for our understanding of the cultural and economic dynamics of private consumption.⁵ Goldthwaite pointed to the rise of new consumption patterns and the development of a strong demand for consumer durables, which was supported by an increase of wealth in Italy from the fourteenth until the sixteenth centuries. Especially the structure and social conditions of this wealth, in particular the presence of a relatively large group of consumers concentrated in an urban environment and the mobility within the elites, both go a long way towards explaining why Italy enjoyed the most favourable conditions for the growth of a vigorous luxury market. In recent decades, studies have built on Goldthwaite's observations and combined social and cultural anthropology with economic history to fully understand the relationships between people and objects, or, on a broader scale, social life and economic practices.⁶ They all underline how the material aspect is crucial for the comprehension of early modern society, since it expresses both individual identity and is connected to wider social, cultural, political and economic contexts. In short, we can truly speak of a "material turn" in history.

Whereas the meaning of material goods in various geographical areas and for a variety of social groups has been reconstructed, certain aspects and figures remained for the greater part in the shadow; the sixteenth-century ambassador is one of them. Therefore, by illuminating the material environment of ambassadors, the subsequent pages aim to recognise the importance of luxury consumption to diplomatic culture and reveal how material culture was employed to assert diplomatic identity. The ambassador's world of goods will be disclosed

⁴ Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle*, 3 vols.

⁵ Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600*. See also his more recent study: Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*.

⁶ This approach is discussed by Paula Findlen in her foreword to the English translation of Renata Ago's book: Paula Findlen, "Foreword: Early Modern Romans and Their Things," in *Gusto for Things: A History of Objects in Seventeenth-Century Rome* by Renata Ago (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), xxx. For examples of this approach, see, amongst others, the works of: Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993); Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1996); Roche, *Histoire des Choses Banales*; Ago, *Gusto for Things*; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For valuable work conducted by art historians, see, for example the work by Patricia Fortini Brown and Evelyn Welch: Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*; Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch, eds., *The Material Renaissance* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2007); Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

within the spaces in which he circulated: the home, that functioned as a performative place, and the ceremonial realm of the city of Venice. However, this is a material world from which very few actual things have survived. Still, even though we do not possess the tangible objects, we can access them through textual sources. These documents can teach us something about the social and cultural meanings and functions of objects, and about more personal experiences, such as the individual choices, uses and interactions with material culture. In this way, written sources can allow us to reconstruct an all-encompassing material environment.⁷ Therefore, I will apply different types of written documentation with the goal of capturing the domestic interior and wardrobe of François de Noailles. In doing so, a fascinating portrait of a sixteenth-century ambassador is created.

⁷ A good outline of the methodology to study material culture through written sources can be found in: Catherine Richardson, "Written Texts and the Performance of Materiality," in *Writing Material Culture History*, eds. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 43-58.

CHAPTER 4

INSIDE THE AMBASSADOR'S HOUSE: LUXURY AND POWER

In February 1602, after having spent five months in the Venetian Republic, French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye stated: “Everywhere I turn I see wonders, magnificence, rarities: all of this prevents me from spending my days alone, and I can give my house the lustre that is required here [...]”.¹ With this comment, Canaye expressed the joy he took in material culture and, more importantly, the necessity of garnishing the embassy with luxurious and exotic furniture. Diplomatic historians have traditionally ignored references to interior design in ambassadorial dispatches; however, a closer reading of diplomatic letters indicates that many ambassadors reported on their material surroundings and invested a lot of time and money in the construction of an appropriate domestic environment. These objects played an important role in diplomatic life, as they were applied to create a splendid appearance, conform to the ambassador’s political status and social rank. Hence, on the one hand, a luxurious lifestyle was an absolute necessity for the representation of the sovereign’s status, the first task of an ambassador; on the other hand, ambassadors employed material culture to cultivate their personal reputation.

The display of goods in early modern embassies should be placed within the broader contemporary context. As a result of a new way of living and spending that first arose in fifteenth-century Italy, where objects became an integral part of articulating individual, familial and occupational identity and defining one’s position in society, the early modern period witnessed a growing accumulation of goods. Due to the increasing social and geographic mobility, the life of the elite became abundantly filled with not only local but also foreign artefacts. Identities were thus constantly renegotiated through the adoption of new commodities. This evolution strongly penetrated courtly societies, where a link was established between conspicuous consumption and virtue, and political influence was attained through a brilliant manifestation of the self. Considering all these developments, it comes as no surprise that historians speak of the rise of consumerism and refer to the early modern period as the “material Renaissance” or the “century of worldly goods”. This newly

¹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Hercules de Boucaud, 20 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 153: “Quelque part que je me tourne je ne voy que merveilles, magnificences, raretez: mais avec tout cela je serois fort empesché à passer les jours seul, et donner à ma maison le lustre qui y est requis [...]”.

developing luxury consumption manifested itself very strongly in the expenditure on household furnishings and decorations. The important role of domestic furniture for a splendid lifestyle is clearly laid out by fifteenth-century Italian humanist Giovanni Pontano:

We call furnishings all domestic objects, such as vases, plates, linen, divans and other objects of this type without which it would not be possible to live pleasantly. Although men acquire these things for use and comfort, it is the obligation of the splendid man to regard not only use and comfort but to acquire as many of these objects as possible in such a way that friends and the knowledgeable, when it is necessary, can easily avail themselves of them, and to have them of the most excellent quality, with some superiority that is due either to the artistry, or to the material, or to both. [...] We call objects ornamental if we acquire them not so much for use as for embellishment and polish such as statues, paintings, tapestries, divans, ivory seats, cloth woven with gems, cases and caskets variously painted in the Arabic manner, little vases of crystal and other things of this type with which the house is adorned according to one's circumstances and with which one decorates dressers and tables. The sight of these things is pleasant and brings prestige to the owner of the house, when they are seen by the many who frequent his house. But the ornamental objects, which should be as magnificent and various as possible, should each be arranged in their own place: one is fitting for the hall, another for the bedchamber. Furthermore, some are destined for everyday use; others kept for festive days and for solemn feasts.²

Even though some early twentieth-century studies have examined the material culture of early modern domesticity, it was only in the 1980s that the interior became a subject of

² Translation, for the greater part, taken from: Evelyn Welch, "Public Magnificence and Private Display: Giovanni Pontano's 'De Splendore' (1498) and the Domestic Arts," *Journal of Design History* 15, no. 4 (2002), 215. The original treatise of Giovanni Pontano was written in Latin, I have consulted the Italian version translated in: Giovanni Pontano, *I Trattati delle Virtù Sociali*, ed. and trans. Francesco Tateo (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1965), 270; 272: "Chiamiamo suppellettile ogni comodità della casa, come i vasi, i piatti, i drappi, i divani e le altre cose del genere, senza le quali non sarebbe possibile vivere comodamente. Sebbene queste cose gli uomini le acquistino per uso e comodità, tuttavia il compito d'un uomo splendido non è quello di guardare solo all'uso e alla comodità, ma di procurarsi molti di questi oggetti, in modo che amici e conoscenti, quando si renda necessario, possano agevolmente servirsene, poi di possederne di eccellente qualità, con qualche pregio particolare o dovuto all'artista o alla materia o a tutt'e due. [...] Chiamiamo oggetti ornamentali quelli che non si acquistano tanto per l'uso, quanto per abbellimento e splendore, come statue, quadri, arazzi, divani, seggi d'avorio, drappi intessuti di gemme, astucci e cofanetti variopinti di stile arabo, vasetti di cristallo e altre cose del genere, con cui si adorna la casa a seconda della circostanza, e si apparecchiano abachi e mense. La vista loro è piacevole e procura prestigio al padrone di casa, purché a frequentare la casa e ad ammirare siano molti. Ma gli oggetti ornamentali, come si richiede che siano magnifici e vari il più possibile, così bisogna collocarli al loro posto: c'è un oggetto che è adatto al salone, un altro alla camera da letto. Inoltre alcuni sono destinati ad un ornamento quotidiano, altri conservati per i giorni festivi e per le solennità." Also other early modern humanist treatises and guidebooks stimulated the display of objects by pointing to the important role of material culture in the development of personal honour and reputation.

systematic scholarly investigation.³ Since the Italian peninsula was the privileged place for luxury consumption, many works have appeared centred around Italian homes of various social classes and professional categories in order to investigate issues related to the accumulation of wealth and new consumption practices.⁴ A very valuable reference book is Peter Thornton's all-embracing analysis of the Italian Renaissance interior between 1400 and 1600.⁵ He combines textual, visual and material sources to recreate the material world of the houses inhabited by the early modern elite, resulting in an indispensable overview of architectural embellishments, furnishings and social relations inside the house. In more recent years, enlightening studies have aimed at further developing new histories of the home, such as the research conducted by the Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior. Their investigations highlight that the relationship between people and objects was influential in both directions: not only did people have an impact on their environment, but objects also defined the identity of their owners. Thus, objects conveyed strong messages about the inner qualities and status of their owners and, consequently, material culture played a central role in self-fashioning.⁶

In spite of this recent prolific research, studies have not yet systematically entered inside the house of a sixteenth-century ambassador.⁷ Nonetheless, the material culture of the embassy offers a rich theme of investigation. As the previous chapters have already illustrated, the embassy was a dynamic and protean institution: a private residence, official embassy and centre of hospitality. This specific context influenced the use of objects and the messages that they were intended to convey. Through the examination of François de

³ Important early twentieth-century studies include: Pompeo Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia nella Vita Privata dalle Origini alla Caduta della Repubblica*, 3 vols. (Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1905-1908); Attilio Schiaparelli, *La Casa Fiorentina e i Suoi Arredi nei Secoli XIV e XV* (Florence: Sansoni, 1908).

⁴ Isabella Palumbo Fossati Casa, "L'Interno della Casa dell'Artigiano e dell'Artista nella Venezia del Cinquecento," *Studi Veneziani* 8 (1984), 109-153; Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Raffaella Sarti, *Vita di Casa: Abitare, Mangiare, Vestire nell'Europa Moderna* (Rome: Laterza, 1999); Syson and Thornton, *Objects of Virtue*; Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*; Furlotti, *A Renaissance Baron and His Possessions*; Ago, *Gusto for Things*. Some general studies on early modern material culture in France: Laurent Bourquin, "Les Objets de la Vie Quotidienne dans la Première Moitié du XVIe Siècle à Travers Cent Inventaires après Décès Parisiens," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 36, no. 3 (1989), 464-475; Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*.

⁵ Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400-1600* (New York: Abrams, 1991).

⁶ Publications of the Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior include: Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, eds., *At Home in Renaissance Italy*; Aynsley, Grant, and McKay, eds., *Imagined Interiors*.

⁷ Some enlightening research on the material culture inside an ambassador's home has already been conducted, but it mainly focuses on an earlier or later period: Cinzia M. Sicca, "Consumption and Trade of Art between Italy and England in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century: The London House of the Bardi and Cavalcanti Company," *Renaissance Studies* 16, no. 2 (2002), 163-201; Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 28; 142; Olin, "Diplomatic Performances", 25-45. The most in-depth study is that of Helen Jacobsen, as she considers issues of diplomatic furniture for the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 11-28; 37-53.

Noailles' embassy's interior, this chapter divulges both the type of objects displayed in a diplomatic residence and how these objects visualised social and political values. In doing so, it aims at showing how objects possessed various dimensions that transcended their functionality: they reflected cultural practices, symbolised social distinctions and were applied as identity markers and political tools. Equally important is the consideration of the consumption practices of Noailles. By means of analysing how and where he acquired his goods, the ambassador is approached as a consumer and, this way, an often overlooked aspect of diplomatic life is revealed.

Reconstructing the Interior of François de Noailles' Venetian Residence

Of all the French ambassadors who resided in Venice between 1550 and 1610, François de Noailles gives the most detailed account of his material surroundings and provides a good example of how an ambassador ostentatiously exhibited luxury objects in the embassy. Consequently, his Venetian residence functions as the central case study in this analysis of ambassadorial material culture. An inventory drawn up at the end of Noailles' mission in 1561, listing a selection of the goods in his embassy, is the core document that enables a reconstruction of his interior ornamentation.⁸ Therefore, before focusing on the actual furnishings that Noailles possessed, it is necessary to consider the particularities of this type of source and place it in the general Venetian context by exposing the domestic environment of Venetian homes.

The Inventory of François de Noailles (1561)

When leaving for his mission to Venice in 1557, François de Noailles was already a man of high standing with diplomatic experience. He had only recently completed an embassy in England but, unfortunately, no inventory is preserved containing the objects he acquired during his English residency.⁹ François and his brothers Antoine and Gilles were constantly on the move from one residence to another, ranging from grand palaces to sober inns, which makes a reconstruction of their interior problematic. Moreover, Antoine's lodgings were still paid for by the English crown, so probably all of them were fully equipped. Especially his

⁸ Inventaire des Meubles, Robbes et autres Accoustremens qui ont esté trouvez en la Garderobbe de Monseigneur L'Evesque Dacqs à Venize, 26 May 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 78r-81v.

⁹ He left London on 21 June 1557 and arrived in Venice on 13 October 1557.

first two lodgings, Charterhouse and Bridewell Palace, were undoubtedly richly furnished and decorated. When complaining about having to vacate Bridewell Palace, Antoine referred to the tapestries and furniture of the queen of which he would be deprived.¹⁰ No details are given about his next house, the Deanery of St. Paul's, except that he composed a small chamber and wardrobe for François, however, avoiding excessive costs:

[...] I [Antoine] am always waiting with great devotion your [François'] arrival in the house of the deanery [Deanery of St. Paul's] where I have reserved a small chamber and a wardrobe for you, which I have composed without great inventiveness and without excessive expenses [...].¹¹

Similarly, when François became resident ambassador in England, his mansion was already decorated with furnishings.¹² Whereas the English mission was for the greater part a disappointment, since political goals could not be materialised, François' stay in Venice would turn out to be a success and a quintessence of his diplomatic skills. That his achievements and reputation were reflected in his domestic life has already been revealed by the general description of his Venetian lodgings. Now, I glance inside his house and open an illuminating window to his possessions, which are evoked in his inventory.

Giorgio Riello, who extensively studies material culture on a global scale, points to the great variety of historical knowledge that historians can derive from inventories; they transfer knowledge about goods, living conditions, family situation, occupation and social standing. He states that in the 1980s, a renewed interest in the use of inventories emerged amongst historians, caused by the rise of consumption studies. The focus shifted from a sole interest in extracting economic and social knowledge from these documents to wider areas of investigations, for which the inventory proved to be a useful source: the connections between wealth and consumption, the appearance of new goods and the links between acquisition and production.¹³ At the same time, however, Riello warns of the pitfalls of inventories. They

¹⁰ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 6 October 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 517.

¹¹ Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 6 October 1554: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 517: “[...] je suis tousjours attendant en grand devotion vostre arrivee en la maison du doyen ou je vous reserve une petite chambre et une garderobe que j’ay composee sans grand artifice aussi n’est elle pas d’excessive depece [...]”.

¹² Louage de la maison de monsieur l’ambassadeur, 25 December 1556: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 18, f. 259r.

¹³ Giorgio Riello, “‘Things Seen and Unseen’: The Material Culture of Early Modern Inventories and Their Representation of Domestic Interiors,” in *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. Paula Findlen (London: Routledge, 2012), 125-150. Some examples of the renewed approaches to inventories after the 1980s are: Carole Shammas, “The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America,” *Journal of Social History* 14, no. 1 (1980), 3-24; Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture*

should not be regarded as objective reflections of material reality, but as “[...] forms of representation that are influenced by social and legal conventions and by the specific economic and financial values attributed to artefacts and commodities in the early modern period.”¹⁴ Still, we can assume that Noailles’ inventory is a truthful reproduction of his possessions, since it was most probably a list of objects, composed by one of his servants, which he wished to send to France after the completion of his embassy.

Another matter raised by Riello is that inventories give a static image of someone’s possessions at one specific moment; they convey knowledge about material culture but say nothing about consumer behaviour, how the goods were acquired and how they were used.¹⁵ Since a household was always in motion, with goods coming in and going out, the knowledge derived from Noailles’ inventory will be complemented with references found in letters regarding gifts and purchases, a chart of accounts depicting his expenses and the passport that Noailles drafted in order to gain a safe passage for his belongings.¹⁶ In doing so, “home-making” will be regarded as a process, an ongoing negotiation with fashions, lifestyles and circumstances.¹⁷ These documents permit an, albeit partial, reconstruction of Noailles’ material life.

The Venetian Domestic Interior

As Noailles’ inventory was composed in Venice, some general remarks have to be made about Venetian domestic interiors in order to uncover similarities or differences in Noailles’ residence.¹⁸ The first systematic analysis of the Venetian home can be found in Pompeo

in Britain, 1660-1760 (London, New York: Routledge, 1988); Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy: Privacy and Domestic Life in Early Modern Paris* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991); Sarti, *Vita di Casa*.

¹⁴ Riello, “‘Things Seen and Unseen’”, 127.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 136. On the continual mobility of goods, see: Furlotti, *A Renaissance Baron and His Possessions*, part 3; Barbara Furlotti, “Display in Motion,” in *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550-1750*, eds. Gail Feigenbaum and Francesco Freddolini (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2014), 146-156.

¹⁶ Passeport, et certificat de Monseigneur d’Acqs de ses meubles et cofres qu’il envoye de Venise à la cour de France, 20 June 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 95r.

¹⁷ For enlightening examples of this approach, see the essays in: Daniel Miller, ed., *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

¹⁸ Two series in the Venetian State Archive contain inventories of Venetian houses relevant for the time period under study here: *Giudici del Proprio, Mobili* and *Cancellaria Inferiore, Miscellanea Notai Diversi*. In the first series, inventories of three periods are catalogued: 1511-1513, 1560-1562 and 1610-1615. These inventories were composed after the death of the owner of the house in order to map the dowry, which was handed over to the widow. The series contain a total of 1.390 inventories coming from various occupational classes. The second collection is divided into twelve *buste* containing about 700 inventories dating from 1497 to 1630, with the highest concentration between 1526 and 1590. It cannot be determined with certainty why these inventories were taken and almost never were monetary values assigned to the possessions. However, they tend to be longer, better organised, more descriptive and more legible than those in the series of the *Giudici del Proprio, Mobili*. Other inventories can be found in *Giudici di Petizion*, which was founded to collect inventories when

Molmenti's monumental study of private life in Venice.¹⁹ For the first time published in 1880, it was immediately very highly received as it broke with the traditional nineteenth-century historiography that focused on politics, war and institutions. Molmenti opted for a narrative on the social and cultural facets of Venetian history and analysed innovative themes such as housing, furniture, costume and festivities. Furthermore, he included a wide range of sources in his research that were barely used in his time, especially manuscripts from private family archives and objects. The fact that he used as many material objects as written sources in his analysis makes his study very valuable to penetrate into the domestic interior of Venetian houses.²⁰ Building on Molmenti's observations, the Venetian home has been subjected to intense examinations from the 1980s onwards, in line with the rising interest in domestic interiors.

In particular the name of art historian Patricia Fortini Brown has to be mentioned. Her book *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice* takes us behind the walls of sixteenth-century Venetian palaces.²¹ She addresses numerous topics related to the domestic sphere and material culture of patrician families, such as attitudes towards wealth and display and how objects were used to articulate (family) identity. Furthermore, she elucidates the understudied aspect of the material culture of Venetian women. In doing so, Fortini Brown has created a very vivid and far-reaching account of the Venetian household. More recently, Isabella Palumbo Fossati Casa has conducted an encompassing study on early modern Venetian interiors.²² She uses more than 600 inventories of various social groups drafted between 1570 and 1600. Her study explores common tastes, ways of life and what interiors can teach us about society in general. Nevertheless, her account is more descriptive than analytic. Furthermore, she often touches only very briefly on the meaning of certain objects, which results in no profound understanding of their value and purpose.

there were inheritance disputes, but it only contains few examples before 1580; in the archives of notaries; and private family archives. Isabella Cecchini, "Collezionismo e Mondo Materiale," in *Il Collezionismo d'Arte a Venezia: Dalle Origini al Cinquecento*, eds. Michel Hochmann, Rosella Lauber, and Stefania Mason (Venice: Marsilio, 2008), 171; Monika Anne Schmitter, "The Quadro da Portego in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Art," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2011), 704-705.

¹⁹ Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia*. His work is divided into three chronological parts, subtitled: *La Grandezza*, *Lo Splendore* and *Il Decadimento*.

²⁰ Eric R. Dursteler, "Introduction: A Brief Survey of Histories of Venice," in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 11-12.

²¹ Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*.

²² Isabella Palumbo Fossati Casa has examined the houses of merchants, patricians, ecclesiastics, artists, artisans and foreigners in Venice: Isabella Palumbo Fossati Casa, *Intérieurs Vénitiens à la Renaissance: Maisons, Société et Culture* (Paris: Michel de Maule, 2012).

Thanks to these and similar investigations, we now have a clear view of the structure and ornamentation of the homes of the wealthy Venetians.²³ The main characteristic of a typical Renaissance Venetian *palazzo* was its decorative nature instead of practical arrangement. The large windows and vast rooms with high ceilings made it very difficult to warm up the building. The spacious chambers also indicate that they were more suited for receptions and feasts than for intimate family life. This is especially personified in the *portego*, the entrance hall that formed the central axis of the *piano nobile*, the first floor, stretching from the large luminous windows on the waterside to the street side (Figure 29).²⁴ Even though we would now define the *portego* as a hall, it was the main site of hospitality where guests were received and banquets and other social events took place. Resulting from its social purposes, the *portego* functioned as a signifier of status; it was here that the owner's identity and rank were represented the strongest by both the decorations and the size and finesse of the room. Connected to the *portego* were the *camere*, the more private quarters of the owner, which were filled with beds, chairs, chests and tables, and sometimes also smaller reception rooms, wardrobes, galleries or libraries. The kitchen, latrines and utility rooms were located on a mezzanine level in between the floors.²⁵

All these rooms were decorated with a plethora of furniture. As Philippe de la Canaye noted during his mission in Venice: "The Italians are highly interested in beautiful furniture [...]"²⁶ Early modern Venetians indeed attached great importance to comfort and goods. The rise of a luxurious, extravagant lifestyle occurred together with the increasing retreat from trade by the patricians during the sixteenth century. Maritime commerce was exchanged for landed income, which instigated the erection of vast properties and agricultural investments. The patricians started to lead a noble lifestyle that included great expenditures on buildings, entertainment and also furnishings.²⁷ Consequently, a profusion of objects characterised the homes of the wealthier classes. This is also the picture painted by Francesco Sansovino in his encyclopedia of the Venetian city in 1581:

²³ For a discussion about what contemporary treatises prescribed regarding the art of governing the house, see: Patricia Fortini Brown, "Behind the Walls: The Material Culture of Venetian Elites," in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, eds. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 304-319.

²⁴ Contemporary treatises pointed to the necessity of the *portego*, see, for example: Memmo, *Dialogo*, 81.

²⁵ Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2, 355; 359; Jürgen Schulz, *The New Palaces of Medieval Venice* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 24-25; 42; Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 63-82; Margaret A. Morse, "The Venetian Portego: Family Piety and Public Prestige," in *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities*, eds. Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 89-90.

²⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 9 May 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 182: "Les Italiens sont curieux de beaux meubles [...]"

²⁷ Muir, "Images of Power", 32-33; 36.

There are countless buildings with ceilings of bedrooms and other rooms decorated in gold and other colours and ornamented with excellent paintings and artifices. Almost everyone has his house adorned with noble tapestries, silk drapes, gilded leather, wall hangings and other things according to the time and season. And most of the bedrooms are furnished with bedsteads and chests, gilded and painted, and with the frames likewise loaded with gold. The dressers displaying silverware, porcelain, pewter and brass or damascene bronze are innumerable. In the reception rooms of great families there are racks of arms with the shields and banners of their ancestors who fought for Venice on land and at sea.²⁸

Most commonly present in Venetian inventories are fabrics like carpets, curtains and leather, works of art, paintings, mirrors, musical instruments and books.²⁹ Sumptuary legislation tried to curb the expenses made on the decoration of the domestic interior by proclaiming laws that, for example, restricted the amount of silk and brocade wall covers or the number and size of tapestries.³⁰ As always, these regulations proved to be hollow phrases and in practice, more and more furnishings were accumulated.

These goods had very diverse origins, which confirms the image of Venice as a cosmopolitan metropolis situated at the crossroads of cultures. Influences from the East, such as Anatolia and Egypt, were abundantly present in city life, yet also characteristics of western culture, especially from Flanders and Germany, affected Venetian fashions and tastes.³¹ An investigation of other European contemporary inventories endorses the impression that early modern homes were cosmopolitan hubs.³² In his manual that defined the daily comportment of the knights hospitaller of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the Italian friar and scholar Sabba da Castiglione described the ideal interior, which had to be decorated with furnishings of various international origins. His list is an interesting reflection of the importance of foreign objects in the process of self-fashioning:

²⁸ Translation, for the greater part, taken from: Fortini Brown, "Behind the Walls", 296. Original quote in: Sansovino, *Venetia Città Nobilissima*, vol. 1, 384: "Sono infinite fabbriche con i palchi delle camere, e dell'altre stanze, lavorate a oro, e altri colori, e historiati con pitture e con artifici eccellenti. Quasi tutte hanno le habitationi coperte di nobilissimi razzi, di panni di seta, di corami d'oro, di spalliere, e di altre cose secondo le stagioni de i tempi. Et le camere per lo più sono adornate di lettiere e di casse fatte à oro, con pitture, e con cornici parimente cariche d'oro. Le credentiere d'argento, e gli altri fornimenti di porcellane, di peltri, e di rami, ò bronzi lavorati all'azimina, sono senza fine. Nelle Sale de grandi stanno le rastelliere dell'armi, con gli Scudi, e con gli Stendardi de loro antenati, che furono in reggimenti di mare ò di terra."

²⁹ Palumbo Fossati Casa, *Intérieurs Vénitiens*, 36-41.

³⁰ Peter Lauritzen and Alexander Zielcke, *Palaces of Venice* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 16-17.

³¹ Palumbo Fossati Casa, *Intérieurs vénitiens*, 36-41.

³² Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Luca Molà, "The Global Renaissance: Cross-Cultural Objects in the Early Modern Period," in *Global Design History*, eds. Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello, and Sarah Teasley (London, New York: Routledge, 2011), 11.

Others furnish and adorn their rooms with tapestries and *celoni* from Flanders with figures, foliage and greenery; some with Turkish and Syrian carpets and *moschetti*;³³ some with covers and wall hangings from Barbary; some with canvases painted by great masters; some with ingeniously wrought leather hangings from Spain; and others with new, fantastic and bizarre, but ingenious things from the Levant or Germany, subtle inventors of many beautiful and artificial things; and all these ornaments I recommend and praise, because they sharpen one's intellect, politeness, civility and courtesy [...]³⁴

An ambassador was by definition exposed to foreign influences through his occupational lifestyle. Diplomatic historian Daniel Riches has already underlined the cosmopolitan worldview of diplomatic actors by pointing out their intellectual and cultural background and the various personal networks they were part of.³⁵ In the following sections, the analysis of the material world of François de Noailles is applied to come to the same conclusion: ambassadors developed a cosmopolitan perspective that transcended the narrow boundaries of the state. Noailles can be regarded as the personification of a cosmopolitan attitude, and his multicultural character and lifestyle are reflected in his plethora of heterogeneous commodities.

The Embassy's Interior Design and the Display of Objects

Raised in a family with ancient noble blood and destined for a career at court and in the Church, François de Noailles was familiar with the intrinsic connection between rank and display. For noblemen, conspicuous consumption was put forward as a necessity to uphold their position. Hence, spending money and accumulating possessions showed a noble

³³ Both the terms *celoni* and *moschetti* are described by Peter Thornton. *Celoni* were woolen textiles made originally in Châlons, France but they were imitated in Italy under the same name. They were often used as wall hangings or coverlets to place on beds, tables and chests. Very good exemplars were produced in Flanders: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 69; 76-77; 164-165; 216-218. Thornton uses the term *moschetti* to refer to prayer rugs, bed-canopies, and mosquito nets: *Ibid.*, 64; 84; 124.

³⁴ Translation taken from: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 53; Ajmar-Wollheim and Molà, "The Global Renaissance", 11. The first version of the *Ricordi* was published in 1561, I consulted the edition of 1584: Sabba da Castiglione, *Ricordi* (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1584), 118r: "Alcuni altri apparano, et adornano le lor stanze di panno di razza et di celoni venuti di Fiandra, fatti à figure et à fogliami, et chi a verdure, et chi con tapeti et moschetti Turcheschi, et Soriani; et chi con carpette et spaliere barbaresche; chi di telle di mano di buoni maestri, chi con corami ingegnosamente lavorati, venuti di Spagna, et alcuni altri con cose nuove, fantastiche, et bizarre, ma ingegnose venute di Levante, ed'Alemagna, sottile inventrice di molte cose belle et artificiose; et tutti questi ornamenti ancora commendo et laudo, perché arguiscono ingegno, politezza, civiltà, et cortegiania [...]"

³⁵ Riches, *Protestant Cosmopolitanism and Diplomatic Culture*.

lifestyle.³⁶ This section will reveal that Noailles' elite and diplomatic status was especially translated through the objects displayed in the public, representational rooms of his Venetian embassy. Furthermore, his identity as an ambassador comes to light in his adaptation of different cultures and the cultivation of a cosmopolitan attitude; Noailles' domestic surroundings were a reflection of the global world of which he formed part. The section concludes by placing Noailles' belongings in a comparative framework; his inventory is paralleled with the possessions of his contemporary Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, the French ambassador to the Ottoman court.

Spaces of Representation: The Portego and Bedchamber

As Noailles' documents do not provide us with information about which objects were located in which room, a reconstruction of the exact interior per chamber is impossible. Still, as the analysis of his objects will show, his possessions were very much in line with Venetian fashions, and thus we can assume that he likewise adapted to the Venetian layout of rooms and filled them with suitable furnishings. Therefore, I will try in this section, where possible, to place the objects back in their original setting, since an understanding of their initial context is necessary in order to comprehend their meaning and purpose. The focus will be on the rooms that served as places of representation: the *portego* and the bedchamber.³⁷ By addressing the specificity of the individual, spaces and objects, and the relationships between the three, an impression is created of the contemporary meanings attributed to the diplomatic material environment.

One of the most outstanding things that Noailles' inventory reveals is that his embassy was abundantly decorated with oriental objects.³⁸ In the early modern period, the East was regarded as a rich source of exotic and precious objects, which were highly prized by the European upper class. These exotic commodities changed the outlook of European domestic interiors and became a standard feature in the houses of the elite to display wealth and social

³⁶ For an analysis of conspicuous consumption in the early modern period, see, for example: Peter Burke, "Res et Verba: Conspicuous Consumption in the Early Modern World," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 148-173. However, we must not forget that the elite also took individual pleasure in the objects they acquired. A study that considers both the necessity of expenditure on luxury goods and the personal pleasure that these objects generated is: Patricia Lee Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2007).

³⁷ Patricia Fortini Brown describes these chambers as places of representation and labelled them as the most beautiful parts of the Venetian domestic interior: Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 65.

³⁸ The provenance of the objects that I label as "oriental" was in fact mainly Ottoman and Persian. I am aware that these regions do not make up the entire orient or east, but that in fact the orient is much vaster and diversified.

standing. Especially Venice was known as the gateway to the oriental world. Through travel, diplomacy and trade, Venetians came into contact with Muslim society. The first permanent embassy was established as early as 1453 and diplomatic encounters were almost constantly maintained throughout the early modern period to sustain the at times ambiguous and tense political relations. These permanent contacts triggered a strong fascination for the Islamic aesthetic and intellectual traditions.³⁹ Furthermore, already in the late medieval period, the *Serenissima* held a virtual monopoly on the trading relations with the Near East. This was due to the fact that already after the First Crusade in 1099, Venetians had started to establish a network of trading posts in the Levant, resulting in the creation of Venetian colonies. All these evolutions prompted the development amongst Venetian traders of a profound knowledge of eastern markets and practices. In the course of the sixteenth century, the trade with the Levant still continued to evolve.⁴⁰

Inversely, Ottoman merchants were certainly present in Venice starting from the sixteenth century. Venice was one of the only European cities that these Ottoman merchants frequented at regular intervals, and at the end of the century, around 500 Ottoman traders were trafficking at the Rialto.⁴¹ As a result, Venetians did not consider the Orient as a cultural “other” but as a common component of daily undertakings and a profusion of oriental goods characterised the Venetian shops and markets. Moreover, between 1300 and 1500, the city’s architectural identity was strongly permeated by eastern influences. However, during the sixteenth century, Venice opted for a western public image inspired by the Roman past. As a result, oriental objects were transferred to the interior of private houses.

³⁹ Deborah Howard, “The Status of the Oriental Traveller in Renaissance Venice,” in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*, ed. Gerald M. MacLean (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 31; Deborah Howard, “Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Forging European Identities*, 138-177. This fascination also worked in the other direction since the diplomatic gifts offered by Venice to the Ottomans stimulated the demand for European, and especially Venetian, luxury goods among the Ottoman elite: Julian Raby, “The Serenissima and the Sublime Porte: Art in the Art of Diplomacy, 1453-1600,” in *Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797*, ed. Stefano Carboni (New York, New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2007), 90-119.

⁴⁰ Howard, “Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans”, 138-177; Luciano Pezzolo, “The Venetian Economy,” in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 258-266.

⁴¹ Suraiya Faruqi, introduction to *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Suraiya Faruqi and Gilles Veinstein (Paris, Leuven, Dudley: Peeters, 2008), xiv-xvi; Maria Pia Pedani, “Between Diplomacy and Trade: Ottoman Merchants in Venice,” in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, 3-9. Other works on the close ties between Venice and the Ottoman Empire: Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Rothman, *Brokering Empire*. For a clear overview of the cultural and artistic interactions between Venice and the Islamic world, see: Carboni, ed., *Venice and the Islamic World*.

Here, they became more popular than ever and the Turkish style blossomed as the most prominent fashion.⁴²

Consequently, Noailles was in a privileged position for collecting oriental objects. His taste for the Turkish fashion is in the first place detectable in his display of Turkish weapons in the *portego*. The aforementioned Sabba da Castiglione stated that: “If by chance you were to ask me which ornaments I would desire above all others in my house, I would reply, without much pause for reflection, arms and books.”⁴³ In Renaissance Venice, the exhibition of weaponry was considered as a paragon of noble identity. Since the *portego* was the room where most social life took place, it was the best place to showcase status. Due to their technical finesse and fine decoration, Turkish weapons became an elementary component of these collections.⁴⁴ Moreover, the Venetian habit of displaying oriental weaponry, and weapons in general, initially also had a political and military purpose; they represented the loyalty of the citizens to the Republic and their willingness to take up arms in military battles.⁴⁵

However, throughout the course of the sixteenth century, the weapons in the *portego* increasingly had to make room for tables and chairs. This was interpreted by the government as a reflection of the growing attention paid to pleasure and delight by the Venetian aristocracy, which had replaced their active involvement in military combat. The rulers criticised this decorative evolution, as they were of the opinion that the objects in the *portego* symbolically represented the strength of the Republic, and that virility and civic duty were now substituted by sumptuous entertainment.⁴⁶ These changes were in line with the general alteration of the manifestation of nobility in sixteenth-century Venice: the attention shifted from the expression of military masculinity to the display of wealth.⁴⁷ Consequently, if weapons were still exhibited in the *portego* in the sixteenth century, they were not actually used in combat, but their presence was purely representational. They often belonged to

⁴² Howard, “Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans”, 138-177; Deborah Howard, “Venice as an ‘Eastern City’,” in *Venice and the Islamic World*, 58-71. After the Venetian defeat at the battle of Agnadello (1509), Doge Andrea Gritti wished to restore the city’s prestige and image through a radical architectural renewal of the central urban spaces: St. Mark’s Square and the Rialto. In his *renovatio urbis*, Gritti promoted Roman architecture. The project was carried out by Jacopo Sansovino, who constructed several new buildings in the classical style on St. Mark’s Square and the adjacent *piazzetta*. The result was an implementation of elements from ancient Rome on the existing Byzantine character of these squares. Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City*, 92-111.

⁴³ Translation taken from: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 269. Original quote in: da Castiglione, *Ricordi*, 119r: “Se per aventura voi mi domandarete quali ornamenti più di tutti gli altri desiderarei in casa mia, vi risponderò senza molto pensarci, Armi e libri [...]”.

⁴⁴ Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study*, 78-80.

⁴⁵ Patricia Fortini Brown, “The Venetian *Casa*,” in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, 57.

⁴⁶ Fortini Brown, “Behind the Walls”, 317; Schmitter, “The Quadro da Portego”, 701-704.

⁴⁷ Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 1-21.

ancestors and were employed to promote family identity and the values of the Venetian Republic.⁴⁸ This is also what Sansovino observed when he wrote that: “In the reception rooms of great families there are racks of arms with the shields and banners of their ancestors who fought for Venice on land and at sea.”⁴⁹

It is not surprising that Noailles chose to associate himself with the Venetian tradition of exhibiting weapons. In France, it was similarly an aristocratic custom to possess a collection of weaponry. For example, the great sixteenth-century noble families Montmorency and Guise both owned an impressive cabinet filled with armoury and weapons. These artefacts were considered a perfect way to visualise their noble status and to astonish visitors with their power.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, more peculiar to Noailles’ collection was that it was solely composed of oriental arms: one knife *damasquinée*, or damascened,⁵¹ of the Levant with a scabbard of gilded silver; one scimitar with belt and scabbard from the Levant, completely of gilded silver; and one Turkish bow with its casing and arrows. The possible political meaning of Noailles’ assortment of oriental weaponry should be considered. For Venetians, the possession of Turkish weapons referred to their military victories over the Ottoman Empire. The choice of the French ambassador, whose king was a long-time ally of the Ottoman sultan, to adopt to this custom can be seen as paradoxical. However, as said before, Ottoman weaponry was admired for its technical finesse and elegance and the possession of these goods was in line with the general oriental fashion that existed in Venice. Hence, oriental arms were most probably employed by Noailles to display luxury and, at the same time, exhibit the military virility of France. Therefore, I believe that no diplomatic statements should be attributed to this decorative choice.

Besides weaponry, paintings constituted a second standard decoration item in the *portego*. During the Renaissance, it was the custom of the wealthy Venetian citizens to embellish every room of the house with paintings of various sizes and with diverse subjects. Many studies have been conducted on sixteenth-century Venetian painting collections of various socio-economic classes, using the inventories in the series *Giudici del Proprio, Mobili* and *Cancellaria Inferiore, Miscellanea Notai Diversi* preserved in the Venetian State Archive. Bertrand Jestaz and Michel Hochmann, for example, have analysed the records of the first

⁴⁸ Schmitter, “The Quadro da Portego”, 703.

⁴⁹ Translation taken from: Fortini Brown, “Behind the Walls”, 296. Original quote in: Sansovino, *Venetia Città Nobilissima*, vol. 1, 384-385: “Nelle Sale de grandi stanno le rastelliere dell’armi, con gli Scudi, et con gli Stendardi de loro antenati, che furono in reggimenti di mare ò di terra.”

⁵⁰ Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Parâtre*, 65-68.

⁵¹ *Damasquiné*, or damascened, is the art of inlaying different metals into one another, typically gold or silver into a steel background, to produce intricate patterns.

half of the sixteenth century and concluded that inventories in which not even one painting was listed were low in number.⁵² For the later sixteenth century, Palumbo Fossati Casa detected paintings in more than 80 percent of the examined inventories, and often they were the first items listed.⁵³ All these studies thus point to the fact that, especially amongst the Venetian elite, paintings were highly collected luxury goods. When the sixteenth century progressed, the *portego* became the primary location to exhibit pictures. There even emerged a separate genre specifically made for the *portego*, the *quadro da portego*.⁵⁴

Consequently, there is no doubt that Noailles garnished his *portego* with numerous pictures. The passport, in which he outlined some of the goods that he transferred to France at the end of his mission, mentions a long chest filled with portraits and paintings.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the precise amount and subjects of these canvases is not stipulated. Only for two paintings do we know the content: two portraits, one of his king, Henry II, and one of the French minister of foreign affairs and Noailles' patron, Constable Anne de Montmorency. These were certainly displayed at a prominent place in the *portego* so that Noailles' guests were immediately confronted with his service to France. Similarly, English Ambassador Henry Wotton decorated his Venetian house with a portrait of the young Prince Henry, son of King James I.⁵⁶

Showing political allegiances through the display of portraits was a standard practice in European embassies. It was believed that the image of the monarch embodied his sovereignty and, this way, that the portrait strengthened the representational role of the ambassador and the extraterritoriality of the embassy. Furthermore, it added prestige to the activities taking place inside the embassy; while conducting state business and entertaining guests, the

⁵² However, Jestaz and Hochmann also underline that a collection with more than ten paintings was extremely rare in this period; vast collections only appeared during the second half of the sixteenth century: Bertrand Jestaz, "Les Collections de Peinture à Venise au XVI^e Siècle," in *Geografia del Collezionismo: Italia e Francia tra il XVI e il XVIII Secolo. Atti delle Giornate di Studio Dedicato a Giuliano Briganti (Roma, Villa Medici e Accademia di San Luca, 19-21 settembre 1996)*, eds. Olivier Bonfait et al. (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2001), 185-201; Michel Hochmann, "Quelques Réflexions sur les Collections de Peinture à Venise dans la Première Moitié du XVI^e Siècle," in *Il Collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai Tempi della Serenissima*, eds. Bernard Aikema, Rosella Lauber, and Max Seidel (Venice: Marsilio, 2005), 117-134.

⁵³ Palumbo Fossati Casa, *Intérieurs Vénitiens*, 34; 38-39. Isabella Cecchini has likewise mapped the number of paintings in Venetian houses between 1511 and 1615, using the inventories of the *Guidici del Proprio, Mobili*, and came to the same conclusion. See her tables n. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 in: Cecchini, "Collezionismo e Mondo Materiale", 185-187.

⁵⁴ Schmitter, "The Quadro da Portego", 706-707; Elizabeth Carroll Consavari, "Il Mare di Pittura: Domestic Pictures and Sociability in the Late Sixteenth-Century Venetian Interior," in *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700*, 143; Morse, "The Venetian Portego", 90.

⁵⁵ Passeport, et certificat de Monseigneur d'Acqs de ses meubles et cofres qu'il envoie de Venise à la cour de France, 20 June 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 95.

⁵⁶ Wotton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 1, 57. For an analysis of the Venetian residence of English Ambassador Henry Wotton, see: Lauritzen and Zielcke, *Palaces of Venice*, 164; Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 89; Netzloff, "The Ambassador's Household", 165-166.

ambassador's master was always clearly present.⁵⁷ Additionally, loyalty to other princes could be visualised through portraits. For instance, Renée de Courcillon, wife of Philippe de la Canaye, deeply desired to acquire portraits depicting various members of the Gonzaga family: Duke Vincenzo I, Duchess Eleonora de' Medici, their son Francesco IV and their daughter Margherita. They were meant to be displayed at the embassy in order to showcase their service to the Gonzaga dynasty.⁵⁸ This circulation and display of portraiture was anchored in the wider noble practice of exchanging portraits. These portraits served as tokens of alliance and loyalty or as visual reminders to keep the friendship alive. Especially when noblemen were separated by distance, portraits offered them the opportunity to make their lasting presence felt.⁵⁹

Besides with portraits of princes, ambassadors decorated their lodgings with the work of local artists. As the documents of Noailles do not provide detailed information about his collection, we cannot determine with certainty that he owned paintings by Venetian masters or with Venetian themes. However, this seems very plausible, especially considering the fact that his last house was awarded to him by the Venetian state. Consequently, Venetian officials might have decorated the interior with some paintings representing the prestige of the Republic. One century after Noailles, French Ambassador Jean Dyel certainly had various paintings in his collection depicting Venetian themes, such as a portrait of the Doge; representations of St. Mark's Square, the Senate and a ceremony; views of Venice; and even depictions of Venetian fruits and game.⁶⁰ Similarly, Henry Wotton commissioned Venetian-based painter Odoardo Fialetti to paint various works for him. However, these paintings were mostly meant to be displayed back at his London residence in order to commemorate his embassies in Venice. Fialetti executed four portraits of doges, a view of Venice and Wotton's audience with the doge.⁶¹

This brings me to another category of paintings that became popular in ambassadorial residences in Venice, the depiction of the ambassador's own entry or audience. It is not

⁵⁷ For the use of portraiture in Tudor diplomacy, see: Tracey Sowerby, "A Memorial and a Pledge of Faith": Portraiture and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture," *English Historical Review* 129, no. 537 (2014), 296-331, especially pages 301-302 focus on the role of royal portraiture in the embassy building.

⁵⁸ Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 781.

⁵⁹ Fernando Bouza, "Letters and Portraits: Economy of Time and Chivalrous Service in Courtly Culture," in *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, eds. Francisco Bethencourt and Florike Egmond, vol. 3 of *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Robert Muchembled and William Monter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 145-162.

⁶⁰ Patrick Michel, "La Peinture Vénitienne en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles: Contribution à l'Histoire d'une Réception," in *Venise en France: La Fortune de la Peinture Vénitienne des Collections Royales jusqu'au XIXe Siècle. Actes de la Journée d'Étude Paris-Venise*, ed. Gennaro Toscano (Paris: École du Louvre, 2004), 41. Dyel's collection of art is described in more detail in Chapter 6.

⁶¹ Walters, "Odoardo Fialetti", 156-170.

exactly clear when this genre first appeared, but especially for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, examples have been preserved. Whereas Wotton commissioned Fialetti to depict Doge Leonardo Donà conceding an audience to him, other ambassadors assigned artists to paint their arrival in the city. Italian painter Luca Carlevarijs worked for at least six foreign ambassadors residing in Venice during the first half of the eighteenth century, amongst which Imperial, French and English ambassadors, for whom he painted their diplomatic entries (Figures 7 and 8). Also Carlevarijs' successor, Canaletto, became a master in this genre (Figure 9). He was appointed by Imperial Delegate Giuseppe Bolagnos to portray his arrival in the city in 1729, which Bolagnos displayed in the reception room of his embassy (Figure 30). Furthermore, a painting by Canaletto of Bolagnos' participation in the *Festa della Sensa*, during which the doge's marriage with the sea was celebrated, decorated the ambassador's residence (Figure 31).⁶²

The brilliance of the *portego*, and other majestic rooms, was further enhanced by dressing the walls with tapestries and wall hangings. In Italian Renaissance interiors, every important chamber was either painted or decorated with wall hangings made out of gilt leather and various types of textiles; no wall could be bare or unclothed. Consequently, wall hangings were ubiquitous and amongst the most essential and costly items owned. They were used as status symbols to demonstrate wealth and standing.⁶³ Accordingly, Noailles possessed various textile hangings: two pieces of gold cloth from the Levant, two pieces of colourful silk from the Levant and 26 pieces of toile from the Barbary states.⁶⁴ Such combinations of textiles and colours were popular in the houses of the early modern elites as they provoked a visual image of magnificence.⁶⁵ Especially the upholsteries of both gold and silk were extremely precious, and still in 1562, they were forbidden by sumptuary legislation, from which ambassadors were exempted, which is a clear indication of the value of Noailles'

⁶² Tipton, "Diplomatie und Zeremoniell".

⁶³ For the abundant use and importance of textile decorations in Italy, see: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 44-53; Alessandra Rodolfo and Caterina Volpi, eds., *Vestire i Palazzi: Stoffe, Tessuti e Parati negli Arredi e nell'Arte del Barocco* (Vatican City: Edizioni Musei Vaticani, 2014). On the profusion of textiles in French late medieval and early modern residences, see, for instance: Thierry Crépin-Leblond, ed., *Parures d'Or et de Pourpre: Le Mobilier à la Cour des Valois* (Paris, Blois: Somogy, Éditions d'Art, Château de Blois, 2002); Katherine Anne Wilson, "In the Chamber, in the Garde Robe, in the Chapel, in a Chest': The Possession and Uses of Luxury Textiles: The Case of Later Medieval Dijon," in *Europe's Rich Fabric: The Consumption, Commercialisation, and Production of Luxury Textiles in Italy, the Low Countries and Neighbouring Territories (Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)*, eds. Bart Lambert and Katherine Anne Wilson (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2016), 11-33.

⁶⁴ Since these textiles are listed in the inventory immediately after the carpets, we can deduce that they were decorative items instead of textiles intended for clothing.

⁶⁵ Furlotti, *A Renaissance Baron and His Possessions*, 84-85.

decorations.⁶⁶ Moreover, the eastern style of his hangings matched the oriental fashion of his other furnishings. Surprisingly, tapestries are not mentioned in Noailles' inventory. This might be due to the fact that they were more difficult to move and, therefore, they were locally rented in Venice for the period of the embassy.

Besides the *portego*, the bedchamber was employed to reflect socio-political standing. The bedroom had both a private and public character in early modern homes, as it was also used as a reception room to entertain guests and discuss important business. As a result, the room was lavishly furnished in order to demonstrate the wealth of the owner.⁶⁷ The bed was often even one of the most expensive and cherished pieces of furniture, decorated with abundant textiles.⁶⁸ Precisely the bedroom is the most vividly evoked in Noailles' inventory. Striking in his bedchamber was the huge variety of colours and materials present, which underline the, sometimes forgotten, colourfulness of sixteenth-century homes. He certainly owned two beds, of which the first had a wooden bedstead of walnut, the most common wood used for splendid beds and high-class furniture in general.⁶⁹ The second was a covered bed, a gift from Cardinal François de Tournon when Noailles was suffering from a grave illness.⁷⁰ These beds were canopied beds and, accordingly, Noailles possessed three sets of rich and elaborate *pavilion*, or bed canopies (in Italian *padiglioni*), and one set of *fourniment* (in Italian *fornimento*), or hangings, which were all sheets attached to a hook on the ceiling or a frame above the bed.⁷¹ The inventory catalogues: one *pavilion* of toile decorated with crimson silk in Turkish style; one *pavilion* of shot taffeta, with the colour changing when the material moved, and the top (*chaperon*) of orange velvet, fringed with gold; another *pavilion* of crepe (*crêpe*) or veil of Bologna; and one *fourniment* in red scarlet, scarlet is in this case referring to the woollen cloth, embroidered with black velvet.

⁶⁶ Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe*, 396; Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 51.

⁶⁷ Richard A. Goldthwaite, "The Empire of Things: Consumer Demand in Renaissance Italy," in *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 170; Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 285-290; Elizabeth Currie, *Inside the Renaissance House* (London: V&A Publications, 2006), 46-50.

⁶⁸ Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy*, 74-79; Sarti, *Vita di Casa*, 138-143; Palumbo Fossati Casa, *Intérieurs Vénitiens*, 172; Giorgio Riello, "Fabricating the Domestic: The Material Culture of Textiles and the Social Life of the Home in Early Modern Europe," in *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society: Global Perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary Times*, ed. Beverly Lemire (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 49-50.

⁶⁹ Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 89; 153; Isabella Palumbo Fossati Casa, "La Casa Veneziana," in *Da Bellini a Veronese: Temi di Arte Veneta*, eds. Gennaro Toscano and Francesco Valcanover (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2004), 469.

⁷⁰ Information about Noailles' beds can be found in: Letter from Cardinal François de Tournon to Gilles de Noailles, 9 November 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 106r; Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venise, n.d. [August 1561]: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 164v.

⁷¹ On the *padiglione* and bed hangings in general, see: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 120-146.

Bedcovers had to be just as prestigious as the bed and its canopies and made with the finest materials. The great variety of rich fabrics recorded in early modern inventories affirms the symbolic importance of the bed. Moreover, the amount of beddings and number of sheets was an indicator of the wealth of the family.⁷² Noailles took several expensive and magnificent bedcovers, or coverlets (*couverture de lit*, in Italian *coperte*), with him back to France: one white *piqué* from the Levant; another one from the Levant, decorated with red and black silk; one that formed a set together with the *fourniment*, made of the same material: red scarlet and black velvet; and Noailles also transformed a piece of leather from the Levant into a bedcover in Bulgarian fashion. The coverlet constituted the top layer of beddings, and underneath there were additional layers of blankets and sheets, such as the six pairs of fine sheets (*lincieulx*, in Italian *lenzuoli*), most probably white and in linen, in Noailles' bed. His pillows (*oreillers*, in old Italian called *origlieri*) were made of equally sophisticated material: two in violet velvet; six pillow cases ornamented with gold and silk in Turkish style; and four pillow cases of undefined materials. Their richness suggests that they were applied for decoration and not for practical use. Lastly, listed together with Noailles' bedcovers, we find: 54 pieces of leather from the Levant in diverse colours, taffeta from Tours and *bavelina* from Ferrara. It is safe to assume that these textiles were equally employed to further garnish the bedchamber.⁷³ This glimpse into the splendour of Noailles' bedchamber reveals that he especially used silk to adorn his bed, which was considered the essential fabric for luxurious beds. The most commonly occurring colours were red tones and black, the most fashionable colours for textile furnishings in sixteenth-century France. The bedrooms in the palaces owned by the Valois kings and powerful French noble families, such as the Guise, were garnished with the same prestigious materials and equally dominated by red and black colours.⁷⁴

In the Renaissance, textiles were not only used to decorate, but also to organise domestic life. Fabrics were related to orderliness, as they were necessary for good health and comfort.⁷⁵ Additionally, their importance can be derived from the fact that the principal budget was often spent on textiles. To get an idea of the financial cost, a comparison can be given between a French standard salary and the price of luxurious textiles. In the second half of the sixteenth century, a French construction worker could only buy one ell of velvet after

⁷² Sarti, *Vita di Casa*, 140.

⁷³ On bedcovers and pillows in the Italian Renaissance home, see: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 162-167.

⁷⁴ Anne Kraatz, "Le Décor Tissé au XVI^e Siècle en France," in *Parures d'Or et de Pourpre*, 52-65; Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 175.

⁷⁵ Riello, "Fabricating the Domestic", 41-65.

20 days of work; however, in order to garnish a magnificent bed with velvet, a minimum of 50 ells were needed.⁷⁶ Hence, both the social and economic value of textiles communicated notions of standing, and fabrics were clearly used as a sign of financial and social well-being.

An additional chamber that should be briefly discussed is the oratory, a common feature in Venetian *palazzi*. In the last residence that Noailles inhabited, he built a private oratory and equipped it with windows, curtains and tables.⁷⁷ It was undoubtedly elaborately decorated and filled with exquisite devotional objects, but the only items listed in his inventory are five corporals, which are the cloths that covered the altar, on which the chalice and paten were placed. Noailles' corporals were decorated with gold and silk, *a la Turque*, of which one was embellished with pearls. The choice of corporals in the Turkish style should again be understood in the particular Venetian context. The Turkish textiles that were regularly gifted by Ottoman delegates as a diplomatic gift to the *Signoria* were often used to fabricate altar cloths. These cloths were subsequently placed on the altar of St. Mark's Basilica or used to display precious objects in the treasury.⁷⁸ In a similar way, Persian textiles were occasionally turned into liturgical vestments.⁷⁹

Persian Carpets

The oriental fashion in Noailles' embassy is also strongly represented in his carpet collection. Every sixteenth-century wealthy man wishing to evince noble character and status displayed luxurious carpets. The important role of carpets can already be derived from contemporary accounts on how to lead a noble lifestyle. These treatises singled out carpets as signs of civilisation and courtship. For example, Alvise Casanova's *Specchio Lucidissimo*, a handbook on accounting and bookkeeping, included carpets and tapestries as necessary belongings of a merchant in Venice.⁸⁰ The aforementioned quote of Sabba da Castiglione

⁷⁶ Kraatz, "Le Décor Tissé au XVIe Siècle en France", 63-64.

⁷⁷ Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venise, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 166r.

⁷⁸ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 77; Stefan Hanß, "Baili e Ambasciatori / Bayloslar ve Büyükelçiler," in *Il Palazzo di Venezia a Istanbul e i Suoi Antichi Abitanti / İstanbul'daki Venedik Sarayı ve Eski Yaşayanları*, ed. Maria Pia Pedani (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2013), 48.

⁷⁹ Rota, "Safavid Envoys in Venice", 228.

⁸⁰ Alvise Casanova, *Specchio Lucidissimo: Nel Quale si Vedeno Essere Diffinito Tutti i Modi, et Ordini de Scrittura, che si Deve Menare nelli Negotiamenti della Mercantia, Cambii, Recambii, con li Loro Corrispondentie, Disgarbugliando, et Illuminando l'Intelletto a Negotianti* (Venice: Comin da Trino, 1558), 20.

referred particularly to Turkish and Syrian carpets, *tapeti Turcheschi et Soriani*, while discussing the suitable ornaments for the decoration of the interior.⁸¹

Rosamond E. Mack states that carpets coming from the Levant had been one of the most admired materials in the global trade since the Middle Ages due to two factors. First, they cost more than other luxury materials and, therefore, only the richest Europeans could afford them. Second, even when they had the money, the supply of carpets was limited, which restricted purchasing opportunities and gave these carpets an exclusive character.⁸² While it is true that they were costly and that at times demand exceeded supply, we do see that in the sixteenth century, oriental rugs were extremely fashionable and appeared in large numbers in noble households.⁸³ Whereas the shape, motives, and designs were not adjusted to meet European tastes, the original placement on the floor in Islamic tradition did transform in western culture. As a result of the high status that these carpets attained in Europe, they were displayed as works of arts on more prestigious locations such as tables, chests, desks and day-beds.⁸⁴

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Venetian Republic had a monopoly on the importation of oriental rugs and they operated as carpet dealers for the rest of Europe. It was the Venetian Jewish community that handled in these oriental carpets. As a result of this trade, lots of carpets could be found in Venice, and Venetian inventories of the sixteenth century demonstrate the great profusion of carpets from the Levant in the houses of all kinds of social classes. Their presence was not restricted to one specific room, but they were scattered around the house and covered various surfaces.⁸⁵ Even though it was common in early modern Venice to garnish the home with oriental rugs, the carpets in Noailles' possession were a remarkable collection and provide an informative glimpse into his material wealth and sumptuous lifestyle.

In spite of the high price of carpets, Noailles certainly owned fourteen pieces, noted down in his inventory along with their size. However, the inventory poses some difficulties and

⁸¹ da Castiglione, *Ricordi*, 114r.

⁸² Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza*, 73.

⁸³ For the abundance of oriental carpets in Italian inventories, see: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 64-65. For a French example from France, see the inventories of the Guise family, who owned 35 oriental carpets in 1589, described in: Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Parâitre*, 175.

⁸⁴ Kurt Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets*, ed. Hanna Erdmann, trans. May H. Beattie and Hildegard Herzog (London: Faber & Faber, 1970), 98; Ajmar-Wollheim and Molà, "The Global Renaissance", 14-15; Palumbo Fossati Casa, *Intérieurs Vénitiens*, 183-184.

⁸⁵ Giovanni Curatola, "A Sixteenth-Century Quarrel about Carpets," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004), 129-137; Walter B. Denny, "Oriental Carpets and Textiles in Venice," in *Venice and the Islamic World*, 174-191; Giovanni Curatola, "Venice's Textile and Carpet Trade: The Role of Jewish Merchants", in *Venice and the Islamic World*, 207-208.

limitations. Firstly, the terminology is not always clear; the unit of measurement mentioned is *brasse*, but it is not specified if this refers to the French *brasse* (1,624 meters) or Venetian *braccio* (0,638 meters).⁸⁶ However, it seems highly unlikely that the French *brasse* was used as in this case the carpets would have been unusually large. Therefore, the Venetian *braccio* is applied to estimate their size. Secondly, whereas the measurements are almost always specified, the inventory does not often indicate the materials and colours of the carpets. The most frequently mentioned textiles are silk and velvet. Furthermore, certainly three carpets were adorned with gold or silver wires, which evidently made them very expensive.⁸⁷ The only colours stipulated are black, crimson and crimson-violet (*violet cramoisi*, which is probably *paonazzo*); all noble colours of importance used to showcase social standing in both sixteenth-century Venice and France. Thirdly, the purpose is only clarified for the smaller items: to decorate the boat, probably gondola, and to cover chests.

Carpets and their dimensions in the Venetian house of François de Noailles (1557-1561)

Undefined origin	Persian origin
1 large black velvet carpet fringed with silk and lined with toile, 8 <i>brasses</i> long, 3 <i>brasses</i> wide [5,104 by 1,914 meters]	1 large Persian carpet completely made of silk, 8 and a quarter and a half <i>brasses</i> long, 4 and a half <i>brasses</i> wide [5,583 by 2,871 meters]
1 carpet of crimson-violet velvet fringed with crimson silk and silver wire	1 large Persian carpet, named <i>le Blanc</i> , 7 and a half and half a quarter <i>brasses</i> long, 3 and 3 quarters and a half <i>brasses</i> wide [4,865 by 2,711 meters]
2 velvet carpets for the boat	1 large Persian carpet, named <i>le Grand</i> , 8 and a quarter <i>brasses</i> long, 3 and a half and half a quarter <i>brasses</i> wide [5,264 by 2,313 meters]
1 small carpet to put on a chest, completely made of silk	1 large Persian carpet, named <i>le Petit</i> , 8 <i>brasses</i> long, 3 and a half minus 2 fingers <i>brasses</i> wide [5,104 by 2,169 meters] ⁸⁸
2 carpets of black <i>drap</i>	2 Persians carpets with gold
	1 carpet in Persian style

⁸⁶ The Venetian *braccio* for silk cloth is used here, for wool cloth the *braccio* corresponds to 0,683 meters.

⁸⁷ Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 70-71.

⁸⁸ 3 and a half minus 2 fingers has been converted to 3,4 in order to make the calculation. The names given to the carpets, *le Grand* and *le Petit*, is peculiar since the carpets were almost of the same size.

The origin is known of seven carpets, as they are defined in the inventory as Persian. This label already indicates the prestige of Noailles' carpet collection since Persian carpets enjoyed international fame for their luxury and splendour. The Persian carpet production witnessed a golden age during the Safavid Period (1501-1722) when Persian artisans manufactured masterworks in terms of technical production and artistic design.⁸⁹ Their creations began to appear in Europe during the second half of the sixteenth century, but they remained rare, costly and only produced in small numbers.⁹⁰ In Venice, the majority of the imported oriental carpets came from the Ottoman Empire, Anatolia and Egypt, and Persian carpets only became more widespread over the course of the seventeenth century.⁹¹ According to Giovanni Curatola, a great authority with respect to carpets in Venice, trade relations between Persia and Venice only occurred sporadically; accordingly, Persians never played a crucial role in the Venetian carpet trade and Curatola found no documents pointing to their arrival in Venice before the beginning of the seventeenth century. Persian rugs only became fashionable after the diplomatic gift of carpets by Shah Abbas in the early seventeenth century.⁹²

Similarly, Kurt Erdmann, an expert in carpet studies, points to the fact that it was very difficult to maintain commercial contacts with Persia in the sixteenth century, this was only possible through diplomatic contacts, which explains the rareness of Persian carpets in Europe.⁹³ The rest of the literature supports this idea, since scholars all underline the scarce presence of Persian exemplars in sixteenth-century European inventories. In his study on oriental rugs in Florence, Marco Spallanzani found only one example of a Persian carpet in gold, silk and wool, ordered by Duke Cosimo de' Medici in 1549. Spallanzani emphasises the rarity of the presence of a Persian carpet in Florence already in the mid-sixteenth century.⁹⁴ According to Spallanzani, towards the end of the sixteenth century, Persian carpets could be acquired more easily. However, inventories of the Medici court dating from the

⁸⁹ Friedrich Spuhler, *Islamic Carpets and Textiles in the Keir Collection* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), 80; Giovanni Curatola and Gianroberto Scarcia, *Iran: L'Arte Persiana* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2004), 217-232.

⁹⁰ Donald King, "The Carpets in the Exhibition," in *The Eastern Carpet in the Western World from the 15th to the 17th Century*, eds. Donald King and David Sylvester (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1983), 29.

⁹¹ Denny, "Oriental Carpets and Textiles in Venice", 179.

⁹² Giovanni Curatola, "Four Carpets in Venice," in *Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries, 1400-1600*, eds. Walter B. Denny and Robert Pinner, vol. 2 of *Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies* (London: Hali Publications, 1986), 128; Curatola, "Venice's Textile and Carpet Trade", 210.

⁹³ Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets*, 98.

⁹⁴ Marco Spallanzani, *Oriental Rugs in Renaissance Florence* (Firenze: S.P.E.S., 2007), 69.

1580s and 1590s show that Persian products, always very conspicuous, were still few in number.⁹⁵

Also outside the Italian peninsula, Persian carpets were rather rare during the sixteenth century. With regard to Spain, Persian rugs can only be recognised starting from the late sixteenth century.⁹⁶ In France, the vogue for Persian carpets apparently occurred earlier. Inventories from the elites, dating from the second half of the sixteenth century, already included some carpets of Persian origins; still, they remained in small numbers.⁹⁷ The same is true for Portugal, where the presence of Persian carpets can be traced back to the middle of the sixteenth century. Although Portugal already maintained diplomatic contacts with Persia in the first half of the sixteenth century, Persian carpets were not yet regularly traded. Instead, Iberian and Turkish carpets dominated Portuguese purchases. Jessica Hallett, who has analysed the evolution of the Portuguese trade in Persian carpets during the sixteenth century, puts forward issues related to production, distribution and design as the most likely explanations for the initial absence of Persian carpets. From the 1540s onwards, inventories and paintings confirm their presence in Portugal and, over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century, a wide variety regarding materials, designs and sizes was imported, although they remained in small numbers until the seventeenth century.⁹⁸

It must be noted that the late appearance of Persian carpets in Europe might also be due to wrong attributions of a Turkish instead of a Persian origin.⁹⁹ However, in any case, Persian rugs enjoyed a more exotic character compared to the thousands of carpets imported from the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the sixteenth-century Persian creations were extremely expensive. Their prize was considerably higher than that of Turkish carpets: large carpets from Persia normally cost at least twice as much as Turkish carpets of a similar size. As a result, not many people could afford them, which might also explain their scarcity. When

⁹⁵ Marco Spallanzani, "Carpets at the Medici Court in the Second Half of the 16th Century," *Islamic Art* VI (2009), 105-109.

⁹⁶ Robert Pinner, "Non-Spanish Carpets from the Mediterranean Countries in Spanish Documents of the 15th to 17th Centuries," in *Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries*, 159.

⁹⁷ Monique King lists some examples in Monique King, "French Documents Relating to Oriental Carpets, 15th-16th Century," in *Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries*, 135-136: Marshal de Saint André owned two Persian carpets, with gold threads, of a very high value when he died in 1562; the inventory of the Castle of Joinville of 1583, owned by the Guise family, documents six Persian carpets: two with gold threads, one in silk and three other large carpets; Duke de Luynes had six of a medium size and three small carpets, probably of Persian origin, in 1589; and an inventory of 1593 also included four Persian table carpets.

⁹⁸ Jessica Hallett, "From the Looms of Yazd and Isfahan: Persian Carpets and Textiles in Portugal," in *Carpets and Textiles in the Iranian World, 1400-1700*, eds. Jon Thompson, Daniel Shaffer, and Pirjetta Mildh (Oxford, Genoa: The May Beattie Archive at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, 2010), 91-122.

⁹⁹ This was for example the case with a Persian carpet in the collection of English King Henry VIII, which was listed as Turkish in 1547 but recognised as Persian in 1649. Pinner, "Non-Spanish Carpets from the Mediterranean Countries", 159.

cheaper variants were made during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, they became more attractive to the broader luxury market.¹⁰⁰

Considering all these observations about Persian carpets, it is very remarkable that Noailles already owned seven items at the end of his mission in 1561. Both in Venice and France, not many contemporary examples like his collection could be detected. A similar case is the inventory of French Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, drawn up in 1589, which also lists seven Persian exemplars, including one in silk with gold ground, measuring 3,56 by 1,58 meters.¹⁰¹ Catherine's Persian carpets are similar to some of Noailles' carpets regarding size and fabric. Generally speaking, Persian carpets of the sixteenth century were nearly always of considerable size, which explains the large dimensions of the carpets in Noailles' possession.¹⁰² With regard to the materials used, only one of Noailles' Persian carpets is explicitly described as completely made of silk. Silk carpets were produced in Kashan, an important Persian centre of silk that was also known for the enhancement of carpets with gold threads, a feature that we also find in the collection of Noailles. During the sixteenth century, these types of Persian carpets of silk and gold were most often specially made for princely clients.¹⁰³

The fact that Noailles owned carpets that were considered to be amongst the most expensive and exquisite of his time is an indication of his excessive wealth. Moreover, it shows that he clearly understood how to judge the prestige and rarity of objects. Letters from other ambassadors illustrate that contemporaries were likewise aware of the high quality of Persian carpets. The Venetian Ambassador Josafat Barbaro, who visited the Persian city Tabriz during the second half of the fifteenth century, was of the opinion that Persian carpets were superior to those of Turkey and Egypt.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, a letter from Ambassador Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, stationed in Constantinople, illustrates their superiority. When he wanted to send a carpet to Noailles as a present, he wished to wait for the arrival of the Persian caravans, which were stopped in Aleppo out of fear of robbery, before transferring the gift because the available Turkish carpets were not of a high value:

About the carpets, there are no items here that are worth one *akçe*¹⁰⁵ as there are only Turkish carpets since the caravans from Persia are stopped in Aleppo out of fear of robbery along the

¹⁰⁰ Hallett, "From the Looms of Yazd and Isfahan", 94; 104-106.

¹⁰¹ King, "French Document Relating to Oriental Carpets", 136.

¹⁰² Spuhler, *Islamic Carpets and Textiles in the Keir Collection*, 80.

¹⁰³ King, "Catalogue of the Exhibition", 90; Curatola and Scarcia, *Iran: L'Arte Persiana*, 222.

¹⁰⁴ Curatola and Scarcia, *Iran: L'Arte Persiana*, 218.

¹⁰⁵ *Akçe* is a silver coin of the Ottoman Empire.

road, if they arrive before I leave, and I have the money, you must believe that I will serve you with all my heart [...] ¹⁰⁶

Heterogeneous Styles

After the examination of Noailles' interior, it can be concluded that the oriental style was the most prominently present in his house. Also for the following decades, the Turkish vogue remained a trend in the French ambassadorial lodgings in Venice. Twenty years after Noailles' mission, André Hurault de Maisse constructed a very comparable domestic environment. Especially their bedchambers must have looked very much alike, since Hurault de Maisse decorated his bed with similar Levantine bedcovers: four of white toile and four of silk from Chios. He additionally bought eastern textiles and undefined furniture from the Ottoman Empire. ¹⁰⁷ It should be analysed if this oriental style of the French embassy in Venice was connected to the political situation of that time, or if it was merely an adherence to sixteenth-century stylistic fashions. A study of material culture should not only consider the objects themselves, but also the interplay between the objects on display and their social and symbolic functions and associations.

Starting from the sixteenth century, France maintained strong diplomatic ties with the Ottoman Empire, as they hoped that the Ottomans would be useful allies to counterbalance the growing power of the Habsburgs. Despite the religious differences and the condemnation of this alliance by western powers, it proved to be a solid partnership. Fellow ambassadors and visitors entering Noailles' embassy were aware of these ties between the French king and the Ottoman sultan and would have been able to associate the oriental interior design with the political situation. However, the analysis of sixteenth-century Venetian inventories has illustrated the widespread presence of eastern commodities in Venetian houses. Thus, the oriental style of the French embassy should be understood more as an adaptation to local Venetian fashions than as a symbol of political allegiance. Being in Venice, a city so deeply influenced by the Orient, the presence of the East in the interior design of the home could not

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Jean Cavenac de Vigne to François de Noailles, 24 July 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 48r: "Des tapis il ne s'en trouve pas ung qui vaille un aspre si ce n'est des Turquesques pour ce que toutes les caravannes de Perse sont arrestées en Alepo de peur d'estre desvalizées par les chemyns, si avant que je parte il en vient, et j'ay de l'argent, vous devez croyre que je vous serviray d'aussi bon cueur [...]".

¹⁰⁷ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, June 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 30, ff. 73r-74r; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, July 1583: *ibid.*, ff. 175r-175v; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, 30 October 1583: *ibid.*, f. 317; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, 22 November 1583: *ibid.*, ff. 357r-358r.

be avoided. As French ambassadors were connoisseurs of culture, they knew that the richness and craftsmanship of oriental goods would render the appropriate splendour to their residence. Still, even though the eastern style characterised Venetian interiors, it should also be underlined that the great number of Noailles' oriental textiles and their varied provenances is truly remarkable and sets his decorations apart from the more typical Venetian aristocratic homes.

The Levantine style strongly penetrated practically every room of Noailles' house, but he also owned products with other provenances, although they could be detected in much lesser numbers. In the first place, the textiles that served as wall and bed decorations had various origins: French, Italian and Barbary. Furthermore, Noailles displayed goblets from Bulgaria (*gobelets Bulgarins*) and a writing cabinet from Germany (*ung escriptoire d'Allemagne*). The Bulgarian goblets are peculiar items. They were sent from Constantinople as a gift from French diplomatic agent Jean Dolu.¹⁰⁸ The Bulgarian origin added curiosity to the objects, which probably gave them more value than their actual monetary worth. The writing cabinet from Germany is a more logical object, as it was a popular and prestigious piece of furniture during the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁹ The production centre was mainly based in the south German city of Augsburg, where they were known as *schreibtisch* or *wrangelschrank*, and from there they were widely exported. These cabinets were lavishly decorated and inlaid with different types of woods. Noailles' exemplar was probably used to store his documents and with a surface for writing. It was most likely a small and compact cabinet, that was placed on a table when in use, so that it could be transported easily.¹¹⁰

Surprisingly enough, besides the fabrics in his possession, Noailles did not take any objects specifically listed as Venetian back to France. Nevertheless, we can be certain of the fact that a selection of his furnishings were of Venetian manufacture, bought or leased from local shops. French commodities also are strikingly absent from Noailles' possessions. Still, diplomatic exchange should be regarded as a bilateral process of exchange, since ambassadors brought their native culture to the host country in the form of official gifts and private purchases. Nevertheless, whereas in England, François' brother Antoine regularly imported goods from France, François almost never requested the distribution of French

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Jean Dolu to François de Noailles, 21 September 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 387.

¹⁰⁹ Passeport, et certificat de Monseigneur d'Acqs de ses meubles et cofres qu'il envoie de Venise à la cour de France, 20 June 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 95.

¹¹⁰ Lieselotte Möller, *Der Wrangelschrank und die Verwandten Süddeutschen Intarsienmöbel des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1956); Dieter Alfter, *Die Geschichte des Augsburger Kabinettschranks* (Augsburg: Walch, 1986); Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 229-233.

merchandise.¹¹¹ The only French items he required were three watches.¹¹² It is likely that at the start of his embassy, some standard furnishings were transported from France to Venice, since this was a common practice amongst European ambassadors.¹¹³ However, this basic furniture was most of the time left behind for the successor, which can explain why it could not be traced in Noailles' inventory, as it only lists the items he transported back to France. The only examples that are described in his passport are “[...] a table of ebony, the foot of that table also of ebony, and two old chairs of sandalwood and ivory [...]”.¹¹⁴

*Comparison: The Inventory of Jean Cavenac de la Vigne's Residence
in Constantinople (1559)*

A comparison of the inventory of François de Noailles with that of his contemporary and colleague Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, can reveal possible similarities in the objects they possessed.¹¹⁵ Vigne's inventory was composed in October 1559 in Ragusa, where he died, presumably of dysentery, during his return journey from the Ottoman Empire to France. Therefore, just as was the case with Noailles' inventory, it gives us an overview of all the goods Vigne was carrying back with him to his home country.¹¹⁶ The content of each chest and bale was carefully written down by a chancellor of Ragusa, in the presence of one of Vigne's domestics, and was then handed over to his *secrétaire de chambre*.¹¹⁷ Fortunately, Vigne's secretary Duplensis had secured these goods already during the illness of his master, as he feared that they would be robbed after the ambassador's death. A couple of servants abandoned Vigne when he died, but the ones who remained loyal transferred his belongings to Noailles.¹¹⁸ The latter was impressed by Vigne's collection:

¹¹¹ Antoine de Noailles especially imported French food, such as grapes, and wine.

¹¹² Letter from François de Noailles to Milan, n.d. [February 1562]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 133v. These watches will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹¹³ Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, 22; 48.

¹¹⁴ Passeport, et certificat de Monseigneur d'Acqs de ses meubles et cofres qu'il envoie de Venise à la cour de France, 20 June 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 95: “[...] une table d'ebene le pied de ladite table qu'est aussi d'ebene, deux chaires de sandal et yvoire vieilles [...]”. Ebony was a greatly prized exotic wood that first appeared in Italy around 1500. It was often used in conjunction with ivory, see: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 89-90.

¹¹⁵ Vigne's inventory contains very rich information about the appearance of his interior. However, the main focus of my analysis is on the objects that were similar to those in Noailles' collection, consequently, many other interesting furnishings are not included in this overview.

¹¹⁶ AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 16, ff. 323r-328v (n.d. [October 1559]).

¹¹⁷ Letter from the *Signoria* of Ragusa to the *Signoria* of Venice, 1 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, ff. 222r-222v.

¹¹⁸ Letter from François de Noailles to Dowager Duchess Rénee de France, 11 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 176.

[...] one of the men of Sir de la Vigne who has come here has told me that the ships that carry his furniture, among which I know there are for seven or eight thousand *écu* of precious and excellent carpets, furs and objects of the Levant, will arrive in ten or twelve days.¹¹⁹

Sixteenth-century French historian Brantôme similarly defined Vigne's furniture as:

[...] the most beautiful furniture and the most exquisite we have ever seen. I have seen some of them in the hands of Monsieur de Dax [François de Noailles], the first time ever that I was in Venice, which were very excellent and very rare [...]¹²⁰

Noailles guarded everything in his house and registered and transported the furnishings and luggage to the inheritor, the Duchess of Savoy, Margaret of France, whom Vigne had served as an officer.¹²¹

Vigne's collection illustrates that the Turkish vogue had infiltrated every layer of his domestic interior.¹²² None of the items listed in his inventory can be qualified as French, signifying that he had completely immersed himself in Ottoman culture. When his possessions are juxtaposed with those of Noailles, it becomes even more evident how Noailles' interior design was similarly influenced by Ottoman tastes, and how Venetian and Ottoman styles, objects and craftsmanship showed many similarities. Especially with regard to the textile trade, they were dependent on each other for raw materials, such as wool, silk and cotton. Furthermore, the designs, patterns and fabrics used in their creations displayed many resemblances.¹²³ Both Venetian and Ottoman houses were also abundantly decorated with all kinds of fabrics. The same can be said of the residences, and especially bedchambers, of Noailles and Vigne, which were richly decorated with a great variety of textiles from the Levant. Vigne possessed various Levantine bedcovers: blankets or quilts (*coltre*) of red and yellow silk and four coverlets (*coperte*): one of yellow *sesa*, a type of cotton, from the Greek island of Chios; one of velvet from Bursa (in present-day Turkey) filled with *bombace*,

¹¹⁹ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 6 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 232v: “[...] celui des gens dudit feu sieur de la Vigne qui est venu icy m’a dict que le vaisseau qui a apporté ses meubles, entre lesquelz j’ay sceu qu’il y a pour sept ou huit mil escus de précieux et excellentz tapis, de fourures ou d’ouvrages de Levant, arrivera dans dix ou douze jours.”

¹²⁰ de Bourdeille, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 5, 68: “[...] des plus beaux meubles et des plus exquis qu’on eust sceu voir. J’en vis aucuns entre les mains de M. de Dax, la première fois que je fus jamais à Venise, qui estoient très-excellans et très-rares [...]”.

¹²¹ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 11 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 185; Letter from François de Noailles to Dowager Duchess Rénee de France, 11 November 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 175.

¹²² For more information on Ottoman artefacts, see the recent study: Suraiya Faroqhi, *Cultural History of the Ottomans: The Imperial Elite and Its Artefacts* (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2016).

¹²³ Howard, “Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans”, 167; Denny, “Oriental Carpets and Textiles in Venice”, 183-189.

similarly a type of cotton; plus two others filled with *bombace* in various colours.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Vigne's hand towels (*macramani*) were in the Turkish fashion. Noailles likewise had towels (listed as *marremens* in his inventory, referring to *macramé*) with gold wire in the Turkish style.

Similar to Noailles, Vigne possessed a variety of Turkish weaponry: seven Turkish bows with a set of strings, eighteen rings for the archer and a canister of arrows; a knife with scabbard, *alla turchesca*, garnished with silver; two knives embellished with *turchine*, turquoise precious stones, and small rubies; one knife without jewels; and a large Turkish inlaid knife. Most importantly, however, is Vigne's vast oriental carpet collection. Whereas the assortment in Noailles' Venetian house was already impressive, Vigne gathered an even more remarkable collection.¹²⁵ He was planning on taking back to France a total of 52 carpets, including 30 from Persia, 12 from Cairo and 10 more of which the origin is not indicated. The size is never declared in the inventory, only the general terms *piccolo* and *grande* are used. Their decorative purpose is stipulated for eight rugs: six to cover chests and two to garnish tables. With regard to colour, only *azzurro* and *rosso* are specifically mentioned, others are designated with the word *colorati*. Furthermore, for some Persian carpets, the fabric is mentioned: one of silk, five of velvet and eight of wool. At least three of them, but presumably many more, were ornamented with gold wires; furthermore, two silken items of undefined origin were garnished with gold flowers and animals, a proof of their high value. Besides another carpet that was adorned with Turkish letters, the decorative content is not specified.

Carpets in the collection of Jean Cavenac de la Vigne (1559)

	Persia	Cairo	Undefined	TOTAL
Silk	1			1
Velvet	5			5
Wool	8			8
Undefined	16	12	10	38
TOTAL	30	12	10	52

As already underlined, it is generally stated in the historiography that Persian carpets only sporadically reached Europe during the sixteenth century. However, the analysis of Noailles' records has shown that he possessed several rugs of Persian origin, and Vigne's inventory

¹²⁴ Both *coperte* and *coltre* were types of bedcovers. According to Thornton, the *coperte* constituted the top layer and the *coltre* the layer underneath: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 164.

¹²⁵ See Source 5 for a transcription of all the carpets in Vigne's inventory.

contrasts the traditional view even more, since no less than 30 were transported back to France. Clearly, ambassadors residing in both Venice and the Ottoman Empire had access to Persian rugs and were important agents in the informal carpet trade. Moreover, being located in the Ottoman Empire, Vigne was also in a privileged position to buy carpets from the markets of Egypt. While Vigne's carpets from Cairo were perhaps less exotic, they were nevertheless very popular amongst the European elites.¹²⁶ Manufactories were established in Cairo by the Mamluk sultans during the fifteenth century, and they continued to operate under Ottoman rule. According to Kurt Erdmann, the main purpose of the Cairene carpet manufacturing was to export products to Europe. Indeed, Cairene rugs were transported to the West on a very regular basis.¹²⁷

A final consideration that should be made concerns the vastness of Vigne's collection. The great number of carpets makes it highly unlikely that they were all displayed in his Ottoman residence or intended to adorn his house back in France. It is more credible that only some items were used in his private lodgings, and that the majority of carpets was bought with the intention of selling them in France or distributing them as gifts amongst the French nobility in order to create networks. Another theory is that Vigne had purchased several carpets on request of wealthy individuals, who had paid him for his services. In any case, Vigne provides us with a good example of how an ambassador could function as a conduit of culture.

Furnishings as Political Tools

While I have already pointed to the general social and symbolic importance of domestic furniture, I will now investigate more precisely how these furnishings were used as political tools. The political motivation behind the rich furnishings of the embassy already becomes clear when we consider the allocation of public funds to establish the domestic setting, as this emphasises the significance attributed by states to appropriate material representation in the political realm. This idea is strengthened further when considering the display of decorative items that transmitted strong messages of both state power and wealth.

¹²⁶ See, for example: Curatola, "A Sixteenth-Century Quarrel about Carpets", 129-137.

¹²⁷ Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets*, 198.

The Costs of Pomp

Since the embassy was the place where the sovereign was represented abroad, funds were given to decorate the residence appropriately. Monarchies, such as Spain and France, smaller states, like Florence and Ferrara, and republics, as Venice, assigned public money to this end. However, as this was a costly enterprise, European states at the same time strove to regulate the amount of money spent on the interior design of the embassy in an attempt to curb the strain this put on public funds. In Venice, numerous laws about diplomatic furnishings were declared. For example, since a great amount of baggage enhanced the costs of the journey, the Republic strove to demarcate the quantity of luggage that ambassadors could carry with them when embarking for an embassy. In 1500, the regulation was proposed that an ambassador travelling beyond the Alps could only take eight chests and four wagons with him, and those sent to Italian states, ten chests and five wagons. Although this law was never passed, another one, voted for on the same day, was introduced and established a limit of six coaches.¹²⁸

To French ambassadors in the sixteenth century, a fixed sum of 1.000 *écu* was given: Gilles de Noailles for his mission to Scotland, Michel de Sèvre for England and François de Noailles and Jean Hurault de Boistailié for Venice, all received the amount of 1.000 *écu*.¹²⁹ In the 1560s, Arnaud du Ferrier again stressed that 1.000 *écu* was the standard amount when he demanded more money, since he had only received 600 *écu* for his Venetian mission.¹³⁰ At times, even members of the diplomatic family acquired money for their furnishings. André Hurault de Maise's nephew, Vignay, who served him in Venice, collected 500 *écu* for his equipment since he was in charge of the embassy for a couple of months when Hurault de Maise returned to France to arrange his domestic affairs.¹³¹ Even for the short period of time that Vignay was the chief royal agent in Venice, he apparently needed to redecorate his chambers to make them suitable for the representation of the French king.

However, the bequeathed public money was far from sufficient to procure the necessary provisions. In 1602, Philippe de la Canaye stated that he had spent 6.000 *écu* on furniture and

¹²⁸ Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors*, 24-26.

¹²⁹ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 20 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 44; Letter from Jean du Thier [from now on referred to as Secretary of State Thier] to the Trésorier de l'Épargne, 27 July 1557: *ibid.*, vol. 23, f. 13r; Ceulx qui viennent à recepvoir la Roynne d'Espagne, 11 January 1559: *ibid.*, Venise, vol. 26, f. 410v; Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 9 March 1561: *ibid.*, f. 14r.

¹³⁰ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to François de Noailles, 23 March 1563: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 221r: "[...] que des mil escuz que l'on a de coustume bailler pour le meuble, m'ont esté retranchez 400 [...]"

¹³¹ Instruction, n.d. [1589]: AMAE, Mémoires et Documents, Venise, vol. 46, ff. 8-9.

other expenses for his Venetian residence, far exceeding his allowance of 1.000 *écu*; he had thus been forced to deploy his private funds.¹³² In the correspondence of François de Noailles, similar grievances can be found about the excessive use of private money for the construction of the domestic setting and the fear of complete financial ruin that this would cause. Noailles even stated that he was forced to sell most of his possessions in order to survive.¹³³ However, his inventory and letters reveal that he sustained his shopping sprees, and that he was still surrounded by wealth at the end of his mission. Even though they were reluctant, ambassadors preferred to use their private funds instead of leading a parsimonious lifestyle; besides the reputation of the prince, personal rank was at stake.

Even successive ambassadors from the same nation wanted to hold their own with one another with regard to their material surroundings. Mark Netzloff gives the example of the two alternating English ambassadors in Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century: the famous Henry Wotton and Dudley Carleton. In 1610, after the end of Wotton's first mission to Venice (1604-1610), he was replaced by Carleton, who wished to bring greater richness to the English embassy. He took over the furniture that Wotton had left for him, and purchased new furnishings for the amount of 1.200 pounds to further embellish the embassy. However, as already discussed in Chapter 2, when Wotton returned for a second mission (1616-1619), he did not take over Carleton's residence and furniture, in spite of the latter's requests. Instead, he furnished a new house, saying that "[...] the house which Sir Dudely Carleton left me was not fit for me in many respects."¹³⁴ During Wotton's third mission (1621-1623), yet another house was chosen and decorated all over again. Wotton's refusal to take over Carleton's furnishings, and the fact that he always informed Carleton about his domestic environment, indicates a sort of rivalry between the two gentlemen to outdo the other in material matters.¹³⁵

Whereas public money was always allotted, in some cases, there might have existed an even stronger connection between the amount of money accredited for the material world of the embassy and the political importance attributed to the mission. An interesting source that sheds light on this matter is a letter written by Philippe de la Canaye addressed to Secretary of State Villeroy:

¹³² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 29 January 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 119.

¹³³ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 30 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 572; Letter from François de Noailles to Fleurimont Robertet [from now on referred to as Secretary of State d'Aluye], 15 March 1561: *ibid.*, f. 973.

¹³⁴ Letter from Henry Wotton to Ralph Winwood, 7 June 1616 in Wotton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 2, 95-96.

¹³⁵ Netzloff, "The Ambassador's Household", 165-166.

The count of Cantecroy has secretly arrived here, and he does not want to show himself before his gout is cured. Those who have seen his furniture say that he has brought pieces with a value of more than 200.000 *écu*. This great pomp has led some curious people to imagine that he is sent here for important occasions, even to negotiate about a league against the Turks, but I do not believe any of this [...] ¹³⁶

Canaye recounted the arrival of the new representative of the emperor, François Perrenot de Granvelle, in Venice, who allegedly had furniture with him with a value of more than 200.000 *écu*, an astonishing sum. As his furnishings were of such an unusually and tremendously high price, people speculated that the ambassador was most probably sent for very important business, such as the signing of a league between the emperor and the Venetian Republic against the Ottomans, which Canaye himself did not believe. Nevertheless, this example summarises the observation that in early modern times, a link was established between money, material culture and political negotiations.

Strategies of Material Politics

A significant aspect that until now has been absent in the discussion of the domestic interior of the embassy is its transitional character. The early modern home was a site of transformation, a dynamic space with goods being refurbished and reused, and rooms adapted to changes in society. The diplomatic household was no different, with spaces being transformed for extended or brief periods of time, following the social and political context. Especially by analysing these changes executed in the interior, it is possible to discover how furnishings were employed as political tools in the diplomatic arena. In Baroque Rome, for instance, the cardinals and noblemen were subdivided into a pro-Spanish and pro-French faction. While some of them permanently showcased their loyalty by exhibiting the coat of arms of the Spanish or French king at the façade of their palace, others decorated their interiors with paintings, national emblems and inscriptions on banners and tapestries to honour special political occasions. The iconographic program boasted the glory, power and victories of the monarch they were supporting. The political rivalry between Spain and

¹³⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 14 July 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 286: “Le Comte de Cantecroy est arrivé secrettement, et ne se veut point laisser voir qu’il ne soit bien gueri de sa goute. Ceux qui ont veu ses meubles dient qu’il en a apporté pour plus de deux cens mille escus. Ce grand apparat donne sujet à quelque curieux de s’imaginer qu’il soit envoyé pour grandes occasions, et mesmes pour traiter une Ligue contre le Turc: mais je n’en croy rien [...]”.

France was thus reflected in material decorations, and, this way, Roman palaces became the stage for international power struggles.¹³⁷

For François de Noailles, only one list of expenses is preserved that allows for an investigation into the alterations of his domestic environment. In this overview, one noteworthy transformation is mentioned. On 28 January 1558, expenses were listed for the decoration of his rooms with tapestries;¹³⁸ the making of an entry gate decorated with greenery and a baldachin, which were both commonly used during early modern processions; and for the preparations of the *jeu de paume* or palm game, a precursor of tennis played without racquets.¹³⁹ All this was done for the festivities surrounding the French capture of Calais in January 1558.¹⁴⁰

In 1346, during the Hundred Years' War fought between England and France, the French port city of Calais was besieged and overthrown by English troops. Only in 1558 the French succeeded in reconquering the city, and precisely François de Noailles had played a crucial role in this process. In June 1557, Noailles had passed through Calais on his way back to France after the completion of his diplomatic mission in England. He covertly examined the conditions of the fortifications and secretly approached some Englishmen, which led him to conclude that Calais' defences were flawed and vulnerable. He wrote a detailed report of his findings regarding Calais' ramparts and drafted a plan of the principal ports of England for French King Henry II, of which he reminded the Cardinal of Lorraine upon hearing rumours about the seizure of the city:

However, if it is true that the King has undertaken something against that town [Calais], I believe that he has based himself on the advice that I have given him after my return from England, in your [the Cardinal of Lorraine] presence, that there were none or very few ramparts from the port at the sea until the old castle, and furthermore from this castle until the boulevard on the right side. This has been confirmed as truthful (based on my report) by Monsieur de Senerpont, who passed here on his way to Boulogne, which he has testified to the King using

¹³⁷ Dandelet, "Setting the Noble Stage in Baroque Rome", 39-51.

¹³⁸ The source does not mention which scenes were depicted on the tapestries.

¹³⁹ The *jeu de paume* was a very popular sport amongst the French aristocracy during the sixteenth century. In the first place, it was an important socialising occasion for the elite and it trained the necessary qualities for life at court such as, to name just a few, coordination, endurance and politeness. Moreover, due to the fact that it was a very physical game and that strategic thinking was crucial to win, it was even considered as a good preparation for a military career. Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 50-51.

¹⁴⁰ Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venize, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 164r-164v. A study that similarly considers the display of luxury textiles as political acts at the early modern Gonzaga court is: Christina Antenhofer, "'O per Honore, O per Commodo Mio': Displaying Textiles at the Gonzaga Court (Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)," in *Europe's Rich Fabric*, 35-68.

the letters that I had brought him, and I had told him what I had learned from certain English gentlemen, whose names I have mentioned to our Majesty, who had secretly discovered for me the weakness of that place [Calais] driven by their hatred towards the Spanish [...] ¹⁴¹.

It was indeed mainly based on Noailles' report that Henry II had decided to attack the city in January 1558, despite the negative advice of his chief captains. ¹⁴² Consequently, Noailles was applauded by contemporaries for his part in this great victory for France. ¹⁴³

I believe that it offers fruitful insights into diplomatic culture if the tapestries and other accoutrements, with which Noailles decorated his house in honour of the French triumph, are understood in light of his dual identity. On the one hand, it was a common practice in early modern times to celebrate important military and political successes with a display of luxurious objects. Ambassadors, as royal representatives, showcased the strength of their nation by hosting festivities and refurbishing their wardrobe and home. On the other hand, in this particular case, Noailles also had a personal interest in underlining the greatness of the victory. It is safe to assume that he boasted about his involvement in this French accomplishment to guests who entered his house and noticed his celebratory decorations. Both the prestige of his king and his own status were elevated by the military achievement of France.

Hosting states likewise understood how they could express power and wealth through a display of material culture. While ordinary ambassadors were obliged to equip their residence with furnishings bought or rented through their own initiative, extraordinary ambassadors were freely lodged in fully furnished residences. With regard to foreign delegates in the Venetian Republic, Chapter 2 has already elucidated the practice of offering a house to extraordinary envoys, but now, the furniture that decorated these houses will be briefly

¹⁴¹ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 7 January 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 115: "Toutesfois s'il estoit ainsy que le Roy eust fait quelque desseing sur laditte ville, je cuyderois plustost qu'il se seroit fondé sur les advis que je luy donnay a mon retour d'Angleterre en vostre presence, de ce qu'il n'y avoit nul ou bien peu de rempart depuis la porte de la mer jusques au vieux chasteau et encores depuis ledit chasteau jusques au Boulevert de main droicte, ce que en passant par Boulogne Monsieur de Senerpont avoit (sur mon rapport) esté reconnoistre et trouvé veritable, comme luy mesmes avoit tesmoigné au Roy par lettres que je luy portay, luy faisant entendre ce que j'en avois appris de certains seigneurs anglois que je nommay lors a sa majesté lesquels m'avoient secrettement descouvert la foiblesse de la place par la hayne qu'ils portent aux Espaignols [...]"

¹⁴² Letter from François de Noailles to Simon Fizes, 10 June 1572 in Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. 3, 276: "Les expédiens que je proposay pour la conqueste de Calais, que le feu roy Henry disoit avoir entreprise sur iceulx contre l'advis de ses principaulx cappitaines, [...]". Works that have discussed François de Noailles' report of Calais: Vertot, *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, vol. 1, 35-37; Tamizey de Larroque, "François de Noailles", 12-13; Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 334. Surprisingly, more recent works that investigate the siege of Calais in 1558 forget to mention the crucial role played by Noailles' report.

¹⁴³ Letter from Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este to François de Noailles, 23 January 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 135.

exposed. The accounts of the *Rason Vecchie*, the office responsible for decorating diplomatic lodgings, show that they spent a great amount of money on these furnishings. When a Muscovite delegation frequented Venice in 1582, their residence was equipped with: beds (*letti*) with bed sheets (*ninzuoli*, it. *lenzuoli*) and various bedcovers (*coltre*, it. *coperte*), of which two were of silk and one of *suriana*;¹⁴⁴ several wall hangings of gilded leather (*fornimento di cuori d'oro*), textile (*fornimento di spal[l]iere a saieta*) and tapestries (*fornimento di razi*, it. *arazzi*);¹⁴⁵ one *antiporta a boscaia*, a textile hung in the door opening, decorated with leaves and plants; numerous carpets, amongst which two carpets for the table (*tapedi da tavola*, it. *tappeti da tavola*) and two Egyptian carpets (*caiarini*); and silverware such as a basin (*bacil*, it. *bacino*), a *refrescador* and six damascened candlesticks (*candelieri*). However, the Muscovite company did not always handle these furnishings with respect; after their visit, Venice had to pay for the repairing of some damages and the removal of stains.¹⁴⁶

Similarly, *Palazzo Mocenigo* was filled with lavish furniture during the sojourn of Ottoman Envoy Hüseyin Ağâ in 1595. The furniture, rented from Jewish merchants in the ghetto, comprised: tapestries (*tap[p]ezzerie*); five gilded beds (*letiere dorate*, it. *lettiere dorate*);¹⁴⁷ four sets of bed hangings (*pavioni*, it. *padiglioni*), two of satin and two of silk, with their *bancali*;¹⁴⁸ four bedcovers (*coltre*, it. *coperte*) of silk; seven *capoletti*;¹⁴⁹ four mattresses (*stramazzi*, it. *materassi*); twelve chairs (*cariege*, it. *sedie*) of crimson velvet and thirteen chairs *pretine* of leather;¹⁵⁰ kitchen equipment (*massaricie di cucina*, it. *masserizie di*

¹⁴⁴ This fabric is probably from Syria or imported from India through Syria by, most likely, Portuguese merchants.

¹⁴⁵ Various words were used during the Renaissance to refer to wall hangings; *spalliera* was the most common but *paramento*, *fornimento* and *adornamento* were also regularly used. Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 44-53.

¹⁴⁶ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, fz. 85 (25 September 1582).

¹⁴⁷ The *lettiera* was the standard bed in Italy, characterised by a tall headboard most often capped with a wide cornice on which objects could be placed. Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 113-120.

¹⁴⁸ Thornton puts forward bench-carpets as the best translation for *bancali*, indicating the cloths placed on a bench to make them more comfortable as seats. Some *bancali* were attached to a wall hanging and this way they formed a long cloth used as back-rest to lean against. This is probably how we should understand *bancali* in this context, as cloths attached to the bed hangings and covering benches that were placed next to the bed. Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 173.

¹⁴⁹ *Capoletto* can refer to two things. In the first place, it was the name used to refer to headboards, meaning the wall hangings that were vertically attached to the wall at the head of the bed. However, Thornton states that by the fifteenth century, the term was no longer used for bed hangings but for any type of wall hanging that was more tall than wide. Nevertheless, since in this account it is listed amongst various items for the bed, it can be interpreted as headboard. Secondly, a *capoletto* was also the capping of the *padiglione* or bed-canopy where the textiles gathered. Both interpretations make sense in this context. Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 48; 111; 121; 128-129.

¹⁵⁰ *Cariege pretine* refers to a type of chair, but its exact nature could not be uncovered. In early modern Italy, numerous models of chairs existed, making it difficult to identify all of them. Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 174-191.

cucina); and napkins (*tovaglioli*).¹⁵¹ Clearly, the Venetian Republic made sure that the envoys were lodged in great style and surrounded by luxury.

Ambassadors in the Marketplace

While the reconstruction of Noailles' residence has illustrated his lavish way of living, the techniques employed by French ambassadors in order to obtain all these objects still need to be investigated. First, the retail market in Venice will be briefly exposed to place the French ambassadors' shopping practices in the Venetian context. Second, their dispatches enable me to analyse to a certain extent the different channels through which goods were purchased in both Venice and beyond. Ambassadors could use various methods to gather the necessary equipment because the early modern commercial circuit was very diversified. A common practice was the employment of agents, who aided the ambassador in his quest for luxury goods. Generally speaking, they can be divided into two groups: domestic servants and intermediaries stationed close to important production centres. These suppliers played an important role in the ambassador's fashioning of his appearance. Additionally, by looking at the various places where merchandise was purchased, the geography of diplomatic luxury consumption is mapped.

The Wealth of the Serenissima

As Patricia Fortini Brown has stated: "Perhaps more than any other city, Venice was built on worldly goods".¹⁵² The numerous contemporary accounts by both Venetian residents and foreign visitors all attest to the opulence of the city. Scholars working on the economic history of medieval and early modern Europe can therefore not deny the commercial strength of the Venetian Republic in this period. During the later Middle Ages, Venice had created a vast empire that was known throughout the world as a commercial crossroads, and between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, which have been characterised as the golden centuries of Venetian history, Venice became one of the largest metropolises of Europe. This exponential growth was triggered, in the first place, by its long-distance trade with both the Levant and northern Europe; for the entire medieval period until well into the sixteenth century, Venetian merchants dominated the trade networks with the Levant and in turn distributed these eastern

¹⁵¹ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, fz. 9 (5 August 1595).

¹⁵² Fortini Brown, "Behind the Walls", 295.

goods to the rest of Europe.¹⁵³ Secondly, the *Serenissima* witnessed an increase of its production, with various flourishing businesses and crafts. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Venetian manufacturing industries reached their culmination point and an important aspect of the Republic's commerce was the production and exportation of a broad spectrum of luxury goods to suit wide-ranging needs.¹⁵⁴

Consequently, Venice was an ideal locus for luxury shopping with a kaleidoscopic range of merchandise available to the consumer, which gave it the reputation of a perpetual fair, a city filled with “[...] all the things one could want [...]”.¹⁵⁵ The goods were offered to the customers in a variety of ways. For one thing, Venice housed both annual fairs and many weekly and daily markets that, according to Marin Sanudo's early sixteenth-century description, were extremely rich and beautiful.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, the idea of fixed-shop retailing had already appeared in Venice during the Middle Ages. The main shopping areas were located in the Rialto and the St. Mark district, with a high concentration of shops on the connecting street, the *Mercerie*. Here, the shops were overflowing with both local and imported goods. Moreover, every neighbourhood had a main square characterised by the presence of a great variety of retailers, and especially the *botteghe* or shops in the Jewish ghetto were constantly frequented. During the second half of the sixteenth century, Venetians who wanted to open a shop were required to register the sign of their business with the city government. From these records, we know that between 1560 and 1597, 517 new shops were opened, the majority of which were owned by mercers or haberdashers selling expensive wares.¹⁵⁷

The richness of the Venetian shops and markets also proved to be a political tool. During visits of important dignitaries, the *Signoria* ordered the shopkeepers of the *Mercerie* to stock their shops with an extensive array of luxury goods in order to dazzle foreign sovereigns with their wealth and prowess.¹⁵⁸ This practice is accurately described in an anonymous letter to

¹⁵³ Valuable overviews of the Venetian trade system can be found in: Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*; Pezzolo, “The Venetian Economy”, 255-289.

¹⁵⁴ Ugo Tucci, “Venezia nel Cinquecento: Una Città Industriale?,” in *Crisi e Rinnovamenti nell’Autunno del Rinascimento a Venezia*, eds. Vittore Branca and Carlo Ossola (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1991), 61-83; Salvatore Ciriaco, “Industria e Artigianato,” in *Il Rinascimento: Società ed Economia*, 523-592.

¹⁵⁵ Sanudo, *De Origine*, 27: “[...] ogni cosa che si vuol [...]”. Marin Sanudo paints a colourful picture of the abundance of shopping opportunities in Venice. Also cited in Evelyn Welch, “The Fairs of Early Modern Italy,” in *Buyers and Sellers: Retail Circuits and Practices in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Bruno Blondé et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 31.

¹⁵⁶ Sanudo, *De Origine*, 27.

¹⁵⁷ Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, ch. 5 and 6; Donatella Calabi, “Renewal of the Shop System: Italy in the Early Modern Period,” in *Buyers and Sellers*, 51-64; Cecchini, “Collezionismo e Mondo Materiale”, 167-168.

¹⁵⁸ Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, 147-149.

Cicco Simonetta, the secretary of Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan, concerning the state visit of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III in 1496:

And then we went along the Marzaria [Mercerie]. [...] They had had all the shops and stalls filled and they did everything to make him [Emperor Frederick III], and those who were with him and all who looked on, understand that they [the Venetians] were rich and powerful and great lords and nothing was lacking in this effort.¹⁵⁹

Similarly, when French King Henry III visited the city in 1574, the retail circuit was employed to showcase the skills and prosperity of the Republic. He was accompanied to the Rialto and *Mercerie*, where he visited a jeweller and perfume shop and spent a huge amount of money.¹⁶⁰

Shopping for Luxury Goods

Besides bringing furnishings from the home country, the easiest way for a newly arrived ambassador to acquire the first necessary furniture for the embassy was to take over certain pieces from his predecessor. Due to the instability of their position, ambassadors frequently made use of these second-hand items. As already stated, this might explain why barely any large furniture is listed in Noailles' inventory; just as he had taken over some furniture from Gabre, his own successor had probably taken possession of the bulk of his bigger furnishings.¹⁶¹ Moreover, goods could be procured from departing ambassadors from other nations. For instance, Charles Brûlart de Léon, French ambassador in Venice in the 1610s and 1620s, approached his English colleague, Dudley Carleton, with the request to buy all of Carleton's possessions. Even though Brûlart offered a very good rate, Carleton refused, as he preferred to reserve his equipment for his English successor.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Translation taken from: Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, 147. Original quote in: Paolo Ghinzoni, "Federico III Imperatore a Venezia (7 al 19 Febbraio 1469)", *Archivio Veneto* 37 (1889), 137: "Poi andò per Marzaria. [...] Avevano facto fornire tute le botige, banchi et fano tuto el suo perforzo per farli intendere a lui et chi e con lui et a chi vede che sonno riche, potente et che sono gran signore, et qui non lassano mancare niente per farli intendere questo."

¹⁶⁰ Gino Benzoni, "Enrico III a Venezia; Venezia ed Enrico III," in *Venezia e Parigi*, 89; Korsch, "Diplomatic Gifts", 92.

¹⁶¹ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r.

¹⁶² Letter from Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 16 June 1614 in Carleton, *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain*, 168-169.

In addition to buying furniture from their predecessor, ambassadors rented goods. In Venice, there existed a lively and extremely diversified world of second-hand products.¹⁶³ Noailles' predecessor, Gabre, advised him to lease his furnishings from Jewish merchants for the first twelve or fifteen days of his residency in order to have the time to buy his own equipment.¹⁶⁴ This lending of furnishings was not only restricted to necessities, but also extended to luxury decorations. For example, Henry Wotton leased miscellaneous objects from a Jewish merchant in 1604: tapestries, leather wall hangings, thirteen beds, a canopy bed, chairs covered with velvet, a billiard table and a gondola.¹⁶⁵ Wotton's successor Carleton took over the lease from the Jewish merchant and included some more decorative items: pictures, halberds, bucklers and arms. However, both Wotton and Carleton experienced some troubles with the Jewish merchant as, according to them, he tried to charge more money for the loan.¹⁶⁶

Once the ambassador was more settled, local shops and markets were constantly visited.¹⁶⁷ It is not clear if a man of high ranking, such as an ambassador, would have frequented these shopping areas in person. Evelyn Welch's research on shopping practices and consumer cultures in Italy between 1400 and 1600 has revealed the complexity of determining who bought the goods and which methods were applied. Generally speaking, upper class men best avoided debating prices on the marketplace, even in the elite shops that sold expensive textiles, since money was considered an inappropriate topic to discuss in public. Moreover, the failure of bargaining could harm their reputation. For the wealthy class, some alternatives existed, such as observing the merchandise in the marketplace and subsequently receiving the vendors at their home, where business could be discussed privately. Another common practice of aristocrats was the employment of intermediaries, such as servants, relatives or friends, who made the purchases on their behalf. However, there were also many cases of elite men who did frequent the marketplace, such as Venetian patricians and senators who even went grocery shopping at the fish and fruit markets at the Rialto.¹⁶⁸ Shopping was also an important social event and many members of the elite experienced shopping for valuable

¹⁶³ Patricia Anne Allerston, "The Market in Second-Hand Clothes and Furnishings in Venice, c. 1500 - c. 1650" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 1996). On the use of second-hand products in general, see: Walsh, "Shopping at First Hand?", 13-26; Furlotti, *A Renaissance Baron and His Possessions*, ch. 6.

¹⁶⁴ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r.

¹⁶⁵ Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice*, 89.

¹⁶⁶ Letter from Henry Wotton to Dudley Carleton, 24 December 1610 in Wotton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 1, 501-502. See also the information in the footnote by the editor.

¹⁶⁷ A very clear overview of retail practices in medieval and early modern Europe is presented in: Blondé et al., eds., *Buyers and Sellers*.

¹⁶⁸ Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, ch 8.

goods as very pleasant.¹⁶⁹ François de Noailles never mentioned visiting shops himself, but he sent out an agent named Pierre Pomare, who had assisted previous French ambassadors in Venice, to obtain supplies for the ambassadorial household.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, similar to the practices in noble households, ambassadors instructed their *maître d'hôtel*, who was responsible for the organisation of the household, to purchase provisions and furnishings at local markets and shops.¹⁷¹

Besides shopping in Venice, it was important to possess objects of various origins, acquired directly from the most distinguished production centres, in order to shape an illustrious identity. However, the procurement of these objects was an expensive and challenging logistical enterprise. It necessitated the construction of far-reaching networks composed of various contacts, who were all essential to the creation of the material environment of the ambassador.¹⁷² Hence, Noailles built a chain of agents stationed at various places. Unfortunately, in the diplomatic correspondence under study, letters to and from suppliers, such as merchants, artisans or agents, are very rare; consequently, only a fraction of Noailles' network comes to the surface. Nevertheless, this already generates an idea of the diplomatic international shopping circuit.

In the first place, the Italian peninsula was an important place of interest. In Conegliano, Noailles' client, Thelligny, frequently replenished his stock of food and raw materials and in Ferrara, Odet de Carrières supplied him with locally-manufactured objects.¹⁷³ Additionally, Noailles' Turkish luxury items were not only bought in Venice, but also procured directly from the Ottoman Empire. To this end, he often commissioned the French diplomatic agent in Constantinople, Jean Dolu, for example, to obtain oriental furnishings for a sum of 300 or 400 *écu*.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, he dispatched his domestics to Poland and the Levant to purchase

¹⁶⁹ Claire Walsh, "Shopping at First Hand? Mistresses, Servants and Shopping for the Household in Early-Modern England," in *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, eds. David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 17; David Hussey, "Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats? Male Consumer Activity and Domestic Shopping in Late-Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century England," in *Buying for the Home*, 58.

¹⁷⁰ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r. Pierre Pomare's activities as a commercial agent will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

¹⁷¹ For a discussion of how the French noble household of the Guise family used domestic servants in the procurement of goods, see: Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 287-288.

¹⁷² Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, ch. 8 and 9.

¹⁷³ See, for example: Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 26 September 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, ff. 291r-292r; Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 15 January 1560: *ibid.*, f. 739.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, ff. 546-547.

fabrics and horses.¹⁷⁵ Particularly interesting is to elucidate how Noailles collected his assortment of precious Persian carpets. In the first place, he commissioned his own agents, namely his secretary Duran and diplomatic agent Dolu, to obtain oriental rugs, explicitly demanding beautiful and large carpets of Persian silk:

[...] you can employ up to 200 or 300 *écu*, according to the condition in which you find yourself, to buy for me some beautiful large carpets of Persian silk that are exquisite, and spend the rest of the money on pieces of gold cloth, velvet and satin, which are made in Bursa, for which I will reimburse you.¹⁷⁶

These agents did not acquire them directly in Persia but could purchase them through the caravans that arrived in the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, the inventory lists *de Pomare*, Noailles' servant in charge of domestic provisions, after two Persian carpets. This suggests that Pomare bought these carpets locally in Venice. How and where he acquired them is, however, impossible to recover from the consulted sources. Thirdly, one carpet in the inventory, denominated as in the Persian style, was procured from Jewish merchants, who were known for their carpet trade in sixteenth-century Venice.¹⁷⁷

Noailles' successors must have employed a similar network in order to embellish the embassy with a variety of luxury goods but, surprisingly, the accessed correspondence does not elaborate on this and, therefore, a reconstruction is not feasible at this point. Only with regard to André Hurault de Maisse could more information be gathered concerning his shopping networks in the Levant. In Constantinople, he appealed to his French colleague located there, Jacques de Germigny, and an agent whom he listed as Marc Antonio Sangague.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, he commissioned his friend, an entrepreneur from Marseille who was travelling to the Ottoman Empire, to purchase certain furnishings.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ For example: Letter from François de Noailles to Bishop of Rennes, 25 September 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 397; Letter from Milan to Antoine de Noailles, 19 October 1560: *ibid.*, f. 446; Letter from François de Noailles to Daniel Duran, 20 October 1560: *ibid.*, f. 455.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from François de Noailles to Daniel Duran, 20 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 455: “[...] vous veuillez de vostre costé employer jusques à 2 ou 300 escuz selon la commodité que vous en aurez pour m’achepter quelque beau grand tapis de soye Persian qui soit exquis et employer le reste de l’argent en pieces de drap d’or, veloux et satin, qui se font a Bourcye dont je ne fauldray de vous rambourcer.”; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: *ibid.*, ff. 546-547.

¹⁷⁷ Curatola, “Venice’s Textile and Carpet Trade”, 205-211.

¹⁷⁸ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, 22 December 1582: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, ff. 87r-87v; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, June 1583: *ibid.*, vol. 30, ff. 73r-74r.

¹⁷⁹ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, 26 May 1584: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 31, ff. 126v-127r. This is probably Lunardo Buron, of who we know that

Claire Walsh qualifies this use of intermediaries as “correspondence shopping” and “proxy shopping”. The first category refers to acquisitions carried out by agents or servants who were ordered to buy specific merchandise, normally less important goods that did not require judgements of taste. Walsh juxtaposes this with “proxy shopping”, shopping performed by family and friends as a favour that instigated ongoing obligations. A proxy shopper had a close relationship with the commissioner and went to great lengths to locate the perfect products.¹⁸⁰ Noailles and Hurault de Maisse employed both methods as they sent out servants, but also relied on friends who were expected to make the right judgements with regard to taste and price. For example, Dolu only received the vague instruction to purchase “some furnishings” from the Levant. Noailles thus trusted Dolu’s taste and ability to locate exquisite furniture appropriate to the ambassador’s rank.

A final noteworthy shopping practice to mention is that the embassy itself could transform into a shop in which products were sold from the ambassador’s native country.¹⁸¹ Philippe de la Canaye mentioned that the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor, François Perrenot de Granvelle, sold rings and tapestries from his embassy. Before even visiting the other ambassadors, he had opened up his “shop” and arranged appointments with jewellers and alchemists, which made Canaye wonder if these commercial transactions formed part of his mission.¹⁸² Granvelle moreover wished to organise a lottery with his rings of which he spoke non-stop. This resulted in people giving him the nickname *Ambassadeur de la Blanque*, as a reference to the *blanque*, the French term for lottery. However, to the great regret of Granvelle, his lottery would not be realised.¹⁸³ This phenomenon of the diplomatic residence turning into a shop was not restricted to Venice. For example, the Florentine ambassador to Spain, Orso Pannocchieschi d’Elci, constantly had to restock the embassy’s supply of verdea wine, a wine made from a white grape grown in Tuscany, since it was very much appreciated

he worked closely together with Hurault de Maisse and that he originated from Marseilles. Thanks to Prof. Luca Molà for pointing me to this information.

¹⁸⁰ Claire Walsh, “Shopping in Early-Modern London c. 1660-1800” (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2001); Claire Walsh, “The Social Relations of Shopping in Early-Modern England,” in *Buyers and Sellers*, 331-351.

¹⁸¹ For a general discussion on the at times blurred distinctions between domestic and commercial spaces, see: Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, 133-137.

¹⁸² François Perrenot de Granvelle is the same ambassador who arrived in Venice with furniture worth 200.000 *écu*. Apparently, as Canaye had wondered, his material culture indeed formed an aspect of his mission: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 28 July 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 299; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 31 July 1604 *ibid.*, 302; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 11 August 1604 in *ibid.*, 314.

¹⁸³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to King Henry IV, 4 May 1605 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 4, 576; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 17 June 1605 in *ibid.*, 625. The reason that the lottery did not take place might be that Granvelle did not get the license of the Venetian government to host his lottery. On lotteries in Renaissance Venice, see: Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, 203-208.

at the Spanish court; the nobles sent someone almost every day to buy some bottles.¹⁸⁴ Sarah Pelletier-Pech's research on foreign embassies in seventeenth-century Madrid has revealed the commonness of this practice in Spain. Officially, the provisions of food and wine from the home country were solely used to maintain the embassy. However, the *maître d'hôtel* also sold these goods to the local citizens and, in doing so, he transformed the embassy into a private shop. This illicit trade escaped municipal control and taxation.¹⁸⁵

This chapter has made clear how an embassy was a centre of fashion and a reflection of royal court life, wherein the displayed furnishings were employed as instruments to communicate messages of wealth and political prowess. Being constantly confronted with a displacement between different courts and cities, the diplomatic identity was always renegotiated, and objects were one way to visualise integration into a new political and cultural context. Instead of focusing on certain items, I have taken into account the plethora of objects that an ambassador acquired during his mission, in order to reveal both the splendour and the cosmopolitan nature of the embassy's interior. Furthermore, the shopping networks of this cosmopolitan figure have been outlined to gain a better understanding of how and where ambassadors acquired their goods, something that hitherto has not been thoroughly analysed. By reconstructing the shopping circuit of François de Noailles, it has become clear that the consumption of an ambassador required the collaboration of various people who all influenced the ambassador's process of self-fashioning.

Important to note is that the rationale behind Noailles' conspicuous consumption stretched further than the framework of his diplomatic mission. Some of the goods that he transported back home were rather rare and exotic in sixteenth-century France, such as his collection of Persian carpets. By displaying them in his residence in France, his visitors were constantly reminded of his accomplishments as ambassador in Venice, a city that was regarded as a prestigious diplomatic post. Similarly, after his mission in Constantinople a decade later, Noailles transported rare furnishings and tapestries of an extremely high value, more than 100.000 *écu*, back to France, which were inherited by his nephew Henri de Noailles who displayed them in his residence.¹⁸⁶ Thus, even after the completion of a diplomatic

¹⁸⁴ Numerous letters of Orso Pannocchieschi d'Elci refer to the popularity of the verdea wine, for example: Letter from Orso Pannocchieschi d'Elci to Belisario di Francesco Vinta, 27 September 1609: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Spagna, b. 4941, f. 252v.

¹⁸⁵ Pelletier-Pech, "Les Maisons des Ambassadeurs", 347.

¹⁸⁶ de Bourdeille, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 5, 68: "M. de Dax, quand il en retourna aussi (mais celui-là estoit riche du sien) il en remmena pour le moins, en des plus rares meubles et tapisseries, plus de cent mill'escus vaillant, dont la maison de son nepveu de Nouailles en est décorée et en reluist très-fort aujourd'huy."

assignment, Noailles could still employ the material culture accessed during his embassy to strengthen his own and his family's elite status. These objects allowed him to demonstrate his cultural connoisseurship and construct a strong political identity based on his diplomatic career. Furthermore, by exhibiting acquisitions made at the time of the embassy, ambassadors could stir up interest for specific goods at their home court. This way, they strongly contributed to the spread and popularity of foreign objects and art.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ For example, Henry Wotton contributed to the English interest in Venetian art. Walters, "Odoardo Fialetti", 153.

CHAPTER 5

THE WARDROBE OF AN AMBASSADOR: CLOTHING AND POLITICS IN DIPLOMATIC CULTURE

[Our courtier] ought to consider what appearance he wishes to have and what manner of man he wishes to be taken for, and dress accordingly; and see to it that his attire aid him to be so regarded even by those who do not hear him speak or see him do anything whatever.¹

This quote from one of the most famous and popular sixteenth-century conduct manuals *Il Cortegiano* by Baldassare Castiglione, first published in 1528, illustrates the important role of dress in early modern society. Castiglione, who understood how clothing managed and manifested personal statements and status, was one of the first authors to investigate the social and political meanings of dress. In his work, clothing and civility were deeply connected; he believed that a man who was dressed in virtuous clothes would commit virtuous acts. Castiglione's contemporaries shared his opinion and, consequently, penned other treatises with instructions on suitable conduct that highlighted the importance of appropriate attire and emphasised the link between dress and manners. They regarded clothing as an instrument to control and discipline the body and as a way to demonstrate the virtue and honour of the inner personality.² Clearly, early modern people strongly believed that a firm relationship existed between dress and identity: clothes were essential for identity formation and for the construction of relations with others.³ Furthermore, starting from the second half of the sixteenth century, costume books emerged that aimed at providing a global

¹ Translation taken from Charles Singleton, reprinted in: Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. Daniel Javitch (New York, London: Norton & Company, 2002), 90. Original quote in: Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Walter Barberis (Turin: Einaudi, 1998), book II, XXVII, 159-160: "Il nostro cortegiano [...] debba fra se stesso deliberar ciò che vol parere e di quella sorte che desidera esser estimado, della medesima vestirsi, e far che gli abiti lo aiutino ad esser tenuto per tale ancor da quelli che non l'odono parlare, né veggono far operazione alcuna."

² The studies by Elizabeth Currie and Carole Collier Frick quote many of these treatises: Elizabeth Currie, "Prescribing Fashion: Dress, Politics and Gender in Sixteenth-Century Italian Conduct Literature," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 4, no. 2 (2000), 157-177; Carole Collier Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence: Families, Fortunes, and Fine Clothing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

³ See, for instance, the introductions in: Susan J. Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2003), 1-12; Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy*, 3-49. See also the work of Valentin Groebner on how dress functioned as a form of identification in early modern Europe: Valentin Groebner, *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

survey of clothing cultures. These books additionally contained advice on both proper apparel and on what ought to be avoided.⁴

The great popularity and distribution of costume books and treatises on clothing, manners and appearances is already a proof of the central place that dress assumed in sixteenth-century society. The epoch's great concern for the politics of clothing can, moreover, be deduced from the fact that the elite spent a large portion of their wealth on the composition of their wardrobe. In Italian states such as Venice and Florence, dress often demanded the principal proportion of household expenditure: more money was reserved for garments than for paintings, furnishings or silverware.⁵ Likewise, in the more northern European court societies, courtiers exhausted most of their revenues on clothing. For example, a Venetian ambassador at the French court of Henry IV stated that "[...] a man is not considered to be rich if he has not 26 or 30 garments of different styles and he has to change clothes every day."⁶ The textile industry could satisfy this high demand easily, since it was one of the major industries of early modern European economies. Especially on the Italian peninsula, the manufacturing and exporting of fabrics was a central commercial activity, but also in the rest of Europe, the textile industry performed outstandingly.⁷

Dress clearly assumed a crucial role in past cultures and, consequently, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians and sociologists started to use clothing as a way to understand society. Also economic historians showed an interest in dress, however, at first, their sole concern was for production. It was only after Fernand Braudel's incorporation of the topic in his *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme: XVe-XVIIIe Siècle* that the investigation of sartorial practices gained an international reputation amongst historians of various backgrounds.⁸ They realised that an examination of clothing conveyed valuable information about political, social, economic and cultural practices. The

⁴ Ulrike Ilg, "The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in Sixteenth-Century Europe," in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. Catherine Richardson (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 29-47; Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), ch. 2.

⁵ For example, Carole Collier Frick states that rich Florentines could invest up to 40 percent of their wealth in their wardrobe and accessories: Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 95-114; 223. See also: Patricia Anne Allerston, "Clothing and Early Modern Venetian Society," *Continuity and Change* 15, no. 3 (2000), 367; Elizabeth Currie, "Fashion Networks: Consumer Demand and the Clothing Trade in Florence from the Mid-Sixteenth to Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 3 (2009), 483-509.

⁶ Quoted in: Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle*, vol. 1: *Les Structures du Quotidien*, 275-276.

⁷ To give just a few examples: Jacques Bottin and Nicole Pellegrin, eds., *Échanges et Cultures Textiles dans l'Europe Pré-Industrielle. Actes du Colloque de Rouen, 17-19 Mai 1993* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Revue du Nord, 1996); Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*; Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*.

⁸ The first volume of Braudel's trilogy, *Les Structures du Quotidien: Le Possible et l'Impossible* (1967, I consulted the edition of 1979), concentrated on consumption. He stated that this was the most fundamental type of economic activity, the other two being distribution and production. In his discussion of consumption, Braudel focused on the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing and furniture.

real breakthrough, however, occurred at the end of the 1980s, when researchers began to take full advantage of the knowledge that a study of dress can provide. Clothing was ascribed with a semiotic agency, communicating strong messages about the wearer and his socio-political and cultural surroundings. Daniel Roche and Christopher Breward are only two important names from an expanding list of scholars approaching innovative topics within clothing culture. Roche's contribution has been to integrate both the demand and supply side in his investigation, instead of separating considerations about consumption and production.⁹ Breward, in turn, has fully acknowledged the importance of the positioning and contextualising of dress within political, social and economic history.¹⁰ Today, clothing has become a topic of interdisciplinary research with a wide-ranging geographical parameter and addressed from various angles to uncover, amongst other things, value systems, identity, social status and economic wealth.¹¹

The historical analysis of clothing is thus not restricted to chronological overviews or surveys of the phenomenon of fashion; instead, dress is recognised as an important aspect of consumer culture and as a marker of identity and social distinctions. This chapter will extend the current research on early modern dress by focusing on the characteristics and meanings of the attire of one specific group of people, ambassadors, and one individual in particular, François de Noailles. The study of diplomatic culture has, to date, not systematically integrated the pivotal topic of clothing in its research. Nevertheless, garments occupied a major place in the day-to-day life of ambassadors. Therefore, this chapter will investigate various dimensions of historical diplomatic clothing and, in particular, three major issues will be tackled: how the dressed body served as a status symbol that enhanced an ambassador's self-presentation and the representation of his sovereign; how clothing functioned to convey political messages; and how ambassadors gathered and consumed their garments. In doing so, I will develop a comprehensive overview of the sartorial practices of early modern ambassadors and showcase how dress visualised the complexity of identities embodied by an ambassador.

⁹ Daniel Roche, *La Culture des Apparences: Une Histoire du Vêtement (XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 1989); Roche, *Histoire des Choses Banales*.

¹⁰ Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

¹¹ To give just some examples of current scholars working on dress in the early modern period: Patricia Anne Allerston (Venice), Carole Collier Frick (Florence), Elizabeth Currie (Florence), Isabelle Paresys (France), Maria Hayward (England) and Ulinka Rublack (Germany). Another clear indication of the renewed interest in dress studies is the establishment of new university programmes devoted to dress and design.

The problem with regard to the source material available for this type of research is that diplomatic clothes themselves have only very rarely survived. The garments are for the greater part lost and unavailable for analysis. Notwithstanding this loss, a wide variety of written documents can be consulted in order to map the vanished diplomatic attire, ranging from treatises and diplomatic dispatches to lists of expenses and inventories of the wardrobes of ambassadors at the moment of their embassy. Even though written records are not always adequate to translate all the characteristics of apparel, they do make it possible to get a good sense of early modern wardrobes. Luckily, François de Noailles' documents provide a very interesting corpus for the study of dress. His inventory of 1561 listed a great variety of garments that allow me to unravel the inherent messages of his clothing. Additionally, the static image conveyed by the inventory – which only communicates about ownership, not consumption – is complemented with information on the dynamic characteristics of Noailles' clothing that I could gather from his diplomatic dispatches and shopping lists. To a lesser extent, contemporary pictorial representations are integrated, as they transfer a visual image of the garments. Nevertheless, the accuracy of their depictions is difficult to measure, which makes them a problematic source to work with.

The Power of Dress: Diplomatic Identity Construction through Costumes

Even though diplomatic techniques were developing and rules that defined and protected diplomatic agents were being formulated, diplomacy was far from an occupation as such during the sixteenth century. Acting as an ambassador was rather a matter of performing a role or function, carried out by people with various occupational and socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, no official and uniform public costume existed. How then did ambassadors choose to represent their sovereign? Did they absorb local fashions or parade national styles during their construction of a diplomatic identity? Both questions will be answered by, on the one hand, looking at the representational nature and power of luxurious dress and, on the other hand, by unravelling identity construction through costumes. This will reveal that in the world of diplomacy, clothing functioned as a strong vehicle to transmit messages about status and as a map for identity.

Luxurious Dress and Competitive Magnificence

From the Renaissance onwards, clothing became more and more diversified with both national and social connotations. Especially in European court cultures, dress played an indispensable and functional role. First, it was one of the main instruments of non-verbal communication used to differentiate hierarchies and signify noble prestige. Second, its beauty and technological innovation were components of the competition between states and were applied to assert the court's supremacy.¹² Particularly during public ceremonies, the court strove to appear as splendid as possible to impress both the local population and foreign powers.¹³ Seeing the main role of dress in spectacles, celebrations could even result in a shortage of cloth; for example, in Florence in 1559, when festivities were planned for the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, provisions for the supply of velvet were made as Duke Cosimo I de' Medici feared a scarcity:

And because these feasts of the two Majesties [Spanish King Philip II and French King Henry II] could exhaust the cloth of the city, we remember you to supply velvet for the liveries, or at least to do this again, since otherwise there will not be enough.¹⁴

Correspondingly, clothing was a vital component of the embassy's performative role. Dress historian Maria Hayward very accurately formulates the importance of dress for diplomatic agents as follows: "Ambassadors were expected to impress, and the elegance of their clothes was a barometer of the status of their masters and the esteem with which the court assigned was held."¹⁵ Dress was considered as the first and most visible sign of regal representation. Consequently, ambassadors dressed very sumptuously during diplomatic receptions and ceremonies; no costs were spared to showcase the wealth of the nation. In

¹² Consequently, when members of the king's household did not possess appropriate attire to greet foreign dignitaries, they were prohibited by the king to appear in public. For instance, Emperor Maximilian could not provide his wife, Bianca Maria Sforza, with luxurious garments due to his financial difficulties. Therefore, in 1505, he prevented her from meeting the French ambassadors. Antenhofen, "O per Honore, O per Commodo Mio", 56-57.

¹³ For the role of dress at European courts, see, amongst others: Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII: The Wardrobe Book of the Wardrobe of the Robes Prepared by James Worsley in December 1516, Edited from Harley MS 2284, and His Inventory Prepared on 17 January 1521, Edited from Harley MS 4217, Both in the British Library* (Leeds: Maney, 2007); Isabelle Paresys and Natacha Coquery, eds., *Se Vêtir à la Cour en Europe (1400-1815)* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Université Lille 3 - Charles-de-Gaulle, 2011); José Luis Colomer and Amalia Descalzo Lorenzo, eds., *Spanish Fashion at the Courts of Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2014).

¹⁴ Letter from Cosimo I de' Medici to Antonio de Nobili, 15 April 1559: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Minute di Registri, Cosimo I, b. 210, f. 59: "Et perché queste feste delle due Maestà potrebbono spogliare di drappi la Città, vi ricordiamo il provvedere di velluti per la livrea, almeno con farne far di nuovo, quando altrimenti non vene sia."

¹⁵ Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII*, 228.

particular when ambassadors represented their sovereigns during prominent ceremonial occasions an air of splendour was created through clothing and new garments were tailored for the ambassador and his entourage, which were adjusted to the solemnity of the event. Fifteenth-century humanist Vespasiano da Bisticci recounted Piero de Pazzi's time as Florentine representative to France between 1461 and 1462 in his collection of biographies and stated that Pazzi and his entourage changed their lavish outfits once or twice per day.¹⁶

The fact that a certain degree of luxury was expected from the ambassador's clothing can also be derived from the alteration in the attire of diplomatic secretaries when they were promoted to acting ambassadors after the ambassador's departure or death. The usual wardrobe of secretaries was not considered as adequate to represent their sovereign and, therefore, new garments were needed, befitting their new role. In the first place, a greater variety of clothing was necessary in order to customise the outfits to the many occasions where they had to make an appearance. Additionally, more prestigious fabrics and colours, suitable to their altered function, had to be used. Giulio Inghirami, who became Tuscan ambassador ad interim in Spain in 1618, understood the significance of appropriate dress:

About my dress, I was without clothing since mine, that were made two years ago, were old, and since I had to appear before ministers and courtiers, I could not do without having a noble garment made of *velluto riccio* [pile on pile velvet], without prints and cuttings, with a *ferraiolo* of grosgrain also lined with *riccio*, and garnished with noble trimmings, which was and is grand and grave but not vain. I could not wear this garment every day, therefore, I also had another one made in a patterned velvet of a more ordinary quality, saving the most money that I could. I do not think that the kindness of Your Highnesses will decide to blame me, since these expenses were necessary, they were not vain, and I did not have my own [clothing].¹⁷

This citation shows the intrinsic link between clothing and the creation of a diplomatic identity. Inghirami initially acted as secretary to the Medici embassy in Spain from 1609 until 1618, but had to act as temporary ambassador in 1618 in expectation of the arrival of the new resident ambassador. Therefore, he wrote to the Medici court secretary about the necessary

¹⁶ Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le Vite*, ed. Aulo Greco, vol. 2 (Florence: Sansoni, 1970), 312-313.

¹⁷ Letter from Giulio Inghirami to Curzio di Lorenzo da Picchena, 29 October 1618: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Spagna, b. 4947, f. 46v: "Quanto al vestire; io ero senza vestiti che i miei che mi feci due anni sono, erano vecchi, e perché havevo da comparire dinanzi a Ministri, et a Palatini, non potetti far di meno di non farmi un vestito nobile che fu di velluto riccio, senza stampare, né trinciare, col ferraiuolo di grossagrana foderato pur di riccio, e guarnito con guarnizione nobile, che haveva, et ha del grande, e del grave, ma non del vano; questo non si poteva portare ogni giorno, però me ne son fatto un altro di velluto a opere più dozzinale con il maggior risparmio che ho potuto. In questi non penso ancora che la benignità di Serenissime Altezze caderà in tacciarmi, poiché erano necessari, non sono vani, et io non havevo del mio."

adjustment of his wardrobe to his new role, and in order to be able to appear magnificent before ministers and courtiers. That Inghirami's dress was employed to correctly serve the duke of Tuscany becomes even clearer in a later letter, where he explicitly stated that the sartorial expenses "[...] were made for the reason to better serve [the duke] [...]".¹⁸

From Inghirami's list of expenses we can derive the precise nature of his new outfits: he had tailored a *casacca*, with sleeves and breeches (*calzoni*); two doublets (*giubboni*) with sleeves; two *ferraioli*; and some undefined garments. These clothes were all made with textiles suitable for his new status: velvet, silk, taffeta, tabby, lamb skin (*bassetta*), canvas (*canovaccio*), satin from Valencia and Florence, grosgrain from Naples and linen from St. Gallen (*tela di San Gallo*). He embellished his dress further with accessories such as stockings (*calzette*) from Toledo, belts (*cintoli*), ribbons (*passamani*), buttons (*bottoni*), buttonholes (*occhiali*) and hats.¹⁹ Inghirami's wardrobe clearly became much more diversified and international. His case strongly illustrates how dress functioned as a social marker and how it made identity legible.

Although clothes were becoming more and more sumptuous, critical voices arose at the same time that questioned the profusion of luxury. Inghirami's quote already pointed to the danger of too much extravagance, as he understood the importance of finding a balance between appearing grand but not vain ("del grande, e del grave, ma non del vano").²⁰ This points to the belief that an exceedingly frivolous appearance would undermine the authority of the sovereign whom the ambassador represented, since the extravagant style of ambassadors could lead to ridicule and embarrassment. Pursuing the anecdotes of Italian ambassadors, an instance discussed by the aforementioned Vespasiano da Bisticci can be given. He described a fifteenth-century Siense ambassador in Naples, who always clothed himself in the richest gold brocades during audiences with the king. Since the king of Naples seldom wore silk and brocade, he could not prevent from laughing at the ostentatious display of the ambassador. Therefore, the king decided to humiliate the Siense envoy by ordering

¹⁸ Letter from Giulio Inghirami to Curzio di Lorenzo da Picchena, 20 January 1619: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Spagna, b. 4947, f. 153r: "Rimangono solamente i vestiti, dove è necessario implorar aiuto e pietà. [...] che quel che ho fatto intorno alla mia persona, è stato pertanto meglio servire [...]".

¹⁹ Nota di tutte le spese, tanto quotidiane e mensuali, quanto straordinarie, fatte dall'Inghirami con occasione di rimanere in Spagna dopo la partenza del Signor Cont'Orso d'Elci, Ambasciatore di Sua Altezza, 20 January 1619: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Spagna, b. 4947, ff. 155r-155v.

²⁰ A very similar statement was made by the Venetian bailo in Constantinople, Marino Cavalli, in 1550, quoted in: Hanß, "Baili e Ambasciatori", 46-48: "[...] quella forma di veste che habbi del grave et non del stupendo et del admirativo, perché queste tali si tiran gli occhi d'ogn'uno, et tall'hor li putti et la plebe dietro con rumore, come se andassero a veder orso over una girapha. Li pani di seta vogliono esser bellissimi, finissimi et di bonissimi colori come neri, lionati et pavonazzi al più et non d'altro colore [...]".

his servants to tug at his garment so that the ambassador's clothing was completely damaged.²¹ A sixteenth-century ambassador from Ferrara, Alfonso Rossetti, was confronted with a similarly discomfiting experience. In 1548, during his ambassadorship in Milan, Rossetti fell into a ditch and stained his lavish satin dress, an event everyone in town talked about and remembered. He was wearing his luxurious clothing, normally reserved for his visits to the court, during a journey on the Po river. Rossetti had to pay the price for his desire to appear excessively splendid at even the most trivial occasions, as his garment remained soiled for ten days and the ambassador only presented himself in public wearing a long overcoat:

[Alfonso] Rossetto, who is the ambassador here replacing [Ferrante] Trotto, is a gallant man, and when we returned from Piacenza, coming to the Po river to embark, he fell into a ditch. He was wearing his vest of satin *alla cortigiana* lined with *bassette* [lamb skin] of a very ordinary quality, which he used to wear at court, and it was so soaked and soiled that a very thorough cleaning was necessary. It stayed for about ten days in a cleaning bath, and, therefore, he did not show himself in public many times and he always wore his *zimarra*, and everyone who saw him remembered the fall and the cleaning of his vest.²²

The guidelines regarding sartorial expectations given in diplomatic treatises of the time similarly warned against too much luxury. Unfortunately, whereas sixteenth-century treatises often underline the fact that an ambassador ought to have a comely appearance, specific details about his costume are omitted. Seventeenth-century authors, on the contrary, devoted more attention to this topic and highlighted the need for simplicity. Juan Antonio de Vera, for example, was of the opinion that the ornamentation of the diplomat's body should be modest in order to escape the vice of vanity and exuberance.²³ Abraham de Wicquefort, who wrote an extensive account of the apparel of ambassadors, agreed with Vera that diplomatic agents must wear discrete garments so as to avoid excessive luxury; an ostentatious display of grandeur in their clothes would not strengthen their state or the magnificence of their

²¹ Bisticci, *Le Vite*, vol. 1, 102. Also recounted in: Syson and Thornton, *Objects of Virtue*, 32.

²² Letter from Francesco di Paolo Vinta to Cristiano Pagni, 17 April 1548: Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Milan, 3101a, f. 1106r: "Il [Alfonso] Rossetto, che è qui ambasciatore in luogo del [Ferrante] Trotto, è galante homo, et quando tornassimo da Piacenza, venendo a Po per imbarcarsi, cascò in un fosso et a sorte haveva la sua veste di raso alla cortigiana foderata di bassette assai dozzinali, quale soleva portare a corte, et la intrise et imbrutti di maniera, che è bisognato lavarla solennamente et stette circa dieci giorni in concia, et in quel mezzo non si lasciò vedere troppe volte et portava una sua zimarra et ognuno se ricordava vedendolo della caduta et della buchata della sua veste."

²³ de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 3, 8r-8v.

monarch.²⁴ Even though both Vera and Wicquefort condemned vanity, they did point to the importance of suitable dress. To receive guests in inappropriate attire was a disgrace towards their own persona and that of their king. Moreover, it could be perceived as an incivility towards the guest country and diminish the ambassador's reputation at the foreign court. Here, Wicquefort gave the good example of seventeenth-century French Ambassador Claude de Mesme, count d'Avaux, whose most important post was that of resident ambassador in the Republic of Venice. According to Wicquefort, even Avaux' own domestics only saw him in the most honourable costumes.²⁵

In theory, ambassadors thus had to find a certain middle ground between elegance and excessiveness. In practice, however, the balance shifted more often than not towards a preference for fabulous apparel, since this was regarded as the best way to embody the grandeur of the sovereign. Especially in the constant symbolic and ceremonial battle between states for precedence on the international political scene, dress functioned as a powerful weapon and was used as an instrument of competitive magnificence. During public ceremonies and audiences, ambassadors made political statements through their dress and strove to not appear inferior to their colleagues from rivalling states. Diplomatic historian Christine Vogel has recounted the interesting story of Charles de Ferriol, French ambassador in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the eighteenth century, who stirred up the Ottoman protocol with regard to dress as an attempt to maintain France's strong position at the sultan's court in a time of changing political constellations. Out of fear that a new peace treaty between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs would challenge France's right of precedence, Ferriol made strong claims to receive the same robes of honour as the Habsburg envoy. Furthermore, he refused to take off his sword, which was part of his traditional French noble attire. The carrying of a weapon when meeting with the sultan was strictly forbidden, hence, by refusing to submit himself to Ottoman dress codes, Ferriol transferred another firm message to the sultan: the power balance in French-Ottoman relations had changed and the sultan could no longer set the rules for the French king.²⁶ This is a clear example of how an ambassador employed his attire as a way to affirm his nation's superiority.

²⁴ de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 313-319.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 313-314.

²⁶ Christine Vogel, "The Caftan and the Sword: Dress and Diplomacy in Ottoman-French Relations around 1700," in *Fashioning the Self in Transcultural Settings: The Uses and Significance of Dress in Self-Narratives*, eds. Claudia Ulbrich and Richard Wittmann (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2015), 25-44.

Sartorial Styles and Transformations

Whereas an ambassador's taste for opulent costumes can easily be detected in contemporary documents, it is more difficult to uncover the national stance of his fashion style. As stated above, no uniform outfit existed for an ambassador, as it was not yet an official profession. Nevertheless, Cesare Vecellio conveys the idea of the existence of a standard diplomatic apparel for the ambassadors of the Venetian Republic in his famous costume book *Degli Habiti Antichi et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo*, first published in Venice in 1590 in Italian and expanded in 1598 with both Italian and Latin descriptions and images of the new world (Figure 32). Vecellio stated that Venetian ambassadors in his time wore a floor-length gown (*vesta di panno*) with a wide open mantle (*manto largo*) fastened at the shoulders with gold buttons, and underneath a senator's tunic (*sottana*) with large open sleeves. The outfit was further enriched with a gold bejewelled chain.²⁷ It appears that the Venetian Republic indeed had an idea of how their ambassadors should be dressed. For example, when at the beginning of the sixteenth century two Venetian ambassadors were sent to participate in the nuptial ceremonies of the duke of Ferrara, Alfonso d'Este, and Lucrezia Borgia, they were required to show their selected garments to the Senate before departing on their mission. This is a clear indication of the importance attributed to the conveying of a correct sartorial image of the nation.²⁸ Yet, in his famous diaries, Marin Sanudo described occasions during which Venetian ambassadors were instructed to modify their dress to the regulations of the assigned court and adopt a more international style of clothing, permeated by foreign influences.²⁹

This example of Venetian ambassadors already testifies to the fact that it is very challenging to unravel the style of diplomatic garments. Even more so since the construction

²⁷ Vecellio's original description underneath the image can be found in: Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, eds. Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2010), 140: "Ambasciatori et Consoli, mandati in Soria [Syria], et in altre parti. [...] Hora per venire al proposito nostro de gli Habiti, si legge che essendo uno di questi Consoli, ò Ambasciatori andato à veder Campsone Gaurio, chiamatovi dal medesimo Soldano, dove essendo poi chiamato un certo Vittorio Scarpe, il quale era diligentissimo Pittore de' tempi suoi, con tale occasione hebbe commodità di ritrar quest' Habito meglio di quanti altri Pittori sieno stati fin qui, lo dipinse come lo vide, et simile à quello vengo à rappresentarvelo io in questo Volume. Portavano adunque una vesta di panno fino lunga fino in terra, con un manto largo affibbiato sopra le spalle da alcuni bottoni d'oro, et dalla parte sinistra aperta fino in terra, con una collana d'oro al collo, ma ricca di molte gioie. Sotto il manto poi haveva una sottana da Senatore con le maniche aperte, et massime quando egli doveva parlare col gran Signore: tale in quei tempi fu l'Habito de gli Ambasciatori di quella Republica, [...]. Ma per tornare al Consolo di Soria, benche hoggi di anchora si mandi in quel paese, non perciò usa quest' Habito, essendosi questa grandezza, et pompa conservata meglio in quegli, che risiedono Baili in Constantinopoli, ò per dir meglio, trasferitasi tutta in loro, per havere il Gran Signor de' Turchi occupato tutti quei paesi, onde tutta la grandezza dell'altre Provincie vicine, s'è trasferita à Constantinopoli."

²⁸ Jola Pellumbi, "Procurators of Saint Mark: Their Official and State Occasions Attire, 1550-1600," *AAANZ "Inter-Discipline" Conference Proceedings* (2014), 4.

²⁹ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 77-81.

of a survey of national fashions is problematic, as dress was constantly subjected to foreign influences during the early modern period.³⁰ Furthermore, European courts imposed their own rules concerning dress on visiting ambassadors, which makes the composition of a general overview extremely complicated. In certain settings, ambassadors were obliged by the hosting state to appropriate the local trends. For example, at the Spanish court, ambassadors had to dress in the Spanish manner during audiences; if not, the king refused to receive them.³¹ Theoretical prescriptions, dating from the seventeenth century, also advised ambassadors to adapt their diplomatic attire to the social and cultural environment of the assigned court. Juan Antonio de Vera stated that ambassadors should dress “[...] in the fashion of the province in which they reside [...]”.³² Wicquefort shared this idea, since any willingness to establish amicable relations would seem more credible if ambassadors adjusted their clothing to foreign customs.³³

Additionally, at various Asian courts, it was the custom to bequeath ambassadors with so-called robes of honour. This refers to a standard component of the reception of royal representatives, where they were dressed in ceremonial garments before their first audience.³⁴ Traditionally, the gifted robe had been worn by the ruler, though this practice faded away and new garments were produced especially for the ambassadors. Receiving robes of honour was interpreted as a mark of distinction and through the act of accepting and putting on the gown, the ambassadors incorporated and were moulded by local values.³⁵ These robes were very luxurious, which is illustrated by the description given by Philippe de la Canaye of the gowns worn by François de Noailles during his first audience with the Ottoman sultan. As already

³⁰ The interplay between national identity and foreign fashions is, for example, discussed in: Roze Hentschell, “A Question of Nation: Foreign Clothes on the English Subjects,” in *Clothing Culture*, 49-62.

³¹ Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle*, vol. 1, 276-278; José Luis Colomer, “Black and the Royal Image,” in *Spanish Fashion at the Courts of Early Modern Europe*, 100-101. See also the preserved outfit dating from 1655 worn by the Swedish ambassador to Spain, Nils Nilsson Brahe, kept in the Skokloster Castle in Sweden, which is clearly a Spanish style black suit (Figure 33). The example of Francesco de’ Medici, son of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici, who visited Spain in 1562, shows that also princes were expected to adapt to the Spanish fashion, see: Roberta Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze 1540-1580: Cosimo I de’ Medici’s style / Lo stile di Cosimo I de’ Medici* (Florence: Mauro Pagliai Editore, 2011), 35-36.

³² de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 3, 27r: “[...] vestirse los Enbaxadores al uso de la Provincia donde residen [...]”.

³³ de Wicquefort, *L’Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 314: “Pour les Ambassadeurs, je dirai d’abord qu’ils s’habillent ordinairement à la mode du país où ils sont employés: ce qu’il faut entendre particulièrement des Ambassadeurs Residents ou ordinaires.”

³⁴ It should be noted that in the case of missions to the Ottoman court, ambassadors often already adapted to the Turkish fashion during their travel for protection, see: Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 123.

³⁵ For a general overview of the types and usages of robes of honour throughout history and in various geographical regions, see: Stewart Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture* (New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

explained in the introduction, when Canaye was a young man he had sojourned in Noailles' embassy in Constantinople for three months. He recounted that Noailles was dressed in:

[...] a gown of gold cloth of a high price and his hands, neck and bonnet were garnished with rings, necklaces and jewels of extreme beauty and value [...] All the gentlemen in his suite and we as well were beautifully clothed in the Turkish fashion, with bonnets covered with velvet.³⁶

Conversely, eastern ambassadors visiting European courts did not adjust to western practices but adhered to their own clothing styles. In Venice, the garments gifted to eastern envoys at the end of their mission were even tailored in the oriental fashion, using Venetian textiles.³⁷

A good example of a sixteenth-century ambassador who understood the importance of diplomatic clothing and immersed himself in local fashions is Siegmund von Herberstein. In doing so, his identity was reshaped through the use of clothing. Herberstein conducted numerous diplomatic missions on behalf of the House of Habsburg. His autobiography, published in 1560 and entitled *Gratae Posteritati Sigismundus Liber Baro in Herberstain etc.*, contains six woodcuts of Herberstein wearing various official robes during his Polish, Spanish, Russian (Figure 34) and Ottoman missions (Figure 35).³⁸ These images provide an understanding of the actual appearance of diplomatic garments and the different sartorial styles at various courts.³⁹

Whereas garments could be employed to transform appearances, in many other court settings, ambassadors did not need to adapt to regional customs but, instead, were required to dress in their national clothing style as a way to make their identity clearly visible. This way, it would be more difficult for them to move freely and uncover sensitive state matters. Furthermore, ambassadors themselves could explicitly choose to display national symbols in

³⁶ de la Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant*, 59: “[...] un habit de drap d’or de grand prix, et il avait aux mains, au cou et au bonnet des anneaux, colliers et bijoux d’une beauté et d’une valeur inestimables [...] Tous les gentilshommes de sa suite et nous autres étions fort bien habillés à la turque, avec les bonnets couverts de velours.” According to French historian Brantôme, François de Noailles’ entire appearance was Turkish, with a short beard and his moustache in the Turkish fashion: de Bourdeille, *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 5, 67: “[...] la barbe courte de nature, et les moustaches à leur mode: et pour ce, disoient-ilz tous qu’en sa taille et en sa carre il tenoit du Turc [...]”.

³⁷ Pedani, *In Nome del Gran Signore*, 73-75.

³⁸ Siegmund von Herberstein, *Gratae Posteritati Sigismundus Liber Baro in Herberstain Neyperg et Guettenhag, Primarius Ducatus Carinthiae Haereditariusque et Camerarius et Dapifer etc. Immunitate Meritorum Ergo Donatus, Actiones Suas a Puero ad Annum usque Aetatis Suae Septuagesimum Quartum, Brevi Commentariolo Notatas Reliquit* (Vienna: Raphael Hofhalter, 1560).

³⁹ For a detailed analysis of Herberstein’s garments, see: John L. Nevinson, “Siegmund von Herberstein: Notes on 16th Century Dress,” *Waffen- und Kostümkunde* 1/2 (1959), 86-93; Jennifer Wearden, “Siegmund von Herberstein: An Italian Velvet in the Ottoman Court,” *Costume* 19 (1985), 22-29; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6-7.

their dress as a way to underline their allegiance. For example, in the most famous portrait of early modern diplomats, *The Ambassadors* (1533) by Hans Holbein, the French ambassador to England, Jean de Dinteville, had himself depicted wearing a gold chain with the emblem of the French chivalric Order of Saint Michael (Figure 36). This was a clear sign of his dedication towards France, since French King Francis I only awarded membership to loyal subjects, who devoted their service to the French crown. The king himself proudly wore the symbol of the order, which had to represent French glory.⁴⁰ Thus, even though Dinteville's French nationality cannot be clearly derived from his clothing style, as his garments reveal similarities with both English and French fashions, his chain strongly referred to his national identity.⁴¹

It is also noteworthy to briefly consider here how the transformation of sartorial styles could serve as a way to disguise identity. A famous story is that of Henry Wotton, the later English ambassador, who, in 1601, was dispatched by the grand duke of Tuscany to Scotland in order to expose a plot aimed at poisoning Scottish King James VI. Wotton masqueraded himself as an Italian envoy during his travels and subsequent stay at the Scottish court, masterfully concealing his true identity.⁴² This is an interesting example of the power of dress as an instrument to camouflage identity; solely by changing his attire, people believed that Wotton was a true Italian envoy. Castiglione had already pointed to the practice of applying clothing to manipulate identity by wearing garments not in line with the status of the individual. In doing so, dress became not a representation of social conditions, but a mask.⁴³ In his treatise on the ideal ambassador, Abraham de Wicquefort similarly wrote about the nature of sartorial dissimulation. He was against the practice and was of the opinion that ambassadors who disguised their diplomatic character through clothing, could not enjoy the protection of the Law of Nations.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 54; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 56.

⁴¹ Maria Hayward, "Quelle Influence de la Mode Française à la Cour d'Angleterre au XVI^e Siècle?: 'One Frenche Gowne of Blacke Clothe of Gold,'" *Revue de l'Art* 174, no. 4 (2011), 53. It is indeed the case that Dinteville's dress was not particularly French because until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the identity of the portrayed men was yet unknown, it was still commonly assumed that they were English. Susan Foister, Ashok Roy, and Martin Wyld, *Holbein's Ambassadors* (London: National Gallery Publications, 1997), 12-13. Their identity was discovered by Mary Hervey: Mary F.S. Hervey, *Holbein's "Ambassadors": The Picture and the Men: An Historical Study* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1900).

⁴² Melanie Ord, "Returning from Venice to England: Sir Henry Wotton as Diplomat, Pedagogue and Italian Cultural Connoisseur," in *Borders and Travellers in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Thomas Betteridge (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 147.

⁴³ Guido Rebecchini, "*Un Altro Lorenzo*": *Ippolito de' Medici tra Firenze e Roma (1511-1535)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010), 158.

⁴⁴ de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 318-319.

Whereas the national stance or local adaptation of dress strongly varied, during official diplomatic ceremonies, it was nevertheless of crucial importance that ambassadors were acquainted with sartorial customs and respected the ceremonial protocol of the foreign court. As Abraham de Wicquefort stated, ambassadors ought to “[...] dress according to the occasion where they have to appear.”⁴⁵ If they showed up in inappropriate clothing during official ceremonies, this could result in a dispute. To give just one example, the French ambassador in Rome during the mid-sixteenth century, Bishop Philibert Babou de la Bourdaisière, recounted the episode of a quarrel between him and the pontifical master of ceremonies. The incident occurred when Babou dressed in improper garments during a public consistory. At such occasions, ecclesiastical ambassadors at the papal court were expected to wear a rochet (*rochet*), cassock (*soutane*) and cope (*chape*). However, Cardinal Georges d’Armagnac, who had likewise held the post of French ambassador in Rome, had informed Babou that he could also attend public consistories without a cope and only wearing a mantle over the rochet. Still, when the master of ceremonies noticed that Babou was not clothed in a cope, he approached him about this and informed him that this had never been the custom during past consistories. It must be noted that there was a deeper issue at play: Babou’s main objective was to outrank the Spanish ambassador in both appearance and position during these consistories, since France had recently won the dispute over precedence.⁴⁶ During a meeting with the pope, Babou’s right of precedence was again reaffirmed.⁴⁷

After this general outline of the features of diplomatic dress, it can be concluded that the key element in the composition of a diplomatic identity through costumes was balance. In the first place, a balance between luxury and modesty: on the one hand, the wealth of the nation had to be represented, but, on the other hand, garments that were too ostentatious could reflect poorly on the nation’s civility and decorum. Secondly, a balance had to be kept between the adaptation to local fashions and the assertion of national styles. During public appearances, ceremonial customs had to be respected, but often the personal and national identity of the ambassador was clearly visible. In short, costumes had to be adjusted to the event, the honour of the monarch and also to the personal identity and character of the ambassador.

⁴⁵ de Wicquefort, *L’Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 314: “[...] en s’habillant selon les occasions, où ils se doivent rencontrer.”

⁴⁶ It was precisely François de Noailles who had won this ancient battle for precedence between France and Spain at the European courts.

⁴⁷ Letter from Bishop of Angoulême to François de Noailles, 29 June 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 388-397.

The Wardrobe of François de Noailles

Building on the analysis of diplomatic attire in general, the focus shifts to the wardrobe of one specific ambassador: François de Noailles during his residency in Venice. Although it is impossible to identify all of his garments and accessories, his inventory of 1561 contains very rich information that permits a reconstruction of the nature and wealth of his apparel.⁴⁸ It has already become abundantly clear that ambassadors were judged by their exterior and, consequently, consciously used their dress to reinforce their king's status and authority during ceremonies. The purpose of bringing Noailles' clothing into sharp focus is to show that also in the everyday life of sixteenth-century ambassadors, appearances were essential, since clothing was the first and most visible sign of his honour as a public and private individual. By understanding clothing, some of the most meaningful aspects of diplomatic identity can be exposed. In order to fully comprehend the symbolic significance of his costumes, François de Noailles will be considered within his social and political setting by contextualising both the Venetian and French environment and comparing his style with that of contemporaries.

Venetian Dress Codes or French Fashions?

The inhabitants of the Venetian Republic had a strong fascination for all types of dress, which can already be derived from the great popularity in the city of the new genre of costume books that arose during the mid-sixteenth century. Venetian mercers, artisans and tailors designed new types of clothing by applying new fashion trends and technological innovations concerning the creation of textiles and colours.⁴⁹ Dress also played a significant role in the structuring of Venetian society by making social and political hierarchies visible. Precise dress codes were prescribed to patricians and citizens and their uniforms became signs of familial and professional identity. In order to protect the legibility of this clothing system and avoid a disruption of the social order, authorities strove to vigorously oversee adherence to dress legislation.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Inventaire des Meubles, Robbes et autres Accoustremens qui ont esté trouvez en la Garderobbe de Monseigneur L'Evesque Dacqs à Venize, 26 May 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 78r-81v.

⁴⁹ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*; Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Clothing, Fashion, Dress and Costume in Venice (c. 1450-1650)," in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 889-928.

⁵⁰ Wilson, *The World in Venice*, ch. 2. This was also the aim of sumptuary legislation, which has been sufficiently analysed in other studies. See, for example: Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe*; Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996);

Stella Newton has made the first systematic analysis of the function and structure of dress in the Venetian Republic. Her study focuses on the period between 1495 and 1525, basing her account mainly on the rich descriptions of costumes in the diaries of Marin Sanudo.⁵¹ Sanudo's depictions, along with engravings of Venetian dress, printed representations of public festivities and archival sources, attest to the magnificence of garments worn by the members of the Venetian government.⁵² Especially during ceremonies, rich costumes were employed as a means of parading wealth, luxury and the economic and technological sophistication of the Republic. For instance, as Chapter 1 has revealed, the Venetian welcoming party, consisting of senators, was always impeccably dressed during the reception of newly arrived ambassadors.

Foreign visitors wished to compete with and impress the Venetian patriciate through the display of magnificent dress. When the count of Vaudémont and general of the Venetian transalpine troops, Francis II, was visiting the city in 1604, he took part in the carnival festivities, where he paraded his rich garments and exquisite precious stones.⁵³ As this was good for France's public image, French Ambassador Philippe de la Canaye decided not to inform him about the death of his sister-in-law Catherine de Bourbon, sister of King Henry IV and wife of his brother Henry II Duke of Lorraine and Bar. Hearing this news, the count of Vaudémont would certainly have immediately exchanged his magnificent apparel for mourning garments, which would have prevented him from "[...] showing off his beautiful

Diane Owen Hughes, "Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy," in *The Italian Renaissance: Essential Readings*, ed. Paula Findlen (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 124-150; Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy: 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli and Antonella Campanini, eds., *Disciplinare il Lusso: La Legislazione Suntuaria in Italia e in Europa tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna* (Rome: Carocci, 2003).

⁵¹ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*. For more information on the clothing of the Venetians, see also: Allerston, "Clothing and Early Modern Venetian Society", 367-390; Rosenthal, "Clothing, Fashion, Dress and Costume in Venice", 889-928.

⁵² Famous early modern engravers of Venetian dress are Cesare Vecellio, Pietro Vertelli, Jacomo Franco and Giovanni Grevembroch.

⁵³ The appointment of a 'general of the transalpine troops' resulted from evolutions in Venice during the late sixteenth century. After the war of 1570-1573 with the Ottoman Empire, the Venetian Republic wished to enlarge their permanent army on land and sea. As the bulk of their infantry was stationed overseas to protect Venetian fortifications, the Republic vigorously sought to raise extraordinary troops to defend the Terraferma. Therefore, in 1599, they signed a contract with the Count of Vaudémont, Francis II, who had to be prepared to dispatch around 26.000 men: 10.000 French, 4.000 to 6.000 Swiss, 4.000 to 6.000 Germans, and 4.000 cavalry of unspecified origin. The Count of Vaudémont received the title 'general of the transalpine troops', but eventually the contract would expire. Michael E. Mallett and John R. Hale, *The Military Organisation of a Renaissance State: Venice c. 1400 to 1617* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 325-326.

clothes, because Venice has not seen something so beautiful for a long time.”⁵⁴ Only after the *mardi gras* celebrations did Canaye inform him about the passing of his sister-in-law.⁵⁵

This anecdote illustrates the great importance of dress in the political arena, of which François de Noailles was similarly well aware. It can be derived from his correspondence that during public ceremonies, he consciously selected his garments in order to appear as the most splendid individual. When Noailles rendered his thanks to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne for sending him fur, he recounted that he had paraded it during the latest festivities and had surpassed everyone in beauty with this magnificent garment:

[...] I don't want to forget to thank you very humbly for the fur that you have sent me, which I consider as the most beautiful possible and it has given me much pleasure to have received it in time to parade it during the latest festivities, where I haven't seen anything that can be compared to its beauty [...]⁵⁶

Noailles understood the visual power of clothing in early modern culture and dressed according to his status. When other officials were not clothed appropriately, he was not shy with his criticism:

[...] his Eminence Cardinal Monti has arrived in this city five or six days ago, where they have already started to know him and to remark about the freedom he takes in his actions and his clothing. He is going daily in the city and appears very often at St. Mark's square and at other public places only with a cape and sword, and behaving in a manner which is inappropriate to the degree and dignity that he holds. Your Eminence will do good by informing him if he is one of your subjects, since they begin to speak about him [...]⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 28 February 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 142: “[...] faire voir ses beaux habits: car Venize n’a rien veu de si beau il y a long temps.”

⁵⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 8 March 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 144.

⁵⁶ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, 27 December 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 61v: “[...] ne voullant cependant faillir de vous remercier bien humblement de la fourure que m’avez envoyée qui a bien esté trouvée la plus belle qu’il est possible de veoir et ne scauriez croire combien ce m’a esté de plaisir de l’avoir receue sy a propos pour m’en parer aux dernieres festes ou je n’en ay point veu qui puissent estre comparées a sa beauté [...]”.

⁵⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Ippolito II d’Este, 9 August 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 106: “[...] Monseigneur le Cardinal de Monti est depuis cinq ou six jours arrivé en ceste ville, ou l’on commence desja a le connoistre et bien remarquer pour la liberté qu’il se permet en ses actions et vestemens allant ordinairement par la ville et comparoist plus souvent en la place de St. Marc et autres lieux publicqs avec la cappe et l’espée seulement et faisant de toutes choses mal séantes au degré et dignité qu’il tient, comme vous ferez bien Monseigneur de l’avertir s’il est du nombre de vos serviteurs, car l’on commence fort a en parler [...]”.

Furthermore, Noailles most likely had prepared his diplomatic mission by studying the functioning of Venetian society, including the symbolic meanings of their dress. This type of knowledge was necessary for an ambassador in order to be able to understand the hierarchy in public ceremonies, in which he would have to participate. Due the nature of the French court environment, Noailles was already familiar with foreign, and in particular Italian, fashions. The French court was known for its eclectic dress; whereas Italian fashions dominated during the beginning of the sixteenth century, the emphasis gradually shifted to Spanish styles, and by the end of the century, French dress had become a melting pot of foreign borrowings, with mixing and matching of luxury fabrics and accessories from abroad.⁵⁸ The taste of the French court for foreign modes is also illustrated in a letter sent to the duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici, regarding the Turkish vogue in French fashion:

Among other news, [Cosimo Bartoli] says that the most Christian King [Charles IX] has started to dress himself in the Turkish fashion with a turban, in which he is followed by the Constable [Anne de Montmorency] and almost the entire court, this court nourished a fashion for hats that are similar to turbans and [the men at court] tried to convince even the women to wear them.⁵⁹

However, with regard to the specific kind and national style of attire expected from an ambassador in Venice, neither the correspondence of François de Noailles, nor the documentation of his successors, explicitly mention dress codes being imposed by the Venetian government. Consequently, the best way to uncover how foreign representatives dressed is to analyse the specific garments in their wardrobe. Noailles possessed both undergarments – shirts (*chemises*), doublets (*pourpoints*), hose (*chausses*) – and outer garments – robes (*robes*), sayons (*sayons*), overcoats (*manteaux*), capes (*capas*), *cabans* – that were typical for a sixteenth-century nobleman.⁶⁰ Long robes in particular feature prominently in his wardrobe. On the one hand, the wearing of these robes was in line with Venetian fashions as they were considered the most suitable garment for the elite.⁶¹ On the other hand, Noailles' preference for robes likewise corresponded to French clothing habits. Research has uncovered the widespread wearing of robes amongst the French population

⁵⁸ Isabelle Paresys, "The Dressed Body: The Moulding of Identities in Sixteenth-Century France," in *Forging European Identities*, 247-251.

⁵⁹ Letter from Bartolomeo Concini to Cosimo I de' Medici, 24 January 1565: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio dei Segretari, Appendice al Carteggio dei Segretari, b. 1687, f. 60: "In fra gli altri avisi dice che il Cristianissimo ha incominciato a vestire alla Turhesca dal turbante in poi, seguito dal Contestabile et quasi da tutta la corte, la quale haveva ritrovato una foggia di cappelli simili a' Turbanti et procacciava d'indurvi anco le donne."

⁶⁰ See the appendix with tables and graphs that give an overview of the various garments in Noailles' collection.

⁶¹ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 9; Rosenthal, "Clothing, Fashion, Dress and Costume in Venice", 920.

during the sixteenth century; it was a common garment amongst various, albeit relatively high-ranking, social classes and not solely restricted to magistrates and university professors. Robes owed their popularity to the fact that they were comfortable and offered warmth as many were lined with fur. Since it was often one of the most expensive articles of clothing, only wealthy citizens could afford it.⁶² For a man with a key diplomatic function such as Noailles, the wearing of these robes was probably also intended to signify his honorary status. The second most common garment in his wardrobe, the sayon, which covered the body from shoulder to trunk or knee with long, full sleeves, had the same function. Just as with robes, sayons gave the wearer a serious and dignified appearance.⁶³ Therefore, Noailles' preference for these types of garments should be seen as a conscious use of clothing to project his solemn identity as royal representative. Additionally, more fabric was needed to tailor longer garments and the wearing of a lot of cloth was a sign of belonging to high society.⁶⁴

Noailles' robes, which can be divided into three categories: robes lined with fur, robes lined with silk and single robes (not lined), show a striking similarity to the clothes found in the wardrobe of French King Henry II in the year 1557. The king had a preference for long robes, which were refined with the same luxurious materials as Noailles' robes, such as velvet, damask and satin, lined with martens and lynx.⁶⁵ An analysis of the rest of the content of both Henry II's and Noailles' wardrobe exposes many other resemblances.⁶⁶ The assumption that the general style of Noailles' dress was in line with his French noble identity, can be strengthened further by the fact that he had a French tailor in his service.⁶⁷ It was a common fashion that ambassadors had personal tailors in their entourage; these could be locally hired or transferred from the home country.⁶⁸ Noailles chose to bring at least one tailor from France instead of appointing a Venetian artisan, which is a strong sign that he opted for a French appearance while on mission. Additionally, as clarified previously, Noailles' inventory was actually a list of the goods and clothing that he transferred to France

⁶² Isabelle Paresys, "Le Noir Est Mis: Les Puits d'Amiens, ou le Paraître Vestimentaire des Élités Urbaines à la Renaissance," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 56, no. 3 (2009), 80-82.

⁶³ Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 41.

⁶⁴ Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 90-94.

⁶⁵ Isabelle Paresys, "Vêtir les Souverains Français à la Renaissance: Les Garde-Robes d'Henri II et de Catherine de Médicis en 1556 et 1557," in *Se Vêtir à la Cour en Europe*, 142-143.

⁶⁶ Both the types of clothing and the textiles used show remarkable similarities. See the descriptions and appendices in Paresys for an overview of Henry II's wardrobe: *Ibid.*, 139-143; 156-157.

⁶⁷ Mémoire et instruction de ce que Raymondie aura a despescher pour les affaires et service de Monseigneur L'Evesque d'Acqs, estant en France ou il l'envoye présentement pour faire les choses qui s'ensuyvent, 25 March 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 268r.

⁶⁸ Dover, "The Economic Predicament of Italian Renaissance Ambassadors", 149.

after the completion of his embassy. The fact that he brought so many garments home might also be an indication of the general French style of his wardrobe as it suggests that he intended to still wear those outfits in France. Whereas other ambassadors often complained in their letters that they would not be able to use their diplomatic outfits when they returned to their home court, since they were made to conform to local foreign fashions.⁶⁹

When considering the attire of Philippe de la Canaye at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it can similarly be concluded that he most probably opted for a French clothing style. His letters provide some insight into what type of clothing was expected from diplomatic servants, and from this we can also derive the practices of the ambassador himself. The Venetian Republic ordered the domestics of the ambassador, including those who were locally hired, to adapt to the ambassador's style. This is illustrated by a critique that was formulated regarding the attire of Antonio Maggi, the Venetian secretary of Canaye. As a Venetian, he adhered to local fashions, however, the Venetian government stated that this was no longer allowed when he entered into the service of a foreigner. Dressed in Venetian robes, Maggi would have access everywhere and could gather a lot of valuable intelligence for his master. This was exactly what Venice actively strove to avoid, as they did not want the French ambassador to gain access to precious information. Furthermore, the contacts maintained by Maggi with Venetian residents were an infraction on the law that forbade private meetings between the ambassador and his staff and Venetian citizens. Hence, Maggi had to dress *a la française*, to the great irritation of Canaye since this obviously confined Maggi's freedom of movement.⁷⁰ This anecdote indirectly sheds light on the national clothing style of Canaye himself: since his Venetian servant had to adapt to the style of his foreign master, *a la française*, this indicates that Canaye himself was not dressed as a Venetian but as a Frenchman.

However, whereas I can conclude that the overall stance of the attire of French ambassadors was in most cases French, a comparison with contemporary inventories of the Venetian nobility reveals striking similarities with regard to colours, fabrics and linings.⁷¹ It was exactly these aspects that rendered an air of splendour to the attire and reflected personality. Hence, they deserve a close examination in order to uncover in more detail the status and meanings of a French ambassador's wardrobe.

⁶⁹ See, for example: Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 81.

⁷⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 29 January 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 43. Bronwen Wilson gives examples of other social and religious groups that were obliged by the Republic to make their identity clearly visible through dress: Wilson, *The World in Venice*, 120-127.

⁷¹ See, for example, the inventory of Venetian Procurator Vettor Grimani drawn up in 1558, three years before the one of Noailles, described by Jola Pellumbi: Pellumbi, "Procurators of Saint Mark", 16-19.

Cloth and Colour Makes an Honourable Man

A standard feature of the outfits of the early modern elites was the wearing of various layers of clothing. Tailors invented innovative cuts to make the textiles, colours, linings and patterns of the garments underneath visible. This way, all the expensive elements could be showed off to onlookers. Two factors in particular contributed to the high status of clothing: material and colour. It was not tailoring but the weave, quality and colour of the fabric that determined the price of clothes and expressed the status and even the character of the wearer.⁷² Accordingly, early modern dress codes attributed a lot of significance to the uses of fabric and colour to reflect identity; as sixteenth-century people believed: “cloth and colour makes an honourable man”.⁷³ François de Noailles’ wardrobe was indeed composed of both outer garments and undergarments used for sumptuous layering, and his clothes were made of a wide variety of both materials and colours.⁷⁴

The most recurrent textile in Noailles’ inventory is silk in its various forms. The variety and lightness of the fabric offered endless opportunities for sartorial creations. Consequently, contemporary writers lauded the ubiquity, beauty and numerous variations and purposes of silk in European society.⁷⁵ Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, the major production areas were located on the Italian peninsula, with Venice as one of the greatest industries, and silk functioned as an important export product to European markets, and, starting from the fifteenth century, also Levantine markets.⁷⁶ Silk was the most lavish and expensive fabric of all and as a result of its high price, it was an indisputable sign of wealth and associated with great prestige and splendour. Hence, especially from the fourteenth century onwards, demand rose tremendously amongst the European elite for the most exquisite variations of silk products, particularly those of Venetian manufacture.⁷⁷ Likewise,

⁷² Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 96; 101; 159-160.

⁷³ Quoted in: Rosita Levi-Pisetzky, *Il Costume e la Moda nella Società Italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), 58: “drappo e colore fa all’uomo onore”; and translated in: Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 3.

⁷⁴ See the appendix with tables and graphs, which offer a detailed overview of the types of clothing in Noailles’ wardrobe, together with their materials, colours and furs.

⁷⁵ See, for example: Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Somasco, 1587).

⁷⁶ It is estimated that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, 14.000, out of a total of 25.000 silk looms in Europe, were operating in Italy, see: Franco Franceschi, “Seta per i Ricchi, Seta per Diventare Ricchi: Lo Slancio della Manifattura Serica nell’Italia del Quattrocento,” in *Seta: Potere e Glamour: Tessuti e Abiti dal Rinascimento al XX Secolo*, ed. Roberta Orsi Landini (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2006), 22. General overviews of the production and importance of silk in Italy can be found in: Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*; Luca Molà, Reinhold C. Mueller, and Claudio Zanier, eds., *La Seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento: Dal Baco al Drappo* (Venice: Marsilio, 2000); Orsi Landini, ed., *Seta: Potere e Glamour*; Luca Molà, “A Luxury Industry: The Production of Italian Silks 1400-1600,” in *Europe’s Rich Fabric*, 205-234.

⁷⁷ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*; Allerston, “Clothing and Early Modern Venetian Society”, 372; Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 96-99; Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, 291.

silk was immensely popular amongst the French elite. For instance, the wardrobe of the sixteenth-century members of the powerful Guise family was mainly composed of silk, such as velvet, satin and taffeta.⁷⁸

In the Venetian retail industry, a lot of varieties of silk were available that satisfied Noailles' yearning for extravagant clothing. The fabric was omnipresent in his attire as he owned numerous garments made of satin (*satin*), velvet (*velours*), damask (*damas*) and taffeta (*taffetas*). Besides being used in luxury clothes, silk was also a common textile applied to accessories: Noailles' inventory contains coifs (*coiffes*) and headgears (*couvre-chefs*) of silk (*soie*); bonnets (*bonnets*) of velvet, taffeta and silk; and hats (*chapeaux*) of velvet and taffeta. Additionally, he owned silk gloves and velvet shoes and mules. Noailles had a particular preference for velvet, however, despite its high price, velvet wore out fast and clothes made of this fabric had to be replaced regularly. Therefore, as the sixteenth century progressed, people developed a preference for cheaper variations of silk such as plain satin and *ormesino*. Costly velvets and brocades, sometimes garnished with gold or silver threads, were thus only reserved for the most prosperous stratum of society.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, velvet is the second most recurrent textile in Noailles' wardrobe.⁸⁰ Consequently, by wearing velvet garments, Noailles' positioned himself as a member of the highest social classes.

Colours were as important as textiles, since they structured society and embodied symbolic meanings in etiquette and ceremony.⁸¹ The value attributed to them can already be deduced from the appearance of numerous treatises devoted to their connotation and significance.⁸² Even medical treatises incorporated hues in their analysis and associated the wearing of certain colours with good or bad health.⁸³ However, the meaning that all of these treatises attributed to colours differed greatly, making a clear interpretation of their

⁷⁸ Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Parâtre*, 52-55.

⁷⁹ Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, 292.

⁸⁰ For more information on the history of velvet, see: Sophie Desrosiers, "Sur l'Origine d'un Tissu Qui a Participé à la Fortune de Venise: Le Velours de Soie," in *La Seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento*, 35-61.

⁸¹ Lucia Rositani Ronchi and Luciana Chiostrì Corsi, "Colore e Simbolismo Cromatico nel Costume," in *Il Costume nell'Età del Rinascimento*, ed. Dora Liscia Bemporad (Florence: EDIFIR, 1988), 99-100.

⁸² For example: Fulvio Pellegrino Morato, *Del Significato de' Colori: Operetta di Fulvio Pellegrino Morato Mantovano Nuovamente Ristampata* (Venice: Giovanni Antonio Nicolini da Sabbio, 1535); Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo di M. Lodovico Dolce nel quale si Ragiona della Qualità, Diversità e Proprietà dei Colori* (Venice: Giovanni Battista, Marchio Sessa et Fratelli, 1565).

⁸³ See, for example, a Spanish treatise on medicine that singles out the colour *grana*, a red dyestuff, as the most advisable one to wear for the good health of the body: Juan Sorapán de Rieros, *Medicina Española Contenida en Proverbios Vulgares de Nuestra Lengua: Muy Provechosa para Todo Genero de Estados, para Philosophos, y Medicos, para Theologos, y Juristas, para el Buën Regimiento de la Salud y Mas Larga Vida* (Granada: Martin Fernandez Zambrano, 1616), 199-206.

symbolism complex.⁸⁴ Still, courtiers were generally aware of the local messages that colours carried, as they were consciously used by kings during court ceremonies.⁸⁵ Since ambassadors constantly moved from one court to another, they needed to be well-informed about the specific meanings attributed to colours in different cultures, as was stressed by Juan Antonio de Vera:

Besides the honesty that is required from dress, the ambassador must largely observe one precept, which might seem of minor importance but is nevertheless necessary to be followed, that is to never dress himself in a colour hated by that nation [where he resides], in particular during public days, feasts or audiences [...]⁸⁶

Consequently, Noailles had to be attentive to the symbolism of colours in the Venetian Republic. Venetian men dressed according to their vocation: for aristocrats and high professions, such as doctors and lawyers, sober black garments were the norm, but the members of the highest strata of Venetian society, procurators and senators, were required by law to wear colourful garments, dyed with the most expensive red dyes and producing colours such as crimson, scarlet and *paonazzo* (livid purple).⁸⁷

That red was one of the most dominant and preferred colours in Venetian society, and in the Italian city-states in general, can also be gleaned from manuals for dying, since recipes for red hues were always the most numerous. A visual hierarchy of red variations was composed based on the price of the dye. For silk, the most superior position was without any doubt granted to crimson. The dye used to obtain the brightest variations of crimson was kermes, named after the insect from whose dried bodies the dye was produced. Due to the fact that the colouring process took twice as long as normal, it was very expensive. However, since the threads dyed with kermes were renowned for their very good quality – they were shiny and wear- and water-resistant – the higher price was justified. With the arrival of cochineal in the mid-sixteenth century, which created more or less the same colour as

⁸⁴ See the work of Rosita Levi-Pisetzky for an overview of these treatises: Levi-Pisetzky, *Il Costume e la Moda*, 65-68.

⁸⁵ Monique Chatenet and Anne-Marie Lecoq, “Le Roi et Ses Doubles: Usages Vestimentaires Royaux au XVIe Siècle,” *Revue de l’Art* 174, no. 4 (2011), 21-31.

⁸⁶ de Vera, *El Embaxador*, discourse 3, 8v: “Pero demas de la onestidad del traje, se deve considerar mucho en una menudencia, que confessando todos que lo es, confiessan assi mismo, que se deve escusar, que es vestirse el Legado (particularmente los dias publicos de regocijo o audiencia) de color odiosa a aquella nacion [...]”.

⁸⁷ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 9; Rosenthal, “Clothing, Fashion, Dress and Costume in Venice”, 920-921.

kermes, the price of crimson cloth diminished.⁸⁸ Whereas crimson was the most superior colour for silk, scarlet was its equivalent for wool.⁸⁹ Noailles owned several garments dyed in crimson (*cramoisi*); scarlet, however, is absent from his wardrobe.⁹⁰ More often he was dressed in *violet cramoisi*, most probably referring to *paonazzo*, a very noble colour in Venetian society.⁹¹ To obtain this colour a red dyestuff was used, in the case of Noailles the most expensive one: crimson. Another colour frequently present in Noailles' wardrobe was violet (*violet*). Again, violet was one of the most expensive colours of the sixteenth-century.⁹²

Furthermore, after crimson, scarlet, *paonazzo*, and also gold, black occupied an important place in the Venetian hierarchy of colours. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was expected from patricians to wear a black toga with a black *bareta* or *berretta* because black cloth was regarded as a sign of dignity. Moreover, the *becho*, a stole draped around the shoulders of the most privileged officials, was made of black material. Underneath, they were correspondingly dressed in black hose.⁹³ Throughout the entire early modern period, the mode of black dress persisted in Italy, but also in the rest of Europe.⁹⁴ Parisian inventories illustrate that around the transition from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, 33 percent of the clothing of the nobility was black and even 44 percent in the wardrobe of officials.⁹⁵ Also in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome, black was the most prevalent colour in male dress. Renata Ago's investigation has shown that half of the clothes, of which the colour was specified in the inventories, were black.⁹⁶ Spain was, more than any other country, responsible for the spread of this fashion. This was due to several reasons, including their genealogical link with the Burgundian court of Philip the Good, where black became the standard colour, and the habit of Spanish King Philip II to almost exclusively dress in black garments.⁹⁷

⁸⁸ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 18; Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, 107-131; Dominique Cardon, "Du «Verme Cremexe» au «Veluto Chremesino»: Une Filière Vénitienne du Cramoisi au XVe Siècle," in *La Seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento*, 63-73; Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 101-102.

⁸⁹ Lisa Monnas, "Some Medieval Colour Terms for Textiles," *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 10 (2014), 43-46.

⁹⁰ A colour that is mentioned one time in Noailles' inventory is scarlet-violet (*escarlante violette*, referring to *écarlate violet*).

⁹¹ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 18-21.

⁹² Kraatz, "Le Décor Tissé au XVIe Siècle en France", 63.

⁹³ Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians*, 9-18; Rosenthal, "Clothing, Fashion, Dress and Costume in Venice", 920-922.

⁹⁴ Levi-Pisetzky, *Il Costume e la Moda*, 74; Michel Pastoureau, *Noir: Histoire d'une Couleur* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 95-104.

⁹⁵ Roche, *La Culture des Apparences*, 127.

⁹⁶ Ago, *Gusto for Things*, 112-113.

⁹⁷ For more information on the Burgundian and Spanish use of black dress, see: John Harvey, *Men in Black* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), ch. 2 and 3; Sophie Jolivet, "La Construction d'une Image: Philippe le Bon et le Noir (1419-1467)," in *Se Vêtir à la Cour en Europe*, 27-42.

Hence, even though there existed a taste for bright colours during the early modern period, black could not be thrust off its dominant position. So when Baldassare Castiglione addressed the question of what the attire of courtiers should look like in his *Il Cortegiano*, he singled out black as the most agreeable colour as it was sober, restrained and grave.⁹⁸ Still, black was a paradoxical colour: it was traditionally associated with death, mourning and shame but transformed from a colour that signified loss to a colour representing rank, authority and reputation. Moreover, the process of producing black dye for luxurious materials, such as silk, was arduous and expensive; consequently, lavish black costumes were a sign of social distinction as only the rich could afford it. Black dress thus became increasingly the signature of wealth and, therefore, the suitable colour for both high clergy and princes.⁹⁹

Looking at François de Noailles' inventory, the majority of his wardrobe was indeed composed of black garments. Black offered Noailles the opportunity to manifest his prosperity and elegance without being ostentatious and vain. It was therefore the perfect colour to express his *gravitas* as ambassador. During the sixteenth century, particularly black velvet was in vogue. Noailles' wardrobe attests to his taste for fashion as it is filled with robes, camails, coats, sayons, hosen and moneybags made precisely of this material. These were probably not dyed by Venetian artisans because Venetian black was of poor quality and this was immediately exposed when applied to the pile wraps of velvet, since the colour faded very quickly. This was one of the arguments that Verona put forward in their battle with Venice for the permission to produce their own black velvet, which they eventually won in 1554.¹⁰⁰ The obtaining of a deep black colour for velvet required a lot of skill, time and a combination of several dyes.¹⁰¹ Hence, black velvet was an expensive, but not flamboyant, garment.

As already emphasised, Noailles preference for garments dyed in black and variations of red was in line with Venetian fashions. Additionally, it is important to highlight that black, crimson and scarlet were equally important in French society, where they likewise served as indicators of social status. Just as their supremacy in textile furnishings, as pointed out in

⁹⁸ Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, book II, XXVII, 158.

⁹⁹ For more information on the evolution and meaning of black dress in early modern society, see: Harvey, *Men in Black*, 41-69; Paresys, "The Dressed Body", 240; Amedeo Quondam, *Tutti i Colori del Nero: Moda e Cultura del Gentiluomo nel Rinascimento* (Vicenza: Angelo Colla Editore, 2007); Pastoureaux, *Noir*, 77-149; Chiara Buss, "Bellissimo Color Nigro," in *Seta Oro Cremisi: Segreti e Tecnologia alla Corte dei Visconti e degli Sforza*, ed. Chiara Buss (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2009), 110-111; John Harvey, *The Story of Black* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 83-110.

¹⁰⁰ Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, 265.

¹⁰¹ Lisa Monnas, *Renaissance Velvets* (London: V&A Publications, 2012), 24.

Chapter 4, these colours dominated the wardrobe of the elite. Again, the members of the Guise family can be cited as a good example. The analysis of their wardrobes in the sixteenth century by Marjorie Meiss-Even has exposed their inclination towards black and red colours to underline their magnificent, noble status. Moreover, the wearing of red was also a religious statement, as this colour was traditionally associated with the papacy. Consequently, it stressed the allegiance of the Guise family to the pope during the turbulent period of the religious wars in France.¹⁰² The socio-political meanings of Noailles' dress should thus also be linked to the French context.

Besides cloth and colour, additional ornamentations could enhance the richness of sartorial appearances. The clothes of the wealthy were often garnished with patterns and jewels, though fur also constituted an essential part of the wardrobe. Seeing that fur signified luxury, prosperous men used various types of fur as linings and trims. Moreover, it was appreciated for its comfort and warmth.¹⁰³ Noailles owned several robes and sayons lined with martens, lynx, sables and black and white lambs; all commonly employed furs in the wardrobe of the early modern elite.¹⁰⁴ Especially fur from sables was a highly sought-after and prestigious accessory, as it was of a very good quality, with long hairs and a deep black colour. Moreover, by the middle of the sixteenth century, it was one of the most expensive clothing accessories, even more costly than cloth of gold.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it was commonly reserved for trimmings instead of linings. The fact that Noailles chose these very exotic and rich materials to embellish his outfits is again a striking example of his opulent self-fashioning.

The Ambassador's Two Selves

Up to this point, the chapter has focused on how clothing played a role in constructing the public appearance and identity of an ambassador. Additionally, a consideration of sartorial practices can shed light on the preservation or transformation of the ambassador's occupational and private status and identity since, as Juan Antonio de Vera stated it, "an

¹⁰² Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 53.

¹⁰³ Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 168.

¹⁰⁴ The terms used in Noailles' inventory are: *martres* (martens); *loup-serviers*, or *loup-cerviers* (lynx); *martres sublimes*, a variation on the scientific term *martes zibellina* and the vulgarisation *martre zibeline* (sables); *agneaux noirs* (black lambs); and *agneaux blancs* (white lambs).

¹⁰⁵ Denis Diderot, *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers, par une Société de Gens de Lettres*, vol. 17: *Venerien-Z* (Geneva: Jean Léonard-Pellet, 1765), 713; Tawny Sherrill, "Fleas, Fur, and Fashion: Zibellini as Luxury Accessories of the Renaissance," *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 2 (2006), 121-150.

ambassador represents two persons: the first one is that of his king, the other one is that of his own [...]”.¹⁰⁶ The main alteration of the wardrobe of ambassadors when on mission was that their diplomatic robes were much richer than their national vocational apparel, since they were freed from any professional restrictions or sumptuary laws. An interesting anecdote about the differences in wardrobe during and after a diplomatic mission can be found in the renowned memoirs of the French soldier, diplomat and writer Louis de Rouvroy, better known as Duke of Saint-Simon, in which he recounted life at the French court of King Louis XIV. Saint-Simon ridiculed an ambassador who maintained the clothing habits he had adopted during the time of his embassy and neglected to adjust to the dress code of his noble rank and vocation when he returned to the French court. This narrative demonstrates that diplomatic garments were regarded as something temporary: once the ambassador’s function of representing the magnificence of his king ended, he had no further need of such grand apparel.¹⁰⁷

As the portrayals of diplomatic attire described above have illustrated, ambassadors in the first place indeed preferred luxurious garments that did justice to their royal representation, in which they chose only to hold onto their occupational insignia when this served the occasion or reflected their honorary status.¹⁰⁸ Abraham de Wicquefort, however, was of the opinion in his diplomatic treatise that prelates and magistrates who acted as ambassadors should make their profession visible in their diplomatic attire.¹⁰⁹ It appears from his inventory that François de Noailles, who was a bishop, tackled the issue of visualising his different identities by opting for two separate sets of clothing: one conforming to his diplomatic, aristocratic status and one in line with his French ecclesiastical vocation. Just like a diplomatic identity, an ecclesiastical identity was acquired throughout the course of a lifetime; while you were born as a nobleman, you were not born as a member of the clergy. In France, the French king personally awarded clerical appointments, and as a result of this royal patronage and political control over the episcopate, French bishops not only represented

¹⁰⁶ de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 2, 117r: “Dos personas son las que representa el Enbaxador: una la de su Rei, otra la suia propria [...]”.

¹⁰⁷ Guillaume Hanotin, “Représenter le Roi de France à la Cour de Madrid: Entre Confiance, «Majesté» et Liens Familiaux,” in *À la Place du Roi: Vice-Rois, Gouverneurs et Ambassadeurs dans les Monarchies Française et Espagnole (XVIe–XVIIIe Siècles)*, eds. Daniel Aznar, Guillaume Hanotin, and Niels F. May (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2014), 142-143.

¹⁰⁸ For example, the French nobility could hold on to their right to carry a weapon; see the above-described anecdote about the French ambassador at the Ottoman Empire, recounted in: Vogel, “The Caftan and the Sword”, 25-44.

¹⁰⁹ de Wicquefort, *L’Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 316.

their Church, but also their king.¹¹⁰ François de Noailles had been appointed as bishop just before his departure to Venice in 1556 as a reward for his loyal service and diplomatic activities in England.¹¹¹ Thus, as a member of the French episcopate, he had to respect the prescripts of ecclesiastical garments. Even during his Venetian residency, his inventory confirms that he possessed several clerical gowns.¹¹²

A subsection in Noailles' inventory entitled "Cassocks, Mantelets and Camails" (*Soutanes, Mantelets et Camails*) grouped together Noailles' ecclesiastical wardrobe.¹¹³ Noailles owned eight camails, six cassocks and two mantelets in various colours: black, crimson-violet, violet and scarlet-violet, these were all made of miscellaneous luxurious materials: camlet, taffeta, serge, velvet, satin, damask and mohair. In some cases, his three clerical garments were made of the same colour and material, creating a complete ecclesiastical outfit. The colours applied were in line with the religious sartorial guidelines, which is reflected in the dominance of violet shades, purple being the traditional colour for the garments of French bishops. The fact that Noailles transported a wide range of sumptuous clerical suits from France, or had them tailored in Venice, suggests that he actually wore them during the time of his mission.

The presence of both secular and clerical robes implies that Noailles displayed two layers of identity: on the one hand, a lay, ambassadorial image, on the other hand, an ecclesiastic appearance. This theory can be strengthened by considering the wardrobe choices of some prominent sixteenth-century cardinal-princes, who, similarly to Noailles, possessed two different sets of clothing. The example of two sixteenth-century contemporaries can be given here: Ippolito d'Este and Ippolito de' Medici. Both men were members of powerful princely families and pursued ecclesiastical careers, culminating in their appointment as cardinal. Even though he was a prelate, Ippolito d'Este dressed like a secular prince in traditional aristocratic robes. Of the over 400 items listed in his inventory dating from 1535, only 43 items were religious. Even after he was appointed as cardinal in 1539, he continued to prefer a secular style above clerical clothes. While he wore his official cardinal's wardrobe when attending formal occasions, he still adorned himself as a magnificent prince during social

¹¹⁰ For more information on the appointments of bishops in early modern France, see: Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate*, ch. 2.

¹¹¹ This was a common practice in France, see: Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate*, 287.

¹¹² *Inventaire des Meubles, Robbes et autres Accoustremens qui ont esté trouvez en la Garderobbe de Monseigneur L'Evesque Dacqs à Venize*, 26 May 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 78v.

¹¹³ Both cassocks and mantelets are long garments reserved for clergymen, and camails are short capes worn over the cassocks.

events.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Ippolito de' Medici opted for a secular, in his case military, appearance. He consciously renounced dressing himself in ecclesiastical robes in order to escape the expectations of a decorous lifestyle that were attached to this identity and, more importantly, to showcase his secular, political ambitions. He was not satisfied with the new role of cardinal that was assigned to him by his uncle Pope Clement VII, since he desired political power instead. Only for certain events did he embellish himself as a cardinal.¹¹⁵

However, contrary to these cardinal-princes, François de Noailles most probably often favoured his ecclesiastical garments, especially during prominent ceremonies and audiences, as they could offer him advantages over other ambassadors in Venice.¹¹⁶ Noailles' ecclesiastical status heightened his ambassadorial rank and his claims to royal representation. Therefore, he would transform or merge both identities when desirable and opportune for issues related to status and esteem.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that, at times, Noailles was allowed by the Venetian authorities to celebrate a public Mass, since we know that sixteenth-century Spanish cleric-ambassadors in Venice were granted this honour as part of the festivities surrounding special events.¹¹⁸ During such occasions, Noailles would have appeared in lavish religious costume.

A painting and drawing with a portrait of François de Noailles as bishop of Dax by eighteenth-century French painter and engraver Jean-Baptiste Oudry gives a very good impression of Noailles' clerical gowns (Figures 2 and 3).¹¹⁹ The portrait painting was ordered by the Duke of Noailles, Adrien-Maurice, in the first half of the eighteenth century to display in his gallery at the castle of Mouchy. Today, it still belongs to the private collection of the duke of Mouchy and Poix. The drawing accompanying the painting is part of an album consisting of two volumes with a collection of 104 drawings made by Oudry. In this album,

¹¹⁴ Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat*, 177-179; 238.

¹¹⁵ Rebecchini, "*Un Altro Lorenzo*", 157-169.

¹¹⁶ Burns, "Cleric-Diplomats and the Sixteenth-Century French State", 722.

¹¹⁷ The differentiation that I make between lay and ecclesiastical garments and identities deserves to be closely examined with regard to other cleric ambassadors in order to come to more general conclusions. The context of the assigned court also has to be kept in mind when considering this distinction. In Rome, ecclesiastical ambassadors always had to wear their clerical garments; a clear separation was made between the outfits worn by clerics and laymen who acted as ambassadors. For a brief discussion on this, see: Valérie Mathevon, "*Le Cérémonial des Ambassadeurs: La Monarchie Française, l'Etat Pontifical et le Rituel Diplomatique*" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2006), 105-114.

¹¹⁸ For example, Diego Guzmán de Silva, Spanish ambassador and canon, was appointed to perform several Masses that were organised to celebrate great events: the conclusion of the Holy League between Spain, Rome and Venice, and the Christian victory at the Battle of Lepanto, both in 1571. Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 32-33.

¹¹⁹ Both the painting and drawing have already been published in: Vincent Guichenuy, "Portraits Méconnus et Inédits d'Évêques de Dax," *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* 498, no. 2 (2010), 141-154.

Oudry sketched all the paintings he made between approximately 1713 and 1725.¹²⁰ It cannot be determined with absolute certainty on which existing depiction of Noailles Oudry based this painting and drawing. According to René Fage, the most plausible explanation is that Oudry was provided with a portrait of Noailles engraved by German artist Nicolaus Andrea in 1578, which is lost today.¹²¹ Although it is not a contemporary representation of Noailles, the depicted clerical clothing is similar to the garments described in his inventory of 1561 and, therefore, the painting offers a rich visual expression of his ecclesiastical wardrobe.

Oudry paid careful attention to the sartorial details in his portrayal of Noailles. The bishop is dressed sumptuously in a long violet-blue robe and camail with red buttons, a white rochet and a black bonnet tricorne. Even though the sixteenth-century print of Nicolaus Andrea on which Oudry most probably based his painting was in black and white, the colours match the abundance of violet-purple shades in Noailles' wardrobe. Noailles' face is more carefully represented in the painting than in the drawing; he is depicted as bald with a blond-red beard and moustache. He holds a red book in his left hand, underlining his knowledge, and is standing on a paved terrace, decorated with a column and heavy orange curtain, behind which we see a glimpse of trees and plants.¹²² This background was almost identical to Oudry's drawing of François' brother Gilles de Noailles and, therefore, probably does not refer to the actual surroundings of the portrayed individuals. A last observation that has to be made is that a second portrait of François de Noailles wearing his clerical robes has been preserved in the castle of Maintenon, which was inherited by the descendants of the commissioner of the original painting, Duke Adrien-Maurice (Figure 4). The dimensions and ornamentation of the painting imply that it was specifically made for the gallery of the castle, where illustrious individuals were glorified. The portrait is almost an exact copy of the one that was on display in Mouchy, with François de Noailles wearing identical garments, but the

¹²⁰ A detailed description of Oudry's album can be found in: Jean Cordey, "Albums de Portraits Inédits Peints par Oudry," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (1920), 140-191.

¹²¹ Not much is known about Nicolaus Andrea; the only thing we know with certainty is that he resided in Constantinople for some time, where he drew the surviving portrait of François' brother Gilles de Noailles. Jean-Baptiste Oudry also depicted Gilles in his album (and a painting that is lost today) and here we clearly see resemblances with the drawing of Andrea with regard to Gilles' clothing and physiognomy. It thus seems very likely that Oudry was presented with this portrait to base his work on. This reinforces Fage's theory that François' depiction was likewise based on the drawing by Andrea, made around the same time as Gilles' portrait. Andrea's portrait of François appeared for the last time in 1857, when it was sold from the collection of the viscount of Combrouse, but it could not be located today. René Fage, "Les Noailles Peints par Oudry," *Bulletin de la Société Scientifique Historique et Archéologique de la Corrèze* 1 (1922), 47-51.

¹²² A description of the painting can also be found in: Cordey, "Albums de Portraits Inédits Peints par Oudry", 184-185.

colours and certain details differ, suggesting that it was not painted by Oudry but by another artist, copying Oudry's original.¹²³

The wardrobe of Noailles has already revealed that clothes constituted a complex system of codes and transferred meanings at various political and social levels. Additionally interesting to consider is the divergence between domestic dress, suited for private occasions at home, and the official uniform, worn when entering the public, political arena. Cesare Vecellio commented on how these different spheres were reflected in clothing in his famous costume book *Degli Habiti Antichi et Moderni di Diverse Parti del Mondo*. Vecellio occasionally depicted men and women both outside and inside their home, wearing distinctive garments, and, in this way, he captured the transformation of wardrobes according to locations.¹²⁴ For example, a Venetian nobleman did not wear his professional toga at home but preferred long floor-length overgowns without any waist seam, such as the *zimarra*. This does not mean, however, that the domestic garments were of lesser quality.¹²⁵ More informal garments should not be considered as inferior to ceremonial robes but, instead, as an equally important expression of another layer of identity.

The practice of dressing according to the occasion is reflected in encounters that took place inside the embassy. When ambassadors decided to meet officials as private individuals at each other's homes, they enjoyed greater liberty in selecting their costumes and switching between identities. Diplomatic treatises pointed to the distinctions between appearing at public and private occasions. Juan Antonio de Vera, for example, was of the opinion that:

[...] the Ambassador, as a minister, has to uphold the authority and decorum of his Prince and his office at public solemnities, audiences and meetings, which he is called to attend, but outside of those, in the domestic sphere and at private visits, informal banquets and ordinary conversations, even though he is still the same ambassador, he has to temper the public decorum with private informality, trying to seem much more who he is, than who he seems to be [...]¹²⁶

Philippe de la Canaye, French ambassador in Venice during the early seventeenth century, provides an interesting example of how an ambassador could manipulate the situation by

¹²³ Guichenuy, "Portraits Méconnus et Inédits d'Évêques de Dax", 149-151.

¹²⁴ Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy*, 107-108.

¹²⁵ Vecellio, *Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, 165-166.

¹²⁶ de Vera, *El Enbaxador*, discourse 2, 117r-117v: "[...] el Enbaxador en las solenidades publicas, en las audiencias, en las juntas que se halla, como ministro deve satisfacer la autoridad, i decoro de su Principe, i de su oficio, mas fuera de allí en el trato domestico, en las visitas privadas, en los conbites familiares, en los razonamientos ordinarios, bien que el mismo Enbaxador se queda, deve tenplar el decoro publico, con la llaneza particular, desseando mas parecer el que es, que el que parece [...]"

playing with the differences between official and unofficial clothes. Canaye exchanged his public personality for an informal appearance in order to bypass ceremonial rules. His predecessor had only visited formally appointed ambassadors during his mission and refused to interact with diplomatic agents without the official title of ambassador, since they had a lower status. Canaye, instead, realised that these agents were a significant source of information and that he would be deprived of their knowledge if he could not meet with them. Consequently, he resolved this dilemma by “[...] visiting them as private persons, without ceremony, with a small entourage, and in domestic clothes [...]”.¹²⁷ In this way, he did not grant agents the same honours as ambassadors, but could still extract useful intelligence from them during these more informal gatherings. Canaye applied a similar strategy during his first visit with the papal nuncio: the nuncio came to his house without wearing his rochet, a ceremonial garment, and thus Canaye likewise dressed as a private individual when returning the visit, dressed only in a mantle.¹²⁸ In doing this, Canaye not only expressed his dual identity, but also delivered a strong political message: in his view, the French king and the pope were on the same footing.

While the analysis of François de Noailles’ clerical garments has revealed his desire to adhere to his ecclesiastical status, Philippe de la Canaye’s sartorial choices have shown that we need to distinguish sharply between the ways that ambassadors used clothing in formal, ceremonial contexts, on the one hand, and in informal, domestic contexts, on the other. Even amongst ambassadors, who were always representing their king during the time of their embassy, we can still detect personal expression and the need to assume different roles in different contexts. By approaching diplomatic dress from both the occupational and domestic angle, this examination has uncovered the fascinating reflection of the dual persona of the ambassador in his clothing strategies. Dress was deeply imbued with various messages, which can only be deciphered when considering the ambassador in all his complexity.

The Embellishment of the Dressed Body: Footwear and Accessories

Garments were not the only factors in the moulding of a sumptuous appearance; in the attire of wealthy men, shoes and accoutrements always accompanied dress. Footwear was a visible aspect of men’s costumes; a widespread fashion was to reveal the under legs so that the shoes

¹²⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 19 October 1601, in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 9-10: “[...] de les visiter comme personnes privées, sans ceremonie, avec petite suite, et en habit domestique [...]”.

¹²⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 16 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 41; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Guillaume Ancel, 23 November 1601 in *ibid.*, 51.

immediately caught the eye. Careful attention was devoted to the selection of appropriate footwear as it was understood as a cultural agent reflecting status.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, footwear has long been considered a marginal accessory. Only after the emergence of renewed perspectives in fashion history during the 1980s and 1990s did shoes become the subject of a vast range of scholarly literature. Studies now recognise the importance of footwear in early modern society since, just as dress, shoes convey information about the wearer's character, social position and cultural and political affiliations. Not only did the history of footwear gain a place within dress studies, it also became a subject of economic and social history, as it is identified as an important item of production, retail and consumption.¹³⁰

Already during the Middle Ages, shoes constituted an important consumer item and were very diversified accessories.¹³¹ This shoe fashion persisted and intensified during the early modern period, which is for example indicated by Roberta Orsi Landini's example of the shoe collection of Duke Cosimo de' Medici's son, Francesco. In the space of two years, Francesco owned 200 pairs of shoes, mules and boots, of which 86 were made within the time frame of only nine months.¹³² Similarly, the early modern elite possessed a wide variety of footwear.¹³³ This is clearly mirrored in Noailles' collection: in total he owned 30 pairs of shoes during the time of his residency in Venice. His wide assortment indicates that he engaged in shoe fashions and wanted his footwear to be adjusted to the occasion in order to respect etiquette and convey refinement.

In Noailles' inventory, a distinction is made between six types of footwear: *souliers*, *pantoufles*, *mules*, *chaussons*, *bottines* and *bottes*. Footwear often had different names in different cities, therefore, it can be challenging to expose the exact nature of the various terms of shoes. *Souliers*, *pantoufles* and *mules*, of which Noailles possessed exemplars in both velvet and leather, were all types of slip-on, backless overshoes, commonly used to cover precious shoes in order to protect them. Whereas the leather overshoes were more suitable for daily and outdoor wear, the velvet pairs were reserved for elegant ceremonial occasions and for indoors.¹³⁴ *Chaussons* were similarly a type of open, backless and soleless

¹²⁹ Ulinka Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance," *Past & Present* 219, no. 1 (2013), 55-56.

¹³⁰ The studies by Giorgio Riello are good examples of these new approaches; he also gives a clear overview of the place that footwear has occupied in historical research: Giorgio Riello, *A Foot in the Past: Consumers, Producers and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil, eds., *Shoes: A History from Sandals to Sneakers* (Oxford: Berg, 2006).

¹³¹ June Swann, "English and European Shoes from 1200 to 1520," in *Fashion and Clothing in Late Medieval Europe*, eds. Rainer Christoph Schwinges and Regula Schorta (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2010), 15-23.

¹³² Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 34; 159.

¹³³ See, for example, Ulinka Rublack's study of the shoe collection of Hans Fugger of Augsburg (1531-1598): Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance".

¹³⁴ Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 159-163; Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance", 57-59; 63; 66.

shoes, probably mostly used to wear inside the house. The term *bottines* referred to Noailles' ankle boots, which were close-fitting and used for everyday wear, while *bottes* were most likely his riding boots, as they are qualified as *grasses* and listed together with three pairs of spurs.¹³⁵ Only for his *bottines* the colours are specified, namely black and white, yet, the colours of his other shoes were most probably customised to match his outfits. Noailles' Venetian correspondence does not convey any information about the provenance and acquisition of his footwear. The fact that he did not request the purchase of shoes by his commercial agents suggests that he bought them locally. The shoe industry was highly developed in Venice and shoemakers constituted a large group in the Venetian marketplace.¹³⁶

Appearances were further enhanced with sartorial decorations, which carried great monetary and cultural worth. Both men and women adorned their clothing to display status, beauty and wealth. Accessories could vary from lavish jewellery to handkerchiefs, and perceptions ranged from positive public regard to accusations of excessive ostentation.¹³⁷ Noailles' inventory does, strangely enough, only mention one jewellery item: watches. He bought one watch from Ferrara with a value of 25 *écu*, which was described as a *monstre d'orologie avec la clochette*, indicating that it was a pocket watch with a ringer.¹³⁸ Additionally, he ordered two watches from France from his secretary Milan, who was returning from a trip to the French court. Noailles insisted on good quality and one of them, again, had to ring.¹³⁹ France was known to produce quality watches and clocks throughout the Renaissance and the mechanism of ringing every hour or at specific times was already experimented with from the early stage.¹⁴⁰ In the mid-sixteenth century, the portable variant used to enrich the sartorial appearance was still a relatively new decorative item. It had been

¹³⁵ Similarly, some boots in the shoe collection of Cosimo I de' Medici are referred to as *grossi*. According to Orsi Landini, this means that they were most probably heavier and reserved for sports and riding: Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 162.

¹³⁶ For an overview of guild membership, see: Richard Tilden Rapp, *Industria e Decadenza Economica a Venezia nel XVII Secolo* (Rome: Il Veltro Editrice, 1986), 86-90.

¹³⁷ Bella Mirabella, introduction to *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories*, ed. Bella Mirabella (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 1-10.

¹³⁸ Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 25 February 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 11r.

¹³⁹ Letter from François de Noailles to Milan, n.d. [February 1562]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 133v.

¹⁴⁰ However, especially artisans from the German lands were renowned for skilfully mastering the art of watchmaking. On both German and French watch- and clockmaking centres, see, for instance: Catherine Cardinal, "L'Horloge, Un Objet Emblématique de la Renaissance," in *Trésors d'Horlogerie: Le Temps et Sa Mesure du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance. Exposition du 30 Mai au 27 Septembre 1998 au Palais des Papes, Avignon*, eds. Catherine Cardinal and Dominique Vingtain (Avignon: Edition RMG - Palais des Papes, 1998), 19-29; Jakob Messerli, "L'Horlogerie dans l'Espace Germanophone de 1550 à 1650," in *Trésors d'Horlogerie*, 77-79.

introduced during the last quarter of the fifteenth century and gradually spread over the courts of western Europe during the first half of the sixteenth century. The popularity of watches and clocks was due to their embodiment of both artistic beauty and technical finesse. Furthermore, the new conception of carefully managing time that arose in the Renaissance contributed to the desire to always carry a watch in order to be able to control and better spend time.¹⁴¹

Surprisingly, Noailles' inventory does not contain any devotional jewellery, which became increasingly popular during the early modern period. The later French ambassador in Venice, Philippe de la Canaye, did make mention of both Agnus Dei and rosaries that he acquired from the French ambassador in Rome, Charles de Neufville, also known as the marquis of Alincourt.¹⁴² Agnus Dei were circular medallions, made out of the wax of the candle burned during the Easter celebrations. They were blessed by the pope and imprinted on one side with the image of the Lamb of God. It was believed that Agnus Dei would, on the one hand, protect the owner against any evil and, on the other hand, destroy sins and augment virtues. They were hung in the home, mainly above the bed, or worn on the skin for constant protection.¹⁴³ As Canaye mentioned them together with rosaries, he and his wife probably used Agnus Dei as devotional jewellery. Rosaries, necklaces with beads representing prayers, were equally popular objects of devotion. Typically, they were composed of five sets of ten beads, marking the Ave Marias, separated by a larger Paternoster bead.¹⁴⁴ Philippe de la Canaye was extremely grateful to Alincourt for sending him these objects of domestic devotion, which he could easily carry with him as talismans.

Returning to Noailles' wardrobe, despite the relative absence of jewellery, other ornaments are listed in great numbers in his inventory: hats, gloves, belts, moneybags, masks and handkerchiefs. Instead of being qualified as trivial aspects, these accoutrements should be considered in their own right. In the first place, throughout the Middle Ages and early modern period, hats were ubiquitous. They served as cultural markers and were employed as indicators of social and professional standing and political stance.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, academic

¹⁴¹ Cardinal, "L'Horloge, Un Objet Emblématique de la Renaissance", 19-29.

¹⁴² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 15 April 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 3; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Alincourt, 6 May 1606 in *ibid.*, 31.

¹⁴³ Syson and Thornton, *Objects of Virtue*, 61-62; Lucia Dacome, "Women, Wax and Anatomy in the 'Century of Things'," eds. Sandra Cavallo and David Gentilcore, *Renaissance Studies Special Issues: Spaces, Objects and Identities in Early Modern Italian Medicine* 21, no. 4 (2007), 541.

¹⁴⁴ Irene Galandra Cooper and Mary Laven, "The Material Culture of Piety in the Italian Renaissance: Re-Touching the Rosary," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Tara Hamling, Catherine Richardson, and David Gaimster (London, New York: Routledge, forthcoming 2017).

¹⁴⁵ See the article by Katharina Simon-Muscheid for examples of how hats were clearly used to signify a collective political identity and to construct alliances: Katharina Simon-Muscheid, "Les Couvre-Chefs au Bas

research into their fabrication, outlook and application is relatively scarce. Historians have pointed to their function as protection against weather situations and the link between hats and health, but their social function is more difficult to uncover. This is partly due to the fact that sources remain silent about the uses of headdresses, and treatises on comportment, that customarily included an analysis of appropriate dress, often overlooked the meaning of headgear.¹⁴⁶

Nonetheless, codes of etiquette about the wearing and removing of hats reveal their important role in the hierarchy of ranks. While the doffing of the headgear implied an inferior position, the permission to cover one's head was a sign of favour.¹⁴⁷ Especially when considering the world of diplomacy, the importance of hats becomes visible, however, just as with dress, different societies implemented their own customs. For instance, at the Ottoman court, there existed a very different diplomatic ceremonial etiquette: whereas in Europe the removing of one's hat was a sign of friendship and respect, in the Ottoman Empire ambassadors had to keep their hats on during audiences.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, practices varied also between European courts. The famous memoirs of Saint-Simon narrated a story about the divergence of hat practices. Under French King Henry IV, the Spanish ambassador, Duke d'Osuna, triggered a change of habits at the French court when, during a walk with the king, he covered his head at the same time as Henry IV. Saint-Simon recounted that at the Spanish court it was the custom to put on the hat simultaneously with the monarch. The French king, however, was very displeased with this action and, therefore, he ordered all the *grands du royaume* to cover their head. They were to maintain this practice as the king wanted to grant a privileged position neither to foreign ambassadors nor, by extension, to their sovereigns.¹⁴⁹

Quarrels about hat requirements also occurred regularly amongst foreign ambassadors, especially when they contested the removal of their headdresses. Diplomatic letters occasionally mention these honour disputes, such as the clash between the Spanish and Tuscan ambassador at the English court in 1603. When they encountered each other, the Spanish ambassador suddenly looked away to observe a bird, and with this act refused to formally greet his colleague. No one of his entourage removed his hat for the Tuscan

Moyen Âge: Marqueurs Culturels et Insignes Politiques,” in *Fashion and Clothing in Late Medieval Europe*, 45-60.

¹⁴⁶ Simon-Muscheid, “Les Couvre-Chefs au Bas Moyen Âge”, 45-60; Tiphaine Gaumy, “De l’Histoire du Couvre-Chef au XVIe Siècle,” *Revue de l’Art* 174, no. 4 (2011), 83-89.

¹⁴⁷ Gaumy, “De l’Histoire du Couvre-Chef au XVIe Siècle”, 88.

¹⁴⁸ Maria Pia Pedani, “The Sultan and the Venetian Bailo: Ceremonial Diplomatic Protocol in Istanbul,” in *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell*, 297.

¹⁴⁹ Recounted in: Mathevon, “Le Cérémonial des Ambassadeurs”, 161-162.

ambassador, which was regarded as a great offense.¹⁵⁰ This incident can be understood when considering the nature of the diplomatic relations maintained between Spain and Tuscany in the early seventeenth century. Duke Ferdinando de' Medici had opted for a pro-French foreign policy because he wished to counterbalance Spanish power. Consequently, the relations between Spain and Tuscany were strained, which would explain why the Spanish ambassador refused to honour his Tuscan colleague.¹⁵¹

The example of the dispute between the Spanish and Tuscan ambassador illustrates the link between political standing and the (un)covering of the head, something that was very significant in the diplomatic world in which hat doffing was considered to reflect princely power. As a result, it is not surprising that ambassadors owned a large quantity of headgears. François de Noailles' inventory distinguishes five categories: headgears (*couvre-chefs*), hats (*chapeaux*), coifs (*coiffes*), bonnets (*bonnets*) and nightcaps (*bonnets de nuit*).¹⁵² Additionally, he owned one *papefigon* (it. *pappafico*), a kind of hood worn underneath the hat when travelling, which also covered the shoulders and could be raised to protect the face.¹⁵³ Noailles' headdresses were made of refined materials: silk, taffeta, crepe or veil, velvet, felt and straw. In Venice, hats had their own hierarchies with regard to colour. Throughout the sixteenth century, black remained the most privileged colour, followed by white and grey; brighter colours were normally reserved for special occasions.¹⁵⁴ In Noailles' collection, the colour is almost always specified and black and white indeed occurred regularly. Additionally, various examples of crimson and violet are detected, dyes that were completely in line with his elevated rank. Particularly interesting is that several of Noailles' hats were made in the oriental style. His collection comprised four coifs in gold and silk *à la Turque* and four small bonnets *piqué* from the Levant. Noailles even owned two nightcaps in Turkish style, thus, also his intimate spheres were characterised by his preference for oriental fashions. This illustrates that he did not only require eastern objects for the status they embodied, but also to satisfy his personal taste.

¹⁵⁰ Extract of a letter from Christophe de Harlay to Secretary of State Villeroy, 18 December 1603: AMAE, Mémoires et Documents, vol. 1819, f. 143.

¹⁵¹ Alessandra Contini, "Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century," in *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy*, 88-89.

¹⁵² See the tables and graphs for an overview of Noailles' hat collection. The terms *couvre-chef* and *chapeau* are both overarching terms that encompass different types of head coverings, therefore, their exact nature is difficult to determine. I have used two different english translations to avoid confusion.

¹⁵³ Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 155.

¹⁵⁴ Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass (1250-1550)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 178; Gaumy, "De l'Histoire du Couvre-Chef au XVIe Siècle", 87.

Besides hats, gloves were precious accessories in early modern wardrobes. It is therefore astonishing that Noailles' inventory only mentions two pairs: one in crimson silk, decorated with gold, and one in deer leather. He must have owned several other items adjusted to his various outfits but, unfortunately, no further knowledge about his collection of gloves can be derived from his manuscripts. The same is true for belts, of which only two items embellished with silk and gold are listed in the inventory. Contrary to gloves and belts, *escarcelles*, belt-bags or moneybags, are recorded in larger numbers in the inventory. Noailles certainly owned nine exemplars, which were fashioned with various materials: silk, velvet, mohair and leather. Apart from one example in violet, the dominant colour was black. To heighten their value even more, two items were *damasquiné*, the iron was inlaid with gold and silver, and three items were garnished with gold and silver threads. Additionally, his inventory contains one bigger bag (*bourse*) of silk, which must have been very exquisite as it was decorated with figures in gold and silk.

Furthermore, Noailles had gathered a great number of masks, namely 26, of which 12 were purchased by Odet de Carrières, his agent in Ferrara and Modena.¹⁵⁵ In Venice, masks constituted an essential aspect of daily life; they were not only worn during carnival, but also during ceremonies and feasts, and masked nobles could even welcome ambassadors.¹⁵⁶ Modena, which formed part of the territory of the dukes of Ferrara, was known throughout Italy and beyond as a mask-making centre, with sculptor and painter Guido Mazzoni as one of the most famous producers of masks in the late fifteenth century.¹⁵⁷ The fact that Noailles consciously bought his masks in Modena is again evidence of his knowledge of where to find quality products.

Lastly, handkerchiefs became increasingly popular during the sixteenth century to embellish one's attire.¹⁵⁸ Handkerchiefs are considered very mundane in modern times, but they served as an important fashion item in early modern Europe. However, the uses and meanings of handkerchiefs could be paradoxical: on the one hand, people used them to intercept tears and snot; on the other hand, they functioned as a symbol of beauty and cleanliness. Cleanliness, in turn, was linked with nobility and dignity, thus, handkerchiefs

¹⁵⁵ Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 15 January 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 739.

¹⁵⁶ Molmenti, *La Storia di Venezia*, vol. 2, 87; James H. Johnson, *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 47.

¹⁵⁷ Francesco Cognasso, *L'Italia nel Rinascimento*, part 1, vol. 5 of *Società e Costume: Panorama di Storia Sociale e Tecnologica*, edited by Mario Attilio Levi (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1965), 530-532; Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England* (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 60.

¹⁵⁸ Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII*, 112.

were connected with virtue and appropriate behaviour.¹⁵⁹ Noailles owned 23 items, of which the major part was white and of an undefined material. However, three of them were very refined and probably used as sartorial decoration during special occasions: one of silk with gold in the corners, one of violet silk and one in Turkish style with gold wires. The later French ambassador in Venice, André Hurault de Maise, likewise adorned his dress with Levantine handkerchiefs.¹⁶⁰

Liveries for the Embassy

In addition to the importance of appropriate dress and accessories for the ambassador, the members of the diplomatic family likewise needed to be impeccably dressed in outfits that identified their link with the diplomatic household. Suitable dress for servants was an important issue during the early modern period and, according to contemporary treatises on family life, it was regarded as a duty of the head of the family to oversee that household members were properly dressed, in line with their function and rank.¹⁶¹ Therefore, in both royal and smaller sixteenth-century courts, it was common practice to provide befitting clothing for the domestics.¹⁶² Noailles' account of extraordinary expenses dating from 1561 mentions the making of clothes for two of his servants, called Antoine and Simon. Although these two men are not officially referred to as domestics, we can be quite certain of this since Noailles only would have paid the costumes, and list this as an expenditure made for the well-being of his embassy, for members of his staff. Moreover, the materials used for their garments were relatively cheaper than those employed for the ambassador's attire, in particular cloth, toile and taffeta, though sometimes also more superior materials, such as silk and leather from Cordoba, were used. They were dressed according to the status of a French diplomatic household in doublets, shirts, hosen in violet and carnation and bonnets in violet. Another member of the domestic staff, an unnamed valet, received a hose, doublet and *giubba*.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Bella Mirabella, "Embellishing Herself with a Cloth: The Contradictory Life of the Handkerchief," in *Ornamentalism*, 59; 63-64.

¹⁶⁰ Letter from André Hurault de Maise to Jacques de Germigny, 22 November 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 30, ff. 357r-358r.

¹⁶¹ Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 80.

¹⁶² See, for example, the sartorial practices at the sixteenth-century court of Ippolito II d'Este, second son of the duke of Ferrara, described in: Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat*, 187.

¹⁶³ Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venise, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 164r-165r.

Especially public events and festivities warranted special attention to dress and sartorial display. The lack of appropriate liveries for servants could be a reason to postpone the solemn entry into the city. For example, in 1625, the Spanish extraordinary ambassador in Rome, the duke of Alcalá, stayed incognito in the city until the clothing for his pages and footmen, which he had ordered from Milan, arrived. Another Spanish ambassador in Rome in 1650, the duke of the Infantado, outfitted his entourage in magnificent velvet costumes for his first official audience. Some months later, completely new liveries in damask were made to attend a public ceremony.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, the members of the French diplomatic family that accompanied the ambassador during public appearances in Venice or diplomatic missions to other Italian courts always had to be superbly dressed. This would ennoble the general appearance of the embassy. In 1587, André Hurault de Maise was sent to congratulate the duke of Mantua's son, Vincenzo Gonzaga, for the birth of his son, deliver presents and take part in the baptism ceremony. He travelled with a suite of 40 people and bought appropriate liveries for four pages and four grooms.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Hurault de Maise does not specify the types of garments but simply states that they were dressed “[...] as it is accustomed for such occasions.”¹⁶⁶

A specific case regarding the dress of diplomatic servants is the clothing of the dragoman, who served the ambassador as interpreter in the Ottoman Empire. The dragoman always accompanied the ambassador when he visited the court to negotiate with the pasha and sultan, therefore, just like the ambassador, he had to appear in appropriate attire. This is exemplified in an appeal of dragoman Marc Antonio Borissi, who assisted the Venetian ambassador, or bailo, at the Ottoman court at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Borissi underlined the necessity of always dressing himself in honourable vestments when he frequented the court. However, the constant buying of clothing put a heavy strain on his finances, as he spent a third of his commission on dress. As a result, he implored the bailo to request an extra annual gift of two garments for the dragoman from the Venetian Senate. The Senate approved Borissi's appeal and assigned him two supplementary vests per year, in satin or damask, in addition to the two vests that he already received annually. The Venetian

¹⁶⁴ Anselmi, *Il Palazzo dell'Ambasciata*, 22.

¹⁶⁵ *Estat de la despence faicte au voyage de Mantoue*, 30 June 1587: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, f. 266r.

¹⁶⁶ Letter from André Hurault de Maise to Secretary of State Villeroy, 30 June 1587: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, f. 263r: “[...] je suis allé accompagné de quarante personnes et ay habillé des pages et des staffières comme il est accoustumé faire en semblables occasions.”

senators realised that it was crucial for the reputation of the bailo, and by extension the Republic, that the dragoman made a grand appearance at the Ottoman court.¹⁶⁷

As these examples illustrate, ambassadors not only carefully selected their own clothing but also that of their entourage. Just as at European courts, where courtiers and their attire were modelled on the king's image in order to become satellites of his magnificence,¹⁶⁸ the staff in the ambassador's household, which personified the prestige of the sovereign's court, likewise needed to be dressed befittingly. Family members played an important role in the image that was created, and poorly outfitted servants could undermine their master's reputation. At the Ottoman court, on the contrary, the clothing of the diplomatic entourage was not so much used to show allegiance to the ambassador as it was adapted to local customs. Just like the ambassador, the men in his suite needed to clothe themselves in Turkish garments during public occasions.¹⁶⁹

Shopping for Clothes: Money and Agents

An analysis of the styles, textiles, colours and accessories present in François de Noailles' wardrobe has offered insight into identity construction. Every sartorial detail was the result of a well-thought-out process, consequently, clothing and accoutrements should be rightly considered as a strong instrument of symbolic communication. The question remains how and where ambassadors in Venice procured these products. The acquisition of clothing and accessories was a much more complex process than just frequenting shops and paying the bills. Firstly, the sumptuous dress required of ambassadors like François de Noailles was extremely expensive, and the diplomatic lifestyle in general already put a strain on the finances of ambassadors. Secondly, Noailles' clothing was not ready-made, but was created in a dynamic process: servants were sent out to shops and markets all over Europe and friends were approached to acquire the necessary materials that would please and fit the ambassador, which were subsequently designed into fashionable garments by tailors. Composing the wardrobe was thus a costly, ongoing and time-consuming activity.

¹⁶⁷ ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Costantinopoli, fz. 12 (4 January 1612).

¹⁶⁸ Chatenet and Lecoq, "Le Roi et Ses Doubles", 26.

¹⁶⁹ See the example of Philippe de la Canaye, who procured Turkish garments to accompany Ambassador François de Noailles during his audience with the pasha and the sultan: de la Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant*, 54; 59.

Clothes as Extraordinary Expenses

As Patricia Allerston has pointed out in her study on the Venetian clothing market, clothes could be very expensive. Numerous factors contributed to the high price of clothing, such as the precious materials used and the costs of dyestuffs. Allerston uses the example of two prominent sixteenth-century Venetians, artist Lorenzo Lotto and ambassador and future doge Leonardo Donà, to illustrate that even the wealthy class experienced difficulties in acquiring expensive vestments.¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, both the general outline of diplomatic attire and the depiction of François de Noailles' wardrobe have revealed the sumptuous nature of ambassadors' garments. Being chosen as a diplomatic representative necessitated expenditure on new clothes. Firstly, before departing on a mission, splendid costumes were tailored in order to properly outfit the embassy for their grand arrival at the foreign court. Secondly, during the time of the residency, ambassadors wished to change clothes regularly to showcase their standing and receive honour.

The question arises which funds were used to procure this lavish apparel since, although French ambassadors were granted 1.000 *écu* for acquiring furnishings, no fixed sum of money was given for the purchasing of clothing. French ambassadors could, however, ask for a reimbursement of their sartorial costs under the banner of extraordinary expenses, and this is exactly what François de Noailles requested just before leaving Venice in 1561.¹⁷¹ In his overview of extraordinary expenses for which he wished to be remunerated, some of the procured textiles are listed with their amount and price.¹⁷² The expectation of an ambassador to be reimbursed for dress materials again illustrates that clothing was regarded as a necessity for the cultivation of the public diplomatic identity and should therefore, at least partially, be paid for with public funds. Similarly, Noailles asked for a compensation of the payments he made for the clothing of the diplomatic staff. Together with the ambassador, they represented the national image abroad, hence, public money was spent on their appearance.¹⁷³ Especially liveries prepared for public ceremonial occasions needed to be funded by the crown. For

¹⁷⁰ Allerston, "Clothing and Early Modern Venetian Society", 372-373. For an example of the high price of clothing in Florence, see: Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 95-114.

¹⁷¹ This is the only time that Noailles listed sartorial costs in his overviews of extraordinary expenses.

¹⁷² Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venise, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 163r-167r. Again, the great variety of the textiles and colours used becomes apparent as serge (*serge*), taffeta (*taffetas*), satin (*satins*), toile (*toile*), tabby (*tabis*), *armoisi* and velvet (*velours*), in violet, yellow, black, crimson and green, are summed up, of which hosen, doublets, mantles and belts were made.

¹⁷³ Dépense faite pour Monseigneur l'Évêque de Dax Conseiller du Roy et Ambassadeur pour sa Majesté vers la Seigneurie de Venise, n.d. [August 1561]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 164r-165r.

instance, André Hurault de Maisse asked a total sum of 200 *écu* for the aforementioned travel to Mantua, amongst which he counted the liveries made for his suite.¹⁷⁴

At a time when the salary of ambassadors was not paid on a regular basis, it seems unlikely that the king would reimburse all sartorial expenses. Nevertheless, there existed one occasion for which clothes were always provided: the death of a king. Following Henry II's passing in 1559, Noailles dressed himself and 20 members of his family and gondoliers in mourning garments.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, his chambers and gondola were decorated with cloth symbolising his grief. All together this cost him 600 *écu*, which was listed as an extraordinary cost.¹⁷⁶ In England too, Noailles' brother and fellow ambassador, Gilles, asked for the repayment of 200 *écu* in 1559, which he had spent on black cloth to furnish himself, his household and his horses with mourning attire.¹⁷⁷ When the sovereign of the court where the ambassador resided died, diplomats were obliged to take part in royal obsequies. In the case of such an event, the home court did not purchase mourning garments, but ambassadors received a certain amount of fabric from the foreign court for themselves and their pages. The quantity of cloth provided and the number of servants permitted at the funeral reflected the hierarchy amongst envoys. For example, for the obsequies of English King Henry VIII in 1547, the Venetian, Scottish and German ambassadors received 30 yards of cloth for 10 servants, the French ambassador 36 yards for 12 servants and the Imperial ambassador 48 yards for 16 servants. Additionally, each ambassador received 16 yards of cloth for himself.¹⁷⁸

When important members of the French nobility passed away, ambassadors were likewise expected to wear black mourning clothes. André Hurault de Maisse received a payment of 263 *écu* in the summer of 1587 for the expenses he incurred on the mourning garments worn after the death of Duke Francis of Anjou, brother of King Henry III, in June 1584. He thus had to wait three years for a reimbursement of his money.¹⁷⁹ When, during Philippe de la

¹⁷⁴ *Estat de la despence faite au voyage de Mantoue*, 30 June 1587: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, f. 266r.

¹⁷⁵ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 11 August 1559: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 115.

¹⁷⁶ *Parties extraordinaires fournies et avancées pour le service du Roy par l'Evesque d'Acqs son Conseiller et Ambassadeur à Venise*, depuis le 1^{er} jour d'avril 1559 jusques au dernier de septembre 1560, n.d. [30 September 1560]: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 403.

¹⁷⁷ *Estat des parties extraordinaires fournies pour le service du Roy depuis le commencement de mois de may 1559 jusques en mars ensuyvant, et avancées par moy Gilles de Noailles, Conseiller, Maître des requêtes, [Maître] de l'hôtel dudit Seigneur, estant lors son Ambassadeur en Angleterre*, n.d. [31 March 1560]: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 14, f. 170r.

¹⁷⁸ Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy", 21.

¹⁷⁹ *Copie de l'estat de la Mirande pour l'an 1587*: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, f. 307v.

Canaye's embassy in Venice, the king's sister, Catherine de Bourbon, died, he dressed his whole family in mourning and went to announce her death, accompanied by an entourage of 30 members of his family. When Cardinal Arnaud d'Ossat, former ambassador in Rome, passed away one month later, mourning attire was again required. Just like Hurault de Maisse, Canaye wished to be reimbursed for these expenses, but he knew that it could take some years before he would see any money.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, Canaye envied his fellow ambassador in the Grisons, Dominique de Vic, who was spared from the costs of refurbishing the wardrobe of his family: while Canaye in Venice and Philippe de Béthune in Rome were both ordered by the king to dress their whole household in black garments to commemorate the memory of his deceased sister, Dominique de Vic was exempted from doing so, as in the Swiss cantons this was apparently not the habit.¹⁸¹

The tradition of listing sartorial expenses as extraordinary costs was not something exclusive to French ambassadors. In every European state, both vast monarchies and smaller duchies, it was common practice to consider clothing as a necessary aspect of the public functioning of the embassy. Particularly amongst the states of the Italian peninsula, which still yearned to validate their reputation on the international scene, there existed a strong competition to appear just as brilliant as the other. For example, when Duke Ercole II d'Este from Ferrara died in 1559, his ambassador in Venice, Girolamo Taletti, purchased textiles, such as *panno*, taffeta and veil (*velo*); boots; buttons; and veil *berette*, to arrange his mourning apparel. He was granted 322 *scudi* to do so, which was the exact same amount that was given to ambassadors from Milan and Florence for their mourning garments.¹⁸² From this it can be deduced that the duke of Ferrara wanted to hold his own in matters of appearance with his Italian counterparts. Again, this is a confirmation of the application of clothing in the realm of competitive magnificence.

The International Shopping Circuit

Having both private and public funds at his disposal and being located in one of the main centres of textile production, François de Noailles spent a great deal of his wealth on clothing. These garments, however, were not ready-made but, instead, the aristocracy made

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 28 February 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 155-156; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 20 March 1604 in *ibid.*, 165-166.

¹⁸¹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 16 April 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 191.

¹⁸² Magnifico Girolamo Taletti per vestir di bruna, 4 October 1559: ASMo, Ufficio del Mese, b. 8B.

use of tailors. As a result, elite men were not just mere consumers, but played a central role in the production process of clothing; not the tailors, but the customers provided the necessary materials. Thus, the elite decided how they wanted to appear and had a great knowledge about the provenance, quality and value of fabrics and accessories. This implied that they had to be able to judge the excellence and price of textiles, and to construct durable connections with merchants and artisans. Fashionable dress was not only a sign of financial and cultural worth, it also reflected the capability of maintaining extended economic networks.¹⁸³

Correspondingly, Noailles performed an active role in the production of his garments and the collection of quality materials. As already explained in the previous chapter, he presumably did not interact with artisans and merchants in their shops in person, but, instead, he commissioned loyal servants to buy textiles, who could be trusted with decisions concerning taste and money. The sources contain the name of someone who was regularly used for this purpose, Pierre Pomare, who was in charge of all the purchases. A letter from Noailles' secretary Daniel Duran divulges that, additionally, Duran himself was employed to obtain textiles in Venice. He provides us with a very detailed account of how much he and Pomare bought, what it cost, and the necessary licences he obtained from the *Signoria*.¹⁸⁴

In addition to his domestic servants who roamed local markets, Noailles used agents to obtain fabrics outside Venice. Fernand Braudel employed the term “geography of textiles” to refer to the fact that textiles were always on the move: both technologies and finished materials crossed the globe.¹⁸⁵ This global dimension of costumes is reflected in Noailles' wardrobe; cosmopolitan individuals, such as ambassadors, are ideal case studies to illustrate the international characteristics that consumption already assumed in the sixteenth century. In Ferrara, Odet de Carrières fulfilled the role of intermediary and supplied Noailles with textiles from diverse Italian cities. For example, he sent samples of satin from Florence, Lucca and Genoa so that Noailles could choose of which colours he would like to have larger

¹⁸³ Hills, *Venetian Colour*, 174-175; Currie, “Fashion Networks”, 484-487; Rosenthal, “Clothing, Fashion, Dress and Costume in Venice”, 891.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 17 December 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 42r: “[...] je vous envoie par ce porteur 18 brasses du plus beau et meilleur satin cramoisy violet qu’il a esté possible a messer Pietre Pomare et a moy de trouver en ceste ville, dont toutesfoys vous n’en payerez que 17 et demye, car l’autre demie est le droict que l’on a quant on prend quantité de draps de soyes ou de laines, assavoir deux de plus pour cent. Je vous envoie aussy 7 brasses et environ 3 quarts de velours de mesme, coustant ledit velours 2 ducats 3 quarts la brasse et ledit satin 33 gros dont les 26 font l’escu. Quant a votre camelot je lay aussy baillé a ce porteur. Le tout fort bien empacqueté, dont j’espère qu’il n’en adviendra inconuenient. [...] Je yray demain de bon matin vers la serenité du Prince pour avoyr la licence qu’il fault pour vous porter lesdits soyes.”

¹⁸⁵ Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle*, vol. 1, 284-286.

amounts. Carrières also procured serge from Florence.¹⁸⁶ The wool industry, along with silk manufacturing, provided the Florentine economy with a strong industrial basis. Their most esteemed product was called *rascia*, made of Castilian wool, mostly in black and considered as exceptionally fine serge. In northern European markets, it was known as *serge de Florence*.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, Carrières was commissioned by Noailles to obtain fabrics from Ferrara, especially during the winter months, when he requested velvet.¹⁸⁸ Noailles' inventory reveals that these Italian textiles were indeed used for his clothing, since Genoa, Florence and Milan are specifically mentioned to denote the materials of some garments.

Outside the Italian peninsula, the Ottoman Empire was an important place of interest for Noailles. Again, secretary Duran acted as commercial agent and was asked to buy satin and cloth of gold from the Levant, and velvet from Bursa.¹⁸⁹ Noailles likewise employed the French ambassador in Constantinople, Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, who was always very eager to please Noailles and had a good eye for locating quality products. For instance, in 1558, he bought fur costing 140 *écu*, which, according to him, was the best one available in the Ottoman markets: he stated that it was of the purest black colour possible, very hairy and made with the best tanning process. Noailles was very satisfied with this purchase and he described it as the most beautiful fur he had ever seen.¹⁹⁰ The presence of eastern fabrics in Noailles' wardrobe can also be gleaned from the fact that one of the most common textiles listed in his inventory, after satin and velvet, was mohair (*mocayar*), a woollen fabric originating from the East, made of the hair of the Ankara, or Angora, goat. In Europe, there was a high demand for this delicate fabric because it was considered an important luxury good and indicator of status. From Ankara, it was exported to Venice and Poland. Especially during the sixteenth century, the distribution of mohair to Venice occurred at such a systematic rate that the villages around Ankara received their greatest revenue from this

¹⁸⁶ Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 13 February 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 525r: “[...] affin que je puisse faire venir le satin de Florence, Luques ou Gennes, et que l’on ne failly a le choisir de la colleur et bonté que le demandez. La sarge, je l’attendz par le premier ordinaire de Florence.”

¹⁸⁷ Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, 274-275.

¹⁸⁸ Letter from François de Noailles to Odet de Carrières, 14 December 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 623; Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 15 January 1561: *ibid.*, f. 739; Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 7 February 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 5r.

¹⁸⁹ Letter from François de Noailles to Daniel Duran, 20 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 455; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: *ibid.*, f. 547.

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 10 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 377r; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, 27 December 1558: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 61v.

trade.¹⁹¹ Noailles' inventory and letters also show the use of camlet (*camelot*), likewise imported from the East and produced from Ankara or Armenian goat.¹⁹² Even though research has revealed that there was a decreasing transfer of Ottoman goods during the sixteenth century, the export of mohair and camlet is a proof of lasting exchanges.¹⁹³

Besides the Ottoman Empire, eastern Europe attracted Noailles, especially to obtain fur. In 1560, his *homme de chambre* named Claude was sent to Poland, and upon his return, he presented his master with fur of martens, sables and *dossi*, which is fur from the back of animals, mostly squirrels.¹⁹⁴ Even though Noailles' secretary Milan qualified the furs as beautiful, Noailles was not completely satisfied with Claude's commerce, as he had probably spent too much money.¹⁹⁵ While Noailles was pleased in general with the merchandise acquired by intermediaries, there also existed the risk of employing servants who lacked trading skills. Lastly, Noailles imported French textiles. When his secretary Milan travelled to Paris, his duties reached further than to report to the king about political matters, since he was also assigned to transport fabrics to Venice from both Paris and Lyon:

I will bring you the clothes from Paris together with the samples that I have already bought and which are very good. With regard to the piece of taffeta, I will search for it in Lyon, where I think I will be able to find better and cheaper pieces than here.¹⁹⁶

Again, Noailles' inventory confirms the presence of French fabrics as it contains, for instance, a shirt made of toile from Paris.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the same practices persisted and French ambassadors in Venice still constructed a strong international network to acquire various sartorial materials. Especially the connections with colleague ambassadors were employed to purchase clothing for private use. For example, Philippe de la Canaye ordered muffs for his

¹⁹¹ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Honour and Hurt Feelings: Complaints Addressed to an Ottoman Merchant Trading in Venice," in *Merchants in the Ottoman Empire*, 67-70.

¹⁹² Wilson, "In the Chamber, in the Garde Robe, in the Chapel, in a Chest", 28.

¹⁹³ Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Textiles in European Markets," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, eds. Anna Contadini and Claire Norton (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 231-244.

¹⁹⁴ Letter from Milan to Antoine de Noailles, 19 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 446.

¹⁹⁵ Letter from François de Noailles to Bishop of Rennes, 3 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 411: "Je n'ay pas trouvé fort bon mesnage a l'emploicte de mondit serviteur, tant des cheveaux que des fourrures. Dieu me face meilleur marchand ailleurs."

¹⁹⁶ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 8 April 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 21v-22r: "Je vous porteray les hardes de Paris avec les monstres que j'ay deja acheptées et sont fort bonnes. Quant a la piece de tafetas, je me remetray a Lyon ou j'en pense trouver de plus belles et a meilleur marché qu'icy."

wife from François Savary de Brèves in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹⁷ He also inquired with the French ambassador at the Holy Roman Empire, Nicolas de Baugy, about the different prices of sables in Frankfurt and Prague, which he would use to make a long robe. This way, Canaye could judge if it was cheaper to buy these furs in Venice, or to have them shipped from the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁹⁸

Ambassadors were offered great liberties from the Venetian government in the procurement and consumption of their clothes. First of all, they were granted the privilege of having a foreign tailor. Secondly, my investigation of Noailles' consumption practices has revealed the regular importation of various fabrics. Venetian inhabitants, in contrast, were subjected to strict limitations or prohibitions concerning the import of textiles, and sumptuary laws often targeted foreign fashions as they wanted to encourage the local economy. Nevertheless, being a foreign ambassador, Noailles received licences to import luxurious cloth from Italy and beyond more easily, and he was exempted from any importation taxes.¹⁹⁹ For example, he wrote to Carrières in Ferrara:

I ask you [Carrières] to send me with the first courier 30 *brasses* of velvet *riez* to make a mourning gown for these feasts [...] I have received a license from the *Signoria* in order to let it enter.²⁰⁰

This preferential treatment enabled Noailles to construct his magnificent wardrobe.

This chapter built on the innovative approaches in the field of dress history that have appeared during the last decades. These studies have revealed that the adherence to sartorial codes was regarded as very important in sixteenth-century Europe, since clothes served as important identity markers exposing gender, profession and status. I started from these considerations to tackle the understudied topic of the clothing of early modern ambassadors. Although, at first sight, it might seem difficult to trace information about the characteristics

¹⁹⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 3 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 57; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 7 July 1602 in *ibid.*, 335; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 14 April 1603 in *ibid.*, book 2, 151; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 6 October 1603 in *ibid.*, book 3, part 1, 155.

¹⁹⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 2 May 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 174; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 30 May 1603 in *ibid.*, 204.

¹⁹⁹ Ambassadors with other nationalities similarly received these licences, such as, for instance, a Spanish ambassador who was granted the permission to procure damask from Milan: ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Terra, reg. 62, ff. 47v-48r (20 August 1592).

²⁰⁰ Letter from François de Noailles to Odet de Carrières, 14 December 1660: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 643: “Je le prie et vous aussi bien fort de m’envoyer par le premier porteur trente brasses de velours riez pour faire ung habit de deuil pour ces festes, [...] j’ay eu une patente de la Seigneurie pour le faire entrer.”

of diplomatic attire in the archives, the detailed case study of François de Noailles' wardrobe made it possible to zoom in on every aspect of his visual image. Especially three main issues have been analysed throughout this chapter, while always keeping in mind that the beauty and richness of clothing should never distract us from its purpose.

First of all, this chapter has uncovered the politics of dress. When focusing on the early modern diplomatic world, we can see all the more how clothing produced political meanings and how it was a vehicle to transmit strong messages that were understood across the narrow boundaries of states. Secondly, the consumption networks of François de Noailles were mapped out, which has uncovered the active involvement of ambassadors in locating fabrics and tailoring outfits. Furthermore, it showed how the cosmopolitan identity of sixteenth-century ambassadors was reflected in the international characteristics of their shopping networks. Thirdly, François de Noailles' documents have revealed that his garments were used to enhance his self-fashioning and that of his king. While on diplomatic mission, a new type of identity had to be moulded, which comprised both the private status of the ambassador and his official representational function. In this process, dress played a crucial role as it gave a visible form to his identity on both a personal and political level. Especially by looking beyond official ceremonies and integrating the entire wardrobe of an ambassador, this chapter has exposed the ambassador's various identities and the mixture of cultural and political influences. Whereas Noailles' diplomatic robes were freed from any professional and religious restrictions, he could switch to his clerical garments when they better served the occasion. François de Noailles and his contemporaries did not use clothing solely to cover their body, but to dress their appearance.

PART III

CONSTRUCTING NETWORKS:

BROKERAGE AND GIFT-GIVING

In the diplomatic arena, the construction of networks was of crucial importance, as they were vital for gathering intelligence and, this way, amassing the knowledge and strength of the nation. Hence, diplomatic instructions and treatises on the ideal ambassador underscored that the forging of both local ties and connections with various European courts was the first and main task of an ambassador. However, not only intelligence, but also goods were transported through these networks. An important characteristic of the Renaissance was the great speed of movement with which a wide variety of goods was transported.¹ This movement should not only be studied within the context of trade and commerce but, furthermore, alternative ways of carrying out exchanges need to be investigated. An important figure in these additional forms of transfer was precisely that of the early modern ambassador. Both through their brokerage activities and gift exchange, goods crossed the world.

The line between brokerage, on the one hand, and gift-giving, on the other hand, can at times be very ambiguous. Whereas in some cases gifts are easily recognised as such, by means of observing the language and context, in other instances, the situation is more abstruse. It proves to be a difficult exercise to distinguish whether items were sent in response to requests from the ambassador's home country and reimbursement was required, or whether they were presented freely as unsolicited gifts. However, I believe that in both cases, mechanisms of patronage were at play and, therefore, the opposition between a purchase and a gift should not be emphasised too strongly. To be precise, objects that were solicited should not be interpreted as mere purchases, where the ambassador acted as intermediary, but as part of the ongoing patron-client relationship, since the patron's request was perceived as an opportunity for the client to prove his loyalty and merits and hope for a future return. By fulfilling a purchase with the money of a patron or friend, the ambassador hoped to receive immaterial graces in return.

This approach is in line with the current condemnation of the strong contrast that was initially imposed on commodities and gifts by anthropological and sociological theories, such as those supported by Karl Marx and Marcel Mauss. Their models were based on the belief that whereas gifts circulated in social relationships, the exchange of commodities was economically calculated and regulated by money, not by sociability. Arjun Appadurai, amongst others, has refuted this simplified contrast and points to the qualities that the circulation of commodities and gift exchange have in common, thereby following Pierre

¹ For a summarised overview of the movement of ideas and goods in the Renaissance, see: John Jeffries Martin, "The Renaissance: A World in Motion," in *The Renaissance World* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 3-27.

Bourdieu's view that gift-giving was in fact a specific type of the diffusion of commodities and not its antonym.² Therefore, Appadurai urges that we do not strongly differentiate between things but, instead, that we “[...] approach commodities as things in a certain situation, a situation that can characterise many different kinds of things, at different points in their social lives.”³

Even though I strongly agree with Appadurai that we should always keep in mind that purchases, gifts and other qualifications of things are very closely related and could circulate alongside each other in social relationships, I will treat commissions and gifts in two separate chapters to permit a clear investigation of the topics. I determine the nature of the object by looking at the linguistic and social context and by studying the underlying structures and characteristics of patronage and brokerage. On the one hand, ambassadors relied on creating and maintaining patronage relationships with their home court in order to wield influence and sustain their position and identity. On the other hand, they played a major role in the cultivation of international networks of exchange that transcended the scope of gift-giving with patrons. In both cases, the objects exchanged made the networks visible and, therefore, the type and meaning of this material culture will be considered closely.

The first chapter in this third part opens with an examination of the brokerage activities conducted by François de Noailles and his successors in Venice. Part II has already strongly underlined the importance of Venice as a marketplace; now, the commercial and economic diversity and wealth of the Venetian Republic will be accentuated even more by analysing the various commissions executed by foreign ambassadors located in the city. In doing so, the constant transfer of goods between Venice and France comes to the surface. In the second chapter, the Venetian-French exchange is studied further by revealing the workings of the patronage and gift-giving networks that the ambassadors established with the French court. Whereas all the chapters so far have focused on the social and cultural life of French ambassadors in Venice, the final chapter broadens the perspective by recreating the ties that connected ambassadors with their home courts.

² Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11-13. For more information on the theories about gifts and commodities, see: Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, ch. 1.

³ Appadurai, “Introduction”, 13.

CHAPTER 6

MATERIAL DIPLOMACY:

THE AMBASSADOR AS BROKER IN LUXURY GOODS

The first type and use of networks that will be investigated are the connections and transactions governed by cultural brokerage. The early modern system of brokerage can be defined as the practice of transferring and disseminating both goods and ideas. The central figures in this process were intermediary brokers, or agents, with various occupational and cultural backgrounds, who were commissioned by elite and royal patrons to buy certain goods, recruit artists and artisans or convey knowledge. The phenomenon of brokerage has received an increasing amount of scholarly attention in the last decades. Two important collections of essays have contributed greatly to our knowledge of the subject: *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe* (2006) and the more recent publication *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (2011). The aim of both volumes is to unmask the multifaceted and interwoven activities of early modern brokers and the convergence of multiple identities within one single figure. The contributors, therefore, classified the actions of an agent as performing a function rather than as a profession.¹

A focus on ambassadors as examples of early modern brokers provides a rich case study, since a diplomatic career offered fertile ground for cultural brokerage. In the first place, due to their mobility, diplomatic agents established contacts at various courts and had access to international trading networks. Since the success of an agent depended strongly on his ability to construct and maintain networks, the ambassador's cosmopolitan profile and wide connections made him a perfect candidate for brokerage. Secondly, brokers had to be able to perform a wide variety of tasks and to switch between different identities. This was a quality that ambassadors mastered, since diplomatic life was characterised precisely by navigating different interests and combining a multitude of tasks. As a result of their attractive profile, ambassadors became important pawns in the luxury consumption and cultural education of the elite. The prince's commissioning of his political representatives as cultural and commercial agents was not declared as a formal task in diplomatic instructions; however, in

¹ Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, and Badeloch Noldus, eds., *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006); Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Noldus, eds., *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011). For a study on brokerage in a later period, see: Simon Schaffer et al., eds., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009).

practice, it was an important part of the ambassador's undertakings. Cultural obligations were always implicit to a diplomatic appointment, and as well as political talents, cultural expertise was equally important to be a successful ambassador.²

Historian Renate Pieper, who has carried out extensive research on cultural exchange, has put forward an additional explanation for the crucial role of ambassadors in cultural brokerage by stating that a comprehensive trade in luxurious goods and exotica was not yet standardised in the sixteenth century. According to her analysis, luxury articles still circulated mainly within patronage networks. Curiosities, in particular, were commonly traded within personal networks, while merchants focused more on mass-produced articles.³ All these observations have led some historians to declare that without the framework of diplomacy, the construction of commercial routes would not have been possible.⁴ Although diplomacy and trade were indeed closely interwoven, their statements should be nuanced, since many other developments contributed to the establishment of a luxury trade. While ambassadors were important players in trading networks, they were certainly not the only ones.

In this chapter, I investigate the profile of an ambassador as a broker in luxury goods by pinpointing the practices of French ambassadors in Venice during the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Due to its strong production and trade successes, the Republic of Venice was constantly teeming with foreigners who wished to profit from the great variety of goods the city had to offer. Hence, ambassadors on Venetian soil had to ensure that there was a constant flow of these goods. My analysis of the commissions executed by French ambassadors aims to uncover the different facets of cultural brokerage. Therefore, firstly, I will zoom in on the mechanisms and logistics of the intermediary services. Secondly, attention is paid to the great diversity of the procured goods, which elucidates both the wealth of Venice and the need for an ambassador to be familiar with different markets. By identifying these cultural services, this chapter will stress the versatility and role-switching of ambassadors.

² Diplomatic historian Daniela Frigo has noted that the general term used in Italian diplomatic instructions and dispatches to indicate ambassadors' activities, *negozi*, also referred to the non-political tasks of ambassadors: acquiring goods, headhunting artists, and so forth: Frigo, "Prudence and Experience", 21.

³ Renate Pieper, "Papageien und Bezoarsteine: Gesandte als Vermittler von Exotica und Luxuserzeugnissen im Zeitalter Philipps II.," in *Hispania-Austria II: Die Epoche Philipps II (1556-1598)*, ed. Friedrich Edelmayr (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 215-224.

⁴ A clear elaboration of this idea can be found in: Cátia Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern Period: The Economic Relationship between Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640-1705* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2004), 141-182.

Mechanisms of Brokerage

Before analysing the precise objects gathered by French ambassadors stationed in Venice, the characteristics and functioning of their brokerage must be unfolded. In the first place, in order to fully comprehend and contextualise the commissions carried out by French ambassadors, it is essential to delineate French cultural interests in Italy, in general, and in Venice, specifically. In the second place, the practical components of brokerage need to be considered carefully. If an ambassador wanted to succeed in his charge as mediator, the execution of two tasks was absolutely vital. On the one hand, it was a necessary requirement that the ambassador erected a strong network of contacts, because access to the right people meant access to their know-how and associates. On the other hand, financial matters and transportation issues had to be carried out prudently.

French Cultural Interest in Venice

Venice's status as trading city, its close commercial contacts with the East, its strong industrial sector and its reputation as a centre of art all contributed to the great international popularity of the city throughout the sixteenth century as a shopping centre where any kind of commodity could be purchased. Immersion in cultural and artistic issues was thus unavoidable for ambassadors residing in the Venetian Republic, and they were constantly involved in fervent negotiations with artists, glassmakers, goldsmiths and other artisans. The ambassador's role in the acquisition of a great variety of objects in sixteenth-century Venice is exemplified in the volumes *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova*, which contain transcriptions of passages from letters sent to and by Mantuan ambassadors concerning the commissions they conducted on behalf of the ducal court.⁵ Their dispatches are a fascinating illustration of how envoys were employed in the weaving of artistic connections and the collecting of various kinds of objects. The ruling house of Mantua, the Gonzaga family, was well aware of the presence in Venice of famous artists and artisans, whom they tried to lure, and collections and merchandises, to which they wished to have access.⁶ Already at the end of the fifteenth century, Mantuan Ambassador Giorgio Brognolo acted as a very industrious broker. In one single year, 1496, Marquise Isabella d'Este, wife of

⁵ Daniela Sogliani, ed., *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563-1587)* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2002); Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*.

⁶ Daniela Sogliani, "La Repubblica e il Ducato: Rapporti Culturali e Artistici tra la Serenissima e Mantova negli Anni di Guglielmo Gonzaga," in *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563-1587)*, 15-81.

Duke Francesco II Gonzaga, commissioned him to acquire all sorts of luxurious objects: jewels, such as turquoises and diamonds; textiles; magnets; foodstuffs; musical instruments; glass and crystal; marble from Carrara; colours for painting; carpets and tapestries; silver; and ostrich's feathers.⁷

Likewise, the activities of Spanish ambassadors in Venice as cultural intermediaries during the second half of the sixteenth century have been briefly depicted by Michael J. Levin in his study *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy*. The Spanish ambassadors devoted a lot of time to contacting a great variety of Venetian craftsmen, communicating commissions, overseeing the work and finally procuring the goods. These goods were again very diverse, ranging from textiles, tapestries, jewels, glass, musical instruments and books to relics.⁸ However, a similar consideration of the brokerage activities executed by sixteenth-century French ambassadors in Venice is absent. For the seventeenth century, on the contrary, studies have been devoted to the figure of the French ambassador as a collector of Venetian art for his private cabinet or for the royal collection. In his monumental study on the artistic collections of French *curieux*, or art lovers, Antoine Schnapper has uncovered the French interest in Venetian paintings, especially those of the great Renaissance masters such as Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Bassano.⁹ In particular, Claude II Maillier du Houssay (1638-1640) and Jean Dyel (1642-1645) accumulated an impressive selection of paintings during their embassies.¹⁰

⁷ Clifford M. Brown and Anna Maria Lorenzoni, "Isabella d'Este e Giorgio Brognolo nell'Anno 1496," *Atti e Memorie della Accademia Virgiliana di Mantova* 41 (1973), 97-122; Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, ch. 9. For the shopping practices of yet another Mantuan ambassador in Venice, Benedetto Agnello, see: Chambers, "Benedetto Agnello", 143-144. On the cultural brokerage of Mantuan ambassadors in general, see: Barbara Furlotti, "Ambasciatori, Nobili, Religiosi, Mercanti e Artisti: Alcune Considerazioni sugli Intermediari d'Arte Gonzagheschi," in *Gonzaga: La Celeste Galeria, L'Esercizio del Collezionismo*, ed. Raffaella Morselli (Milan: Skira, 2002), 319-328.

⁸ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 183-199.

⁹ Antoine Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle: Collections et Collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe Siècle*, vol. 2: *Oeuvres d'Art* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 120; 175-177.

¹⁰ Houssay's collection included several works of art by Veronese with, for the greater part, biblical subjects: a martyrdom of Saint Justine; a conversion of Mary Magdalene; a resurrected Christ; and a Venus and Adonis. He also bought other works by Venetian masters with biblical topics: a disposition from the Cross by Tintoretto; a birth of Christ by Bassano; a Madonna and two devotions of the Virgin with Saint Joseph and other saints by Palma il Vecchio; and an Apollo and Marsyas by Battista Franco. Moreover, Houssay possessed fine works of art by other Italian artists: a bust of the Virgin by an unknown Italian artist; a Saint Anthony by Correggio; a Venus and the Graces by Niccolò dell'Abbate; a mystic marriage of Saint Catherine by Lotto; a *Noli me Tangere* probably by Ventura Salimbeni; a head of Mary Magdalene by a certain "Calmeno"; and one painting in the style of Bernardino Luini. The bulk of this artwork was directly acquired in Venice during Houssay's embassy and transported as personal belongings to his Parisian house, where it decorated his cabinet alongside his collection of books and medals. Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle*, vol. 2, 176; Michel, "La Peinture Vénitienne en France", 40-41; Laura De Fuccia, "Residenti, Viaggiatori e 'Curieux' Francesi," in *Il Collezionismo d'Arte a Venezia: Il Seicento*, eds. Linda Borean and Stefania Mason (Venice: Marsilio, 2007), 129. The cabinet of Dyel's Parisian house similarly showcased a wide range of objects, including paintings by Venetian and other Italian masters: a portrait by Tintoretto; a Marsyas flayed by Apollo by Guido Reni; a four

Following Schnapper's work, Laura De Fuccia has analysed the presence of Venetian art in seventeenth-century French collections in her doctoral study. She similarly points to the crucial role of diplomatic networks in transferring Venetian artworks. Ambassadors cultivated links with the artistic scene in Venice in order to gain access to valuable paintings to decorate their own lodgings, both in Venice and back home, or they negotiated with artists on behalf of French ministers. For example, in the second half of the seventeenth century, Pierre de Bonzi (1661-1665) and Jean-Antoine de Mesmes (1672-1676), better known as Count d'Avaux, were assigned by French Minister of Finances Jean-Baptiste Colbert to gather information about Venetian paintings that could enrich the royal collection.¹¹ Although De Fuccia recognises the additional role of ambassadors in the transfer of other objects such as glass, mirrors, crystal and jewellery, she does not elaborate on the exact nature of these commissions.¹²

These studies have uncovered the fascination fostered by the seventeenth-century French elite in the Venetian artistic landscape. Was there a parallel curiosity in Venetian material culture during the sixteenth century? In order to unravel this question, the broader historical context of France and Italy has to be taken into account. Between 1494 and 1559, the Italian states were constantly stirred up by foreign invasions. Both French and Habsburg armies carried out numerous attacks in an attempt to gain control over the peninsula. Italy became the main battlefield of the French-Habsburg war over European dominance. Besides military victories and defeats, these French interferences in Italy also led to an enhanced transfer of Italian styles, tastes and goods to France, and a period of strong Franco-Italian cultural transmission commenced. This started already during the campaigns of French Kings Charles VIII and Louis XII, but it was especially King Francis I who gathered paintings, sculptures and medals on a large scale and recruited Italian artists to come work in France. Francis I wished to rival the rich artistic culture of the contemporary Italian courts and to establish

seasons by Bassano; a Maria Magdalene by Veronese; a Virgin by Pietro da Cortona; and several works by Preti and Savoldo. Dyel's most important acquisition in Venice, however, was a Pietà by Guercino, which was actually commissioned by his wife Suzanne Ardier. In total, he owned 20 paintings by Venetian painters or with Venetian themes. Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle*, vol. 2, 177-178; Michel, "La Peinture Vénitienne en France", 41; De Fuccia, "Residenti, Viaggiatori e 'Curieux' Francesi", 127.

¹¹ For transcriptions of their reports, see: Guillaume Depping, ed., *Correspondance Administrative sous le Règne de Louis XIV: Entre le Cabinet du Roi, les Secrétaires d'État, le Chancelier de France, et les Intendants et Gouverneurs des Provinces, les Présidents, Procureurs et Avocats Généraux des Parlements, et Autres Cours de Justice, le Gouverneur de la Bastille, les Évêques, les Corps Municipaux, etc., etc.*, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1850-1855), 525-527; 588-589.

¹² Laura De Fuccia, "Collezionisti Francesi di Pittura Veneziana nel Seicento" (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Udine, 2007); De Fuccia, "Residenti, Viaggiatori e 'Curieux' Francesi", 125-139.

himself as a great patron.¹³ As a result, the Italian culture penetrated the heart of the court, which became truly Italianised or, as Jean-François Dubost has qualified it, a *France italienne*.¹⁴

Whereas during the first half of the sixteenth century France ventured on foreign campaigns and was blessed with domestic peace, internal problems affected the country during the second half of the century as French Catholics and Protestants, or Huguenots, constantly engaged in bloody armed fights. This paralysed France to a certain extent, and it is often stated that it was only with Henry IV's accession to the throne that the French monarchy returned as a chief actor on the European scene.¹⁵ It is generally believed that the artistic fervour of the French kings diminished due to these internal religious and social struggles, and, consequently, it has been put forward repeatedly that between the death of King Francis I (1547) and the start of the personal rule of King Louis XIV (1661), royal patronage and collecting weakened.¹⁶ As a result, the interest of the French elite in art and luxury goods during the second half of the sixteenth century is an understudied topic compared to the many studies carried out on the beginning of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. However, it is not true that the French elites and kings had absolutely no interest in the arts during this turbulent era. For example, the powerful Guise family procured many Italian luxury products in the 1550s and 1560s, and the court of King Henry III in the 1570s and 1580s was in fact a sumptuous centre of cultural activity.¹⁷

In this chapter, I would like to investigate further French material interests during the second half of the sixteenth century in order to showcase that the French court was still very much concerned with the accumulation of a wide variety of goods. By analysing the nature and type of commissions that French ambassadors in Venice received, a deeper insight can be

¹³ Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France 1500 to 1700* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), 13-14; Alberto Tenenti, introduction to *Venezia e Parigi*, 10; Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle*, vol. 2, 115. For a clarifying description of the French Renaissance court that takes into account the artistic and cultural aspects, see: Robert J. Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court, 1483-1589* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Jean-François Dubost, *La France Italienne, XVIe-XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1997).

¹⁵ For a brief overview of the crises affecting the French Kingdom during the second half of the sixteenth century, see: Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court*, ch. 13 and 14.

¹⁶ Antoine Schnapper, "The King of France as Collector in the Seventeenth Century," in *Art and History: Images and Their Meanings*, eds. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 185-202; Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle*, vol. 2, 115.

¹⁷ Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France*, 133-156; Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 263-264; Marjorie Meiss-Even, "The Guise 'Italianised'? The Role of Italian Merchants, Intermediaries and Experts in Ducal Consumption in the Sixteenth Century," in *Aspiration, Representation and Memory: The Guise in Europe, 1506-1688*, eds. Jessica Munns, Penny Richards, and Jonathan Spangler (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 47-60. Henry III also cultivated an interest in the Italian arts; during his stay in Venice in 1574, for instance, he commissioned three paintings by Tintoretto, including a portrait, see: Benzoni, "Enrico III a Venezia", 86; Korsch, "Diplomatic Gifts", 98-99.

gained into the material needs of the French court and elite. In order to do this, first, the background of the ambassadors has to be taken into account since education, social and economic position and personality all influenced the success of an agent. In the introductory chapter, I have already given a short biographical description of the French diplomatic agents stationed in Venice between 1554 and 1607. This has revealed that they were all selected amongst the highest strata of society. From childhood, they were taught the importance of a basic mastery of the arts because this reflected their status. Moreover, all of them were destined for a career either in the Church or in the juridical sphere, which means that they had received a refined schooling of which arts and literature were important components. Consequently, their upbringing must have cultivated a certain connoisseurship.

Networks of Contacts

In order to execute commissions from the French court, the ambassadors needed to construct firm networks with local and international agents in Venice and abroad, without which the required products could not be obtained. The usefulness of an agent, or mediator, was determined by his social position, occupational background, education, mobility and contacts. They conducted all kinds of tasks: they brought the ambassador into contact with the right people, arranged logistical issues or carried out acquisitions. Hence, these agents were actively involved in the process of transferring goods and added a third layer to the system of brokerage: whereas the ambassador acted on behalf of various members of the French elite, he likewise employed agents to help him complete his commissions successfully. When approaching these individuals, we should differentiate between vertical and horizontal networks.¹⁸ The first group consisted of lower, or higher, placed individuals, whilst the second cluster comprised fellow diplomatic representatives, who had the same rank as the ambassador.

Especially for François de Noailles, it is possible to map his web of contacts, which he employed mostly to satisfy his own luxury consumption.¹⁹ These connections were additionally employed to the benefit of the French monarchy. In Venice, a key figure in what I have labelled as Noailles' vertical network was Pierre Pomare, or Pietro Pomaro, who

¹⁸ I based this distinction on the differentiation made by Marika Keblusek between primary and secondary networks of contacts established by an early modern agent: Marika Keblusek, "Introduction: Profiling the Early Modern Agent," in *Your Humble Servant*, 14. For my case studies, I found the words "horizontal" and "vertical" more appropriate.

¹⁹ Noailles' letters tell us more about how he used his network to obtain goods for personal use, which has already been discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

regularly appears in the dispatches of French ambassadors in Venice. The literature disagrees about his origin, as he is labelled as both a French and an Italian merchant. The most plausible explanation is that he was a member of the Italian merchant colony that was established in Lyon in the sixteenth century. He then became a political agent of the French kings in Venice, where he served the French ambassadors.²⁰ Dominique du Gabre referred to him, in his instructional memoir for his successor Noailles, as someone who would serve him “[...] loyally and well and who you can charge with tasks regarding buying and the household.”²¹ Pomare was thus acquainted with Venetian markets and knew where to buy certain products. His immigrant merchant background, knowledge of both the Italian and French language and his mobile nature, made him an ideal candidate for brokerage activities. Research into the profile of early modern agents has uncovered that many of them originated from a commercial community abroad and had gained experience by living and working in various countries.²² Later on, Pomare even became the French diplomatic agent in Ragusa and the consul in Alexandria.²³

Another contact in Venice involved in cultural transfers was Francesco Nasi. Although Nasi does not comply with the typical profile of an early modern agent, he did closely collaborate with Noailles, and his assistance is mentioned regarding the acquisition of luxury objects for the French crown. Nasi was a member of an important Florentine-Jewish banker family who became a *fuoriuscito*, political exile, after the Medici regained their power. In the 1530s, he travelled to France and Antwerp before settling in Venice, where he was a main actor in the anti-Medici campaign by constructing a bank through which he collected money from all over the world to finance the war against the Medici.²⁴ Later, he became the main financial agent in Venice of banker Albisse del Bene, *surintendant général* of the French finances in Italy.²⁵ In that capacity, Nasi was responsible for providing loans for French

²⁰ Guillaume Pellicier, *Correspondance Politique de Guillaume Pellicier: Ambassadeur de France à Venise 1540-1542*, ed. Alexandre Tausserat-Radel, vol. 2 (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Germer Baillièrre et Cie, 1899), 744; Marie-Thérèse de Martel, “La Mission de Jean Yversen à la Porte du Grand Seigneur (Mai-Juin 1559),” *Revue d’Histoire Diplomatique* 97 (1983), 42.

²¹ Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs, n.d. [July 1557]: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896)*, Venise, vol. 23, f. 8r: “Ledit Pomare servira fidellement et bien et vous pouvez vous decharger sur luy des choses a achepter et du mesnaige.”

²² See, especially, the essays by Marika Keblusek, Hans Cools, Badeloch Noldus and Jan Willem Veluwenkamp in: Cools, Keblusek, and Noldus, eds., *Your Humble Servant*.

²³ Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. 2, 786-787; Pellicier, *Correspondance Politique*, vol. 2, 744.

²⁴ Paolo Simoncelli, *Fuoriuscittismo Repubblicano Fiorentino, 1530-54*, vol. 1: 1530-37 (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2006), 149; Soldini, “Les Républiques de Donato Giannotti”, 18-23.

²⁵ Albisse del Bene in turn operated as an agent for the influential the Guise family; he especially procured luxury foodstuffs for them, see: Meiss-Even, “The Guise ‘Italianised’?”, 54-55.

military campaigns and advancing payments to agents and ambassadors of the French king.²⁶ Again, Noailles' predecessor, Gabre, can be quoted as he described Nasi as: "[...] a man of great credit and a good man, who has always provided money for the king in Italy and relieved ambassadors."²⁷ These recommendations by Gabre illustrate that while ambassadors were coming and going, the networks they had established were most of the time passed on to their successors. Nasi's background made him an opportune collaborator for the French ambassadors in Venice. As a political refugee he was accustomed to travelling and had established many contacts with other *fuoriusciti*. Furthermore, his family was dispersed all over Europe, which meant that he had access to various markets. These connections and his strong financial position made him a helpful intermediary for Noailles.

Noailles' efforts to construct a web of contacts reached further than soliciting individuals who were already servants of the French monarchy. A remark found in the letters of the Florentine ambassador to Venice, Pero Gelido, indicates that Noailles also tried to establish contacts with inventors looking to sell their devices. Scholarship on diplomatic exchanges has often overlooked the role of ambassadors in the transmission of practical knowledge, such as technology. However, inventors must have certainly formed part of the local networks of ambassadors. This way, the ambassador could report on technological novelties to the French king, who was always interested in hearing about new discoveries. Together with his friend Daniele Barbaro, patriarch of Aquileia, Noailles visited Francesco Formiconi, a Florentine inventor in Venice who had recently created a hand mill. Both gentlemen were very amazed by this invention, as it worked a lot faster than other grinders: in one hour it processed one and a half scoops of wheat.²⁸ Since the inventory of Noailles mentions *un molin a bras de fer*, we can be certain that he owned an exemplar, though whether this was purchased or received as a gift could not be determined.²⁹ Moreover, it is not clear if the French king was interested in buying the product. In any case, it does become evident that the networks of a French ambassador in Venice included diverse individuals with various professions and nationalities.

²⁶ Lucien Romier, *Les Origines Politiques des Guerres de Religion*, vol. 1: *Henri II et l'Italie* (Paris: Librairie Académique, 1913), 144.

²⁷ du Gabre, *Correspondance Politique*, 8: "[...] un homme de grand crédit et un homme de bien, qui a toujours fourni les deniers pour le roi en Italie et a secouru les ambassadeurs."

²⁸ Letter from Pero Gelido to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, 8 June 1560: ASF, Mediceo del Principato, Relazioni con Stati Italiani ed Esteri, Venezia, b. 2973, ff. 102r-102v; Letter from Pero Gelido to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, 15 June 1560: *ibid.*, ff. 112r-112v. Thanks to Prof. Luca Molà for bringing this information to my attention.

²⁹ Inventaire des Meubles, Robbes et autres Accoustremens qui ont esté trouvez en la Garderobbe de Monseigneur L'Evesque Dacqs à Venize, 26 May 1561: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896)*, Venise, vol. 28, f. 81v.

The mentioning of Daniele Barbaro should also be explored further. Barbaro was a devoted scholar and writer whose most famous work was the translation and annotation of *I Dieci Libri dell'Architettura* by Vitruvius. It is difficult to uncover how widespread Barbaro's role was as a collector and maecenas, but it is certain that he owned an extensive library, containing scientific and astronomic instruments in addition to valuable Greek and Latin manuscripts, and that he was a passionate numismatist. He was, moreover, a close friend of the great architect Andrea Palladio, who was commissioned to design Villa Barbaro in Maser, a magnificent villa for which Veronese carried out the interior decoration with frescoes.³⁰ Barbaro was clearly a well-connected man and might have introduced Noailles to some of his local contacts, such as perhaps the abovementioned Florentine inventor Francesco Formiconi. It is undeniable that the two developed a familial relationship, which can be derived from the affectionate language they used in their correspondence and the fact that Noailles was a guest at Barbaro's villa in Noventa Padovana.³¹ With Barbaro, Noailles had an important contact in the Venetian cultural scene.

On an international level, Noailles fostered close relationships with diplomatic agents stationed at various courts. This brings us to his horizontal network that was established between colleagues who commissioned each other to search for objects. As the following section will make clear, especially the Ottoman Empire was a place of interest for the acquisition of goods, hence, Noailles maintained a strong link with the French agents in Constantinople to have their assistance in the procurement of eastern commodities. To give just one example, when French King Francis II wished to have some bonnets from the Levant, Noailles employed the French agent in Constantinople, Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, to purchase them and send them to Venice.³² Vice versa, the ambassadors in Constantinople counted on their colleagues in Venice to secure the transport of Ottoman merchandise ordered by French courtiers.³³

Noailles' successors in the second half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries continued to uphold the same connections with eastern territories. For instance, Philippe de la Canaye transported oriental carpets for his "customers" from the

³⁰ Deborah Howard, "I Barbaro come Collezionisti Rinascimentali," in *Il Collezionismo d'Arte a Venezia: Dalle Origini al Cinquecento*, 193-205.

³¹ This has been discussed in Chapter 2.

³² Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 11 September 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 156v

³³ One example: Philippe de la Canaye was responsible for the transport of damask and felt intended for Secretary of State Villeroy and Dominique de Vic, which were acquired by François Savary de Brèves: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 1 January 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 8; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 18 January 1603 in *ibid.*, 35.

Ottoman Empire with the help of the French ambassador in Constantinople and the French consul in Alexandria. Canaye is another interesting individual of whom we can retract information regarding his network of contacts. To stay with the example of carpets, his correspondence indicates that he had built a strong network of carpet connoisseurs in Venice, or as Canaye denominated them, “[...] people who made it their profession to know it [...]”.³⁴ This is an example of how it was necessary for ambassadors to maintain relations with various experts in case they could not judge the quality of certain products themselves.³⁵ Unfortunately, the only name of an expert in the carpet trade that Canaye mentioned was that of Leonardo Pomaro, who perhaps belonged to the same family as the aforementioned Pierre Pomare, or Pietro Pomaro. This could indicate that the Pomaro family had become a stable contact for the French ambassadors in Venice.

Additionally, Canaye’s wife, Renée de Courcillon, was actively involved in the recovering of carpets, as she was in charge of giving orders to search for specific types and handled the payments.³⁶ Especially with regard to the carpets for the French ambassador to Rome, Philippe de Béthune, she had made all the necessary arrangements, from locating the most exquisite examples and contacting the right people to obtaining the best price:

My wife has bought for you two carpets for two beds, the biggest and the best that can be found in Venice. She has also bought two Cairene carpets in Persian style, square-shaped as you requested, to put on the table, of which the biggest is four *brasses*. These carpets have been selected by very knowledgeable people, who have assured me that they have seen neither more beautiful nor better items in all of Venice. The two to put on the ground cost 20 ducats a piece, the two others cost 100 ducats, including the packaging. Now we just have to wait until the person that has been assigned to collect them arrives.³⁷

³⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 18 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 70: “[...] personnes qui font profession de s’y cognoistre [...]”.

³⁵ About the importance of the services of experts in the process of buying goods, see also: Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 291-292.

³⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 29 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 76.

³⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 2 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 131: “Ma femme vous a achepté deux tapis pour deux lits, les plus grands et les meilleurs qui soient en tout Venize: elle vous a aussi achepté deux tapis Cairins à la Persiane pour mettre sur table, carrez comme avez voulu, le plus grand est de quatre brasses en carré. Ils ont esté choisis par personnes tres-entenduës, qui m’asseurent n’y avoir rien de plus beau ny de meilleur en tout Venize; les deux pour mettre par terre coustent vingt ducats piece: les deux autres coustent ensemble, avec l’emballage cent ducats: reste donc que celuy a qui en avez donné la charge les envoie querir.”

With regard to other commissions, Canaye's wife was likewise the main executer of the purchases.³⁸ She developed an eye for quality and was not shy of bargaining the desirable price. No matter the product, textile, jewellery or carpets, she was always dedicated to finding the most beautiful, lucrative items.³⁹ Canaye offered her expertise in the world of acquisitions to prominent French officials, such as Cardinal François de Joyeuse: "My wife appeals to you very humbly to employ her as your most submissive servant in everything that you would like to buy here."⁴⁰ This way, Renée's valuable services were used to maintain her husband's networks. Both for other countries and earlier or later periods, we can see that ambassador's wives similarly played a key role in transferring objects. The wife was often the one responsible for shopping, for which she could fall back on her own group of agents.⁴¹ Women were also entrusted more with matters of taste. For instance, when Marquise Isabella d'Este commissioned the Mantuan ambassador in Venice, Giorgio Brognolo, to purchase some linen, she ordered him to first show the textile to his wife, who would be a better judge of the beauty and quality.⁴²

A final remark regarding the construction of a system of agents is that the French ambassadors in Venice did not only actively set up contacts with middlemen and traders, but they were also directly approached by merchants or inventors who wished to sell their products to the French monarchs. André Hurault de Maisse was contacted by various merchants, like a seller of pearls and a Turk from Chios, who manufactured all kinds of products in the Turkish style with gold, silver and silk.⁴³ Furthermore, an inventor of a new type of bread used Hurault de Maisse as an intermediary in order to sell his idea to the French king.⁴⁴ Philippe de la Canaye, in turn, was approached by a Spaniard, whom the French ambassador to Constantinople, Jean de Gontaut Brion, baron of Salignac, recommended for the king's services. The Spaniard was an excellent worker of brocatel and damask, which he

³⁸ In aristocratic households in general, women played a crucial role in supplying the household, supervising the expenses and instructing domestics to buy certain goods. Neuschel, *Word of Honor*, 78-79; Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraitre*, 300-304.

³⁹ The specific items procured by Renée de Courcillon will be discussed in the next section. To already give an idea of the diversity of goods she acquired: velvet and turquoise for Dominique de Vic and watches and carpets for François Savary de Brèves.

⁴⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal François de Joyeuse, 21 January 1607 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 424: "Ma femme vous supplie tres-humblement la vouloir employer par tout ce qu'aurez à acheter par deçà comme la plus humble de vos servantes."

⁴¹ Laura Oliván Santaliestra, "Between Discourses and Practices: Imperial Ambassadors in Madrid (1650–1700)" (Presented at Splendid Encounters III: Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, European University Institute, Florence, March 6, 2015).

⁴² Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance*, 263-264.

⁴³ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, December 1585: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 31, ff. 368v-369r.

⁴⁴ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to King Henry III, 13 July 1586: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 32, ff. 307v-308v.

could garnish with flowers in every colour. Canaye gave him around 30 or 45 ducats to rent a ship and travel with his wife and tools to Marseille, where Salignac had made further travel arrangements for the Spaniard.⁴⁵ Clearly, ambassadors themselves could become pawns in the networks of other individuals.

Payment and Transport

Once the goods had been located by the ambassador and his contacts, they needed to be paid for and shipped to the French court. Logistical matters were a vital aspect of intermediary services, however, insights into these practicalities are more difficult to retrieve from the correspondence.⁴⁶ What does become clear is that a transaction often had to happen quickly, and, as a result, the ambassadors advanced large sums of money for the French crown. Consequently, they frequently complained about the financial distress caused by these payments, to give just one example of a plea by Arnaud du Ferrier to Catherine de' Medici:

[...] I will completely devote myself to acquiring the pearls requested by you, either by sending money to whom they belong so that he transports them to you, or by buying them myself. However, I don't have enough money to make such an advance, since my salary of this year has not yet been assigned, let alone that I have received money, moreover, my extraordinary expenses for the past year have not yet been reimbursed nor allotted.⁴⁷

The ambassador likewise paid for the purchases made for friends and officials, who eventually reimbursed the amount. On some occasions, the ambassador or his wife would guard some money of the "customer". For instance, François Savary de Brèves, French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, entrusted money to Canaye's wife Renée that she could

⁴⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 18 October 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 247; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Brûlart, 29 November 1606 in *ibid.*, book 5, 305.

⁴⁶ Maria Stieglecker did find a lot of references to shipment in the letters of Imperial Ambassador Johann Khevenhüller, who resided in Madrid between 1574 and 1606. She was able to reconstruct the means of transport Khevenhüller employed and the difficulties that this entailed: Maria Stieglecker, "Was Ich Eingethan und Erkhauft, Wille Ich mit Erster Gelegenheit Überschickhen": Zum Gütertransfer von Spanien an den Kaiserhof," in *Hispania-Austria II*, 225-245.

⁴⁷ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 7 February 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, ff. 44-45: "[...] je feray la plus grande diligence que me sera possible de retirer les perles que demandez, soit en baillant quelque argent à celuy à qui appartiennent, pour les vous porter, soit en les achetant, et pour ce que je suis tres mal pourveu pour faire telle avance, n'ayant encores eu l'assignation de mon estat de cette année, tant s'en faut que j'aye receu l'argent, outre les frais extraordinaires de l'année passée, dont je ne suis encores remboursé ny assigné."

use to pay orders in the future.⁴⁸ This is a clear indication of the necessary trust in brokerage relationships. Furthermore, the fact that Savary de Brèves was sure that he would continuously require Renée's services points to both the stability of networks and the unceasing popularity of Venice as a marketplace. Additionally, it again underlines the pertinent role played by the wives of ambassadors in the field of acquisitions.

A second observation with regard to payment is that the French monarchs and elite only paid the cost price of the acquired goods, and not the services rendered by the ambassador. However, an ambassador did expect to receive graces and favours in return for their arduous labour. After his exposition about his long search for barbet dogs in Venice for Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, Ferrier asked her to grant him a favour in return by bestowing an office to his nephew, who would also deliver the dogs to her.⁴⁹ Similarly, following Canaye's list of all the goods he was trying to buy for Secretary of State Pierre Forget, including Levantine flowers, melons and carpets, he mentioned his poor financial condition and asked Forget to instruct the payment of some money that had been withheld from him.⁵⁰

Concerning the transportation of objects, the first step was to acquire a safe passage and a dispensation from taxes from the Venetian government. The letters of the French ambassadors reveal that these two requests were always granted, both in the case of merchandise for the French monarchs and for officials stationed at the French court or abroad. Secondly, valuable goods needed to be packed securely. No specific information is given regarding packaging, but in some cases a certain craftsmanship must have been necessary for the creation of the boxes, which would have been fairly costly.⁵¹ However, the ambassadors only used very general terms to refer to the packaging and only one instance could be found where the price is mentioned: the wrapping of 30 *brasses* of velvet had cost Canaye one or two ducats.⁵² The third step was the actual transfer of the goods, which

⁴⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 2 April 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 136; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 19 July 1603 in *ibid.*, book 3, part 1, 65.

⁴⁹ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 16 May 1578: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, ff. 491-492.

⁵⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Pierre Forget [from now on referred to as Secretary of State Forget], 18 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 40.

⁵¹ Barbara Furlotti discussed the understudied moveable aspect of goods in her talk during the annual conference of the Renaissance Society of America in 2015: Barbara Furlotti, "By Land, by Sea: Moving Antiquities around in Renaissance Rome" (Presented at the Sixty-First Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Humboldt University, Berlin, March 27, 2015). She is also preparing a book on this topic: *Marbles in Motion: The Journey of Antiquities from Excavation Sites to Renaissance Collections*.

⁵² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 9 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 137.

required a lot of patience from the buyer as it could take weeks, and even months, for the merchandise to arrive.⁵³

Additionally, the transport of luxury goods was a vulnerable enterprise. Therefore, ambassadors did not want to rely on public couriers, as the objects were often too valuable to be entrusted to the postal system, which could be very unreliable and was susceptible to robberies.⁵⁴ Also during sea travel, there existed a great danger of theft, as the seas were filled with pirates. When the French consul in Alexandria sent a vessel to Venice carrying some Cairene carpets for Dominique de Vic, an English sea robber attacked the ship and stole the goods.⁵⁵ Consequently, Canaye recommended that Vic ordered his carpets only from Venice, as the same products were available there and they could be transported more securely by land.⁵⁶ François de Noailles mentioned another commonly applied solution to the difficulties of safe shipment. The jewellery he had gathered for King Henry II was extremely precious and Noailles decided that it would be best if the jeweller himself would travel to France to show him the wares.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the king occasionally sent his own couriers to collect the commodities.⁵⁸ Most of the time, however, diplomatic secretaries or members of the ambassador's family were assigned with the distribution of purchases to the French court. The employment of young members of the family as messengers, particularly nephews, was also the case in the example of Arnaud du Ferrier, as it was a way to introduce the bearer to the French court.⁵⁹ For nephews and younger brothers, the time at the embassy served as an apprenticeship in the world of politics, and the delivery of goods brought them into contact with the influential members of the king's household. Deliveries made to individuals outside

⁵³ The fastest postal route through Europe in the sixteenth century was the one operated by the Tassis family between Italy and Brussels, via Tirol. The 764 kilometres of distance were traversed in five days with the couriers travelling around 139 kilometres per day. However, this pace was exceptional and it is difficult to measure a standard speed of travel, both on land and on sea, since it depended on weather conditions, the quality of the roads and political tumult. Between 1497 and 1532, Marin Sanudo noted down the arrival of almost 10.000 letters and news reports in Venice. Based on his accounts, a letter coming from Paris arrived in Venice with an average speed of twelve days. Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Époque de Philippe II*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1976), 326-335.

⁵⁴ Philippe de la Canaye, for example, expresses his lack of trust in couriers: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 6 April 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 211: "Monsieur, Je suis marry que le Courier n'ait mieux fait son devoir de vous rendre le book du sieur *Baptista Guarini*, veu qu'il avoit esté bien payé pour ce faire; mais je veux esperer qu'il en adviendra comme de vos tapis, et qu'avec un peu de longueur, il arrivera en fin entre vos mains [...]".

⁵⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Christophe de Harlay, 7 March 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 99.

⁵⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 9 May 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 182.

⁵⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Constable Anne de Montmorency, 30 April 1559: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique* (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, ff. 399r-399v.

⁵⁸ Letter from King Henry III to Arnaud du Ferrier, 9 August 1574: BNF, *Cinq Cents de Colbert*, vol. 366, f. 703.

⁵⁹ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 16 May 1578: BNF, *Cinq Cents de Colbert*, vol. 367, f. 491-492.

the French court were mostly entrusted to servants or local agents of the buyer.⁶⁰ When the servants were untraceable or on the road for too long to collect the merchandise, the products were assigned to French merchants travelling to the court where the buyer resided.⁶¹

Coveted Venetian Objects and the Appeal of the Orient

Now that the general features of brokerage have been elucidated, the focus shifts to a close examination of the actual objects procured by the French ambassadors in Venice. Since all these objects can teach us something about taste and identity construction, they should be considered carefully. The majority of the scholarly work conducted on the brokerage activities of ambassadors has looked at the close connection between diplomacy and art, which has generated interesting studies on the role played by artwork in diplomatic negotiations, on the one hand, and the artistic collections and expertise of ambassadors, on the other.⁶² In this chapter, however, I will not emphasise the fine arts of painting and sculpture but, instead, highlight the wider plethora of luxury objects, which were often more expensive than art, that French ambassadors were ordered to acquire during their mission in Venice for their king, friends and patrons. Consequently, I will not investigate the role of ambassadors in commissioning works of art, but only their involvement in the buying of finished goods.⁶³

⁶⁰ To give just one example: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 9 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 137.

⁶¹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 16 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 147.

⁶² David Howarth, "William Trumbull and Art Collecting in Jacobean England," *The British Library Journal* 20 (1994), 140-162; Elizabeth Cropper, ed., *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy. Papers from a Colloquium Held at the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1998* (Milan: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 2000); Robert Hill, "The Ambassador as Art Agent: Sir Dudley Carleton and Jacobean Collecting," in *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, ed. Edward Chaney (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 240-255; Robert Hill, "Ambassadors and Art Collecting: The Parallel Careers of William Trumbull and Sir Dudley Carleton," *Journal of the History of Collections* 15, no. 2 (2003), 211-228; Francesca Pitacco, "Dal Secolo d'Oro ai Secoli d'Oro: I Collezionisti Stranieri e i Loro Agenti," in *Il Collezionismo d'Arte a Venezia: Il Seicento*, 103-123; Robert Hill, "Art and Patronage: Sir Henry Wotton and the Venetian Embassy 1604-1624," in *Double Agents*, 27-58.

⁶³ Studies that have already considered the diversity of goods gathered by early modern ambassadors: Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy*, 75-87; Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 183-199; Keblusek and Noldus, eds., *Double Agents*; Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, ch. 3; Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, "Exotica for the Munich Kunstkammer: Antonio Meyting: Fugger Agent, Art Dealer and Ducal Ambassador in Spain," in *Exotica*, ed. Georg Laue (Munich: Georg Laue, 2012), 8-27. A promising forthcoming study is: Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, *Hans Khevenhüller at the Court of Philip II of Spain: Diplomacy and Consumerism in a Global Empire* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, forthcoming 2017).

Jewellery

Recent scholarship on the dissemination of fashions is increasingly looking at the role played by ambassadors in the circulation of styles. Resident ambassadors were often commissioned by their sovereigns to act as intermediaries in the purchasing of foreign textiles and jewels: they negotiated with local merchants and artisans, obtained passports for the shipment of merchandise and solicited safe passages for tailors. Moreover, they operated as “fashion spies”: as the king’s eyes and ears at a foreign court, ambassadors reported on local fashions and, this way, stimulated fascination and adaptation.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, the dispatches of the French ambassadors do not contain many references to textiles acquired in Venice for monarchs or courtiers. For jewels, on the contrary, various references could be traced in the diplomatic correspondence. In fact, the bulk of the orders from the French crown were precisely related to the purchase of jewels.

Venice was known for its market in splendid jewels. Already since the end of the Middle Ages, the Republic played a key role in the importation, processing and exportation of precious stones. Their proximity and access to both the supplies from the Middle East and the markets of the Mediterranean facilitated this process.⁶⁵ Venice was especially renowned as both a production and trading centre of diamonds. Diamonds owed their value to their scarcity, resulting from the limited supply, and the technical skills that were necessary for cutting the stones. These factors made the diamond a highly coveted luxury object that symbolised social rank and wealth. Even though Venice experienced competition with other diamond industries, notably with Antwerp, they remained famous for their know-how regarding the crafting of diamonds.⁶⁶

However, of all the jewels, in particular pearls were the most conspicuous and the most desired by the elite. In Venice, they were the source of ire for the *Magistrato alle Pompe*, who supervised the laws on luxury and tried to curb the usage of pearls for five centuries without much success.⁶⁷ Likewise, in the rest of Europe, sumptuary legislation tried to

⁶⁴ Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 112-151; Milena Hajná, “The International Wardrobe of Emperor Rudolf II: Visual and Textual Representations of an Early Modern Emperor’s Clothes (1552-1612),” in *Se Vêtir à la Cour en Europe*, 123-132; Corinne Thépaut-Cabasset, “Garde-Robe de Souverain et Réseau International: L’Exemple de la Bavière dans les Années 1680,” in *Se Vêtir à la Cour en Europe*, 177-193.

⁶⁵ Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe*, 172; 175; Sogliani, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563-1587)*, 56-63; Salvatore Ciriaco, “Diamonds in Early Modern Venice: Technology, Products and International Competition,” in *History of Technology*, eds. Anna Guagnini and Luca Molà (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 70.

⁶⁶ An overview of the Venetian diamond industry and its competitors is given in: Ciriaco, “Diamonds in Early Modern Venice”, 67-86.

⁶⁷ Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe*.

control the excessive consumption of pearls. Nonetheless, amongst the upper echelons of society, pearls were used abundantly to enrich their appearance. Similarly, sixteenth-century kings and queens were almost always depicted with accessories of pearls on their ears, in necklaces and on hats and garments. Oriental pearls were the most fashionable, and Venice's location offered a great advantage in procuring these products: pearls constituted a central item in the Republic's commercial transactions with the East.⁶⁸ However, over the course of the sixteenth century, the influx of pearls from the Americas made Lisbon and Seville the new centres of the pearl trade.⁶⁹

François de Noailles' most important commission was the acquisition of jewellery for French King Henry II, to be worn during the wedding ceremonies resulting from the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, signed between France and Spain on 2 April 1559. To reinforce the bond between the actors involved, Spanish King Philip II married the daughter of French King Henry II, Elisabeth of Valois, and Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy married Henry's sister, Margaret of France. Noailles was contacted by Constable Anne de Montmorency to employ French agents Pierre Pomare and Francesco Nasi to search in Venice and Ferrara for “[...] some beautiful big oriental pearls very clear and united, to be called exquisite, with some beautiful rubies and diamonds.”⁷⁰ Before purchasing these pearls, rubies and diamonds, models in lead or drawings had to be made and delivered to the French king. If they pleased the king, money would be transferred to Venice to finalise the transaction.⁷¹

Noailles acted immediately and sent out Pomare and Nasi, who quickly presented him with samples of pearls of various sizes and values: 3 pear-shaped of 16, 36 and 39 carats and 32 others of 11 and 12 carats. They also showed all the rubies and diamonds that they had discovered, either separate or on hangers, necklaces and belts. However, Noailles admitted to the constable that he could not give advice about their quality or value. Therefore, instead of making samples and drawings, he proposed to collect the most beautiful and exquisite examples and transport them to France so that the king could make an informed decision.

⁶⁸ George Frederick Kunz and Charles Hugh Stevenson, *The Book of the Pearl: Its History, Art, Science, and Industry* (New York: The Century Company, 1908), 24-26.

⁶⁹ Neil H. Landman, *Pearls: A Natural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 75.

⁷⁰ Letter from Constable Anne de Montmorency to François de Noailles, 8 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 343r: “[...] quelques belles grosses perles orientales bien claires et unies, pour estre dictes exquisés avec quelques beaulx rubis et diamans.”

⁷¹ Letter from Constable Anne de Montmorency to François de Noailles, 8 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 343r.

Additionally, an inventory was drawn with the dimensions, texture, carats and value of the rubies, diamonds and pearls.⁷²

In 1573, Arnaud du Ferrier received a task very similar to that of Noailles: he was assigned to buy pearls, the most beautiful and at the best price that he could find in Venice, since these were the jewels that Catherine de' Medici coveted.⁷³ A glance at her portraits illustrates her great fondness for pearls: the upper parts of her dresses were often completely decorated with pearls and other jewellery and, in addition, she wore pearls, diamonds and rubies around her neck, on her ears and in her hair.⁷⁴ Pearls were the perfect way to demonstrate her status and the affluence of the French crown. The fragile and delicate nature of the pearl made it an even more valuable accessory. Additionally, their colour, appearance and natural, unrefined beauty signified purity, chastity and moral value.⁷⁵

A letter from Ferrier to the Cardinal of Lorraine gives a good impression of the quality of Venetian pearls, the process of collecting them and the practicalities of payment and transportation. In his detailed report, Ferrier recounted that he had contacted a merchant in Venice who had three exquisite pearls to sell: 2 pear-shaped of 23 and 27 carats, a shape that was highly demanded according to Ferrier, and 1 round and pure of 19 carats. They were all of the finest quality and the most beautiful he had encountered. The merchant sold them at the price of 4.000 *écu*, which had to be paid within a period of four months. Ferrier sent samples in lead to the French court and agreed with the merchant that he would not sell the jewels in the meantime. Ferrier also arranged that when the queen decided to buy the pearls, she could still decline if, after seeing the originals, they did not meet her standards. In that case, the merchant would take back the merchandise at a cost of 100 *écu*.⁷⁶

Later that year, Ferrier searched once more for pearls at the request of Catherine de' Medici. He contacted a Venetian merchant who sold a string of 151 pearls with a value of 130 *écu* per piece. However, Ferrier negotiated with the merchant to sell them at 100 per

⁷² Letter from François de Noailles to Constable Anne de Montmorency, 30 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, ff. 399r-399v; Letter from François de Noailles to Constable Anne de Montmorency, 30 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 403r.

⁷³ Letter from Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici to Arnaud du Ferrier, 12 January 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, f. 28: "[...] si vous en descouvrez de plus belles et à meilleur prix vous me ferez tres grand plaisir [...]"

⁷⁴ Joan Evans, *A History of Jewellery, 1100-1870* (London: Faber & Faber, 1953), 114.

⁷⁵ Karen Raber, "Chains of Pearls: Gender, Property, and Identity," in *Ornamentalism*, 159-180.

⁷⁶ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 16 March 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, ff. 79-81.

piece, since the dowager queen would buy the entire cord.⁷⁷ Catherine was satisfied with the bargain achieved by her ambassador and commissioned him to proceed with the purchase. She wished to pay one third immediately, another third after six months and the last third again six months later.⁷⁸ It is very likely that also over the following years, Ferrier was occasionally instructed to procure pearls and other jewellery. In a letter dating from 1578, he mentioned his connections with a French jeweller located in Venice, who had been employed in the past to locate “[...] beautiful pearls and other rings [...]”.⁷⁹

Pearls continued to be a central object of the brokerage activities of the subsequent French ambassadors. In 1585, André Hurault de Maisse was approached by a merchant wishing to sell a string of pearls to French Queen Louise of Lorraine.⁸⁰ The following year, Catherine de’ Medici again yearned to have some pearls from Venice. Hurault de Maisse located a merchant presenting the finest pearls you could find in the city; they were more beautiful and larger than all the other examples the ambassador had seen in the past. The merchant would travel to the French court to present the jewels; if the dowager queen decided not to purchase the merchandise, she would only have to reimburse the travel expenses amounting to 200 *écu*.⁸¹ Although Catherine bought the pearls for a sum of 11.500 *écu*, to the regret of the merchant who had hoped to receive a higher payment, she deemed them too small.⁸² Hurault de Maisse assured her that larger pearls could be located in Venice, however, these cost more and were of lesser quality.⁸³

Clearly, French monarchs fostered a great interest in jewels that could be found in the Venetian market squares. Additionally, there existed a strong curiosity for jewellery amongst the French elite. Philippe de la Canaye’s wife Renée de Courcillon occasionally roamed Venetian shops in search of some fine turquoises, an opaque blue-green gem originating from

⁷⁷ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de’ Medici, 10 July 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, ff. 255-256.

⁷⁸ Letter from to Dowager Queen Catherine de’ Medici to Arnaud du Ferrier, 3 August 1573: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 366, f. 291; Letter from Catherine de’ Medici to Arnaud du Ferrier, 17 September 1573: *ibid.*, ff. 370-371.

⁷⁹ Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 13 February 1578: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, f. 448: “[...] et qu’il [Jeweller] est aussy François et tres suffisant en son mestier, quand vostre Majesté se voudroit servir de luy par deça pour recouvrer quelques belles perles et autres bagues [...]”.

⁸⁰ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Queen Louise of Lorraine, March 1585: AMAE: Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 31, ff. 368v-369v.

⁸¹ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Dowager Queen Catherine de’ Medici, March 1586: AMAE: Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 32, ff. 79v-81v.

⁸² Both this example and the ones concerning Arnaud du Ferrier show the tremendously high price of pearls.

⁸³ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Dowager Queen Catherine de’ Medici, April 1586: AMAE: Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 32, ff. 218v-219v.

the Middle East, particularly Persia, for French official Dominique de Vic and his wife.⁸⁴ However, the supply of turquoises in Venice seems to have reached a low point at the beginning of the seventeenth century, since Renée did not succeed in locating a beautiful exemplar:

Please do not find it strange that my wife has not yet sent you a turquoise, this is not because she does not search for it every day, but because nothing beautiful is available, and she does not want to make a purchase that she thinks will not please you.⁸⁵

Consequently, after a year of searching in vain, she decided to hand over her own turquoise to Madame de Vic.⁸⁶ Canaye and his wife were also in contact with a gentleman who, according to them, made the most beautiful pearls in Venice, as they outshined the natural oriental pearls and were much harder.⁸⁷

Further proof of the fact that Venice had a thriving market in all kinds of jewels is that other foreign agents also explored Venetian markets in search of a great variety of luxurious jewellery. The dispatches of the Mantuan ambassadors show that both Duke Guglielmo and Vincenzo Gonzaga requested an enormous amount of diamonds, rubies, balases, emeralds, sapphires, topaz, pearls, and many other precious and semi-precious stones.⁸⁸ This is expressed in a letter from Francesco Valvassori to ducal advisor Annibale Chieppio:

[...] while I found myself in that city [Venice] I heard that our serene duke as generous prince [Vincenzo Gonzaga], takes a lot of pleasure from the noble profession of having processed for him every sort of splendid stones, and especially rubies, emeralds, sapphires, topaz, and other varieties.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 2 August 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 83; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 19 September 1603 in *ibid.*, 134.

⁸⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 3 October 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 154: “Ne trouvez estrange s’il vous plaist, que ma femme ne vous ait point encore envoyé de Turquoise, ce n’est pas qu’elle n’en cherche tous les jours: mais ne se presentant rien de beau, elle ne se peut resoudre à faire emplete qu’elle juge ne vous devoir estre agreable.”; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 31 October 1603 in *ibid.*, book 3, part 2, 13.

⁸⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 28 July 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 301.

⁸⁷ Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 670.

⁸⁸ Michaela Sermidi, “Vanità, Lusso, Arte e Scienza: Il Collezionismo Onnivoro di Vincenzo I Gonzaga a Venezia,” in *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, 17. For examples, see: Sogliani, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563-1587)*, ad vocem; Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, ad vocem.

⁸⁹ Sermidi, ed., *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 587: “[...] mentre ch’io mi trovava in quella città intesi che quel serenissimo duca commune signore nostro come principe generosissimo, molto si diletta della nobilissima professione di far acconciare ogni sorte di pietre gioiose, et massime rubini, smeraldi, zaffiri, toppaci, et d’altre sorti ancora.”

Likewise, the Spanish ambassadors of King Philip II were in close contact with merchants in order to locate the best gems in Venice. In 1544, for example, Diego de Mendoza spent 6.000 *escudos* on 68 pearls, which Philip II used as a present for his new wife, Maria Manuela of Portugal.⁹⁰

Oriental Carpets and Textiles

The previous chapters have already pointed to the oriental taste in both Venice and France, where the wealthy classes consumed especially Ottoman luxury goods in great quantities. Since the possession and display of oriental furnishings symbolised prosperity, power and social superiority, it comes as no surprise that French ambassadors often received requests for eastern commodities.⁹¹ Three factors made it relatively easy for them to pursue these demands: Venice's close commercial contacts with the East, the presence of Ottoman merchants in the Venetian marketplace and the contacts with French ambassadors in Constantinople. Particularly highly sought-after objects from the East were oriental carpets. As has already been outlined in Chapter 4, Venice was a privileged market for acquiring eastern carpets. François de Noailles observed that rugs with many provenances could be purchased easily in Venice: "[...] one can find here very beautiful Cairene, *Semyscays*, *Jamina* and Persian [carpets], of all of them I can search and reserve the quantity that pleases you."⁹² Whereas the qualifications Cairene and Persian are very straightforward, it is more complicated to expose the provenance of carpets from *Semyscays* and *Jamina*. *Semyscays* most probably refers to Çemişgezek in Anatolia, which had a small production centre of carpets.⁹³ The meaning of *Jamina* is even more difficult to determine. It might hint at carpets coming from Persia, although Noailles also mentions Persian carpets separately.

⁹⁰ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 188.

⁹¹ For an overview of the European taste for eastern objects, see: Anna Contadini, "Sharing a Taste? Material Culture and Intellectual Curiosity around the Mediterranean, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, 22-61.

⁹² Letter from François de Noailles to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 30 May 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 137: "[...] car il s'en trouve de fort beaux Cayrins, Semyscays, Jamina et Persiens, de tous lesquels je ne faudray d'en chercher et retenir la quantité qu'il vous plaira."

⁹³ Michael Rogers and Giovanni Curatola link the terms *cimischasa*, *cimicasa* and *cimiscasa* to the town of Çemişgezek: Michael Rogers, "Carpets in the Mediterranean Countries 1450-1550: Some Historical Observations," in *Carpets of the Mediterranean Countries*, 18 note 19; Curatola, "Venice's Textile and Carpet Trade", 208. Sanudo mentions *tapedi cimischasachi* when recounting a solemn procession taking place in Venice in September 1515. This indicates that carpets from Çemişgezek were indeed present in Venice during the sixteenth century: Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 21, col. 45. Furthermore, in her analysis of Venetian inventories of the sixteenth century, Isabella Cecchini found many carpets denoted as *cimiscasà*, which again most probably refers to Çemişgezek: Isabella Cecchini, "Material Culture in Sixteenth Century Venice: A Sample from Probate Inventories, 1510-1615," Working Papers, Department of Economics, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Despite the great variety of carpets present in Venice, most people commissioned Noailles to procure carpets coming from Anatolia, current-day Turkey. For example, Secretary of State Fleurimont Robertet, Lord d'Aluye, contacted him in name of Queen Catherine de' Medici:

[...] the Queen Mother has commanded me to inform you that she desires that you locate some beautiful carpets from Turkey, if there are some in Venice, to furnish here house in Chenonceaux. And if you notify her about how much they cost, she will provide you with the money to buy them.⁹⁴

Additionally, Noailles' friends and patrons in France commissioned him to recover carpets. François de Scépeaux, lord of Vieilleville, sent him money to purchase Turkish carpets and to transport them to France.⁹⁵ One of Noailles' patrons, Cardinal of Châtillon Odet de Coligny, likewise asked him to recover and transfer velvet and Turkish carpets.⁹⁶ These Turkish rugs already reached Europe in the fourteenth century, and Venice had played a key role in this trade since the start. In the sixteenth century, Turkish carpets constituted the principal group of oriental carpets transported to Europe. Their great popularity can be deduced from the many representations in paintings.⁹⁷

Almost fifty years later, Philippe de la Canaye was similarly overwhelmed with requests for oriental carpets by the French court, such as Secretary of State Pierre Forget, and by fellow ambassadors. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, eastern rugs were commonly found in France, and Canaye noted that carpets from Cairo and Syria were not cheaper in Venice, but they could be found in bigger quantities. Additionally, there were more varieties at hand in price, size and purpose, such as carpets for beds, floors and tables.⁹⁸ Furthermore, just as Noailles had remarked, Canaye pointed to the availability of carpets

14, 2008, 9. Peter Thornton gives another explanation for the carpets described as *simiscasa* in a Venetian inventory of 1584. He suggests that term refers to Circassia in the Caucasus, a major carpet-making region: Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 65.

⁹⁴ Letter from Secretary of State d'Aluye to François de Noailles, 27 april 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 36: “[...] la Royne mere ma commandé de vous faire entendre qu’elle desireroit bien que vous luy fissiez recouvrer quelques beaux tappis de turquye s’il y en a a Venize pour meubler sa maison de Chenonceaux. Et que luy faisant entendre ce qu’ilz cousteront elle vous fera tenir par de la l’argent pour y satisfaire.”

⁹⁵ Letter from Gilles de Noailles to François de Noailles, 31 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, ff. 491-492.

⁹⁶ Letter from Odet de Coligny [from now on referred to as Cardinal of Châtillon] to François de Noailles, 8 January 1564: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 296v; Letter from Cardinal of Châtillon to François de Noailles, 12 July 1564: *ibid.*, f. 352r.

⁹⁷ Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets*, 18-21; 95.

⁹⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Forget, 16 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 40; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 18 November 1601 in *ibid.*, 70; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 20 January 1602 in *ibid.*, 107.

from various places: besides Cairo and Syria, also pieces from Persia and *Zenims* could be purchased.⁹⁹ Especially the French ambassador to Rome, Philippe de Béthune, ordered a great quantity of carpets: four for the bed, two for the table and two to place around the bed; the origin is only specified for the last two, which were Cairene rugs.¹⁰⁰ Later, Canaye procured for him two carpets for the bed and two square pieces from Cairo in Persian style for the table.¹⁰¹ Another French ambassador, Dominique de Vic, stationed in the Grisons, requested several Turkish and Cairene rugs.¹⁰² Again, it is enlightening to compare these French orders with those received by contemporary ambassadors and agents of other states. For instance, in the mid-sixteenth century, Imperial Ambassador Diego de Mendoza supplied his friends, such as the Spanish royal secretary Francisco de los Cobos, with eastern carpets.¹⁰³ Likewise, the Mantuan resident ambassadors recounted about the presence of many Cairene carpets, both new and used, in the shops in the Venetian ghetto at the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁴

In addition to carpets, textiles from the Ottoman lands were highly admired amongst European consumers. Yet, only in the last decades have historians shown interest in their importation and consumption. Ottoman fabrics were mainly produced in Istanbul, Bursa and Damascus, and from there they were exported to western markets already during the Middle Ages. For Venice, the expenditures concerning the import of eastern textiles were one of the highest yearly expenses of the Republic in the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Even though over the course of the fifteenth century, the distribution of oriental textiles stagnated due to the competition with Italian fabrics, eastern silks and velvets still appeared in the houses and wardrobes of the European elite.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, only a few requests for oriental creations could be traced in the court's correspondence with François de Noailles. French King Francis II requested some Moroccan skins in various colours, which would be used to make collars

⁹⁹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 26 January 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 115. *Zenims* most likely refers to the same place as the above-mentioned *Jamina*.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 5 January 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 86; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 11 January 1602 in *ibid.*, 98.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 2 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 131.

¹⁰² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 31 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 83; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Christophe de Harlay, 7 March 1603 in *ibid.*, book 2, 99.

¹⁰³ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 188.

¹⁰⁴ Sermidi, ed., *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 1052.

¹⁰⁵ For the importation of Levantine textiles in Venice, see, for example: David Jacoby, "Dalla Materia Prima ai Drappi tra Bisanzio, il Levante e Venezia: La Prima Fase dell'Industria Serica Veneziana," in *La Seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento*, 265-304.

¹⁰⁶ Faroghi, "Ottoman Textiles in European Markets", 231-237.

and bonnets *piqué*.¹⁰⁷ His mother, Catherine de' Medici, in turn, wished to have silk in blue and carnation and gold cloth from the Levant.¹⁰⁸ Most probably the French crown customarily purchased oriental textiles directly from the Ottoman Empire through the French ambassador in Constantinople.

Manuscripts and Books

Another important Venetian commerce that attracted the French elite was the book market. Venice held a strong position in the international book trade and was a place of major interest for the procuring of books. This was due to both their technical finesse and geographical location. Firstly, Venice was one of the pioneers in the printing and publishing industry because they possessed the necessary technical and design skills to implement a strong business. Consequently, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, Venice had become the chief production centre of printed books, and the Venetian printing industry flooded European markets with their products. Secondly, at the same time, the city had an easy access to the collections of the Levant, which were highly coveted by the elite.¹⁰⁹ Hence, ambassadors from various nations were commissioned by their patrons to acquire manuscripts and books in the city.¹¹⁰ For instance, Mantuan ambassadors in the sixteenth and

¹⁰⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 11 September 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 156v; Letter from Secretary of State d'Aluye to François de Noailles, 24 July 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 265.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Secretary of State d'Aluye to François de Noailles, 15 June 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 179; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine: 17 June 1560: *ibid.*, f. 185. Whereas the reconstruction of Catherine de' Medici's wardrobe of 1556 by Isabelle Paresys has revealed the cosmopolitan nature of her attire, no mention is made of these Oriental elements: Paresys, "Vêtir les Souverains Français à la Renaissance".

¹⁰⁹ Anthony Hobson, *Renaissance Book Collecting: Jean Grolier and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Their Books and Bindings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), ch. 5; Lisa Pon and Graig Kallendorf, eds., *The Books of Venice / Il Libro Veneziano* (Venice, New Castle: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, La Musa Talià, Oak Knoll Press, 2008); Neil Harris, "The Italian Renaissance Book: Catalogues, Censuses and Survival," in *The Book Triumphant: Print in Transition in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, eds. Malcolm Walsby and Graeme Kemp (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 28-33; Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013).

¹¹⁰ Some studies on the role of ambassadors as important pawns in book assembling and distributing networks in various geographical regions include: Levin, *Agents of Empire*, ch. 7; Marika Keblusek, "Book Agents: Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books," in *Your Humble Servant*, 97-107; Joanna Craigwood, "Diplomats and International Book Exchange," in *Cultural Transfers: France and Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Ann Thomson, Simon Burrows, and Edmond Dziembowski (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010), 57-69. Additionally, ambassadors could perform an important role in the transfer of knowledge related to printing and book production. I will, however, not pursue this topic here.

seventeenth centuries were in constant contact with Venetian printers and purchased numerous books for the Gonzaga family.¹¹¹

Many of the French ambassadors selected for a post in Venice were already acquainted with the world of books. Here we have an example of how the cultural and social background of an ambassador could determine his selection for a certain posting. In particular, the Hurault brothers were book connoisseurs who had a family library at their disposal and had enjoyed a refined education, which had introduced them to the literary classics. Likewise, Arnaud du Ferrier was a book collector. In Venice, he purchased some Hebrew and other very rare books, of which some were filled with mathematical secrets.¹¹² Moreover, Philippe de la Canaye was a learned scholar and writer familiar with the world of letters. An intellectual background was decisive for the ambassador's success as book entrepreneur, since this provided him with the basic knowledge to identify the authenticity and quality of manuscripts and books.

Throughout the entire sixteenth century, French ambassadors in Venice operated as agents in the international network of book exchange. They were continuously employed to discover new commodities available in Venetian bookshops. These stores were mostly located in the commercial hearts of the city, such as the *Mercerie*.¹¹³ One of the reasons why the French nobility was interested in obtaining books from Venice was the predominance of Italian as a fashionable language for the cultivated elite. Furthermore, at the French court, there was a great Italian cultural influence due to matrimonial alliances.¹¹⁴ Additionally, the French kings desired rare, eastern manuscripts to display in their royal libraries, which could be easily acquired in Venice. Consequently, when King Francis I established a new library at his castle in Fontainebleau between 1520 and 1530, which essentially had to consist of Greek manuscripts, he ordered his ambassadors to search for these texts in Venice.¹¹⁵

Greek manuscripts were highly coveted by the European aristocracy for the knowledge they contained and the status they conveyed to the owner. Furthermore, the Greek and Latin

¹¹¹ Chambers, "Benedetto Agnello", 144; Sogliani, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563-1587)*, ad vocem; Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, ad vocem.

¹¹² Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 2 December 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 594.

¹¹³ Hobson, *Renaissance Book Collecting*, 106.

¹¹⁴ Harris, "The Italian Renaissance Book", 31.

¹¹⁵ Jean Irigoien, "Les Ambassadeurs à Venise et le Commerce des Manuscrits Grecs dans les Années 1540-1550," in *Venezia: Centro di Mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (Secoli XV-XVI): Aspetti e Problemi. Atti del Secondo Convegno Internazionale di Storia della Civiltà Veneziana (Venezia, 3-6 Ottobre 1963)*, eds. Hans-Georg Beck, Manoussos Manoussacas, and Agostino Pertusi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1977), 399-400; Christian Förstel, "Les Manuscrits Grecs dans les Collections Royales sous François Ier," *Revue Française d'Histoire du Livre* 98-99 (1998), 72; 77.

classical antiquity stood at the centre of western education. Throughout the early modern period, printers everywhere in Europe developed techniques to print the Greek alphabet, again pointing to the great popularity of Greek books.¹¹⁶ Venice was known as the most important market for these Greek writings. This has for example been formulated in the 1570s by the famous French book collector and writer Jacques-Auguste de Thou, who stated that he “[...] searched the shops of the Venetian booksellers, buying thence a great number of books, especially Greek, which were more rare amongst us [French].”¹¹⁷ The easy accessibility of Greek manuscripts and books in Venice was due to several factors, such as the Venetian territorial possessions in Greece, the strong presence of a Greek colony in Venice, the eminent place assumed by the University of Padua in Greek studies and the fact that many printers were specialised in printing Greek books.¹¹⁸

Following Francis I's commands, the French ambassadors in Venice were gradually devoting an increasing amount of time to their task of book collecting. Lazare de Baïf (1531-1534) and Georges de Selve (1534-1536) even took lessons in Hebrew in order to be able to recognise quality Hebrew manuscripts. Just as was the case with Greek books, Venice became the leading city in Europe for the printing of Hebrew texts. These texts were popular amongst humanists and at European universities.¹¹⁹ Additionally, both of them procured Greek works during their mission in Venice. Baïf was instructed to find Greek manuscripts, handwritten on parchment, on history, philosophy and rhetoric. Selve, a renowned Hellenist, purchased Greek manuscripts from a merchant from Crete, and his visits to the University of Padua and interactions with the intellectual scene in Venice stimulated his consumption of classical and philosophical books for private use. Furthermore, he maintained close relations with Venetian printers and copyists. When Selve died, his private library was almost immediately added to the royal collection.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Jean Irigoin, “En Guise d’Introduction: Le Livre Grec et l’Europe (XVe-XVIIIe Siècles),” *Revue Française d’Histoire du Livre* 98-99 (1998), 9-20.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in: Antoni Mańczak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 200.

¹¹⁸ Irigoin, “Les Ambassadeurs à Venise et le Commerce des Manuscrits Grecs”, 399. A very famous printer of Greek books during the second half of the fifteenth century in Venice was Aldus Manutius, see: Reinhard Flogaus, “Aldus Manutius and the Printing of Greek Liturgical Texts,” in *The Books of Venice*, 207-230.

¹¹⁹ Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear, eds., *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

¹²⁰ Irigoin, “Les Ambassadeurs à Venise et le Commerce des Manuscrits Grecs”, 400; Kalas, “Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France”, 385; Anthony Hobson, *Humanists and Bookbinders: The Origins and Diffusion of the Humanistic Bookbinding, 1459-1559* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 183; Philippe Hoffmann, “Sur Quelques Manuscrits Vénitiens de Georges de Selve, Leurs Reliures et Leur Histoire,” in *Paleografia e Codicologia Greca. Atti del II Colloquio Internazionale (Berlino-Wolfenbüttel, 17-21 Ottobre 1983)*, eds. Dieter Harlfinger and Giancarlo Prato (Alessandria: Edizione dell’Orso, 1991), 441-462; Gadoffre, *La Révolution Culturelle dans la France des Humanistes*, 94-100.

French book collecting in Venice reached a first true culmination point under Guillaume Pellicier, stationed in Venice between 1539 and 1542. He built a network of experts of the Greek book trade and employed several tactics in order to acquire Greek manuscripts. Firstly, he hired scribes who copied manuscripts that were preserved in Venetian libraries and private collections, and, secondly, he tried to retrieve books and manuscripts directly from the source by asking people who travelled to the Levant to search for the desired texts.¹²¹ Due to the efforts of Pellicier and other French ambassadors in Venice, and also Rome, around 600 Greek manuscripts entered the royal library between 1538 and 1550.¹²² Pellicier's collecting practices show many similarities with that of his Spanish colleague, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, who represented Emperor and Spanish King Charles V in Venice between 1539 and 1546. He followed Pellicier's example and strove to rival his assortment of books. Mendoza definitely succeeded in his goal, as he established a magnificent private library in Venice containing Greek manuscripts, Greek printed books, Latin printed books, contemporary books and Arabic manuscripts. His collection of Greek manuscripts counted up to 258 exemplars, which he had acquired by using the same techniques as Pellicier: copying existing manuscripts and sending out agents to the Levant.¹²³ After his death in 1575, his impressive collection was bequeathed to the Spanish royal library at the Escorial.¹²⁴ Between 1572 and 1574, Spanish Ambassador Diego Guzmán de Silva was an equally passionate book collector. He fervently looked for new acquisitions in Venice that could enrich his king's library.¹²⁵

Unfortunately, François de Noailles' correspondence never mentions book collecting activities. He did, however, occasionally send books to Cardinal François de Tournon, who was greatly pleased with them.¹²⁶ A description of Tournon's character by Jacques-Auguste de Thou some years later reveals the cardinal's love for books, which he always carried with him when travelling and used to educate the young scholars in his retinue.¹²⁷ With regard to the second half of the sixteenth century, we again have more information available. This is

¹²¹ Irigoien, "Les Ambassadeurs à Venise et le Commerce des Manuscrits Grecs", 399-415.

¹²² Förstel, "Les Manuscrits Grecs dans les Collections Royales sous François Ier", 77.

¹²³ Hurtado de Mendoza also applied an unusual and bold technique to acquire Greek manuscripts: he contacted the Ottoman sultan with the offer of exchanging a Turkish prisoner for Greek manuscripts, to which the sultan agreed. Hobson, *Renaissance Book Collecting*, 75.

¹²⁴ More information regarding Hurtado de Mendoza's book collecting can be found in: *ibid.*, ch. 4.

¹²⁵ Irigoien, "Les Ambassadeurs à Venise et le Commerce des Manuscrits Grecs", 402.

¹²⁶ This was communicated to Noailles by a member of Cardinal Tournon's household, Vincenzo Laureo: Letter from Vincenzo Laureo to François de Noailles, 8 October 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 312r; Letter from Vincenzo Laureo to François de Noailles, 27 October 1558: *ibid.*, f. 349r; Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal François de Tournon, 15 January 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 424r.

¹²⁷ Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*, 199.

when the brothers Jean Hurault de Boistaillé and André Hurault de Maisse, who are the most famous examples of French ambassadors who were simultaneously passionate book collectors, executed their diplomatic assignments in Venice. Both of them are known as bibliophiles, and used their missions in Venice to collect books and manuscripts for their private library and for the king's collection.

In particular Hurault de Boistaillé was a fervent book collector. Just as his predecessors, he was especially interested in Greek, Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts, which he had already started to collect throughout his diplomatic mission in Constantinople from 1557 to 1558. During his residency in Venice, he built a strong network of agents and established contacts with booksellers all over the Italian peninsula. This way, he gathered and copied more than 100 items. Hurault de Boistaillé's brother, Hurault de Maisse, mostly acquired Greek and Italian manuscripts for his private library.¹²⁸ A letter sent to his second cousin, Philippe Hurault de Cheverny, two months after his arrival in Venice, indicates that he also functioned as a book agent for Cheverny, who was likewise a well-known collector: "I am ready to look for the books you have requested, and I hope that I will gather a certain quantity to send you [...]."¹²⁹

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, French ambassadors still roamed Venetian bookshops in search for new titles that would please their king and friends. In the letters of Philippe de la Canaye, we find several references to visits of local bookshops. Canaye himself was a writer, and after his journey to the Ottoman Empire in 1573, he had composed a travel account, which was, however, published as late as 1897. He also published a translation and analysis of Aristotle's *Organon*, a work on logic, and in 1589, he translated Aristotle's treatise on the soul and wrote a study on physics.¹³⁰ Canaye's own intellectual background made him a reliable book agent. Therefore, he was approached by various members of the French elite to procure several books on their behalf. Supplying these

¹²⁸ For more information on the book collection of the Hurault family, see: Donald F. Jackson, "The Greek Manuscripts of Jean Hurault de Boistaillé," *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 2 (2004), 209-252; Marie-Pierre Laffitte, "Les Manuscrits chez les Amateurs, Fin XVIe - Fin XVIIe Siècle," in *Mazarin: Les Lettres et les Arts. Actes du Colloque Tenu en Décembre 2002*, eds. Isabelle de Conihout and Patrick Michel (Saint-Rémy-en-l'Eau: Hayot, 2006), 326-337; de Conihout, "Jean et André Hurault", 105-148.

¹²⁹ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Philippe Hurault de Cheverny, 1 January 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, f. 100v: "Je suis pres de faire une recherche de vous les books de par deça, et espere en mettre ensemble quelque quantité pour les vous envoyer [...]". For more information on the book collection of Philippe Hurault de Cheverny, see: Laffitte, "Les Manuscrits chez les Amateurs", 328-330; de Conihout, "Jean et André Hurault", 108.

¹³⁰ de la Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant*; Philippe de la Canaye, *L'Organe, c'est-à-dire l'Instrument du Discours, Divisé en Deux Parties, Sçavoir Est, l'Analytique, pour Discourir Véritablement, et la Dialectique, pour Discourir Probablement. Le Tout Puisé de l'Organe d'Aristote* (Geneva: Jean de Tournes, 1589). For more information about these works, see: Robert Regnault, introduction to *Lettres et Ambassades*, by Philippe de la Canaye, book 1, 4-5; Henri Hauser, introduction to *Le Voyage du Levant*, by Philippe de la Canaye, xvii.

services to fellow intellectuals and scholars was an integral part of the patronage system that governed the Republic of Letters.¹³¹

Canaye's letters indicate that he occasionally sent lists of new books that were available in Venice to French officials Dominique de Vic, Nicolas Brulart de Sillery and Nicolas de Baugy, so that they could select the titles they coveted, which Canaye would then purchase.¹³² Others, such as the French ambassadors in Rome and Constantinople, respectively Philippe de Béthune and François Savary de Brèves, approached Canaye to find specific titles. Canaye fervently searched for these books in every bookshop in Venice in order to please them and remain in their good graces.¹³³ Canaye was, moreover, employed from time to time by the aforementioned Jacques-Auguste de Thou, who was appointed as *maître* of the French royal library in 1593.¹³⁴ It cannot be derived from the letters whether Thou wished to have these books for his private collection or for King Henry IV's library. This last assumption is plausible since, as the king's librarian, Thou was obliged to establish a network of contacts, at home and abroad, who could regularly send him new books for the royal collection.¹³⁵

Canaye's relationship with Thou brings to light another interesting phenomenon with regard to the circulation of books. Between 1604 and 1607, when Thou finished what would become his magnum opus, *Historiae Sui Temporis*, he sent manuscripts and volumes of his work to Canaye with the request of trying to get a copy accepted in the library of St. Mark, the *Marciana*.¹³⁶ Canaye indeed related that he had received three exemplars: one was for him, one he gave as a present to the nephew of Doge Marino Grimani and one he would try

¹³¹ Keblusek, "Book Agents", 106.

¹³² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 31 December 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 83; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 6 February 1602 in *ibid.*, 134; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas Brûlart de Sillery, 1 January 1603 in *ibid.*, book 2, 9; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Nicolas de Baugy, 17 May 1604 in *ibid.*, book 3, part 2, 214. Unfortunately, these lists are not attached to the letters anymore.

¹³³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de la Béthune, 3 April 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 180; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 6 May 1607 in *ibid.*, book 5, 568; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 8 June 1607 in *ibid.*, 623-624. The Béthune family would build out an important book collection, see: Laffitte, "Les Manuscrits chez les Amateurs", 332-337.

¹³⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 16 July 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 63; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 3 June 1604 in *ibid.*, book 3, part 2, 239; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 11 January 1605 in *ibid.*, book 4, 473.

¹³⁵ Keblusek, "Book Agents", 97.

¹³⁶ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 10 March 1604 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 2, 156; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 3 June 1604 in *ibid.*, 239; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 15 May 1607 in *ibid.*, book 5, 579. Today, the *Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana* holds many editions of Thou's book.

to place in the library of the Republic. Furthermore, Thou's Venetian friend Paolo Sarpi, the famous prelate, received a copy:

[...] I thank you, Sir, for the three exemplars of your second edition, which you have honoured me with. Father Paolo [Sarpi] has received his and thanks you for it, I have given another exemplar to the nephew of the Doge who is, as you know, of the Grimani family, since he had shown a great desire for it and grants a lot of importance to it. [...] I will deliberate on how to get it accepted in the library of the Republic, a place worthy of such a jewel [...]¹³⁷

This example is a clear indication of the two directions in which cultural transfer operated. Ambassadors were not only commissioned to seek out and send back foreign commodities, they were also approached to introduce products of their home country to foreign courts. This way, ambassadors tried to promote and boost their native culture abroad. Although this aspect has been absent in this discussion, as it transcends the focus of the chapter, it should not be forgotten that cultural exchange was always a bilateral process.

The Versatility of the Venetian Market

The markets of domestically produced or imported jewels, oriental carpets and textiles, and manuscripts and books, were not the only sectors that attributed to Venice's fame and wealth. As already stated, contemporary sources uncover the great diversity of goods one could procure in Venice: from luxury objects such as precious stones to peculiar objects like antimony.¹³⁸ Still, members of the French court society ordered no other goods as consistently as jewels, oriental carpets and books. For additional Venetian luxury goods, only scattered examples can be found in the letters of French ambassadors. This is actually surprising, as a more broadly supported interest in Venetian products would be expected. Nevertheless, the scarcity of purchase requests for some periods of the sixteenth century is probably mostly due to the surviving letters; not for every ambassador could the

¹³⁷ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jacques Auguste de Thou, 11 January 1605 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 4, 472: “[...] je vous rends donc graces, Monsieur, de trois exemplaires de vostre seconde Edition, dont il vous a pleu me faire part. Le Pere Fra Paolo a receu le sien, et vous en remercie pareillement: j'en ay donné un autre à un nepveu du Prince, qui est comme vous sçavez, de la Grimani, parce qu'il a monstré en avoir un grand desir, et en faire cas. Apres que j'auray conferé quelques passages de celuy qui me reste avec la premiere Edition, je me delibere de le mettre dans la Bibliotheque de cette Republique, comme lieu digne d'un tel joyau, et où il pourra proffiter à plusieurs sujets de valeur, et qui en pourront servir leur patrie.”

¹³⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Villeroy, 22 March 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 111: “[...] Quelques Agents dudit Seigneur Empereur luy ont achepté pour cinq ou six mille escus de Lapis et autres pierres exquisés en cette ville, depuis peu de jours. Il y a aussi des gens qui ont achepté grande quantité d'Antimoine au nom de Madame la Duchesse de Bar, et dit-on que c'est pour pratiquer quelque beau secret de Philosophie.”

correspondence with friends and patrons during his mission be located.¹³⁹ Moreover, there was already a stable presence of French merchants in Venice, who transported the bulk of merchandise to France. Still, this section will analyse all the discovered examples of various goods that French diplomats were assigned to acquire.

First of all, Venice was especially famous for its textile market and would maintain a dominant position in the international textile trade throughout the entire early modern period. Surprisingly, in the examined diplomatic correspondence, no evidence could be found that points to the buying of Venetian fabrics by French monarchs via their ambassadors. However, the French diplomatic agents in Venice were certainly commissioned by French officials to obtain certain materials. In 1559, François de Noailles and his agent Camille de la Croix were approached by the French ambassador to the Swiss Cantons, Matthieu Coignet, to procure some crimson silk for his wife.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, in 1583, André Hurault de Maisse's colleague in Rome, Paul de la Foix, employed him to buy a shirt of gold cloth.¹⁴¹ Philippe de la Canaye, in turn, procured a typical Venetian product for Dominique de Vic in 1602: 30 *brasses* of velvet in crimson violet (*cramoisi violet* or *paonazzo*) for the price of six ducats per *brasse*.¹⁴²

As well as the thriving textile industry, the production of glass contributed to the prosperity of Venice. The Venetian glassmakers from Murano were praised all over the world for their craftsmanship. Therefore, other states repeatedly tried to attract these artisans in order to gain access to the technology and to construct a domestic glass industry.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, only one request for glass was found in the correspondence of French ambassadors in Venice. The Cardinal of Châtillon asked François de Noailles to purchase some crystal glass on his behalf.¹⁴⁴ The dispatches sent by sixteenth-century Mantuan agents,

¹³⁹ This is the case for Arnaud du Ferrier and André Hurault de Maisse, in both cases the bulk of the preserved correspondence is limited to letters to and from the king and his most important ministers. This is not a problem that is limited to French sources, Francesca Pitacco points to the same difficulty with regard to seventeenth-century English and Spanish ambassadors in her study on art collectors in Venice; the private documents of ambassadors sent during their missions are only preserved fragmentarily: Pitacco, "Dal Secolo d'Oro ai Secoli d'Oro", 103.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Matthieu Coignet to François de Noailles, 9 January 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 86r.

¹⁴¹ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Paul de la Foix, 30 April 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, f. 380r; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Paul de la Foix, June 1583: *ibid.*, vol. 30, ff. 65v-66r.

¹⁴² Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 6 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 134; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 9 February 1602 in *ibid.*, 137.

¹⁴³ For example, the Florentine ambassador to Venice, Cosimo Bartoli, was instructed to recruit glassmakers from Murano, see: Luca Molà, "States and Crafts: Relocating Technical Skills in Renaissance Italy," in *The Material Renaissance*, 139-140.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Cardinal of Châtillon to François de Noailles, 8 January 1564: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 296v.

on the other contrary, elucidate the great popularity of Venetian glass at European courts: vases, carafes, glasses, plates, crystal windows and the typical windows of Venetian manufacture called *occhi di vetro*, were all purchased for the ducal court of Mantua.¹⁴⁵

In the sixteenth century, Venice was also a great manufacturer of musical instruments, and its products were esteemed throughout Europe for their technological finesse and innovation.¹⁴⁶ Noailles received some orders for instruments, specifically lutes. French King Francis II loved playing the lute and desired to have two excellent exemplars from Venice. Similarly, Secretary of State d'Aluye wished to have one lute.¹⁴⁷ Music was an important part of French court life and was one of the favourite pastimes of the elites.¹⁴⁸ The lute, in particular, took on a central place in the French music scene, in line with the general popularity of the lute among the European elite during the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁹ Since lutes of Venetian manufacture were considered to be amongst the best in Europe, they were acquired there in great numbers. Protagonists in the field of lute-making in Venice were German artisans, such as the Tieffenbrucker family, who were active in the city from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the second decade of the seventeenth century.¹⁵⁰ Inventories of the Tieffenbrucker shop illustrate the large-scale production of lutes and their flourishing business.¹⁵¹ It cannot be determined where exactly Noailles purchased the lutes for the king and secretary of state, but he certainly had a wide plethora of quality products to choose from.

¹⁴⁵ Sogliani, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1563-1587)*, ad vocem; Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, ad vocem.

¹⁴⁶ Stefano Toffolo, *Antichi Strumenti Veneziani 1500-1800: Quattro Secoli di Liuteria e Cembalaria* (Venice: Arsenale Editrice, 1987); Flora Dennis, "Musical Transformations in the Early Modern Home" (Presented at the Sixty-First Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Berlin, March 26, 2015).

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Cardinal of Lorraine to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 530; Letter from Secretary of State d'Aluye to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: *ibid.*, f. 532.

¹⁴⁸ For more information, see: Jeanice Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Christelle Cazaux, *La Musique à la Cour de François Ier* (Paris: École Nationale des Chartes, 2002); Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion to French Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁴⁹ Michael Lowe, "The Lute: An Instrument for All Seasons," in *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space and Object*, eds. Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 145-156. For an extensive study on the place of the lute in French music culture, see: Jean Michel Vaccaro and Gaston Martin, *La Musique de Luth en France au XVIe Siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981).

¹⁵⁰ Stefano Toffolo, "Una Famiglia di Liutai Tedeschi a Venezia: I Tieffenbrucker," *Il Fronimo* 51 (1985), 56-61; Stefano Toffolo, "Sui Liutai Tedeschi a Venezia nel Cinque e Seicento e Sui Rapporti tra Liuteria Tedesca e Pittura Veneziana," in *Venedig und Oberdeutschland in der Renaissance: Beziehungen zwischen Kunst und Wirtschaft*, eds. Bernd Roeck, Klaus Bergdolt, and Andrew John Martin (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1993), 197-205; Giulio M. Ongaro, "The Tieffenbruckers and the Business of Lute-Making in Sixteenth-Century Venice," *The Galpin Society Journal* 44 (1999), 46-54.

¹⁵¹ For example, the two inventories listing the items in the shop of Moisé Tieffenbrucker after his death in 1581 reveal that there were 532 lutes present in various stages of completion, and an immense number of lute parts. Ongaro, "The Tieffenbruckers", 49-50.

Lastly, the thriving animal market in Venice deserves to be briefly mentioned here. The only request for animals was found in the correspondence of Arnaud du Ferrier. In 1577, Catherine de' Medici inquired about some barbet dogs. She wished to have two small barbets, like the ones she received in the past, which also came from Venice.¹⁵² However, Ferrier reported to her that the breed was almost extinct in Venice after the extermination of dogs and cats ordered by the Venetian government in response to the plague epidemic to which the city fell victim between 1575 and 1577. Only one year after Catherine's appeal, Ferrier was able to procure some beautiful barbets for her.¹⁵³ Animals played an important role at European courts in the process of cultural and political self-fashioning and in diplomatic gift exchange. Rulers considered the possessing of animals, especially those of exotic nature, as an expression of their princely status and magnificence.¹⁵⁴ Catherine de' Medici probably used these barbets as lapdogs, which was in vogue amongst aristocratic women. Seeing this versatility of commissions carried out by the French ambassadors, they had to acquire the necessary skills to navigate various markets. This enabled them to develop a certain expertise and the reputation of knowledgeable agents.

This chapter has portrayed the figure of the ambassador as a conduit for foreign cultures and materials. Whereas the negotiation of political issues on behalf of the king remained their most crucial task, assignments concerning the purchase of luxury items occurred frequently and have been rightfully considered here as an essential aspect of early modern diplomacy. While art historians have already pointed to the significant role played by ambassadors in artistic transfer, they have mainly focused their attention on the ambassador's involvement in the construction of important art collections. Consequently, they tend to overlook the wider range of luxury items that diplomatic agents gathered. However, as Marika Keblusek and

¹⁵² A barbet is a medium-sized water dog with a long, woolly and curly coat. They were especially used for waterfowl hunting.

¹⁵³ Letter from Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici to Arnaud du Ferrier, 26 June 1577: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, f. 367; Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 16 August 1577: *ibid.*, ff. 371-372; Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, 16 May 1578: *ibid.*, ff. 491-491.

¹⁵⁴ On the role and uses of animals in early modern court cultures, self-fashioning and identity construction, see, for example: Angelica Groom, "The Role of Rare and Exotic Animals in the Self-Fashioning of the Early Modern Court: The Medici Court in Florence as a Case Study" (PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2012); Pia F. Cuneo, ed., *Animals and Early Modern Identity* (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014). See also the still ongoing research project by Sarah Cockram entitled *Courtly Creatures: Animals and Image at the Italian Renaissance Court*.

Helen Jacobsen have likewise indicated, the cultural mediation of ambassadors reached far beyond the securing of paintings and statues.¹⁵⁵

When analysing these intermediary activities, the connection between brokerage and patronage came to the surface. Pointing to this close association allows me to reunite the two themes and reveal the common thread in Part III. Firstly, through their successful brokerage activities, ambassadors wished to distinguish themselves and showcase their skills. In doing so, they aimed at increasing their political influence and create potential profitable connections with the French elite. Secondly, whereas the French ambassadors received no remuneration for the conducted cultural services, they did use their brokerage to bargain for immaterial favours. Thirdly, family members of the ambassador were often charged with the transfer of merchandise as a way to introduce them to the French court and to influential patrons. Similar manoeuvres and mechanisms can be detected in the practice of gift-giving. Ambassadors were in a position to easily acquire finished goods that were sent to patrons and friends as gifts in order to further their political power and sustain the relationship while being away from the home court. Patronage and gift-giving will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

¹⁵⁵ Marika Koblusek, "The Embassy of Art: Diplomats as Cultural Brokers," in *Double Agents*, 22-23; Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power*, ch. 3.

CHAPTER 7

PATRONAGE AND FAMILY NETWORKS:

COURT FACTIONS AND THE MECHANISMS OF GIFT EXCHANGE

Even though a diplomatic career generated social status and political esteem, ambassadors often regarded their residencies as punishments since, in their eyes, they were exiled from the centre of power.¹ Due to this physical absence from the home court, it was of the utmost importance that they sustained relationships with the influential figures of national politics in order to have access to sources of patronage. A constant anxiety repeated in the correspondence of François de Noailles is precisely his fear that he will be forgotten by his patrons while on mission:

[...] I already start to have a great desire for your friendship, since after my departure I have found not one single letter from you amongst the couriers and parcels that arrived from there [the French court], which leads me to fear, your Eminence, that you have forgotten me or that the memory of someone who desires to serve you has cooled off.²

Other French ambassadors echoed his distress that remoteness would eventually equal to oblivion. For example, Dominique du Gabre lamented at the end of his mission that no one would remember him at the French court, while Philippe de la Canaye articulated his concern that he would lose the protection of his patron Charles de Bourbon, Count of Soissons and cousin of King Henry IV: “[...]I very humbly beg your Highness, that my absence does not decrease the honour of your kindness [...]”.³

¹ See, for example: Ord, “Returning from Venice to England”, 147.

² Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State Thier, 17 October 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 70r: “[...] je commence desja d’entrer en jalousie de vostre amitié, puisque depuis mon partement par les couriers et paquets qui sont venus par deça je n’ay trouvé aucune lettre de vous qui me faict craindre Monseigneur, que vous ayez oublié ou aulcunement refroidy la memoire de celuy qui desire vous faire service [...]”.

³ Letter from Dominique du Gabre to Secretary of State Thier, 23 September 1557: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, f. 33r: “[...] je n’esperay jamais guieres de vostre court du temps que je pensois y avoir ung protecteur je vous laisse penser si j’en doibs esperer maintenant que personne ne m’y cognoist plus [...]”; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Charles de Bourbon, 11 January 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 94: “Pour le moins, Monseigneur, je supplie tres-humblement vostre Altesse, que mon absence ne me recule point de l’honneur de vostre bienveillance [...]”. A similar example: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jean de Gontaut Brion, 29 May 1606 in *ibid.*, book 5, 58: “Je vous supplieray seulement m’honorer de vos commandemens en ce que me jugerez capable de les executer, afin de m’asseurer contre l’injure de l’esloignement et de l’oubly, et je mettray peine de m’en rendre digne autant que la debilité de mon foible pouvoir le pourra permettre.” It should be briefly noted that this flattering language was also an obligatory aspect of patron-client correspondence. Even though ambassadors complained about their absence,

The numerous complaints uttered by ambassadors about their temporary detachment from the centre of patronage and power point to the great importance of patronage ties in early modern societies. Starting from the Renaissance, patronage networks had flourished in number, social depth and geographical span: on the one hand, an expanding number of clients entered into the services of patrons and, on the other hand, different strata of the social ladder, spreading across and beyond the country, were linked with each other. In these patronage relationships, a person in a position of authority offered support and bestowed favours upon individuals placed at lower ranking or less favourable positions. The type of support offered could vary greatly, ranging from hospitality to the securing of an important political post. In return, the clients offered their loyalty and services. Moreover, gift exchange was a frequent component of patronage: the search for favours was almost always accompanied by gifts, which aimed at attesting to the patron's honour and superiority. Despite the fact that the obligatory nature of patron-client relationships was concealed by constant courteous references to voluntary help, services and gifts, reciprocity was compulsory if they wished to maintain the bond. Thus, even though there could exist a discrepancy in the degree of profit, a patron-client connection was a mutually beneficial relationship. Additionally, patronage networks were very fluid, with people acting as both patron and client, and fragile, with shifting loyalties according to personal situations.⁴

Patronage relationships were not only ubiquitous in political, social, economic and artistic contexts, which all have been extensively studied by scholars; we can also detect a strong presence of these ties in the diplomatic environment. The fact that diplomacy was closely interwoven with patronage comes clearly to the foreground when applying the “actor-centered” approach to the study of diplomatic history. Ambassadors were not merely active as representatives of their king in state and dynastic networks; they additionally developed various identities with several layers of allegiance. The work of diplomatic historian Hillard von Thiesen, amongst others, has accurately captured how ambassadors remained anchored in their personal networks while on mission, and how they were guided by personal and familial interests when performing diplomatic assignments.⁵

they did also actively sought diplomatic appointments, as will become apparent later on in this chapter, since a diplomatic career could stimulate political advancement.

⁴ Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Neuschel, *Word of Honor*, ch. 2; Sharon Kettering, “Patronage in Early Modern France,” *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (1992), 839-862; Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 1992), 47-75; Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, 70-78.

⁵ For analyses of the importance and use of patronage and family networks in the world of diplomacy, see: Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy*; Christian Wieland, *Fürsten, Freunde, Diplomaten: Die*

Building on von Thiessens' insights, I will start from an examination of the formation of networks and subsequently disclose and analyse the importance of gifts to patronage relationships. Hence, the first part of this chapter will investigate the strategies employed by Ambassador François de Noailles to maintain his ties with his home country while abroad.⁶ The shifting power constellations at the French court complicated the quest for patronage and necessitated the construction of new networks. One of the primary aims of Noailles' safeguarding of patronage networks was the advancement of the Noailles family as a whole. Not only François, but also his brothers Antoine and Gilles strove to build political and ecclesiastical careers. The horizontal kinship tie proved to be very useful for the improvement of their position: the brothers assisted each other with introductions at court, securing nominations and financial support. This way, they advanced the power and prestige of the family. Most importantly, by preparing each other for diplomatic missions, the Noailles clan established a diplomatic family of semi-professional ambassadors.⁷

During the analysis of François de Noailles' multilateral social networks, the important role played by gifts, as a way to visualise the patron-client relationship, will become apparent. Noailles used gifts to compensate for his absence by reminding his patrons of his existence, and to secure support for the promotion of his own and his family's further political careers. Therefore, in the second section of this chapter, I will focus on both the type of gifts offered and the context in which the gifts were given. To give a complete picture of Noailles' gift exchange, both the offering of luxury objects and foodstuffs will be examined. Through an exchange of these gifts, cultural transfers occurred and thus, as in the previous chapter on brokerage, a focus on the circulated goods allows me to underline the role of an ambassador as a mediator between cultures as well as stress the important place assumed by material culture in diplomatic life. In doing so, this final chapter will expand the horizon of

Römisch-Florentinischen Beziehungen unter Paul V. (1605-1621) (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004); Hillard von Thiessen and Christian Windler, eds., *Nähe in der Ferne: Personale Verflechtung in den Aussenbeziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2005); von Thiessen, *Diplomatie und Patronage*; von Thiessen and Windler, eds., *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen*; Catherine Fletcher and Jennifer Mara DeSilva, "Italian Ambassadorial Networks in Early Modern Europe: An Introduction," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010), 505-512; Jennifer Mara DeSilva, "Official and Unofficial Diplomacy between Rome and Bologna: The de' Grassi Family under Pope Julius II, 1503-1513," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14, no. 6 (2010), 535-557; Catherine Fletcher, "War, Diplomacy and Social Mobility: The Casali Family in the Service of Henry VIII," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010), 559-566; Katalin Prajda, "The Florentine Scolari Family at the Court of Sigismund of Luxemburg in Buda," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14, no. 6 (2010), 513-533; Megan K. Williams, "'Dui Fratelli ... con dui Principi': Family and Fidelity on a Failed Diplomatic Mission," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010), 579-611; Riches, *Protestant Cosmopolitanism and Diplomatic Culture*.

⁶ This chapter does not aim at mapping all the various patronage networks upheld by François de Noailles during his career but, instead, at examining how he consolidated his networks while serving abroad as ambassador.

⁷ Kalas, "Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France", 255-375.

the dissertation beyond the Venetian Republic by connecting François de Noailles to the French court.

Compound Patronage: Networking, Kinship and Diplomacy

The expression “compound patronage” was coined by Megan Williams when analysing the diplomatic, kinship and patronage networks upheld by the Casali brothers during the first half of the sixteenth century. The Casali family maintained numerous connections with potential patrons at various courts and strategically placed family members in the diplomatic service of multiple European princes. This way, they succeeded in safeguarding the advancement of the entire family.⁸ Even though François de Noailles’ patronage and family networks were not as successful, astute or multilateral as those of the Casali family, he was likewise flexible in forging new ties. Therefore, the term “compound patronage” accurately describes the interconnected nature of his various activities and networks. Since Noailles’ patronage strategies were entangled with both the political situation of France and his concern for the social standing of his family, only an investigation of the evolution of these two components will expose his goals and tactics as patron and client.

Shifting Patrons: Factional Upheaval at the French Court

The second half of the sixteenth century was a very turbulent era for the French monarchy. The death of King Henry II in 1559 instigated a great crisis throughout the kingdom. The succession of King Francis II, who lacked political experience, paved the way for ambitious courtiers to take over control and promote their own agendas. Furthermore, the country was divided by an expanding opposition between the Catholic and Protestant faith, which plunged France into the destructive wars of religion.⁹ It was against this turbulent background that François de Noailles and his two brothers, Antoine and Gilles, carried out their embassies in London and Venice. Therefore, in order to understand the mechanisms of François de Noailles’ patronage networks, the political situation in mid-sixteenth century France first needs to be elucidated in more detail.

At the French court, politics were characterised by the formation of factions, supported by networks of patrons and clients, pressing for their own political interests. These court factions

⁸ Williams, “‘Dui Fratelli ... con dui Principi’”, 579-611.

⁹ A good overview of the crises in France during the second half of the sixteenth century can be found in: Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court*, ch. 13 and 14.

strongly influenced foreign policy. Especially under the rule of Henry II, two strong rivalling parties arose, which led to a diplomacy characterised by dualism, with the king constantly switching between parties.¹⁰ One faction was led by Anne de Montmorency, constable of France and grand master of the royal household. He gained prestige owing to his military victories during the first half of the sixteenth century. Montmorency also accumulated respect and power at the French court; he was a close childhood friend of French King Francis I and had been the main advisor of King Henry II ever since he had been the *dauphin*. Montmorency even acted as a sort of father to the latter, who highly sought and respected his advice. As a consequence, Montmorency had unparalleled political powers and far-reaching access to the king. Their intimate bond resulted in the allotment of many favours, such as the elevation of Montmorency's barony to a duchy.¹¹

The other faction was presided by the Guise family from the House of Lorraine, a semi-sovereign duchy in the Holy Roman Empire. Consequently, they were labelled as *princes étrangers* at the French court, a rank to which many honours were attached, including easy access to the French monarchs.¹² During the sixteenth century, the Guise family was the largest non-royal house of their time with transnational dynastic interests stretching all across the European continent on account of their marriages within royal and princely circles. Moreover, profiting from the turbulence of sixteenth-century France, they succeeded in obtaining the highest ecclesiastical and military positions. As a result of these dynamics, the Guise family greatly influenced the course of events in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The members of the House of Guise have been qualified both as outstanding statesmen, who vigorously defended the Catholic cause, and as ambitious, manipulating tyrants with an unhealthily strong grasp on the French kings.¹³

By the mid-sixteenth century, the brothers François and Charles de Guise were leading the family. Both of them gained the favour and admiration of French King Henry II, who invited them into his intimate circle of confidants and appointed them to the highest levels of government, making the brothers the direct rivals of Montmorency. The eldest brother, Duke

¹⁰ For a general overview of this dual diplomacy, see: Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, ch. 1.

¹¹ Normally, the title of duke was only given to someone of princely ancestry, which Montmorency was not. Biographical information on Anne de Montmorency can be found in: André Thevet, *Portraits from the French Renaissance and the Wars of Religion*, ed. Roger Schlesinger, trans. Edward Benson (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2010), 103-114; Robert J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion, 1559-1598* (Harlow, New York: Longman, 2010), xxviii; Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, 52; 55-56.

¹² More information on the rank of *prince étranger* can be found in: Jonathan Spangler, *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 19-51.

¹³ Some studies on the Guise family include: Spangler, *The Society of Princes*; Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*; Munns, Richards, and Spangler, eds., *Aspiration, Representation and Memory*.

François of Guise, acquired honour through his military victories for France and was praised for the prowess and humanity that he displayed on the battlefield. As a military general, he was known both as a soldier doing the hard work in the trenches amongst his men and as a strategist and expert in the science of warfare.¹⁴ Whereas François excelled on the battlefield, Charles, better known as the Cardinal of Lorraine, built out an impressive ecclesiastical career. Already at the age of fourteen, he became the archbishop of Reims, and in 1574, he was appointed as cardinal. As an ecclesiastic, he amassed many benefices, which contributed to his extraordinary wealth. The Cardinal of Lorraine also executed some diplomatic assignments and acted as French representative at the Council of Trent. His contemporaries regarded him as an ambiguous figure: on the one hand, the cardinal was considered a very intelligent, tactful and cultivated man, gifted with diplomatic talents; on the other hand, he was judged as untrustworthy and hypocritical.¹⁵

By 1550, Montmorency, already of a more advanced age, had a great desire for peace on all fronts. He knew that any disturbance in the *status quo* would benefit the ambitions of his younger competitors, the Guise, who wished to obtain various crowns in Europe.¹⁶ However, over the course of the 1550s, Montmorency's policy started to unravel and the Guise brothers booked more and more successes, which stirred up the strong rivalry between the two factions. In the year 1555, they especially cherished divergent opinions concerning France's foreign affairs policy: whereas the constable and his adherents strove for peace with the Habsburgs, the Guise promoted more military campaigns to fight off Spanish supremacy.

Initially, the king opted for peace, and on 5 February 1556, the treaty of Vaucelles was signed between French King Henry II and Spanish King Philip II. Pope Paul IV, however, challenged the truce by pressing the French king to maintain the league against the Spanish in order to oppose Spanish influence on the Italian peninsula. The Guise supported the pope because war in Italy furthered their own ambitions, specifically, to acquire the crown of the Kingdom of Naples, on which they had a claim through their ancestors.¹⁷ In return for French

¹⁴ Thevet, *Portraits from the French Renaissance*, 89-101; Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, 59-62.

¹⁵ Thevet, *Portraits from the French Renaissance*, 127-135; Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion*, xxvii; 20; Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, 62-65.

¹⁶ The sister of François and Charles de Guise, Mary, was already queen regent of Scotland and her daughter was engaged to the *dauphin*, Francis II. Moreover, François desired to conquer the Kingdom of Naples and Charles the papal throne. Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 8-9.

¹⁷ Jonathan Spangler, Penny Richards, and Jessica Munns, "Introduction: The Context of a Dream," in *Aspiration, Representation and Memory*, 6; 10; 14-17; Silvana D'Alessio, "Dreaming of the Crown: Political Discourses and Other Sources Relating to the Duke of Guise in Naples (1647-48 and 1654)," in *Aspiration, Representation and Memory*, 99-124; Charles Gregory, "Parthenope's Call: The Duke of Guise's Return to Naples in 1654," in *Aspiration, Representation and Memory*, 147-168. Moreover, owing to the marriage of

military support, the pope agreed to transfer Milan and Naples to French control and François de Guise was promised the position of viceroy in Naples once he had conquered the Kingdom from Spain. In spite of Montmorency's strong opposition against the Guise's plans for new Italian campaigns, Henry II aligned with the pope and new military operations on Italian soil commenced in September 1556; however, the French king stated that his intention was only to aid the pope, not to break his truce with Spain.¹⁸

This campaign was a complete disaster due to a lack of preparation, manpower disadvantages, illness amongst the troops, a scarcity of financial funds and disagreements about how to proceed. However, Montmorency likewise failed in his objectives. In December 1556, he changed his policy entirely and now also counselled the king to openly restart the war with Spain. The reasons for his sudden change of heart are not completely clear; perhaps he judged a war inevitable or he feared that the Guise would steal all the glory, as their operations in Italy had not yet failed at this point. The subsequent French military actions ended catastrophically, as the campaign was again misconceived from the start, with numerous deaths and prisoners on the French side. Montmorency himself was even held hostage, which increased the grip that the Guise had on French policy, until the king paid the ransom for his release in December 1558.¹⁹ But it was the death of King Henry II in July 1559 that caused a real shift in French politics: Montmorency, temporarily, was removed from power and the two Guise brothers de facto came to rule the country because they had a strong influence on the new French king, Francis II, and enjoyed the grace of Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici. The Cardinal of Lorraine usurped control over diplomatic affairs, finances and the administration of civil and religious affairs and his brother, François, wielded power over the French army.²⁰

The factional upheaval at court and the continuous alteration of the political landscape made it imperative for the Noailles brothers to consolidate their patronage networks. During the first half of the sixteenth century, Antoine, being the eldest brother, had already safeguarded the main patrons, who would support his own career and that of his siblings. In the late 1520s, Antoine had entered into the service of François de la Tour, viscount of Turenne and son-in-law of Constable Anne de Montmorency. By means of his connections with Turenne, Antoine not only curried favour with the constable, but also with King Francis

François de Guise with Anna d'Este, daughter of Duke Ercole II of Ferrara, the Guise were tightly linked with Ferrara.

¹⁸ Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, 73-77.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 77-79.

²⁰ For a detailed overview of the power struggle between the Guise and Montmorency, see: *ibid.*, ch. 3, 4 and 5.

I himself. With the rise to power of the new French king, Henry II, Antoine upheld his favourable position at court and succeeded in gaining the respect of both factions. On the one hand, he could count Montmorency amongst his closest friends; on the other hand, he had acquired the admiration of the Guise family due to his standing as a soldier and their shared preference of solving political problems with military solutions.²¹ It was a common practice amongst nobles to maintain multiple dependencies and loyalties.²²

Even though, initially, François de Noailles could likewise count on the support of both factions, the letters between the constable and himself reveal that he was mainly a loyal adherent and supporter of the Montmorency House. In return, the constable always advocated for the advancement of François' career and lauded the accomplishments of the three Noailles brothers. He referred to François as “[...] someone who is my old friend and strongly recommended for his worthy qualities [...]” and to his entire family as people who “[...] deserve so much and they are my old and affectionate servants [...]”.²³ Consequently, at the French court, François and his brothers were known as clients of Montmorency.²⁴

Regardless of the fact that the Guise had accumulated a lot of power and respect by 1559, the Noailles family still aimed their gift-giving at sustaining the family's strong allegiance with Montmorency. In mid-June 1559, Gilles, who served as ambassador to England at that time, sent a servant, named Goudran, to the French court carrying gifts for his patrons. In agreement with the head of the family, Antoine, Gilles' gifts were offered to the constable who received one gross (or 144) aglets (*aiguillettes*), two pairs of gloves and two pairs of hosen. Furthermore, the constable's nephew, the Cardinal of Châtillon, who had likewise been an important long-term patron of the Noailles brothers, was presented with two pairs of

²¹ Kalas, “Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France”, 255-299; Sharon Kettering, “Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France,” *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 2 (1989), 414-415.

²² Neuschel, *Word of Honor*, 70-72.

²³ Letter from Constable Anne de Montmorency to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, 20 September 1563: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 606: “[...] personnage qui m'est antien ami et fort recommandé pour ses dignes qualitez [...]”; Letter from Constable Anne de Montmorency to Bishop of Angoulême, 20 September 1563: *ibid.*, f. 607: “[...] qui sont deux personnages [François and Gilles de Noailles] qui méritent tant et me sont si antiens et affectionnez serviteurs [...]”.

²⁴ When François de Noailles was in Venice, he discovered that the former French ambassador at the Ottoman court, Michel de Codignac, betrayed his king by entering into the service of the Spanish king. Through Noailles' instigation, one of Codignac's servants, referred to as Coüet, was captured in Venice. Coüet told the Venetian Council of Ten that Noailles only wished to slander him because he was a client of the House of Guise, whereas Noailles belonged to the House of Montmorency: Articles sur lesquels Monseigneur l'ambassadeur entend informer contre Coüet, 15 December 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 32r: “[...] ledit Sieur l'Ambassadeur l'avoyt fait mettre prisonnier pour haine et malveillance qu'il luy portait pour quelques offices qu'il avoit fait par deca sans son conseil par commandement de Monseigneur le Cardinal de Lorraine a qui il se disoit estre secretaire et par le commandement du quel il estoit venu en Italye et que pource que luy Couet estoit serviteur de la maison de Guyse, ledit Sieur Ambassadeur, comme serviteur de celle de Montmorency luy vouloit ainsy mal attendu la mauvalyse intelligence et peu d'amytye qu'il y avoyt entre lesdits deux maisons.”

gloves and eight dozen (or 96) aglets.²⁵ It is important to note that Goudran had arrived just before the jousting accident, and subsequent death, of King Henry II. At this point, the Noailles family apparently did not deem it necessary to reserve some gifts for François or Charles de Guise and, this way, consolidate their connections with the other faction at court.

While the family's bonds with Montmorency were only strengthened over the years, François de Noailles' opinions about the developments on the Italian peninsula during the 1550s caused him to lose the favour of the House of Guise. After the signing of the treaty of Vaucelles in 1556, François was sent to Rome to convey the news to Pope Paul IV. During this mission, he developed an aversion to the pope, his ministers and their policy.²⁶ François sided with Montmorency and strongly opposed the Guise's plans for a coalition with the pope and new Italian campaigns. He believed that a renewed war would only lead to more pointless bloodshed and would put a strain on the French treasury.²⁷ By alienating himself from the Guise family, François had failed to maintain relationships with all potential patrons at court. At a time of rapidly shifting power constellations, which made changes in patrons advisable, François had opted to remain loyal to the Montmorency clan. However, due to the fall from grace of his patron in 1559, the power struggles at court started to influence the future of the Noailles family, and it became imperative for François to reconcile with the Guise faction.

Therefore, François started to change his patronage tactics and tried to charm new patrons. However, his residency in Venice obstructed him from reminding the Guise of his merits in person. As a way to overcome the distance between him and the court, he employed gifts as physical tokens of his virtues. Over the course of the year 1560, at the height of Guise power, François sent the same gift, a mirror, to both Constable Montmorency and the Cardinal of Lorraine.²⁸ I believe that the offering of these gifts should be regarded as a clear sign that

²⁵ Letter from Goudran to Gilles de Noailles, 10 July 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 14, ff. 203v-204r. The date on this letter, 10 July 1559, reveals that it was written and sent on the same day as King Henry II's death. However, Goudran does not speak a word about the king's passing, he only mentions his jousting accident. Apparently, Goudran had not yet received word of the king's death, otherwise he would have certainly communicated this to his master.

²⁶ Pope Paul IV was not a popular pope: he had established the Roman Inquisition; supported the first index of prohibited books; persecuted Evangelicals, Catholics, Protestants and Jews; and imposed a nepotistic policy. Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, 76-77.

²⁷ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 292; 295-296; 300; Kalas, "Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France", 316-317.

²⁸ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 6 February 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 492v; Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 31 October 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 497. It must be noted that the date of the first letter, mentioning the gift of a mirror to the constable, is problematic. The date found on the letter is 6 February 1559. However, as explained in the preliminary notes, the French new year started on Easter and looking at the chronological order of the correspondance, we see that this specific letter is placed between December 1559 and April 1560. Therefore, it is the most logical to

François wished to sustain the old ties with the constable and, at the same time, tried to establish renewed bonds with the cardinal. Moreover, the fact that François chose to offer them identical gifts demonstrates that he wanted to treat the two leaders equally, without revealing his preference for a specific faction. During the remaining years of his mission in Venice, François kept trying to win over the favour of the Guise, however, without forfeiting his allegiance to his loyal patron Montmorency. To this end, he sent his secretary Milan, carrying a package of gifts, to the French court in January 1561. After having carefully consulted with François' brother, Gilles, both Duke François de Guise and Constable Montmorency were pampered with gifts of cloth and hats.²⁹ Again, both a member of the Guise family and the constable were offered practically identical gifts.

Thus, in order not to be cut off from court politics, François de Noailles, with the help of his brothers, employed gifts as a means to tap into various potential sources of political patronage.³⁰ Nevertheless, even though François' competencies spoke for themselves and he was always greatly admired by Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, he would never firmly secure the support of the Guise. For example, in 1563, the Cardinal of Lorraine worked hard to sabotage François' diplomatic assignment. The latter was appointed by Catherine de' Medici to conduct a mission to Rome, where he had to defend the prerogatives of the Gallican Church. The Roman Inquisition had called several prominent French prelates to appear before their council on suspicion of supporting the Protestant cause, however, French ecclesiastics could not be summoned to appear before a judge outside the French Kingdom. The Cardinal of Lorraine had urged the pope to investigate even Queen Jeanne III of Navarra, wife of Antoine de Bourbon. The House of Bourbon was a great rival of the Guise family and thus they wished to slander the Bourbon name. The arrival of François would interfere with this plan and, therefore, the Cardinal of Lorraine convinced the pope to demand that François could only enter the city if he appeared before the Inquisition himself,

conclude that the letter dates from 1560. Nevertheless, some letters before and after this letter are directed to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, French ambassador at the Ottoman court, who had already died in October 1559. Fortunately, for the point that I want to make, the date of the second letter is the most important one, and this missive was certainly sent on 31 October 1560.

²⁹ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 18 January 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 543-544.

³⁰ Also in the further advancement of his career, François de Noailles understood the importance of attracting new patrons and changing allegiances according to the political situation, see: Robert R. Harding, *Anatomy of a Power Elite: The Provincial Governors of Early Modern France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 37; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France*, 29; Burns, "Cleric-Diplomats and the Sixteenth-Century French State", 731.

on account of the fact that he had negotiated with the Huguenot Prince of Condé. François refused and asked to be recalled to France without concluding his mission.³¹

Besides this incident, François de Noailles' career did not suffer under the factional upheavals; however, the position of the Noailles family as a whole became more precarious. The three brothers were all appointed and supported by the constable, and when his influence diminished, the social status of the family was threatened. François' objective for regaining the support of the Guise family was thus not only aimed at advancing his own profit; the gifts he sent mostly needed to benefit the survival of his entire family. By this time, François and his brothers had already established a diplomatic family network with great expertise in matters of foreign affairs. By trying to retain prestigious charges within the family and placing various members at diverse courts in Europe, they wished to safeguard and promote their interests and standing.

The Diplomatic Family Network and Kin Patronage

In early modern times, kinship ties operated as a valuable source of support to which members could resort for general help, favours and access to networks. It was often the case that younger family members could thrive in the political world due to the assistance and stimulation of their kin, who secured apprenticeship positions and, this way, bootstrapped their careers. Furthermore, in political and economic partnerships, kinsmen were keen to closely work together as they trusted one another and, consequently, were more willing to share intelligence and resources amongst each other. The fact that a kinship relationship was built on trust led to an equal and symmetrical exchange of services and help, as opposed to patron-client bonds in which the position of the givers and recipients and the types of goods and services exchanged were characterised by more inequity.³²

Kinship was thus of vital importance to the functioning of early modern politics. Particularly in the world of diplomacy, the engaging of family and personal ties was a widespread phenomenon that produced many successes.³³ Ambassadors, too, more easily provided each other with intelligence, hospitality and political experience if they were

³¹ Vertot, *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, vol. 1, 53-62; Kalas, "Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France", 325-326.

³² For a general overview of the functioning of kinship as a patronage and support system in early modern times, see: Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France", 408-435; Neuschel, *Word of Honor*, 78-93; Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, 47-58.

³³ Pioneering studies in the field of diplomatic family networks include: Jennifer Mara DeSilva, "Official and Unofficial Diplomacy between Rome and Bologna", 535-557; Catherine Fletcher, "War, Diplomacy and Social Mobility", 559-566; Williams, "'Dui Fratelli ... con dui Principi'", 579-611.

members of the same kin relationship; this, in turn, facilitated the effectiveness of diplomacy. When reviewing the members of the French diplomatic corps in the sixteenth century, we indeed cannot ignore the regular recurrence of the same family names. To give just a few examples, the Noailles, Hurault, Bellièvre and l'Aubespine all established so-called diplomatic families. Within such a family, the diplomatic experience was either handed down from fathers to sons or shared between brothers, nephews and cousins.

The phenomenon of diplomatic families was not peculiar to France but can be perceived all over Europe. Various families strove to strategically place their members as diplomatic agents at European courts. The aim was to accumulate and exchange resources and, in doing so, to broaden political knowledge and contacts in order to ultimately improve the social position of the entire family.³⁴ For sovereigns, this interconnectedness of the unit of the family with diplomacy had advantages as well. As stated above, family members openly shared political knowledge and social contacts amongst each other, which created a strong and well-informed network of state servants, who used their professional knowledge and skills for the benefit of their monarch. However, at the same time, this practice created powerful families which could use their expertise as leverage to obtain important embassies.

Seeing the significant role played by family networks in the world of diplomacy, we should not solely concentrate on the ambassador as an individual when studying diplomatic practice, but, moreover, his broader networks need to be considered carefully. In line with this notion, my analysis does not focus on the individual successes of the Noailles' brothers, but on the functioning of their fraternal collaboration: the brothers acted as each other's patrons and invoked their patronage networks for the advancement of the family. By doing so, both the mechanisms that determined the inner workings of early modern families and the more personal nature of the diplomatic machinery will be revealed.

Whereas Louis de Noailles had secured the social and economic standing of the Noailles dynasty during the early sixteenth century, it was his three sons, Antoine, François and Gilles, who established the national esteem and influence of the family.³⁵ All three of them obtained high offices at court and with the Church, where they achieved great successes. Furthermore, they understood how a diplomatic career could heighten their status and instigate further social advancement. Considering the prestige attached to embassies, the brothers did not want to rely solely on the favour of the king as a means of receiving

³⁴ Fletcher and Desilva, "Italian Ambassadorial Networks", 509-511.

³⁵ The best overview of the history of the Noailles family can be found in: Kalas, "Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France". For specific information on Louis de Noailles and the careers of his three sons, Antoine, François and Gilles, see: *Ibid.*, ch. 4 and 6.

ambassadorial appointments; rather, they actively constructed a private network of diplomatic expertise based on apprenticeship and patronage.

Antoine was the first member of the Noailles family to acquire a post as resident ambassador. In 1553, he was dispatched to London and starting from 1554, his brother François often joined him at his embassy in order to get acquainted with French foreign politics. As no official, codified training existed for the office of ambassador, an apprenticeship with senior diplomats was common practice in early modern Europe. This was the only way to learn the diplomatic craft at first hand in the hope of one day obtaining an official appointment. Moreover, it enabled junior family members to mingle in local networks and establish useful contacts.³⁶ François' knowledge of Anglo-French affairs and the fact that he was already a familiar face at the English court, where he had won the respect of Queen Mary, were indeed the main reasons why he was chosen to replace his brother as ambassador in England. However, Antoine wished to flee the country as soon as possible after his involvement in a conspiracy directed against the queen was discovered. Since François was in Rome at that time to announce the treaty of Vaucelles to the pope, Antoine proposed that his youngest sibling, Gilles, could act as temporary agent in London in expectation of François.³⁷ This way, Antoine could retain the position within the family and provide his brother with the opportunity of obtaining further experience. The fact that Gilles was indeed sent as a French agent, without having any prior diplomatic experience, demonstrates the political credibility built up by his two brothers.³⁸

After François had completed his diplomatic assignment in London, he was immediately sent as ambassador to Venice. Just as Antoine had educated him in England, François would in turn take his brother Gilles with him on mission.³⁹ François' letters reveal that this apprenticeship had the purpose of securing an ambassadorial nomination for his brother. He boasted to the Cardinal of Lorraine about Gilles' knowledge of foreign affairs and, therefore, he only entrusted delicate assignments to him:

Your Eminence, we, Sir the Cardinal of Tournon and I, considered to have this express letter delivered to you by one of my secretaries, both to inform the King and you about the affairs

³⁶ Frigo, "Prudence and Experience", 29; Fletcher, "War, Diplomacy and Social Mobility", 563; Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy*, 73-74.

³⁷ Letter from Constable Anne de Montmorency to Antoine de Noailles, 7 February 1555 in Vertot, *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, vol. 5, 300; Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 292-294.

³⁸ A similar case concerning the Casali brothers can be found in: Williams, "'Dui Fratelli ... con dui Principi'", 595-596.

³⁹ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 8 September 1557: AMAE, *Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896)*, Venise, vol. 23, f. 28r.

and the particularities that it contains, and to more quickly serve you. But after some more thinking we found it pertinent and necessary to assign this letter to someone of whom we knew that he would make great efforts, and who can quickly have a profound knowledge of the affairs. Therefore, we were of the opinion that it had to be the abbot of Isle, my brother, since he has been nourished for a long time both here and in England, where he has always had the same involvement and communication as me. I will bounce for him since I know that he will deliver a good account to the King and you [...]⁴⁰

This training paid off, as Gilles was appointed as official ambassador to England in 1559. The brothers' efforts to assist one another had resulted in the cultivation of diplomatic roles for the various family members.

With the three brothers placed at intervals at various courts in Europe, it was imperative for the preservation of the family network that they kept each other informed about political evolutions that could affect their career and position. Furthermore, if an early modern diplomat wanted to be successful, he had to gather as much news related to his country's political affairs as he could. An important way to acquire this intelligence was through their personal connections.⁴¹ The great importance of accumulating information can be gleaned from François' repeated complaints to Gilles about the latter's lack of providing regular updates.⁴² Equally important for the family network was the physical presence of a family member at the French court. Therefore, François always urged one of his brothers, who was not performing a diplomatic mission, to remain at court in order to stay close to the sources of power and patronage and to remind everyone of the family's existence; a clear reflection of the typical fear of ambassadors to be forgotten while on mission.⁴³

⁴⁰ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Charles de Lorraine, 9 April 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 214: "Monseigneur, nous avons advisé mondit Sieur le Cardinal de Tournon et moy de vous envoyer ceste despesche expressement par ung de mes secretaires, tant pour rendre compte au Roy et a vous des affaires et particularitez y contenues, que pour faire aussi plus prompte dilligence, mais depuis nous avons pensé qu'il estoit beaucoup plus a propos et necessaire, commettre laditte despesche a personnage qui en sceust rendre meilleur compte, et enfonce plus vifvement aux affaires, comme nous avons pensé que pourra faire l'abbé de l'Isle mon frere pour y avoir esté nourry longtemps a tant en Angleterre que icy, ou il a tousjours eu telle part et communication que moy mesmes, a la suffisance duquel je me remettray pour l'assurance que j'ay qu'il en scaura rendre fort bon compte a Sa Majesté et a vous [...]". See also: Instruction pour Monsieur de l'Isle allant vers le Roy, 9 April 1558: *ibid.*, ff. 215-222.

⁴¹ It reaches beyond the ambition of this dissertation to map the information networks maintained by François de Noailles and the other French ambassadors stationed in Venice. For general information on intelligence gathering in Venice, see: de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*.

⁴² Some examples of these complaints can be found in: Letter from François de Noailles to Gilles de Noailles, 1 July 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 4r; Letter from François de Noailles to Gilles de Noailles, 26 September 1559: *ibid.*, ff. 178r-178v; Letter from François de Noailles to Gilles de Noailles, 27 October 1559: *ibid.*, f. 219r.

⁴³ Some examples of François prompting his brothers to go to the French court can be found in: Letter from François de Noailles to Gilles de Noailles, 8 January 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896),

As discussed in the previous section, the constant factional upheaval at court made it more essential than ever to sustain patronage networks and glorify the family's accomplishments. Until the mid-1550s, Montmorency dominated diplomatic appointments and, consequently, his clients were awarded with residencies.⁴⁴ With the accession to the throne of Francis II, and the complete power of the Guise clan over this young king, the Cardinal of Lorraine took over the control of the diplomatic machinery. Gilles in particular found himself in a precarious position, and his career suffered under these shifts in power. The English ambassador to France, Nicholas Throckmorton, wrote already at the end of July 1559 that Gilles would be replaced soon because he was of the constable's appointment.⁴⁵ Gilles himself likewise expected his revocation and shared his concerns with François:

Since our new world I have received two letters from the King and as many from his Eminence the Cardinal of Lorraine in which they do not give me the hope that I will stay here, according to my opinion you and me do not need to expect great favours and advancement in our charges [...]⁴⁶

His anxiety was justified, since Gilles was called back from his post in London in early 1560, and, to add to his misfortune, he was lodged inadequately at the French court.⁴⁷ Gilles lamented to François that he found himself in “[...] inconvenience, without a bed and other necessary equipment [...]”. About the situation at court, he stated that he felt the coldness and did not know what to expect of his future.⁴⁸

Gilles thus desired a new appointment, for which he could strongly rely on the help of François, who acted as a sort of patron for his younger brother, a common feature of kinship relations in early modern Europe. Here, we have an example of what Sharon Kettering has described as “kin patronage”. After the power shift at the French court, François found

Venise, vol. 26, f. 405r; Letter from François de Noailles to Antoine de Noailles, June 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 104r.

⁴⁴ Harbison, *Rival Ambassadors*, 7.

⁴⁵ Letter from Nicholas Throckmorton to Queen Elizabeth, 27 July 1559: CSP, Foreign, Elizabeth, vol. 1: 1558-1559, no. 1075.

⁴⁶ Letter from Gilles de Noailles to François de Noailles, 5 August 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 14, f. 224v: “Despuys nostre nouveau monde j’ay eu deux lettres du Roy et aultant de Monseigneur le cardinal de Lorraine par lesquelles on ne me donne ny ouste l’esperance d’estre icy continué, mais selon mon opinion vous et moy ne nous devons pas fort attendre de plus grand faveur et advancement en noz charges [...]”.

⁴⁷ This was reported to Noailles by one of his embassy secretaries, named Boudeville, who had travelled to the French court: Letter from Boudeville to François de Noailles, 29 February 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 563v.

⁴⁸ Letter from Gilles de Noailles to François de Noailles, 13 March 1560 in Louis Paris, ed., *Les Papiers de Noailles de la Bibliothèque du Louvre* (Paris: Dentu, 1875), 98: “[...] pour l’incommodité que je treuve icy de n’avoir lict et aultre équipage qui y est nécessaire [...] je y cognoys de la froideur, je me ramenterai pour sonder moy mesme ce que je doibs esperer de ma fortune [...]”.

himself in the most favourable position of the three brothers and, therefore, he dominated the family's political capital and monitored the distribution of kin patronage. However, the difference with a traditional patronage relationship was that amongst kinsmen, the reciprocity was voluntary, not obligatory. They helped each other out of affection, loyalty, duty and family honour.⁴⁹

A letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State Fleurimont Robertet, Lord d'Aluye, is very telling of François' efforts to save his family's prestige by reevaluating all their hard labour for the crown. François realised that out of the three brothers, he found himself in the most secure position and, therefore, he strongly promoted the virtue and zeal of Antoine and Gilles. He was deeply saddened that their honourable services were barely recognised or compensated. François was particularly angered by the fact that Gilles was forced to retire from London prematurely, where he was performing valuable work, in order to be sent to, what he qualified as, a useless place. François was referring to the idea to appoint Gilles in Scotland, whereas he put forward Venice as a much more suitable post for Gilles. Firstly, it was already proven to be a successful diplomatic career path to first serve in England and then in Venice, since both François himself and Georges de Selve had performed these two missions, one after the other. Secondly, Gilles had stayed with him working for the embassy for seven or eight months, during which time he became acquainted with Venetian affairs. Thirdly, François stated that he would be more willing to share all the secrets of his embassy with his brother than with any other replacement. This way, he used his diplomatic know-how as leverage for his family's benefit. For all the reasons listed, François beseeched d'Aluye to support his brother's case.⁵⁰

Besides reaching out to his friends at court, François also applied other strategies to boost the advancement of his younger brother's political career and secure the nomination as ambassador to Venice. When François' secretary, Milan, travelled to the French court in the autumn of 1560 to arrange his master's affairs, one of his tasks was to advocate for Gilles. To this end, he carried gifts with a value of 100 *écu* with him to be distributed at the French court.⁵¹ Although no details are provided about the nature and recipients of these gifts, it is very likely that they were offered to members of the Guise clan in an attempt to win over their favour and their support for Gilles. In December 1560, Milan reported that after a

⁴⁹ Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France"; Sharon Kettering, *Patronage in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France* (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), viii.

⁵⁰ Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State d'Aluye, 10 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 475-477. See Source 6 for the complete transcription of this letter.

⁵¹ Letter from Milan to Antoine de Noailles, 19 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 446.

meeting with the Cardinal of Tournon, Queen Catherine de' Medici seemed willing to appoint Gilles as ambassador to Venice. However, the Cardinal of Lorraine had been kept in the dark so far to avoid that he would undermine Gilles' nomination. In order to obtain the cardinal's support, Milan urged François to promptly send a mirror and other honourable gifts and, additionally, suggested that Gilles offered his services and present himself regularly to the cardinal.⁵²

Nevertheless, eventually, the embassy in Venice would be entrusted to Jean Hurault de Boistaillé, who also had actively solicited for the job. In spite of François' vigorous endeavours as a patron for his brother and the support of Montmorency, who had likewise pressed for Gilles' nomination in Venice, the brothers could not escape the consequences of the altered political situation in France. The Cardinal of Lorraine interfered with the appointment of ambassadors and installed Jean Hurault de Boistaillé because he belonged to the clientele of the House of Guise.⁵³ A by now more and more impoverished Gilles, however, received another diplomatic assignment: ambassador to Scotland.⁵⁴ Even so, Gilles was not particularly happy with this position as it was a less prestigious embassy than Venice, and this meant that he had to return to a country from which he had been revoked, an act in which he did not find much honour.⁵⁵

Fortunately for Gilles, his diplomatic career did not stagnate and he later became resident ambassador to Rome (1561-1564) and Constantinople (1574-1578), where he succeeded his brother François. Thus, in Constantinople, the brothers again accomplished their goal of retaining the post within the family and strengthening the diplomatic family network.⁵⁶ In the end, the Noailles family had generally succeeded in remaining in the court's favour, and they

⁵² Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 31 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, ff. 493-497. Thus, the aforementioned gift of a mirror sent to the Cardinal of Lorraine not only served to gain the favour of the Guise clan, but also had a specific purpose.

⁵³ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 20 December 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 522: "Monseigneur, Monsieur de l'Isle a ce matin esté veoir Monseigneur le Connestable pour le remercier des bons offices qu'il avoit faictz pour tous deux a qui il a faict fort bon recueil, s'excusant d'en avoir peu le faire vostre successeur, tant pour ce que l'ellection de son voyage d'Escosee ou il luy a asseuré qu'on l'envoyeroit bientost, [...] ce aussy qu'il a trouvé que la place estoit reservée pour Monsieur de Boystaillé [...] Je pense que Monseigneur le Cardinal de Lorraine y doit bien avoir tenu la main, puis que ce voyage d'Escosee vient de sa pure ellection." However, later in his career, Jean Hurault de Boistaillé would work together with the constable; for more information on the political allegiances of Hurault de Boistaillé, see: de Conihout, "Jean et André Hurault", 108-113.

⁵⁴ Letter from Gilles de Noailles to François de Noailles, 18 January 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 545-547; Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 27 January 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 793

⁵⁵ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 496.

⁵⁶ Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. 3, 289; Tamizey de Larroque, "François de Noailles", 22.

had survived yet another change of power constellations. Under the regency of Catherine de' Medici for her son Charles IX, various family members were entrusted with important political posts.⁵⁷ Also outside the realm of diplomacy, François de Noailles constantly assisted his family. After the death of Antoine in 1562, he acted as head of the Noailles clan until Antoine's eldest son, Henri, came of age. In this capacity, François functioned as a guardian for his brother's children and helped to arrange their marriages. Furthermore, he accumulated more land holdings for the Noailles family.⁵⁸

Brothers of ambassadors were not the only ones who could profit from apprenticeships and kin patronage; other family members also were included in the diplomatic family network. Especially nephews or cousins of the ambassador were recurrent individuals present in French embassies.⁵⁹ Their tasks mostly included the transmitting of letters, messages and goods to the French court.⁶⁰ Through their activities as messengers, they came in direct contact with French officials who would hopefully remember their services and merits when a position became vacant. For instance, during their time in England, the Noailles' brothers employed their cousin, Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, to transport messages between England and France.⁶¹ His familiarity with Anglo-French affairs resulted in his appointment as resident ambassador to London in 1568. During his mission in Constantinople, François de Noailles was accompanied by another cousin, Montagnac, whom he put forward to replace him in 1572. However, Noailles was instructed to stay and complete his diplomatic assignment in the Ottoman Empire.⁶²

Another good example is the cousin of French ambassador in Venice, André Hurault de Maisse, denominated as Vignay, who received many responsibilities at the embassy. Besides being sent to France to deliver messages to the court and arrange Hurault de Maisse's domestic affairs, he was also dispatched to Mirandola to supervise the conditions of the

⁵⁷ For example, Antoine maintained his offices and pensions and received the new post of mayor of Bordeaux, while Antoine's wife, Jeanne de Gontault, was appointed as one of Catherine de' Medici's ladies-in-waiting, see: Kalas, "Wealth, Place, and Power in Sixteenth-Century France", 296-297.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 335.

⁵⁹ The letters of Arnaud du Ferrier, André Hurault de Maisse and Philippe de la Canaye all make several references to their cousins who were serving them in the embassy. For example: Letter from Arnaud du Ferrier to King Henry III, 21 September 1576: BNF, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 367, f. 262; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, July 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, f. 210r; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Cardinal Arnaud d'Ossat, 12 July 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 3, part 1, 55.

⁶⁰ Examples of the commissions carried out by nephews have already been discussed in Chapter 6.

⁶¹ Mémoire baillé au Sieur de la Mothe retournant de la Cour de France en Angleterre, 18 August 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 14, ff. 238r-240v; Cowan, "The Culture of Diplomacy", 7.

⁶² Letter from François de Noailles to Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici, July 1572 in Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. 3, 289 note 1; de la Canaye, *Le Voyage du Levant*, 19 note 3.

French troops, which were stationed there. When he was physically present at the embassy, he oversaw the day-to-day affairs and knew where quality merchandise could be purchased.⁶³ Just like François de Noailles, Hurault de Maisse literally stated that he nourished his nephew so that he could personally serve the king one day.⁶⁴ His efforts paid off: when he left Venice for some months between his two residencies, Vignay was left in charge of the embassy and acted as ambassador ad interim.⁶⁵ Vignay's more active role in the embassy is a clear indication of the skills he had developed and the trust he had gained from the king.⁶⁶

The hope for future advancement was not the only driving force behind the nomination of family members in the diplomatic household. At most European courts, it was the tradition that the ambassador received a material reward after the completion of his mission. In some cases, even members of the diplomatic staff were bestowed with a present or pension. For example, Cardinal Bernardino Spada took his two nephews with him on his diplomatic mission as papal legate to the French court in 1623. At the end of his residency, the French king awarded both Spada and his nephews with a yearly pension: 6.000 *scudi* for Spada and 2.000 *scudi* for each nephew.⁶⁷ The accumulation of the family capital was thus an additional motive for the employment of kin in the embassy.

All these examples of the ambassadors' zeal for their kin's advancement indicate an important facet of early modern diplomacy; ambassadors were not isolated individuals performing their diplomatic tasks but, on the contrary, they operated within overlapping kinship and patronage networks. While on mission abroad, representing the sovereign was just one of the various roles performed by ambassadors. Above all, they acted as heads of their families, patrons and clients, and wished to expand their social and economic capital by embarking on a diplomatic career. Even though they were appointed as official royal representatives, ambassadors could not afford to stop their participation in ongoing patronage and kin relationships.⁶⁸ In the case of the Noailles brothers, they engaged their kinship ties

⁶³ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Henry Clause, 10 February 1587: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 33, f. 67v; Copie de l'estat de la Mirande pour l'an 1587: *ibid.*, f. 307r.

⁶⁴ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, 12 October 1587: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 34, f. 40v: "[...] j'espere qu'il sera un jour service a sa Majesté pour le moins je le nourir a cette intention [...]".

⁶⁵ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Secretary of State Villeroy, 4 April 1588: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 34, f. 263r; Instruction, n.d. [1589]: AMAE, Mémoires et documents, Venise, vol. 46, f. 9.

⁶⁶ Other examples of family members acting as substitutes for the ambassador can be found in: Fletcher, "War, Diplomacy and Social Mobility", 572.

⁶⁷ Arne Karsten, "Familienbanden im Außendienst: Die Diplomatischen Aktivitäten des Kardinals Bernardino Spada (1594-1661) im Kontext der Familienpolitik," in *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen*, 45-46.

⁶⁸ Heiko Droste, "Ein Diplomat zwischen Familieninteressen und Königsdienst: Johan Adler Salvius in Hamburg (1630-1650)," in *Nähe in der Ferne*, 87-104; Karsten, "Familienbanden im Außendienst", 45-61;

and diverse patronage loyalties in order to promote the family's interests and solicit diplomatic appointments. An indispensable instrument in the cultivation of these social relationships were gifts. Through an exchange of gifts, ties of mutual commitment and obligation were created that easily crossed national boundaries and helped to secure the personal and familial standing of ambassadors.

The Purpose and Meaning of Gifts

“Your Eminence, he loves presents [...] and I expect that even before he touches them, he will have done something even better for you.”⁶⁹ This quote by Milan, one of François de Noailles' secretaries at his embassy in Venice, in a letter to his master, the ambassador, accurately summarises the importance and purpose of gifts: the offering of a gift embodied the hope for future returns. Contemporaries understood the power of gifts and employed them to cement ties, exchange favours and obtain personal and political goals. In spite of the fact that the early modern period witnessed an expansion of market economies, gift-giving still penetrated all aspects and levels of society. During the last decades, historians have started to recognise more and more this important role played by gifts in social, kinship, religious and political relationships. Especially elite patronage was pervaded with a continuous exchange of gifts, whereby gifts created and sustained the relationship and were a means to acquire prestige.⁷⁰

Christian Kühner, “Hochadlige Außenverflechtung zwischen Fürstendienst und Hochverrat: Der Grand Condé als Europaweit Tätiger Akteur,” in *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen*, 63-77; von Thiessen, “Diplomatie und Patronage”; Hillard von Thiessen, “Switching Roles in Negotiation: Levels of Diplomatic Communication between Pope Paul V Borghese (1605-1621) and the Ambassadors of Philip III,” in *Paroles de Négociateurs: L'Entretien dans la Pratique Diplomatique de la Fin du Moyen Âge à la Fin du XIXe Siècle*, ed. Stefano Andretta (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2010), 151-172; Williams, “‘Dui Fratelli ... con dui Principi’”, 579-611. See also von Thiessen's work for examples of how the ambassador's ambitions as a private person could collide with that of his king.

⁶⁹ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 534: “Monseigneur, il ayme les présens, et pour ceste cause vous ne les luy devez point plaindre, car j'espere qu'avant qu'il les touche, il aura faict quelque chose de meilleur pour vous.”

⁷⁰ In the first instance, it was historians of ancient and medieval times that studied the gift, applying theories of anthropologists and sociologists, such as Marcel Mauss' pivotal model: Marcel Mauss, “Essai sur le Don: Forme et Raison de l'Échange dans les Sociétés Archaiques,” *L'Année Sociologique* 1 (1923-1924), 30-186. For a good overview of important studies written by ancient and medieval historians, see: Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 6-8; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 5 note 6. Early modern historians were later in starting their investigations into the use of gifts in early modern society. However, in recent decades, more and more studies are appearing, which greatly contribute to our understanding of the purposes and meanings of gifts. Some important studies include: Alain Guery, “Le Roi Dépensier: Le Don, la Contrainte, et l'Origine du Système Financier de la Monarchie Française d'Ancien Régime,” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 39, no. 6 (1984), 1241-1269; Linda Levy Peck, “‘For a King Not to Be Bountiful Were a Fault’: Perspectives on Court Patronage in Early Stuart England,” *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 1 (1986), 31-61; Sharon Kettering, “Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France,” *French History* 2, no. 2 (1988), 131-151; Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*; Zemon

Before analysing the specific gifts that circulated in François de Noailles' networks, the general characteristics of ritualised gift exchange in French patronage relationships needs to be considered. Sharon Kettering has already clarified the most important aspects. First of all, gift-giving was regulated by a language of courtesies and compliments, which shaped a climate of mutual respect and trust. This language created the impression that the bond was more affective and spontaneous than it actually was, since it concealed the reciprocal nature of gift-giving and patronage. This brings us to the second fundamental feature of gift exchange: the obligation to reciprocate. The third characteristic was the personal bond that came into being due to the constant flux of gifts. Reciprocity and gratitude triggered the creation of an enduring intimate relationship.⁷¹

In order for a gift to succeed and stand out, it had to be personalised. Gifts varied greatly in their financial and aesthetic worth and the selection of a gift was a well-considered process: every object conveyed a specific meaning and was carefully chosen in correspondence to the occasion, the envisioned goal and the receiver's rank and taste. As ambassador in Venice, François de Noailles found himself in a privileged position for the procuring of gifts. As the previous chapters have made abundantly clear, the city had the reputation of being one of the main centres of luxury production, and its trading relations with both the West and the East made it a market of international goods. Noailles took advantage of these shopping facilities to gather the perfect gifts for his patrons and friends.

Gift-Giving to Impress: Luxury and Exotic Objects

Due to the fact that the possession and display of luxury objects had become an important factor in the self-fashioning of the wealthy over the course of the Renaissance, the elite wished to be at the receiving end of a constant flux of goods. Thus, by locating impressive and rare objects, ambassadors wished to show their usefulness and ability to satisfy the recipient's needs and, moreover, to present themselves as connoisseurs of worldly cultures. Henry Wotton provides a perfect example of an ambassador applying his cultural skills to gain the favour of his home court. Whilst conducting his various residencies in Venice,

Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*; Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts*; Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen, eds., *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003); Suzanne B. Butters, "The Uses and Abuses of Gifts in the World of Ferdinando de' Medici (1549-1609)," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 11 (2007), 243-354; Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*; Felicity Heal, "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 199, no. 1 (2008), 41-70; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*.

⁷¹ Kettering, "Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France", 131-151.

Wotton constantly pleased his patrons in England with all sorts of quality gifts that had to attest to his knowledge of Italian culture.⁷² Unfortunately, François de Noailles' material contains fewer examples of gifts of high luxury. Still, the items he gifted do reflect how he carefully selected the appropriate objects to showcase his artistic knowledge and taste.

In the first place, Noailles must have distributed luxury gifts amongst the Venetian elite to strengthen his networks. However, only one specific item could be traced in his correspondence; a watch he had brought from France through one of his servants. It was oval and intended to hang around the neck as a piece of jewellery.⁷³ He specified that he would use it as a gift for a woman, but who eventually received the watch could not be revealed.⁷⁴ Noailles more regularly transported luxury items to the French court. Especially textiles had a powerful function as luxury gifts due to their aesthetic and technical finesse. Since Venice was considered an important capital in textile production, Noailles could easily collect various luxuries. The high price of the gift made it a very suitable tool to curry favour with the elite. For example, in 1561, the Venetian embassy secretary, Milan, carried clothing items to the French court: King Charles IX received a hat and six bonnets, Dowager Queen Catherine de' Medici six skins and some bonnets, Duke François de Guise was offered four skins and bonnets and Constable Anne de Montmorency two black skins and bonnets.⁷⁵ Catherine de' Medici was furthermore presented with a typical Venetian clothing accessory, masks, which she could wear during French court festivities.⁷⁶

François also played on the desires of the French nobility by presenting them with more exotic textile items. Secretary of State Beauregard received silk from Bursa and Lord d'Aluye, likewise Secretary of State, was honoured with a hat of Polish fibres.⁷⁷ The most curious and exotic textile gift was a piece of an overcoat sent to the Cardinal of Lorraine:

Your Eminence, I send you a piece of a *gaban* [*caban*] that comes from Muscovy and that is made of the fur of an aquatic animal that they call *biber* in their language. It is not something that is

⁷² Ord, "Returning from Venice to England", 147-167; Hill, "Art and Patronage", 27-58.

⁷³ Various examples of oval watches to attach to a necklace can be found in: Cardinal and Vingtain, eds., *Trésors d'Horlogerie*.

⁷⁴ Letter from François de Noailles to Milan, n.d. [February 1562]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 133v.

⁷⁵ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 18 January 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 543-544. The letter also mentions *langues* and *larmes* as gifts, but so far I could not identify these objects, therefore, it is not clear if they were clothing items or not.

⁷⁶ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 6 February 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 492v.

⁷⁷ Letter from Secretary of State Thier to François de Noailles, 10 October 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 315r; Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State d'Aluye, 4 December 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 607.

dignified for your grandeur but it can be admired for its novelty. They assure me that it is good for the rain, and since it is only a small piece and the colour is a bit strange for you, I thought that it could be used to make a coat for the King, if you, your Eminence, thinks that this is a good idea.⁷⁸

The coat came from Moscow and was made with the hair of a beaver, an animal that was relatively unknown in France at that time, which can be derived from Noailles' description of it. Noailles suggested using it to make a mantle for the king, as the colour did not suit the cardinal.⁷⁹ Not monetary value but, instead, the exotic character and novelty gave the gift its magnificence. Writings that go as far back as Seneca had already advised the choosing of presents that were rare rather than costly.⁸⁰

The growing desire amongst the early modern elite to acquire curious novelties of extra-European origins, expressed itself especially in the vogue for objects coming from the Levant. French ambassadors stationed in Venice took advantage of the easy availability of in particular Ottoman commodities in the city. Consequently, during his residency, François de Noailles regularly sent *quelques singularitez de Levant* as presents to French officials.⁸¹ Moreover, he gathered various Turkish objects, amongst which were carpets and fur, which he would distribute as gifts to his patrons at the French court upon his return:

The said Claude has brought him [François de Noailles] beautiful furs of martens and sables and *dossi* [fur made of the back of squirrels], which were added to the many others he had already recovered from the Levant, and to the carpets and other excellent objects of Turkish manufacture, and he expects another high amount. I know that he plans to give away the majority when he arrives at court, and that he has spent a great amount of money on them.⁸²

⁷⁸ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 6 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 232v: "Monseigneur, je vous envoye une piece de gaban qui vient de moscovie et qui est faite de poil d'un animal aquatique qui s'apelle en leur langue biber. Ce n'est pas chose qui se doit estimer digne de vostre grandeur que pour la nouveauté on m'a assuré qu'il est bon a la pluye, et pour ce que laditte piece est petite, et la couleur ung peu estrange pour vous, j'ay pensé qu'elle pourra servir a faire ung manteau pour le Roy, si vous, monseigneur, le trouvés bon."

⁷⁹ Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal of Lorraine, 6 November 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 232v. Similarly, Jean Cavenac de la Vigne honoured the Guise family with various exotic gifts such as Turkish bonnets. Moreover, he secured the transport of various horses. Meiss-Even, *Les Guise et Leur Paraître*, 289.

⁸⁰ Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 18-19.

⁸¹ Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State Thier, 3 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 365r; Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State d'Aluye, 4 December 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 607. Unfortunately, the nature of these eastern objects is not specified.

⁸² Letter from Milan to Antoine de Noailles, 19 October 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 446: "Ledit Claude luy a pareillement apporté de belles fourrures de martres et gibelynes et dozzy qui ont bien augmenté le nombre de plusieurs autres, qu'il avoit deja recouvert de Levant, ensemble des tapis et ouvrages Turquesques fort excellentes, et en attend encores bonne quantité, dont je scay

Noailles had also started a private collection of rarities from the Levant on behalf of his older brother Antoine and his wife Jeanne de Gontault, which he presented to them at the end of his mission to enrich their cabinet.⁸³

First, by offering costly and precious gifts, François de Noailles aimed at honouring both the recipient and himself: on the one hand, inferior gifts were perceived as insults, which could lead to a loss of favour, and, on the other hand, Noailles wished to showcase his own elevated status in society by presenting objects in line with his identity and esteem. Second, since luxuries had become more easily accessible, the realm of gift-giving was characterised by competitiveness between clients, who tried to honour their patrons with an increasing number of lavish gifts. The presenting of more exotic items was a way to try to stand out in the ubiquity of gifts.

Gift-Giving to Please: Foodstuffs, Seeds and Medicines

Besides luxurious gifts that served as status symbols, Noailles also offered smaller, more personal presents that had to illustrate his deeper commitment and care. More than economic worth, the conveying of pleasure gave these gifts their value. Noailles employed three different categories: foodstuffs, both in the form of seeds and actual food; seeds for exotic flowers; and various types of highly coveted medicines. The first category, foodstuffs, was amongst the most often exchanged presents in early modern times. Both in a horizontal and vertical relationship, food gifts were recognised as a tool to show esteem and affection and to facilitate social bonding. Despite its omnipresence, the historiography of the gift has often failed to analyse the messages conveyed by foodstuffs.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, a closer look at the type of food gifts exchanged can reveal a great deal about the culinary trends of a specific time and, more importantly for my point of view, the symbolic value and meaning of foodstuffs. Since they were of less financial value than luxury objects and were of ephemeral nature, foodstuffs could be repeated regularly at a low cost and as a constant reminder of a cordial relationship. However, even though it was a less expensive gift, its value for the

qu'il a fort desseing de donner a son arrivée a la court la plus grand part en quoy il a employé tant d'argent [...]".

⁸³ Letter from La Marque to Jeanne de Gontault, 4 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 21, f. 532.

⁸⁴ Useful studies that do analyse the gift of food and their meanings are: Heal, "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange", 41-70; Bercusson, "Gift-Giving, Consumption and the Female Court". Also plants, fruits and vegetables in general have only received systematic attention from scholars starting from the 1980s. A study that approaches the topic from a historical, botanic and artistic point of view is: Grieco, Redon, and Tongiorgi Tomasi, eds., *Le Monde Végétal (XIIIe-XVIIe Siècles)*.

recipient was just as high. In a time when society was constantly troubled by a fear of scarcity, people wished to demonstrate their power with the presentation of a great variety of nourishments. Accordingly, just as with material goods, one's social and economic position could be illustrated by the display of foodstuffs.⁸⁵

Particularly seeds for fruits and vegetables are the type of food gifts we encounter in François de Noailles' correspondence.⁸⁶ There existed some regional differences with regard to the appropriateness of these gifts of seeds and the prestige that they embodied. Felicity Heal has stated that in early modern England, many fruits and vegetables were considered to be gifts of the poor that lacked status and delicacy.⁸⁷ However, Laura Giannetti's research on food in Italy has revealed that fruits and vegetables, although initially thought of as peasant's food, became to be seen as luxury food during the Renaissance and a standard component of elite diets.⁸⁸ Also in France around the middle of the sixteenth century, we can detect an augmentation in both the quantity and variety of fruits and vegetables cultivated and consumed by the nobility. This was in line with the general adaptation by the sixteenth-century French upper classes of the Italian tastes.⁸⁹ Similarly, food historians Ken Albala and David Gentilcore stress the vegetable vogue that characterised Europe during the Renaissance; the early modern elite fostered a profound interest in fruit and vegetables, which had become a standard and prized item on their banquet tables.⁹⁰ Despite the many negative health judgements in contemporary medicinal treatises, it can be concluded that, generally speaking, there was a strong European fashion for greens during the sixteenth century.

⁸⁵ Bercusson, "Gift-Giving, Consumption and the Female Court", 198-206.

⁸⁶ Sharon Kettering and Felicity Heal would qualify these offerings as tokens instead of gifts. A token was a modest object that initiated or sustained a personal relationship, it was a sign of goodwill and service and an assurance of friendship: Kettering, "Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France", 138-140; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 31-35. However, as the distinction between a gift and a token can be very difficult to make, I prefer to always use the general term "gift" throughout this chapter. Moreover, in the sources under study the French equivalents of the word "token" are never used, instead, I only found the term *présent*.

⁸⁷ Heal, "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange", 56-57. Laura Giannetti likewise states that in England, the negative stigma attached to vegetables and fruits persisted longer: Laura Giannetti, "Italian Renaissance Food-Fashioning or the Triumph of Greens," *California Italian Studies Journal* 1, no. 2 (2010), 6. Furthermore, Ken Albala is of the opinion that, generally speaking, vegetables were not yet popular in England during the sixteenth century: Albala, *The Banquet*, 80.

⁸⁸ Giannetti, "Italian Renaissance Food-Fashioning", 1-13; Laura Giannetti, "'Taste of Luxury' in Renaissance Italy: In Practice and in the Literary Imagination" (Presented at Luxury and the Ethics of Greed in the Early Modern World, Villa I Tatti and European University Institute, September 26, 2014). For the Middle Ages, see: Allen J. Grieco, "Réflexions sur l'Histoire des Fruits au Moyen Âge," In *L'Arbre: Histoire Naturelle et Symbolique de l'Arbre, du Bois et du Fruit au Moyen Âge*, ed. Michel Pastoureau, vol. 2 of *Cahiers du Léopard d'Or*, ed. Michel Pastoureau (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1993), 150-151.

⁸⁹ Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Les Légumes dans les Livres de Cuisine Français, du XIVe au XVIIIe Siècle," in *Le Monde Végétal (XIIIe-XVIIIe Siècles)*, 73; 81-82; Albala, *The Banquet*, 79.

⁹⁰ Albala, *The Banquet*, 73-89; Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, ch. 6.

A gift of fruit and vegetables was thus certainly suitable for the elite. Especially rarities and delicacies were desired; curiosities were precisely what sixteenth-century noblemen loved to cultivate in their private gardens and display on their sumptuous tables. Therefore, if a food gift wanted to bring much pleasure to the recipient, it had to be distinctive, meaning that it had to stand out from the quotidian eating pattern.⁹¹ Hence, François de Noailles sent products that were still rather rare in France, but could easily be procured in Venice. It should also be noted that in some cases, these foodstuffs were solicited gifts, specifically requested by French courtiers or fellow ambassadors. This is why the geographical context should always be evaluated when studying gift exchange. The comparison of Noailles' food gifts with those sent by one of his successors half a century later, Philippe de la Canaye, indicates the persistence of the same type of gifts, which in turn illustrates the specificity of Venice.

A first typical food gift sent from Venice was melon seeds. Already in the fifteenth century, melons constituted a recurrent component of the gift packages sent by the Venetian state to foreign sovereigns, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Venice still appears to have been the best place to purchase melons.⁹² The ubiquity of the fruit in the Venetian market squares is accurately described by English traveller Thomas Coryat, who visited the city in 1608:

Likewise they had another special commodity when I was there, which is one of the most delectable dishes for a Sommer fruite of all Christendome, namely muske Melons. I wondered at the plenty of them; for there was such store brought into the citie every morning and evening for the space of a moneth together, that not onely St. Markes place, but also all the market places of the citie were superabundantly furnished with them: insomuch that I thinke there were sold so many of them every day for that space, as yeelded five hundred pound sterling. They are of three sorts, yellow, greene, and redde, but the red is most toothsome of all. The great long banke whereof I have before spoken, which is interjected as a strong Rampier betwixt the Adriatique sea and the citie, even the Litto maggior, doth yeeld the greatest store of these Melons that are brought to Venice. [...] Also they have another excellent fruite called Anguria, the coldest fruit in taste that ever I did eate: the pith of it, which is in the middle, is as redde as blood, and full of blacke kernels. They finde a notable commodity of it in sommer, for the

⁹¹ Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 37-40.

⁹² See, for example, the gifts sent to Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, and English King Henry VI and King Edward IV: ASV, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, Notatorio, reg. 2, f. 124v (21 June 1463). The importance of the melon trade in Venice is also reflected in the extensive legislation about it: James E. Shaw, *The Justice of Venice: Authorities and Liberties in the Urban Economy, 1550-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 80.

cooling of themselves in time of heate. For it hath the most refrigerating vertue of all the fruites of Italy.⁹³

Coryat is astonished about the great quantity of both musk melons (*melone*) and watermelons (*angurie*) available in Venice. However, this does not mean that they could be purchased all year long; Philippe de la Canaye made mention of the seasonality of the melon seeds in his letters.⁹⁴ Like many fruits, the availability of the melon was connected to a season, as a result of which they gained status and value. Their limited access made them more fragile and, consequently, more desirable.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the fact that Coryat labelled melons as a “special commodity” illustrates that still at the beginning of the seventeenth century, these fruits were considered a novelty in northern Europe.

It thus seems that melons had a more exotic nature and were found in Italy more than in any other country in Europe. Melons gained popularity on French aristocratic tables during the second half of the sixteenth century.⁹⁶ Consequently, both François de Noailles, in the mid-sixteenth century, and Philippe de la Canaye, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, were repeatedly requested by French officials to transfer melon seeds.⁹⁷ For them, this was an easy yet efficient gift: they could effortlessly acquire the seeds in Venice, which were not particularly expensive, but still greatly please their patrons at the French court with this popular and exotic fruit.⁹⁸ Both ambassadors even employed melons as part of their hospitality strategy. When François de Noailles was staying in Conegliano with his friend and patron, Cardinal of Tournon, he commissioned one of his servants back in Venice to transfer a dozen melons, of the finest quality, to him. These were most probably used to enjoy together with the cardinal during their dinners.⁹⁹ Philippe de la Canaye, in turn, invited French courtiers to stay with him in Venice during the summer to enjoy some delicious

⁹³ Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities*, vol. 1, 395-396.

⁹⁴ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Forget, 18 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 40; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 2 February 1602 in *ibid.*, book 1, 131.

⁹⁵ Albala, *The Banquet*, 83; Heal, “Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange”, 41; Bercusson, “Gift-Giving, Consumption and the Female Court”, 215.

⁹⁶ Meiss-Even, “The Guise ‘Italianised’?”, 55.

⁹⁷ It was a common practice to ask for a gift of specific foodstuffs. Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 42-43.

⁹⁸ François de Noailles: Letter from Secretary of State d’Aluye to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 532; Letter from François de Noailles to the Admiral [of Mirandola], 2 December 1560: *ibid.*, f. 598. Philippe de la Canaye: Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Forget, 18 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 40; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 9 October 1604 in *ibid.*, book 3, part 2, 352; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 8 January 1605 in *ibid.*, book 4, 459; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 29 January 1605 in *ibid.*, 492; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jean de Gontaut Brion, 28 February 1605 in *ibid.*, 517.

⁹⁹ Letter from Daniel Duran to François de Noailles, 29 August 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 195v.

melons.¹⁰⁰ French ambassadors were not the only ones who used melon seeds as a gift in their patronage networks. For example, English Ambassador Henry Wotton tried to please his sovereign with melon seeds of all sorts, which the king had specifically requested.¹⁰¹ Clearly, despite the fact that melons were marked as a dangerous food for health in early modern medicinal treatises, the fruit gained popularity amongst the elites, who started to cultivate their own melons and prominently display the fruit during splendid banquets.¹⁰²

An equally popular gift was seeds from the cauliflower. French writer and soil scientist Olivier de Serres stated in his famous treatise *Théâtre d'Agriculture et Mesnage des Champs* (1600) that “[...] *cauli-fiori*, as the Italians call it, are still rather rare in France; they hold an honourable place in the garden because of their delicacy [...]”.¹⁰³ Fifty years later, the French cook and horticulturist Nicolas de Bonnefons still designated cauliflowers amongst the rarer and newer vegetables in his *Le Jardinier François* (1651).¹⁰⁴ Although cauliflowers had already been introduced in France by the Genoese at the end of the Renaissance, it only became a standard feature on the French noble table during the reign of King Louis XIV.¹⁰⁵ Also in other northern European countries, such as England, the cauliflower only became a standard product in mid-seventeenth century.¹⁰⁶ Hence, in Noailles’ time, it was still a rather rare and exotic vegetable, and, once again, its curiosity made it a suitable gift.¹⁰⁷ For the same reason, Canaye often sent cauliflower seeds to French officials.¹⁰⁸

Venice appears to have been known as a place where the best cauliflower seeds could be found.¹⁰⁹ This can be related to the vast trade networks maintained by the Venetian Republic

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to de la Fin, 12 March 1603 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 2, 109.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Henry Wotton to King James I, 2 December 1622 in Wotton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, vol. 2, 253; Letter from Henry Wotton to George Villiers, December 1622 in *ibid.*, 258.

¹⁰² Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe*, 54-55; Albala, *The Banquet*, 83; Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, 124.

¹⁰³ Quoted in: Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, *Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 66.

¹⁰⁴ Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, 120.

¹⁰⁵ Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *A History of Food*, trans. Anthea Bell (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 622; 625.

¹⁰⁶ Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 289.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State Thier, 29 March 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 634v; Letter from Secretary of State d’Aluye to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: *ibid.*, vol. 27, f. 532; Letter from François de Noailles to the Admiral [of Mirandola], 2 December 1560: *ibid.*, f. 598.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 2 February 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 131; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 18 January 1603 in *ibid.*, book 2, 34; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Dominique de Vic, 29 January 1605 in *ibid.*, book 4, 492.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, the requests from a gardener in Poli, a town in Lazio, Italy, who frequently asked his correspondents to send him some cauliflower seeds from Venice, as he had heard that they were excellent, in: Karen Liebreich, *Fallen Order: Intrigue, Heresy, and Scandal in the Rome of Galileo and Caravaggio* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 93.

and their access to various eastern markets. The cauliflowers purchased by the French ambassadors often originated from Cyprus, what is most commonly believed to be the place from where the vegetable was introduced to Italy.¹¹⁰ Venetian merchants had been present in Cyprus for centuries, and between 1489 and 1571, the island was one of the overseas territories of the Venetian Republic. Moreover, Philippe de la Canaye also mentioned seeds from Syria, which has also been put forward as a possible place where the cauliflower originated, and with which Venice maintained extended trade relations.¹¹¹ Also the Gonzaga court supplied themselves with cauliflower seeds through their agents in Venice, who purchased them directly in the city, procured them from Cyprus and Syria or obtained them through the services of Venetian merchants in Syria.¹¹²

By now, it has become clear that the ambassadors stationed in the lively trading town of Venice had easy access to foodstuffs of various origins. Philippe de la Canaye seems to have been particularly resourceful in locating curiosities. He not only commissioned his servants to roam Venetian markets, but also appealed to the French ambassadors in the Ottoman Empire to provide him with Levantine seeds.¹¹³ Another good example of his gifting of exotic plants is the gift of a potato to a certain commander, called Orazio Langosco, which caught the attention of the Mantuan Ambassador Ercole Udine. Udine reported to the ducal advisor at the Gonzaga court that the *radici* offered by the French ambassador were called *patate*, a clear indication of the fact that potatoes were not yet widespread at this point.¹¹⁴

Additionally, Canaye was active in acquiring another category of gifts, that is, flowers. To both Secretary of State Pierre Forge and French Ambassador in Rome Philippe de Béthune he wished to send seeds of Levantine flowers, such as tulips and crown imperials.¹¹⁵ Once more, these types of plants could easily be acquired in Venice, which can be deduced from Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga's request to the Mantuan ambassador in Venice to collect no

¹¹⁰ Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 153.

¹¹¹ For more information on Venice's relationship with both Cyprus and Syria, see: Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*.

¹¹² Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 237; n. 309; n. 339; n. 408; n. 682; n. 978.

¹¹³ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to François Savary de Brèves, 9 June 1602 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 302.

¹¹⁴ Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 793. For more information on the fact that the potato was still relatively rare in Europe during the sixteenth century, see: J.G. Hawkes and J. Francisco-Ortega, "The Potato in Spain during the Late 16th Century," *Economic Botany* 46, no. 1 (1992), 86-97; David Gentilcore, *Italiani Mangiapatate: Fortuna e Sfortuna della Patata nel Belpaese* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013), 41-56.

¹¹⁵ Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Secretary of State Forget, 18 November 1601 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 1, 40; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 2 February 1602 in *ibid.*, 131; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Philippe de Béthune, 18 January 1603 in *ibid.*, book 2, 34.

less than 400 tulips.¹¹⁶ The popularity of flowers was linked to the fashion of gardening that had emerged amongst the wealthy during the Renaissance. Maintaining a garden granted status and became an important aspect of self-fashioning, which led to a refinement of horticulture. The elite also took pride in presenting their guests with both flowers and foodstuffs that were privately cultivated. Moreover, yet again, we perceive the elite's preoccupation with novelty and rarity and, consequently, exotic flowers could not be absent from these gardens.¹¹⁷ Hence, the meaning of flower gifts can be understood in a similar way as foodstuffs. By sending various types of curious seeds, ambassadors delighted and honoured the recipients, who could embellish their private gardens with beautiful flowers and show off their ability to obtain these items.

Even though the ambassador did not have to make great financial efforts, all these gifts of foodstuffs and flowers illustrated his desire to please his patrons on a more personal level. This was even more the objective of the sending of delicacies that were assigned with medicinal powers. In early modern times, foodstuffs were often used for two purposes: as food and as medicine. I believe that this is how we should interpret Noailles' gift of pistachio nuts to Francesco d'Este, third son of Duke Alfonso I d'Este of Ferrara and a loyal supporter of the French king; the Duchess of Ferrara, Renée of France; and the Duchess of Savoy, Margaret of France.¹¹⁸ It was generally believed in early modern times that pistachio nuts relieved various pains, such as stomach ache; obstructions in the liver, chest and lungs; internal, skin and sexual diseases; and so forth.¹¹⁹ Noailles considered them to be especially beneficial for the stomach and, therefore, sent some nuts to the Duchess of Savoy, apologising for not offering them earlier:

Madam, it has already been a while ago that Madam the Dowager Duchess of Ferrara has passed by here. She wrote me remembering the pistachio nuts that I had occasionally sent to Ferrara for her and she thought that they would be good for your stomach. Therefore, she

¹¹⁶ Mantuan Ambassador Ercole Udine was commissioned to procure 400 tulips in diverse colours and 24 *tazzette d'argento* or narcissuses. Eventually, the famous Venetian merchant Bartolomeo dal Calice could acquire 125 tulips and all the 24 narcissuses. Udine likewise purchased various flowers for the garden of Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga. Sermidi, *Le Collezioni Gonzaga: Il Carteggio tra Venezia e Mantova (1588-1612)*, n. 682; n. 924; n. 926.

¹¹⁷ Albala, *The Banquet*, 28; 74; Alexander Samson, ed., *Locus Amoenus: Gardens and Horticulture in the Renaissance* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

¹¹⁸ Letter from François de Noailles to Francesco d'Este, 24 May 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 122; Letter from François de Noailles to Duchess Margaret of France, 31 January 1561: *ibid.*, f. 801.

¹¹⁹ Oribasius, *Dieting for an Emperor: A Translation of Books 1 and 4 of Oribasius' Medical Compilations with an Introduction and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Mark Grant (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997), 186-187; Efraim Lev and Zohar Amar, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 240-242.

commanded me to send you some on the first secure occasion that I had, as I now do, Madam, through Sir de Tillon, gentleman of your house, and it saddens me that I have not sent them sooner. I think that your apothecary can make them as good as here, and Sir de Rochefort, your doctor, likewise knows how they make them here.¹²⁰

By presenting these small proofs of friendship to prominent individuals, Noailles demonstrated his concern for their health, which had to highlight the personal nature of the gift and foster a relationship of trust and amity.¹²¹

François de Noailles was not only active in sending these types of gifts, he was also the recipient of food gifts from those who wished to uphold good relationships with the ambassador. During his embassy in Venice, he received various foodstuffs from both French diplomatic agents and his own agents in Italy. The individuals that offered him foodstuffs can be qualified more as friends than as clients. They hoped that these small demonstrations of loyalty would reinforce their relationship with Noailles, who had built up a good reputation at the French court by now and, therefore, could become a potential source of political patronage. In the first place, Noailles was at the receiving end of personal food gifts that showed a concern for his health. He was for example offered pears, very popular in the sixteenth century, by the provost of St. Martin of Tours.¹²² The pears he received were *Bon Chrétien* pears, which were believed to have miraculous workings and cure all types of diseases.¹²³

Additionally, Noailles especially received meat such as ham, salami, woodcock and turkey (*poule d'Inde*), all foodstuffs that benefited the sociability and hospitality strategies of the embassy.¹²⁴ Meat was an important course during sumptuous meals, at which the ambassador wished to display his wealth and affluence in order to impress his guests.¹²⁵ In particular the

¹²⁰ Letter from François de Noailles to Duchess Margaret of France, 31 January 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 801: “Madame, il y a assez longtemps que passant madame le Duchesse Douairiere de Ferrare par mon calier, elle m’escripvit comme se souvenant de la pistache que je luy envoïois quelques fois a Ferrare, elle avoit pensé qu’elle seroit propre a vostre stomach, et par ce me comandoit de vous en envoyer par la premiere seure voie comme je fois presentement, Madame, par le Seigneur de Tillon Gentilhomme de vostre maison, et me desplait bien que je ne l’aie peu faire plustost ancores que je pense que vostre apoticaire la sçara faire aussi bonne que ceste la, et mesmement puisque monsieur de Rochefort votre medecin sçait comme l’on la faict icy [...]”.

¹²¹ For more information on the use of gifts with medicinal workings, see: Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, 73; Bercusson, “Gift-Giving, Consumption and the Female Court”, 210-211.

¹²² Letter from Bishop of Angoulême to François de Noailles, 20 February 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 540r.

¹²³ Toussaint-Samat, *A History of Food*, 573.

¹²⁴ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 22 October 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 339r; Letter from Thelligny to François de Noailles, 28 December 1558: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 65r; Letter from Odet de Carrières to François de Noailles, 7 February 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 5r.

¹²⁵ The importance of food in sociability and hospitality has been discussed at length in Chapter 3.

turkey is an interesting gift. The first turkeys were brought from the Americas to Spain at the beginning of the sixteenth century and rapidly spread across the European continent, where they became a coveted item on courtly tables. Although turkeys were no longer a novelty by the mid-sixteenth century, they were still considered a luxury food and remained an elite foodstuff for another century.¹²⁶ Sumptuary laws in Venice even prohibited the eating of turkeys and partridges during the same meal; they judged that one rare, luxurious bird at a time was sufficient. Still in 1562, a Venetian law forbade the serving of turkey during wedding feasts. Also in sixteenth-century France, the turkey was considered a luxury item and was much coveted by the elite, who commonly used this meat in their self-fashioning strategies by displaying it at their tables during special occasions.¹²⁷ Noailles would thus certainly have been very pleased with the gift of a turkey, which was in line with his elevated status and which he could present to his guests during important diplomatic dinners.

Another interesting category of presents that were employed in early modern times were gifts of medicines. In particular the French ambassador in the Ottoman Empire, Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, wished to please Noailles by offering him theriac, mithridatum and stag's tears (*lacrima cervi*), which were perceived as antidotes healing all kinds of diseases and warding off poisons.¹²⁸ Similarly, French agent Jean Dolu supplied Noailles with these three antidotes; either he sent them as a gift or Noailles paid for the products.¹²⁹ In both the western and Islamic world, theriac was known as a panacea, a universal drug curing all illnesses. It was composed of a great variety of ingredients, with each ingredient corresponding to a function of the body. Over the course of the early modern period, it became a standard component of the elite's medicine cabinet, and, therefore, could not be missing from Noailles' pharmaceutical collection. Mithridatum, likewise used as a panacea, was very similar to theriac, but it did not contain the latter's key ingredient: the flesh of vipers. Stag's tears, which were literally the tears of a stag, were also believed to be a

¹²⁶ Stanley J. Olsen, "Turkeys," in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, eds. Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 581; Sabine Eiche, *Presenting the Turkey: The Fabulous Story of a Flamboyant and Flavourful Bird* (Florence: Centro Di, 2004); Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, 141-144.

¹²⁷ Bistort, *Il Magistrato alle Pompe*, 378; Eiche, *Presenting the Turkey*, 21-22; 24; Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, 142.

¹²⁸ Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 24 July 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 26, f. 48r. Vigne's inventory illustrates that he also used these medicines himself: *ibid.*, vol. 16, ff. 323r-328v (n.d. [October 1559]).

¹²⁹ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 22 May 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 109; François, ed., *Correspondance du Cardinal François de Tournon*, no. 734.

medicine that cured a wide range of illnesses.¹³⁰ Noailles, moreover, was interested in receiving flasks of mastic from the Ottoman Empire, which both he and his brother Antoine employed to remedy stomach aches.¹³¹ Recent studies have proven that mastic, sap from the mastic tree in liquid or crystallised form, indeed possesses antibacterial qualities that can help cure stomach ulcers.¹³²

However, the most coveted medicinal product by François de Noailles was *terra sigillata*, a highly esteemed medicinal clay stamped with a seal as an indicator of authenticity, from which its name “sealed earth” derives. It was often employed as an antidote against poisoning and to treat bites and ulcers. *Terra sigillata* was physically absorbed by the body or used to make cups and amulets, which were assigned healing powers.¹³³ Vigne regularly sent packages of *terra sigillata* to Noailles in order to remain in his good graces.¹³⁴ He stressed the trouble he had gone through to procure *terra sigillata*, both white and red, of the best quality, for which Noailles was always grateful.¹³⁵ However, Noailles did complain when it was delivered to him broken and, therefore, he advised Vigne to always make sure that it was securely packed.¹³⁶ Besides receiving it as gift from Vigne, Noailles moreover solicited other French diplomatic agents in Constantinople to procure it for him.¹³⁷ André Hurault de Maise and Philippe de la Canaye were equally gifted *terra sigillata* by the French ambassadors in the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁸ Moreover, while André Hurault de Maise received theriac and

¹³⁰ Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 241-243.

¹³¹ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 21 September 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 387; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 20 October 1560: *ibid.*, f. 460.

¹³² Aglaia Kremezi, “Mastic,” in *The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets*, ed. Darra Goldstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 433-434.

¹³³ A good overview of the history, varieties and uses of *terra sigillata* can be found in: Arthur Macgregor, “Medicinal Terra Sigillata: A Historical, Geographical and Typological Review,” in *A History of Geology and Medicine*, eds. Christopher J. Duffin, Richard Moody, and Christopher Gardner-Thorpe (London: The Geological Society, 2013), 113-136.

¹³⁴ Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 10 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 377r; Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 13 November 1558: *ibid.*, f. 384r; Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 2 March 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 191r; Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 24 July 1559: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 48r.

¹³⁵ Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, 10 November 1558: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 24, f. 377r: “Je vous envoye aussi ung peu de terre sigillate laquelle j’ay recouvrée avec grand peine.”; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, 27 December 1558: *ibid.*, vol. 25, f. 61v.

¹³⁶ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, n.d. [March 1559]: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 284r.

¹³⁷ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 22 May 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 109; Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 20 October 1560: *ibid.*, f. 460.

¹³⁸ Letter from André Hurault de Maise to Jacques de Germigny, 28 February 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, f. 226r; Letter from André Hurault de Maise to Jacques de

Armenian bole, a type of medicinal clay, Philippe de la Canaye and his wife and daughter were offered flasks of mastic.¹³⁹

Since all these medicines assisted Noailles' health, they symbolised Vigne's and Dolu's personal concern for the well-being of their colleague and, in return, they wished to, as Dolu expressed it: "[...] make clear to you the desire that I have to please and serve you and, afterwards, be humbly recommended for your good graces."¹⁴⁰ Noailles was indeed very grateful for these and other gifts that Dolu sent him from the Levant and offered to acquire for him something from Venice in return:

[...] and I do not want to forget to thank you as much as possible for the beautiful gift that you sent me through the ship Barbara, which I have not yet received, but I send you my loving graces as if I had it already in my hands, and if you want something in return from our *boutique* [embassy] as a compensation for your kindness, let me know and I will satisfy your desires.¹⁴¹

Noailles not only received medicinal compounds as gifts, he also employed them in his own gift-giving strategies: to Cardinal Jean du Bellay in Rome he offered theriac, and *terra sigillata* was sent to one of his patrons at the French court, Cardinal Châtillon.¹⁴² Noailles probably pleased more French officials with medicinal gifts but, unfortunately, no further examples could be traced in his correspondence. However, he did receive an interesting request from someone referred to as the admiral, probably of Mirandola. He asked Noailles for help with the acquisition of some herbs from the *giardino dei semplici* or garden of simples, a garden specialised in medicinal plants and herbs, in Padua. This garden refers to the botanical garden of Padua that had been established by the Venetian government in

Germigny, June 1583: *ibid.*, vol. 30, ff. 66v-67r; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jean de Gontaut Brion, baron of Salignac, 3 December 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 314.

¹³⁹ Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, 28 February 1583: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 29, f. 226r; Letter from André Hurault de Maisse to Jacques de Germigny, June 1583: *ibid.*, vol. 30, ff. 66v-67r; Letter from Philippe de la Canaye to Jean de Gontaut Brion, baron of Salignac, 3 December 1606 in *Lettres et Ambassades*, book 5, 314.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 21 September 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 387: "[...] vous faire cognoistre l'envie que j'ay de vous faire plaisir et service, et que apres m'estre bien humblement recomandé a votre bonne grace."

¹⁴¹ Letter from François de Noailles to Jean Dolu, 16 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 546: "[...] et ne veult oblir par mesme moyen de vous remercier tant qu'il m'est possible, du beau present que vous m'envoyez par la nave Barbara lequel je n'ay encores receu, mais je vous en rendz aussi affectueuses graces que si je l'avois entre mes mains et si vous voulez rien de nostre boutique en recompence de voz biensfaictz en m'en advertissant vous en ferez satisfait."

¹⁴² Letter from François de Noailles to Cardinal Jean du Bellay, 7 April 1559: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 25, f. 341r; Letter from Cardinal of Châtillon to François de Noailles, 12 July 1564: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 352r. Also Jean Cavenac de la Vigne sent a box with theriac to Cardinal Bellay: Letter from Jean Cavenac de la Vigne to François de Noailles, n.d.: *ibid.*, vol. 26, f. 488r.

1545.¹⁴³ Someone had informed the admiral about it and he was so curious that he would send a porter to collect both seeds and full-grown herbs together with their roots and soil.¹⁴⁴ During the sixteenth century, not only did the desire to cultivate private gardens with flowers, fruit and vegetables emerge, the elite also developed a taste for gardens of simples, filled with medicinal plants.

This outline has focused on a group of often-overlooked gifts in patronage and friendship relations: foodstuffs, seeds for plants and flowers, and medicines. By analysing the presents offered by and to François de Noailles, and to a lesser extent Philippe de la Canaye, I have uncovered the messages that their gifts entailed and illustrated their usefulness in the strengthening of networks and the fostering of more informal ties. Gifts of food and medicines were more intended to illustrate an interest in the recipient's needs than to display magnificence. Still, for both parties, feelings of pride and honour were involved: on the one hand, the ambassador took pride in finding distinctive gifts and pleasing the recipient; on the other hand, the patron was honoured to be able to display and consume exotic foodstuffs and flowers. The ephemeral nature of all these products was also a way to evade the reciprocal nature of patronage networks and to circumvent the desire to always surpass previous gifts.

Gift-Giving to Persuade: Bribery

The types and messages of gifts that circulated in patronage relationships have been sufficiently analysed, however, a special category of gifts remains to be elucidated: bribes. Bribes are here defined according to the description provided by Sharon Kettering: “[...] the bestowal of money or favours on an individual in a position of authority in order to influence his conduct.”¹⁴⁵ To help the aims of their diplomacy, ambassadors often employed bribery to gain access to information, obtain the support of local officials and establish politically useful friendships. These bribes could take on various forms, such as tips, pensions and objects.¹⁴⁶ The interest of this study, however, is again directed towards the private networks of the ambassador and how bribes were used to further the ambassador's individual situation and position.

¹⁴³ Alessandro Minelli, ed., *L'Orto Botanico di Padova, 1545-1995* (Venice: Marsilio, 1995).

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 20 December 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, f. 523.

¹⁴⁵ Kettering, “Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France”, 147.

¹⁴⁶ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, 150; 169-170; Fletcher, “Those Who Give Are Not All Generous”, 1-10. For a general consideration of the functioning of bribery and corruption in court politics and beyond, see: Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*; Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, ch. 6; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, ch. 7.

Firstly, it is important to establish when a gift was a bribe and when it was part of a patronage relationship. Sharon Kettering has put forward a clear distinction. In a patron-client relationship, gift-giving was part of an ongoing personal relationship in view of securing the bond to obtain future favours or services. The gifts thus functioned as part of a long-established reciprocal relationship, not as a payment for a specific undertaking. Bribery, on the contrary, consisted of a one-time only exchange where the offering of a present, money or political appointment served a specific objective. As a result, bribery was not part of an existing bond and did not establish one.¹⁴⁷ However, despite Kettering's well-defined classifications, it can be difficult to categorise gift exchange either as patronage or bribery. For example, the already described present of a mirror and other unspecified gifts offered by François de Noailles to the Cardinal of Lorraine, in order to obtain his support for the appointment of Gilles de Noailles as ambassador to Venice, seems to be a bribe at first sight, as it had to fulfil a specific purpose. Yet, there already existed a more personal relationship between the Noailles and the Guise family, and even though this was not a strongly established patron-client relationship, the Noailles brothers occasionally sent gifts to maintain in their good graces.

A more evident example of how François de Noailles resorted to bribery are the gifts presented to the *Trésorier de l'Épargne*, who was in charge of the finances of the crown. Embassy secretary Milan had been sent to the French court to negotiate the payment of Noailles' extraordinary expenses. In order to quickly obtain this money, Milan suggested that his master offer gifts to the treasurer and his clerks:

Your Eminence, since now your extraordinary expenses have been approved and will be signed at the latest tomorrow morning, the most important thing is to retrieve the money, and to achieve this, I would offer some honest presents to the Treasurer or his clerks [...]¹⁴⁸

Milan purchased most of the gifts, of which the nature is unfortunately not specified, in France; however, he also wished to add a Turkish carpet. Since he did not succeed in locating an exquisite exemplar in France, he urged the ambassador to purchase it in Venice and transfer it to the French court to complete the gift package.¹⁴⁹ In the end, the agent who had

¹⁴⁷ Kettering, "Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France", 147-151.

¹⁴⁸ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 12 November 1560: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 536: "Monseigneur, a ceste heure que voz parties et estat sont commandez et seront a tout le moins demain matin signés, le plus fort est de recouvrer argent, pour a quoy parvenir, je ne plaindray point quelque honeste présent au Trésorier ou ses commis [...]"

¹⁴⁹ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 27 January 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 27, f. 791: "[...] je leur quitte tout pourveu que je puisse avoir vostre argent, du quel

to transmit the carpet did not follow through, and it is not clear whether the carpet was eventually given or not.¹⁵⁰

This very brief consideration of bribery has showcased that in order to fully understand the nature and purpose of the gift, it is very important to analyse the wider context in which it was given. As Catherine Fletcher's innovative study on bribery at the papal court in Renaissance Rome has accurately indicated, it is crucial to surpass the work of Marcel Mauss, wherein all sorts of offerings were grouped together under the general denominator "gift".¹⁵¹ Instead, the distinctions made between various types of gifts have to be considered.¹⁵² In doing so, it is possible to approach the more underhanded offerings that had to benefit both political causes and private advancement.

The case study of the strategies employed by Ambassador François de Noailles to construct and safeguard overlapping patronage and kinship networks has revealed yet again how closely interwoven the public and private, the political and domestic spheres were in early modern times – categories that have been treated as separate units in traditional diplomatic historiography. While serving abroad, ambassadors were not mere loyal servants of their crown but, in parallel, they carried out their private and family agendas. The example of Noailles was certainly not an anomaly in the world of early modern diplomacy. Embassy life demanded an itinerant lifestyle, and the cultivation of various allegiances at home and abroad was necessary for further career advancement.

By starting from an investigation of the personal networks maintained by an ambassador, I was also able to investigate the use and meaning of objects, circulating between courts, that served as an indispensable medium to consolidate one's position and to establish social and political relationships. As ambassadors could not converse with potential patrons in person, they used gifts to display their abilities and to distinguish themselves from competitors.

Monsieur le Trésorier m'a encore ce jourdhuy donné la mesme assurance que je vous ay par mes dernieres escriptes, aussi ay je confirmé a son commis la promesse que j'ay, parlant a luy, faicte a l'un et a l'autre. Et pour ce que le recouvrement de l'un des presens ne se peult faire par deça qui est le tapis turquesque, je vous ay bien auzé supplier, Monseigneur, faire s'il vous plaist, donner ordre qu'il soit trouvé et achapté pour m'estre envoyé avec quelque commodité, ou si je n'estois plus en ceste court, en quelque lieu a Lyon pour estre envoyé a Paris, car il ne leur fault point faillir de promesse, et j'espere trouver moyen de le leur payer sans que vostre somme en soit diminuée."; Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 4 February 1561: *ibid.*, vol. 28, f. 1r; Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 9 March 1561: *ibid.*, f. 14r.

¹⁵⁰ Letter from Milan to François de Noailles, 13 March 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 16v.

¹⁵¹ Fletcher, "Those Who Give Are Not All Generous", 1-10; Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, ch. 7.

¹⁵² For a good overview of Mauss' theory and important applications of his theory in the field of history, and also some alternative approaches to the study of the gift, see: Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome*, 146-148.

François de Noailles understood the importance of tailoring the financial and social value and nature of the gift to the circumstance, type of relationship and the intended objective. Being stationed in Venice, he had a broad spectrum of gifts to choose from and by sending more exotic items, he stimulated exchange and contributed to the development of a global Renaissance.

In this final chapter I have widened my perspective to incorporate the home court of the ambassadors into my research. Although diplomatic agents needed to establish social and political lives in the country of their embassy, they did not break off their ongoing relationships and interests. Consequently, when analysing the social and cultural facets of diplomatic life, the connections with the home court ought not to be overlooked. François de Noailles remained in the first place a French nobleman, who committed himself to preserving his status and advancing his career in France. Since he had to be able to reintegrate into French society when returning home after the completion of his embassy, he needed to continuously connect himself with France and present himself as a member of the French elite. Whereas the sojourn in Venice was temporary, his position in France was constant. Therefore, this chapter has situated François de Noailles in Venice, but looked towards France.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Melanie Ord has investigated the importance of reintegration in the home society after a diplomatic mission: Ord, "Returning from Venice to England", 147-167.

CONCLUSION

When François de Noailles was about to leave Venice in the spring of 1561, he lamented the great strain that his embassy had put on his finances. Therefore, he sent his embassy secretary, Milan, to the French court to implore the king to reimburse him for all the expenses that he had incurred for the benefit of the French monarchy over the past years. Milan underlined that Noailles had already loyally served the French kings abroad for eight years, for which he had never received any gift. Moreover, the French crown owed Noailles 18.217 *livres tournois*, as neither his salary nor his extraordinary expenses had been defrayed for the last 23 months of his residency. This had led Noailles to borrow a sum of 6.000 *écu* in Venice, and he could not leave the city without repaying his debt, since this would dishonour him and harm his king's reputation.¹

These high expenses were a necessary part of embassy life in order to uphold a magnificent lifestyle and honourably embody the virtues and power of the monarch. Especially expenditure on material culture was of great significance as it aided the ambassador to shape his diplomatic identity. Ambassadors' houses, furnishings, clothing, purchases and gifts all contributed to the execution of diplomatic tasks and transmitted political and social messages. The main contribution of this study is that it has united these various aspects of diplomatic material culture for the first time and, this way, the complete material environment of early modern ambassadors has been brought into sharp focus, thereby revealing the interconnectedness of material culture and politics on every level of diplomatic life. This story of material culture has been deeply anchored in and linked to the specific characteristics of embassy life.

The chronology of this narrative encompassed the half century between François de Noailles' residency (1557-1561) and the embassy of Philippe de la Canaye (1601-1607). During this time frame, the French diplomatic service become more and more professionalised. In 1589, King Henry III even established the department of foreign affairs, which was responsible for all the correspondence with ambassadors. This way, international relations were centralised.² Besides the observation that the diplomatic institution became better organised in the course of sixteenth century, ambassadors themselves began to see

¹ Remontrances faites par le secrétaire de Monsieur d'Acqs, à nos Seigneurs du Conseil Privé, pour faire payer ledit Seigneur de ses appointemens d'Ambassadeur à Venise, 21 March 1561: AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 19r; Requête pour Monsieur d'Acqs à Monsieurs du Conseil Privé, 21 March 1561: *ibid.*, f. 20r.

² Ribera, *Diplomatie et Espionnage*, 55-56.

their function more as an occupation and the embassy more as their home. This was a result of many, often interconnected, developments of which two should be stressed in particular: the fact that a political, international training became very important for an appointment as ambassador and the observation that the duration of a diplomatic mission was gradually prolonged.

First, experience abroad and political connections were increasingly put forward as necessary qualities for ambassadors. To this end, diplomatic family networks were expanding in number, with ambassadors providing political training in the embassy for cadet members of the family. In doing so, ambassadors transferred their diplomatic skills and far-reaching networks were created between family members stationed all over Europe. Performing diplomatic services transformed into a political career, which resulted in ambassadors identifying themselves with their diplomatic function, in addition to their noble, national vocation. However, at the same time, the diplomatic career continued to be a very diversified enterprise, with ambassadors brokering both luxury goods and state secrets.

Second, seeing that ambassadors resided at one location for a longer period, they started to establish a comprehensive domestic structure, consisting of a wide variety of servants and family members, including wives and children. As a result, the embassy became more and more a place of domestic family life, in parallel with its function as bureaucratic office. The stable presence in one city for an extended period, moreover, stimulated the social and cultural integration of ambassadors. In the first place, they established numerous contacts with local elites and agents, both groups played an indispensable role in the ambassador's brokerage, patronage and information networks. In the second place, they adapted to local cultural practices in the embellishment of their interior and wardrobe, while at the same time representing their native background and sovereign as well. This mixture could lead to interesting amalgamations of values and the cultivation of various types of identities.

These two broad evolutions already go a long way towards explaining how and why the domestic and the public constantly came together in embassy life during the second half of the sixteenth century. Not only were personal, family connections crucial to the launching of a diplomatic career, domestic embassy life involved both public and private concerns. Throughout the entire period under study, this intertwinement is clearly visible; the ambassador operated as an individual advancing both political and personal interests. Particularly, the examination of the activities and experiences of François de Noailles opened a window to the dualism of diplomatic life by examining the domestic and material facets of

diplomacy. A final overview of his residence in Venice will exemplify and summarise the renewed diplomatic reality of the mid-sixteenth century.

The framework of Noailles' political operations was the embassy building in which he erected a diplomatic court. This court, or household, had symbolic and instrumental functions. The architecture of the building, the social events taking place inside the embassy and the comportment of the diplomatic family all had to reflect royal grandeur. Consequently, domestic duties, such as food supply and the management of servants, were indispensable to the diplomatic practice. Although these aspects have become a concern of the new diplomatic history, more research remains to be done on the household of an early modern ambassador. While this study has already examined some understudied topics, the nature of minor servants and agents in particular should be investigated on a broader scale in order to fully comprehend how diplomacy operated on the "streets".

The embassy building and the diplomatic family thus played an important role in the moulding of the ambassador's new role. Similarly, François de Noailles consciously used objects and clothing both to formulate his official identity and to display and preserve private and family status. Furthermore, this analysis has shown that the process of identity construction through material culture was a collective enterprise, as it depended on the procurement of the necessary goods by intermediaries and servants, and the gifts offered by clients and friends. I have touched upon issues related to the shopping circuit erected by ambassadors, however, these consumption networks are a rich topic for future research. It would be interesting to uncover, on the one hand, the activities of more (sub)agents and, on the other hand, the influence of these intermediaries on aristocratic consumption through their selection or rejection of certain goods and their judgements of quality. Concerning the Italian peninsula, both published and unpublished sources contain a wealth of information that would allow for a detailed reconstruction of the multilateral networks of commercial agents.

Lastly, the social interaction surrounding the purchase and use of objects was considered through an investigation of the ties that François de Noailles established and sustained with the French court. Noailles was imbedded in a social web involving patrons, clients, merchants and artists, in which the continual exchange and display of material culture was of crucial importance. Both brokered and gifted goods were applied to safeguard Noailles' own, and his family's, position in the political structures at the home court. Additionally, he employed the goods he acquired for patrons and friends as a way to shape his image as a member of the French elite by selecting gifts that symbolised his refinement and awareness

of current tastes and trends. Not only the possession of objects, but also their exchange supported the ambassador's construction of a diplomatic identity.

Early modern Venice offered a fascinating stage for the study of these various facets of diplomatic culture. By the sixteenth century, the Republic had developed a strong ritual apparatus, with careful attention to the ceremonial of diplomacy, and it still flourished as a commercial nation with an extensive luxury market. More work still needs to be done to map the ambassador's objects and consumption patterns in other geographical regions. The study of diplomatic material culture, and diplomacy in general, could also profit from a comparative analysis, which would uncover broader phenomena, reveal social and cultural change and stress even more the cosmopolitan profile of the early modern ambassador. For example, following one ambassador on his numerous assignments could exemplify possible differences in national diplomatic practices and political cultures.³

All the activities of early modern ambassadors analysed in this study formed part of the ambassadors' performance on the stage of international politics, where they played the role of representative of a prince. The metaphor of theatre was outlined in contemporary diplomatic treatises, such as the often quoted works throughout this study by Juan Antonio de Vera and Abraham de Wicquefort. Vera compared the ambassador's impersonation of his monarch with the performances of actors in a tragedy.⁴ Similarly, Wicquefort stated that "[...] a good Ambassador is also a great Theatrical Personage; and to be successful in his Profession, he ought to play the Comedian a little."⁵ By looking behind the curtains of diplomacy, this study has depicted the setting of this theatrical performance. The material culture with which the ambassador surrounded himself was shown to a specific audience, ranging from exclusive guests in his home to the wider public during ceremonies. Every material detail was meticulously planned and manipulated, as it contributed to the appearance of the character that the ambassador was portraying, and moulded the total diplomatic scenery.

³ For an outline of the merits of a comparative analysis for the study of early modern diplomacy, see: Erik Thomson, "For a Comparative History of Early Modern Diplomacy," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, no. 2 (2006), 151-172.

⁴ de Vera, *El Embaxador*, discourse 2, 117r.

⁵ Translation taken from: de Wicquefort, *The Ambassador and His Functions*, book 1, 4. Original quote in: de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, book 1, 5: "[...] qu'un bon Ambassadeur ne soit aussy un grand personnage de theatre, et que pour reüssir en cette profession il faut estre un peu Comedien." See also: Johanna Sprondel and Tilman Haug, "What's in a *Promesse Authentique*? Doubting and Confirming Authenticity in 17th-Century French Diplomacy," in *Indexing Authenticity: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, eds. Véronique Lacoste, Jakob Leimgruber, and Thiemo Breyer (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 350-352.

GLOSSARY OF TEXTILE AND CLOTHING TERMINOLOGY¹

A general note on textiles: early modern Italians used three different words to refer to cloth, in the most general sense of the word, i.e. a piece of textile material: *tela*, *drappo* and *panno*. *Tela* is the easiest to identify, as it usually indicated linen cloth and canvas. However, it is more complicated to unravel the meanings of *drappo* and *panno*. In Venice, these terms were used to denote both silk and woollen cloth, therefore, I will refrain from giving a clear definition, but in the consulted sources, *panno* was mostly associated with silk.² In French, *toile* was the equivalent of the Italian *tela* and *drap* was the general term for fabric or cloth.

Aiguillette (aglet): pointed metallic tip fixed to the ends of laces (also called points) to make them easier to thread through the eyelets. Aglets could be decorated with jewelled tips and were mostly used on sleeves and berets.

Armoisi: plain, light and inexpensive silk. Originally imported from the East (probably taking its name from the Persian city Ormuz), but later also produced in Italy and France.

Bassetta: lamb skin, the fur of miscarried or newborn lambs.

Bavelina: lower quality silk made with waste silk threads.

Beretta (beret): type of hat, normally made of velvet or wool, consisting of a round or square crown and a small brim. Often adorned with jewels and feathers.

Bonnet (bonnet): the term is used for a wide variety of styles of headgear, mostly made of soft material and lacking a brim.

Bottes (boots): type of footwear that covers the feet and extends up the legs.

¹ The French and Italian terms that are used throughout my dissertation and in the tables and graphs of François de Noailles' clothing are qualified in this glossary, together with the English translation when available. Certain terms have been cited in both the French and Italian version; in that case, both languages are included in this glossary. The glossary has been compiled based on the glossaries provided in: Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, 403-408; Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 301-320; Marie Viallon, ed., *Paraître et se Vêtir au XVIe Siècle* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2006), 261-294; Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 305-310.

² Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 69.

Bottines (ankle boots): shorter boots that only cover the ankles.

Caban: cloak with large sleeves and a hood, often worn with a belt. In early modern times, the caban was stuffed or lined with fur. It was introduced by Venice in the middle of the fourteenth century after sartorial influences from the East. It probably was the first cloak with sleeves that appeared in Europe.

Calzette (stockings): article of clothing covering the feet and the legs from the bottom of the trunk hose, to which the stockings were frequently attached.

Calzoni (breeches): very wide hosen that gathered at the waist and then gradually narrowed downwards to below the knee.

Camail (camail): short sleeveless cape or cloak, covering the upper body from the shoulders to the elbows. Worn by ecclesiastics over the cassock.

Camelot (camlet): rich cloth of Asian origin, supposed to have been made originally of camel's hair and silk, and later of goat's hair and silk.

Canevas / canovaccio (canvas): undyed toile, made of linen or hemp.

Cape (cape): coat without sleeves and collar, draped over the shoulders, which could have a hood.

Casacca: garment with long or short sleeves that covered the trunk and had skirts of a variable length.

Chape (cope): long and loose-fitting cloak, often with hood and sleeves. It was generally used as a ceremonial and liturgical vestment.

Chapeau (hat): a term that encompasses all sorts of head coverings of different materials and with different borders.

Chausse (hose): close-fitting undergarment that covered the legs.

Chaussons: open shoes, without sole.

Chemise (shirt): very important undergarment of sixteenth-century dress. The collar and cuffs, which were generally the most elaborate and finished parts, were always on view.

Cintolo (belt): long strip of cloth that served as a belt.

Coiffe (coif): close-fitting cap covering the head.

Couvre-chef (headgear): general term that refers to different types of head coverings.

Cramoisi / cremesino, cremisi (crimson): the most precious and durable shade of red, obtained from the kermes insect.

Crêpe (crepe or veil): very fine and transparent fabric.

Damas / damasco (damask): patterned fabric made using one warp and one weft, where the design is usually produced by reversing the weave, but also with different weaves: one shiny, normally in satin, which is the ground of the fabric, and one matte which forms the design.

Dossi: fur from the back of animals, mostly squirrels.

Écarlate: vivid red colour, obtained from a bath in grain, applied to woollen cloth, and also the name used to refer to the woollen fabric dyed in this colour.

Escarcelle (belt-bag or moneybag): small bag that was often attached to the belt and used to carry money.

Ferraiolo: short circular or semi-circular cloak with collar that could also be worn over one shoulder.

Feutre (felt): non-woven fabric of compressed animal fibers, such as wool or fur.

Giubba: tunic of eastern origin. In Italy, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it denoted a short, close-fitting vest made of rich materials and worn by the elite.

Giubbone (doublet): garment that covered the chest, with tight sleeves, a central front opening and a standing collar. It could be padded over the stomach and have waist tabs and wings at the shoulders. It was fastened to the hose by a system of laces threaded through eyelets.

Grana (grain): red dye obtained from the dried bodies of insects (Mediterranean shield lice).

Grossagrana (grosgrain): silk fabric with relatively thick weft threads, giving it a ribbed appearance.

Latà: milky colour.

Loup-servier, loup-cervier (lynx): medium-sized wild cat, whose skin was used to make luxurious fur.

Manteau (overcoat): general term to refer to the outermost garment, generally long.

Mantelet (mantelet): loose, sleeveless mantle or cloak split in the front, fastened around the neck and reaching until the knees. Worn by the clergy.

Martre (marten): slender, agile animal living in northern regions, whose skin was used to make luxurious fur.

Martre sublimes, martes zibellina, martre zibeline (sable): a species of marten originating from Siberia and initially traded by Muscovite merchants. It was the most sought-after fur in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Mocayar (mohair): woollen fabric made of the hair of the Ankara or Angora goat.

Mules (mules): backless, open shoes without heel section, made of velvet or leather. Worn, both indoors and outdoors, over precious shoes to protect them.

Ormesino, ermesino: see *Armoisi*.

Paille (straw): dried stalks of grain plants.

Pantoufles (slip-shoes): large, backless mule-type footwear. Worn over shoes or boots to protect them.

Paonazzo (probably corresponds to violet cramoisi): shade of red qualified as livid purple, which was obtained from a first bath in a red dye and a second bath in a blue dye.

Papefigon / Pappafico: type of hood or wimple, which covered the head and shoulders and could be raised to protect the face. Used for travelling.

Passamano: braid or ribbon.

Piqué (piqué): the verb *piquer* means to use a thread to attach two or more fabrics placed over each other with points that cross and unite them. This technique was commonly applied to bonnets.

Pourpoint (doublet): see *Giubbone*.

Rascia (rash): a kind of woollen cloth, named after its city of origin, Raska, in nowadays Serbia. It was a typical product of the Florentine textile industry.

Robe (robe or gown): loose-fitting outer garment with sleeves.

Rochet (rochet): ecclesiastic vestment in white linen resembling a surplice but with close-fitting sleeves and frequently trimmed with lace. Worn over the cassock.

Satin (satin): fabric with a basic weave and with a very smooth, shiny and compact surface.

Sayon, saie (sayon): short male garment. The older exemplars had very wide sleeves and long skirts, but over the course of the sixteenth century, they became shorter with a more slender cut.

Scarlatto (scarlet): see *Écarlate*.

Scotto: type of woollen cloth.

Serge (serge): type of woollen cloth.

Soie (silk): extremely soft and loose thread, which is used to make splendid, costly fabric.

Soprarizzo, sopra rizzo: one of the most expensive and complex silks, mostly velvet, decorated with gold threads.

Sottana (tunic): in the Venetian context, it referred to a long robe with wide sleeves. For the ecclesiastical variant, see *Soutane*.

Souliers: type of mules that cover the feet until the ankles.

Soutane (cassock or soutane): close-fitting ankle-length garment, often with a series of buttons down the front. Worn by the clergy.

Tabis (tabby): medium-quality fabric, made of pure silk or a mix of waste silk and flax, with a striped, wavy or watered pattern.

Taffetas / taffeta (taffeta): plain weave, very light silk fabric.

Tané, tanné: orange-brown, colour of the chestnut husk.

Tela San Gallo: linen cloth produced in St. Gallen, known for its thriving linen industry.

Velluto riccio: pile on pile velvet.

Velo (veil): see *Crêpe*.

Velours / velluto (velvet): fabric made entirely of silk, characterised by a surface pile created by the use of an extra warp.

Vesta: short or long overgown with full or narrow sleeves.

Violet (violet): colour close to purple and blue.

Violet cramoisi: see *Paonazzo*.

Zimarra: long overgown, without waist seam, of Middle Eastern inspiration.

Zoccoli: type of clogs or mules with a raised wooden sole. Worn to protect more delicate footwear.

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Source 1. Advice of Dominique du Gabre to François de Noailles, n.d. [July 1557]. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, ff. 8r-8v.

Source 2. Extracts from Antoine de Noailles' letters concerning his relocations during his residency in England, 1554-1555. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 362; ff. 499-500; ff. 503-504; f. 505; f. 517; f. 1053; f. 1085.

Source 3. Inventory of François de Noailles, 26 May 1561. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 78r-81v.

Source 4. Passport and certificate for François de Noailles' furniture and suitcases, 20 June 1561. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 95r.

Source 5. Carpets in the collection of Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, taken from his inventory, n.d. [October 1559]. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 16, ff. 325r-328r.

Source 6. Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State Fleurimont Robertet, Lord d'Aluye, 10 October 1560. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 475-477.

III. Figures

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Figure 4. Artist unknown, *Portrait of François de Noailles*, year unknown, oil on canvas, 225 × 120 cm. Château de Maintenon, Maintenon. Published in: Vincent Guichenuy, “Portraits Méconnus et Inédits d’Évêques de Dax,” *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* 498, no. 2 (2010), 150.

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Figure 16. Artist unknown, *The Audience of Dutch Ambassador Cornelis van der Mijle with the Doge in 1609*, year unknown, oil on canvas, 133 × 200 cm. City hall of Veere, Veere.

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Figure 20. Palazzo Vendramin, Rio di Santa Fosca, Fondamenta de Ca' Vendramin © Views on Venice Estates S.R.L. and Savills plc.

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Figure 29. Ca' da Mosto, *portego*. Published in: Patricia Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004), 72.

Figure 30. Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *The Entry of the Imperial Ambassador Giuseppe Bolagnos in the Doge's Palace*, c. 1729, oil on canvas, 184 × 265 cm. The Diocesan Museum, Collection Crespi, Milan.

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Figure 34. Siegmund von Herberstein wearing Russian robes of honour presented during his second embassy to Russia (1526), woodcut, approximately 16.8 × 10.8 cm (attributed to Johann Lautensack). Published in: Siegmund von Herberstein, *Gratae Posteritati Sigismundus Liber Baro in Herberstain Neyperg et Guettenhag, Primarius Ducatus Carinthiae Haereditariusque et Camerarius et Dapifer etc. Immunitate Meritorum Ergo Donatus, Actiones Suas a Puero ad Annum usque Aetatis Suae Septuagesimum Quartum, Brevi Commentariolo Notatas Reliquit* (Vienna: Raphael Hofhalter, 1560).

Figure 35. Siegmund von Herberstein wearing Ottoman robes of honour presented by the sultan during his embassy to the Ottoman Empire (1541), woodcut, approximately 16.8 × 10.8 cm (attributed to Johann Lautensack). Published in: Siegmund von Herberstein, *Gratae Posteritati Sigismundus Liber Baro in Herberstain Neyperg et Guettenhag, Primarius Ducatus Carinthiae Haereditariusque et Camerarius et Dapifer etc. Immunitate Meritorum Ergo Donatus, Actiones Suas a Puero ad Annum usque Aetatis Suae Septuagesimum Quartum, Brevi Commentariolo Notatas Reliquit* (Vienna: Raphael Hofhalter, 1560).

Figure 36. Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 × 209.5 cm. The National Gallery, London.

I. TABLES AND GRAPHS

Table 1. Outer garments, with their colours, of François de Noailles in his inventory of 1561

	<i>Robes</i> (Robes)	<i>Sayons</i> (Sayons)	<i>Manteaux</i> (Overcoats)	<i>Capes</i> (Capes)	<i>Cabans</i>	TOTAL
Not specified	5	4	1	2	1	13
Black	8	4	3			15
Crimson-violet	1	3				4
Violet	2					2
<i>Tanné</i> (brown-orange)	2	1				3
TOTAL	18	12	4	2	1	37

Table 2. Undergarments, with their colours, of François de Noailles in his inventory of 1561

	<i>Chemises</i> (Shirts)	<i>Pourpoints</i> (Doublets)	<i>Chausses</i> (Hosen)	TOTAL
Not specified	9	6	4	19
Black		1	3	4
White	12			12
Crimson		2		2
Crimson-violet		2	1	3
<i>Tanné</i> (brown-orange)		1	1	2
TOTAL	21	12	9	42

Table 3. Clerical garments, with their colours, of François de Noailles in his inventory of 1561

	<i>Camails</i> (Camails)	<i>Soutanes</i> (Cassocks)	<i>Mantelets</i> (Mantelets)	TOTAL
Not specified	4	2	1	7
Black	2	2		4
Crimson-violet	1	1	1	3
Violet	1			1
Scarlet-violet		1		1
TOTAL	8	6	2	16

Table 4. Pairs of shoes, with their textiles, of François de Noailles in his inventory of 1561¹

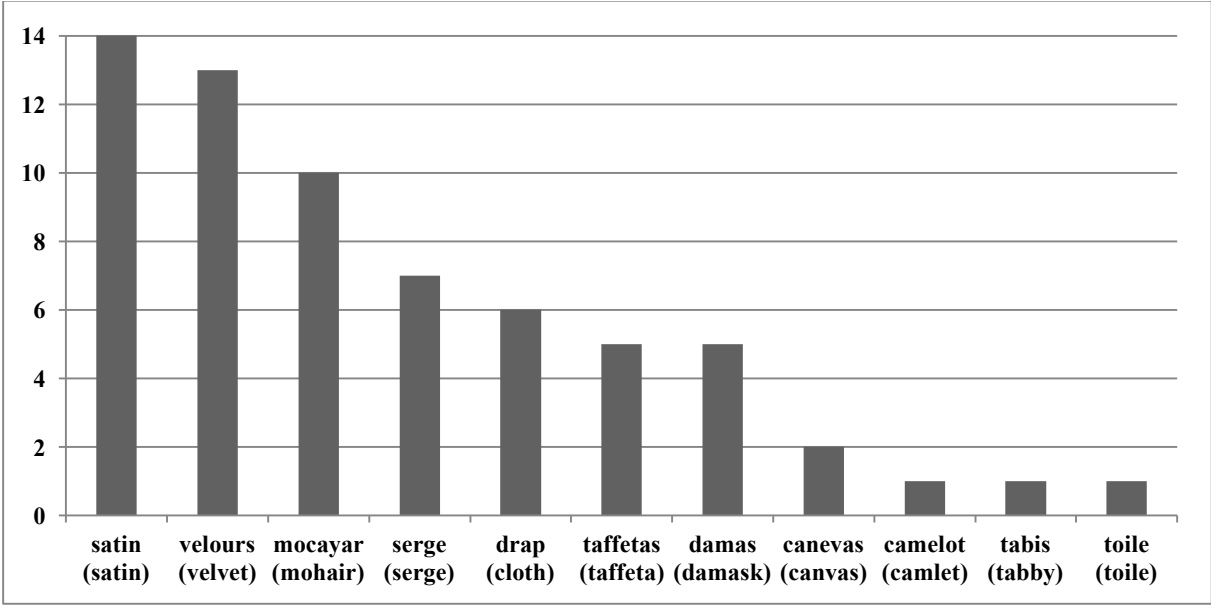
	<i>Chaussons</i>	<i>Bottines</i> (Ankle boots)	<i>Souliers</i>	<i>Bottes</i> (Boots)	<i>Pantoufles</i>	<i>Mules</i> (Mules)	TOTAL
Not specified	12	5		3			20
Velvet			3		2	1	6
Leather			2			1	3
TOTAL	12	5	5	3	2	2	29

Table 5. Hats, with their colours, of François de Noailles in his inventory of 1561

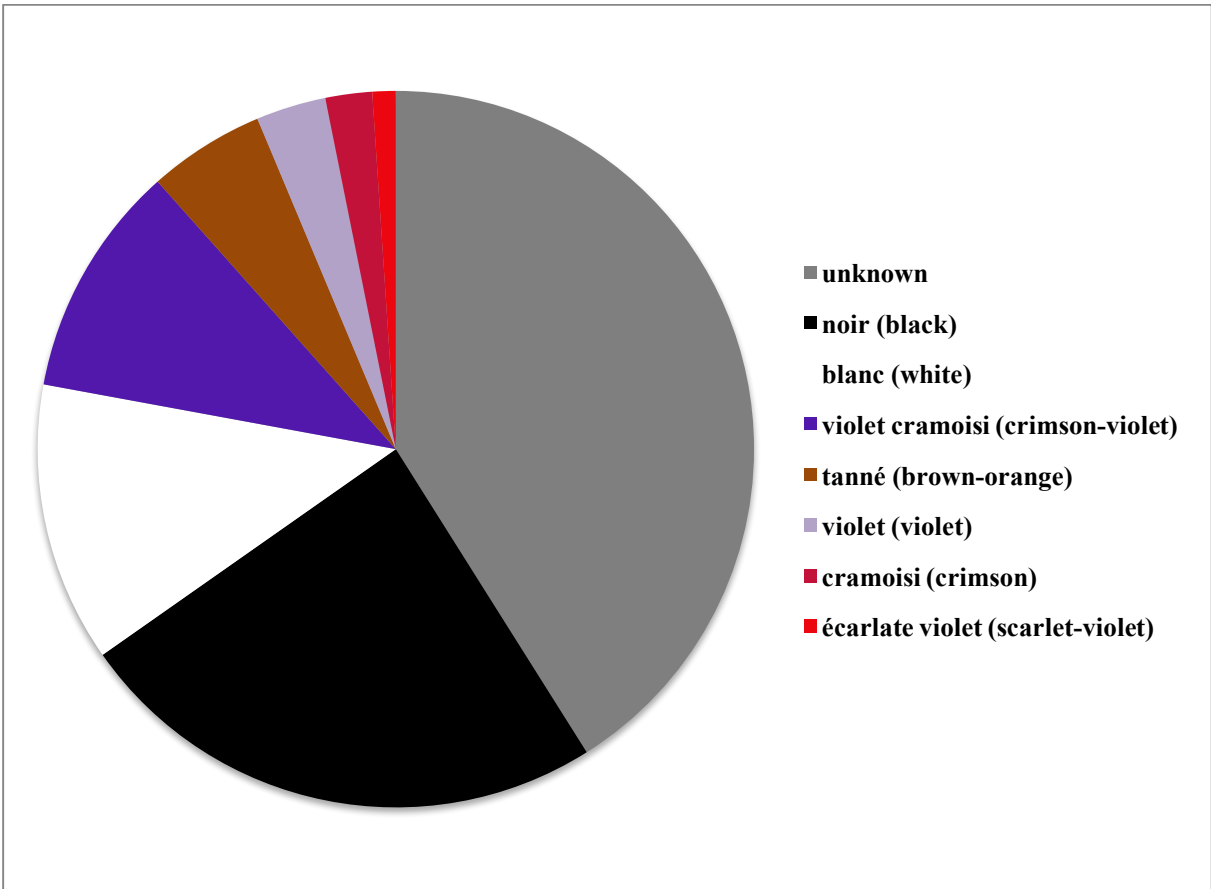
	<i>Coiffes</i> (Coifs)	<i>Couvre-chefs</i> (Headgears)	<i>Chapeaux</i> (Hats)	<i>Bonnets</i> (Bonnets)	<i>Bonnets de nuit</i> (Nightcaps)	<i>Papefigon</i> or <i>Pappafico</i>	TOTAL
Not specified		2	7	8	6	1	24
Black	1	2					3
White	10				2		12
Crimson	2	4					6
Violet	1		1				2
Gold	4						4
TOTAL	18	8	8	8	8	1	51

¹ Since the colours are only specified in the case of the *bottines* (black and white), it is more interesting to give an overview of the textiles used.

Graph 1. Textiles of François de Noailles' garments in his inventory of 1561

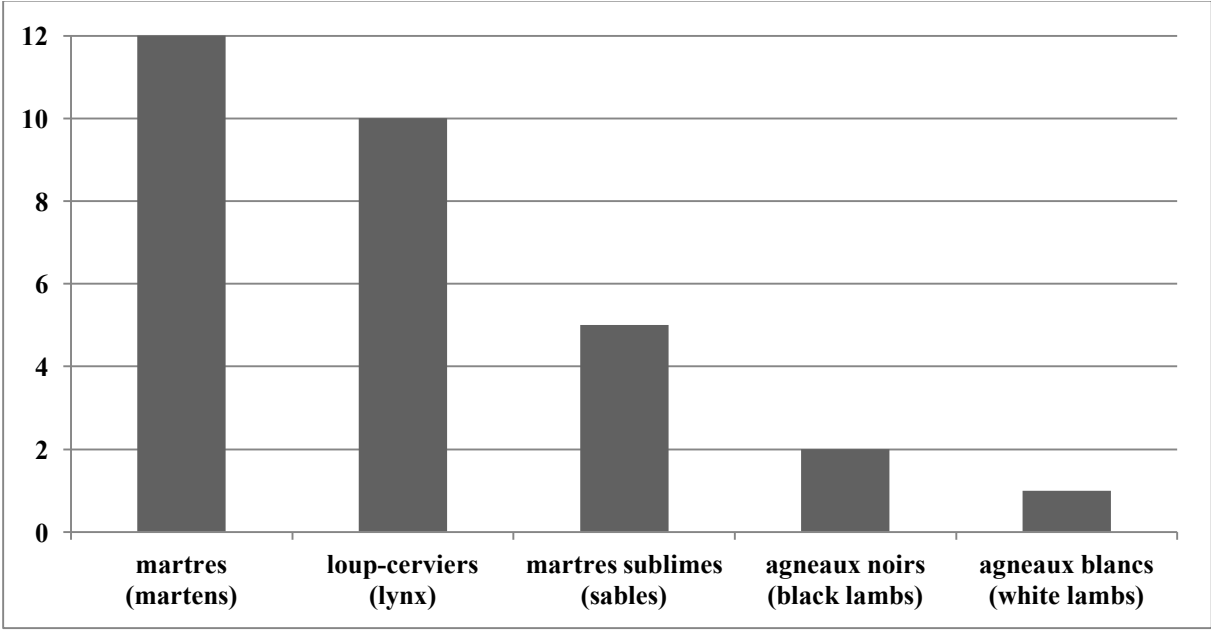


Graph 2. Colours of François de Noailles' garments in his inventory of 1561²

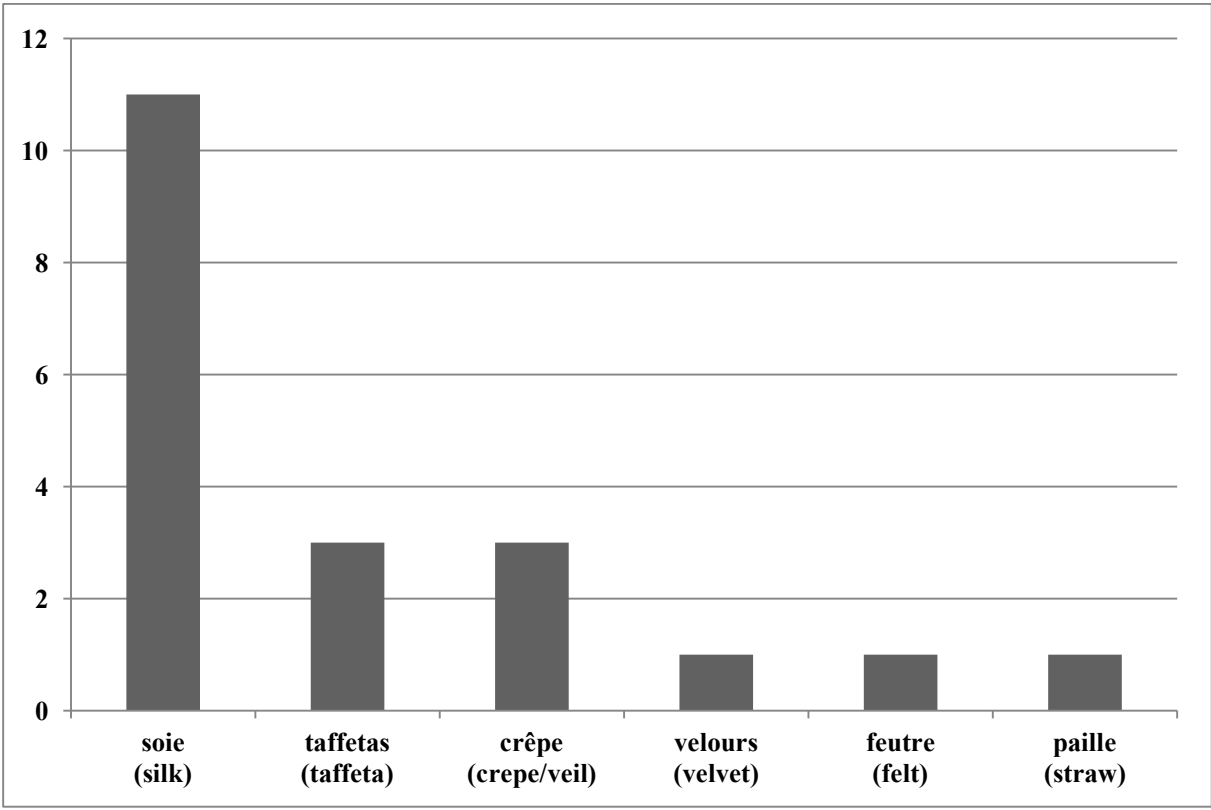


² The colours used in this graph are by no means a true reproduction of the actual colours, but they try to convey a general idea of the hues.

Graph 3. Fur linings of François de Noailles' garments in his inventory of 1561



Graph 4. Textiles of François de Noailles' hats in his inventory of 1561



II. SOURCES

Source 1. Advice of Dominique du Gabre to François de Noailles, n.d. [July 1557]. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 23, ff. 8r-8v.

[f. 8r]

Avis de Monsieur de Lodève à Monsieur de Daqs

Agenda a Monsieur Dacqs

La premiere chose la reception en college pour Vendredy ou Samedy a seize heures et le plus tost

Cependant resolution de son logis commise a son frere et a Monsieur Pierre Pomar reservant la veue

Je le resoudray mais qu'il me laisse un jour en liberte des meubles dont je l'epouray accomoder et du reste les juifs luy enfournèront pour douze ou quinze jours et cependant il se resoudra de n'achepter

Qu'il donne charge a quelque sien maître d'hostel ou homme de negoce pour vacquer au la, et pour assister avec Pomar aux marchez et provisions

Ledit Pomare servira fidellement et bien et vous pouvez vous decharger sur luy des choses a achepter et du mesnaige

Vous avez le Sieur Francisque Bertrand lequel vous viendra souvent dire des nouvelles et persuasions, il le fault fort escouter et louer, et jamais ne luy discourir sinon de gallante humeur.

Vous avez Marc Vidal homme dextre et fort exercite aux partis d'argent qui scayt la ou il y en a, et les moyens d'en avoir possibles et raisonnables et homme d'entendement et d'honneur. Vous aurez toujours par luy toutes les nouvelles de Realte et de St. Marc, qui servent de pasetemps et quelques fois donnent argument et matiere d'ecrire.

Vous avez cest ambassadeur de Ferrare qui est de son naturel affexionne a nos affaires et est fort mal traite et mal content du Duc et fait profession de decouvrir toutes secrettes intentions de la Seigneurie et des ennemys, il luy fault faire bonne chere et quelques fois l'appeller domestiquement a disner louer son scavoir aux lettres et aux armes dont il fait grande profession et louer ses discours, mais estre fort reserve a luy faire les vostres.

Vous avez icy Camille de la Croix qui est fort bon jeune homme diligent et fidelle et vous fera mille services aux negociations du palays, des courts, s'il advenoyt quelque occasion et pour l'expedition des lettres et patentes dont vous aurez bien souvent besoing de la Seigneurie, je my fais

[f. 8v]

toujours tant fye, que quant je ne pouvoys aller a la Seigneurie je luy envoyois au lieu de mon secretaire.

Vous avez le Sieur Francisco Nazi homme de grand credit et homme de bien, cest luy qui a tousjours fourny tous les derniers despenduz pour le Roy en Itallye et a secouru les Ambassadeurs, mais il veult bien scavoir comment.

Il vous fault elire ung secretaire vostre qui tous les matins aille a St. Marc entendre tout ce que l'on y dict au lieu ou se reduisent tous les Ambassadeurs subalternes et les autres secretaires, et partant dudit St. Marc, il s'en viendra a Realte donner une passegrata et puis s'en viendra disner et vous raporter tout ce qu'il aura entendu l'advertir de la modestie et de parler reservement.

J'ay ung portier qui a servy troys ambassadeurs, fort bon homme seur et conscientieux, jamais ne bouge de la porte, et avant que l'on soit levé il a ballye et nestoyé la salle et la maison, il a ung escu le moys de gaiges.

Vous l'aurez s'il voulez.

J'ay ung jeune gentilhomme français, que l'on appelle Cambiz, qui me sert de copyer il voudroit encores demeurer en Itallye et est fort bien conditionne de qui je me fie, il avoit deux escuz de gaiges.

[...]

Source 2. Extracts from Antoine de Noailles' letters concerning his relocations during his residency in England, 1554-1555. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Angleterre, vol. 9, f. 362; ff. 499-500; ff. 503-504; f. 505; f. 517; f. 1053; f. 1085.

Duplicate of a memoir sent to La Marque when he embarked for France, 29 May 1554, f. 362

Les insolences fetes audit de Noailles pour le fere desloger de la Chartrouze, et le contraindre venir loger a ung logis duquel l'ambassadeur [of the Emperor, Simon Renard] en avoit emporté jusqs'aus portes, fenestres et sarures, et qui pis est, sur l'entrée y demeure ung de siens qui est la mitz comme garde.

Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 21 September 1554, ff. 499-500

[f. 499]

[...] que l'on est apres pour vous renvoyer par deça, de quoy je suis fort aise. Le pise que je y veoye vous ne serez plus logé au palais de Bridouel, car j'espere mardy ou mercredy aller coucher au Doyenné vis a vis de St. Pol

[f. 500]

ou desja j'ay faict porter vin & bois. Je n'ay point esté en la maison, mes gens m'ont asseuré qu'elle sera bonne et chaude pour passer cest yver. Monsieur l'Admiral de Brion y logea quand il vint en ceste ville, ainsi que l'on m'a dict on m'avoit donné a choisir de ceste maison ou de celle du Ducq de Suffolq qui est pres de la Tour qui estoit en beau lieu et large avec grande commodité de Jardrins, mais il y avoit dedans tant de pouvres femmes vefves et d'enfans orfelins qui mettoient en avant tant de difficultez et choses pitoyables pour ne vuyder la place que je fus tres aise de prendre autre chemin. Je ne vous scaurois dire le regret que j'ay au jeu de paulme aux butes couvertes et jardin, mais c'est ung faire le fault et ung peu plustost que ne permettoit le remuement de tant de mesnage mesmement de bois dont j'avois achevé de faire mes provisions pour tout l'yver, le jour que ceste nouvelle me fut annoncée, et avoit encore le vitrier la main en la besoigne quand le secretaire de ce conseil m'en apporta la sentence.

Letter from Antoine de Noailles to King Henry II, 22 September 1554, ff. 503-504

[f. 503]

[...] et que depuys peu de jours par lesdits Seigneurs de ce conseil m'a faict encores instamment solliciter me retirer de son palais de Bridouel soubz ombre d'y loger sa personne

et quelques meubles qu'il a apporté d'Espagne, mais a ce que je puis entendre, Syre, c'est pour remplir secretement une telle et si grande maison (qui est la plus belle que luy et sa femme ayent en ceste ville) de toutes courvees, munitions et de gens de sa nation ou il y en pourra mettre, ensemble ung bon et grand nombre pour tenir la ville subgete. Ce qui sera bien aysé, d'autant que ledit palais est sur la riviere joignant et par dehors l'un des boutz de laditte

[f. 504]

ville avecques ung pont pour entrer dans icelle qu'ilz feront ouvrir quant ilz voudront et de l'autre bout au dessoubz du grant pont est la Tour.

Letter from Antoine de Noailles to Constable Anne de Montmorency, 22 September 1554, f. 505

Et vous diray au surplus que depuis troys ou quatre jours j'ay esté tres instamment sollicité par les Sieurs de ce conseil de me disposer a desloger dans mercredy prochain du palais de Bridouel que ceste Royne et Eulx m'avoient ordonné par cy devant, et en ay esté pressé et contrainct de telle sorte qu'ilz en m'ont voulu donner la moitié du temps qui m'estoit necessaire pour envuyder. Et pour telz empeschemens que les myens et moy y avons euz, je n'ay pu vous envoyer plustost ceste depesche que j'avois preste il y a trois jours, ce qui m'a fort fasché, comme vous pouvez penser, Monseigneur, tant pour le retardement d'icelle, que pour estre le cinquiesme logis que j'ay faict en ceste ville depuys que je y suis arrivé et aussy pour mes provisions d'hyver que j'avois faict faire audit Bridouel qui se gasteront et diminueront de beaucoup, sans la peyne, incommodité, despence et honte que je y recepray. Toutesfoys je ne leur en scay maintenant, si mauvais gré sachant l'occasion par aucuns de mes amys, telle que pourrez veoir par ce que j'en escriptz au Roy.

Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 6 October 1554, f. 517

Mon frere depuis les quatres lettres que je receuz ensemble dont la derniere estoit du 13e du mois passé je suis tousjours attendant en grand devotion vostre arrivee en la maison du doyené ou je vous reserve une petite chambre et une garderobe que j'ay composee sans grand artifice aussi n'est elle pas d'excessive depence, au surplus je vous diray que estant destitué de ce beau palais que vous scavez on est maintenant apres moy pour me despoiller de la tapisserie et meubles de la Royne [...]

Post Scriptum: [...] vous dira que le meuble m'est demeuré et ce logis en plus grant repas que je ne cuidois.

Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 10 November 1555, f. 1053

[...] je m'attends d'estre bientost logé a Sodouart [Southwark] ainsy que ledit me promet et je ne voudrois pour aulcune chose me desloger de ce lieu sans le moyen que j'auray par la de vous en laisser successeur veu le peu de temps que je fais compte d'y demeurer.

Letter from Antoine de Noailles to François de Noailles, 20 November 1555, f. 1085

[...] vous prie que vous teniez secret vostre voyage jusques au que je sois dans la maison de Sedouart [Southwark] car il est a croire que vous perdrez l'occasion de ce beau logis si l'ambassadeur anglois scait par dela que j'aye envoyé demander mon congé. Et fault que je vous dye que je suis tousjours au combat pour avoir ladite maison vuide du Chamberland gaige et ses enfans qui ne la veullent bailler qu'en retenant la moietie au logis a quoy il fais faire une seconde recharge de laquelle j'espere avoir responce dans demain et pour ce soyez un peu secret en attendant que je sois saisy [...]

Source 3. Inventory of François de Noailles, 26 May 1561. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, ff. 78r-81v.¹

[f. 78r]

Inventaire des Meubles, Robbes et autres Accoustremens qui ont esté trouvez en la Garderobbe de Monseigneur L'Evesque Dacqs à Venize

Premierement Robbes fourées

Une robbe de satin noir de Gennes toutes fourrée de martres sublimes

Une robbe de velloux rice les paremens et quartiers de devant dicelle fourrée de queue de martres subilines et le derriere de gambetes.

Une robbe de satin noir toute fourrée de gambettes de martres sublimes

Une robe de satin violet cramoisy fourrée tous les quartiers de devant de ventre de loups-serviers et le derriere de dos desdits lups

Une robbe de veloux noir toute fourrée de gambettes de martres sublimes

Une robbe de tabiz de soie tané toute fourrée de martres du pais

Une robe de mocayar noir toute fourrée d'aignaulx noirs.

Une fourrure de manteau pour porter a cheval, de martres sublimes

Plus 10 martres entieres de Poloigne

Plus huit dos de lups servies

Saïons fourrez

Un sayon de mocayar fourré d'aignaulx noirs

Une fourrure de saïon d'aignaulx blancs dont le get est de loup servier

Robbes doublés de soie

Une robe de velloux noir a hault collet toute doublée de satin noir

Une robbe de velloux a collet carré doublée de damas noir, et les paremens dicelle doubléz de velloux

Une robbe de satin viollet toute doublée de tafetas

Robbes sengle

Une robbe de damas noir a collet carré

¹ The source uses different terms to refer to the same piece of clothing or object. The original spellings have always been preserved but obvious mistakes have been corrected between square brackets.

Une robe de damas tané a hault collet

Une robe de damas violet a hault collet

[f. 78v]

Une robe de satin noir a collet carré, les paremens dicelle doublés de panne de soye

Une robe de tafetas a collet carré

Une robe de sarge de Milan a collet carré

Une robe, sarge de Venise a collet carré

Une robe de mocaïar a collet carré

Sotanes, Mantelets et Camails

Une sotane de camelot de soie violet cramoisy a ondes bandée d'une bande par le dedans de tafetas cramoisy avec le mantellet et le camail de mesme

Une sottane de tafetas noir

Une sotane d'escarlade violette avec son camail le tout avec une bande de taffetas cramoisy

Une sotane de drap noir avecques son camail

Une sotane de sarge de Venise

Deux camails de velloux noir

Ung camail de satin

Ung camail de Damas violet

Une sotane de Mocaïar avec son mantelet et camail

Une corvete de taffetas noir

Une corvete de crespé

Manteaux et Cappes

Ung manteau sans manches de veloux noir et le dedans de panne de soye canelée avecques ung passement autour.

Ung manteau de veloux noir avecques les manches tout doublé de damas noir et les paremens de panne de soye

Un manteau de sarge de Milan a manches

Un manteau de drap noir a manches doublé de veloux

Une cappe de drap bandée par le dedans de satin

Une cappe de sarge de Venise

Un raistre de drap noir

Saïons

Un saye de veloux violet, cramoisy
Un saye de satin violet, cramoisy
[f. 79r]
Un saïe de tafetas violet, cramoisy
Un saïe de satin tané
Un saïe de damas noir
Un saïe de velloux noir
Un autre saïe de velloux noir
Un saïe de mocaïar
Un saïe de sarge de Milan
Un saïe de drap noir
Une juppe de camelot de soye, violette cramoisy

Propointz

Un porpoint de satin cramoisy rouge
Ung porpoint de satin violet cramoisy
Ung propoint de satin noir
Ung porpoint de veloux rice
Ung porpoint de satin tané destouppé
Ung propoint de tafetas violet cramoisy
Ung propoint de mocaïar sanglé
Ung propoint de mocaïar cotoné
Ung pourpoint de mocaïar doublé de revers de Florence.
Ung porpoint de canevas bordé de tafetas cramoisy.
Ung propoint de canevas descouppé a grandes taillades
Ung bust de porpoint de mocaïar.
Ung paire de brassieres de toile picquée pour la nuict.

Chausses

Ung paire de chausses de veloux noir toute chamarrée de cordon de soie
Ung paire de chausses de satin violet cramoisy
Ung paire de chausses de veloux noir doublées de satin
Ung paire de chausses de satin tané

Ung paire de chausses de sarge de Florence
Ung paire de chausses de mocaïar
Ung paire de chausses de drap noir
Ung paire de chausses a la marine de tafetas
Ung autre paire de chausses de drap dont l'une a esté retournée
[f. 79v]

Chemises

Une chemise a fraize de toille de Paris
huict a collet renversé
Douze garnitures de chemise d'ouvrage blanc

Coyffes

Dix coiffes blanches
Une coiffe ouvrée de soye noire
Deux coiffes ouvrées de soye cramoisie
Une coiffe ouvrée de soye violette

Mouchoirs

Mouchoirs blancs, vingt
Ung Mouchoir ouvré de soye et d'or par les coings
Ung Mouchoir ouvré autour de soye violette

Couvrechef et Pignoirs

Deux couvreche[f]s a mettre sur l'estomach
Deux pignoirs ouvrés de blanc
Deux couvrechefs ouvrés de soye cramoisie
Deux couvrechefs ouvrés de soye noire
Ung pignoir petit ouvré de soye noire
Ung couvrechef tout ouvré de soie cramoisie
Ung autre couvrechef ouvré de soye cramoisie

Lincieux

Six paires de lincieux

Bone[t]s de nuict

Six bonetz de nuict picquez d'Angleterre

Deux bonetz blancs a la Turquesque

Frontoirs

Quatre fronteurs

Couvertures d'oreliers

Quatre couvertures d'oreliers

Chaussons

Douze paires de chaussons

[80r]

Ung paire de chaussetes de toille

Plus deux pieces de toille

Gans

Ung paire de gans de soie cramoisine ouvrée d'or

Ung paire de gans de cerf doublés d'aucaigne

Deux roches

Chappeaulx

Ung chapeau de veloux

Ung chapeau de feutre

2 chappeaulx de tafetas

Troys chap[p]eaulx de creppe

Ung chapeau de paille doublé de tafetas violet

Ung esthuy de noyer pour chapeau

Bonnetz

Ung bonet rond de doeil

Ung bonet et ung esthuy de veloux pour bonnetz

Ung petit bonet de tafetas picqué

Ung aultre petit de soye

Souliers, Pantoufles et Mulles

Souliers de veloux trois paires
2 paires de souliers de cuyr
2 paires de pantoufles de veloux
Ung paire de mulles de veloux
Ung paire de mulles de cuyr

Bottines

2 paires de bottines noires, neufves
2 paires de bottines blanches
Ung paire de bottines noires

Bottes

2 paires de bottes grasses
Ung paire de bottes seiches
Trois paires desperons dorez
 surchausses --- a botter
Deux paires de chausses a bot[t]er, l'une drap rouge, et
[80v]
L'autre de toille noire
Ung gaban noir avec son soubzbassement
Deux husses de velloux l'une grande et l'aulture petite
Deux malles grandes
Ung portemanteau de drap violet avecques sa bande de veloux
Une petite mallete
Ung papefigon

Besoignes de nuict

Une toilete de velloux violet, le sac l'esthuy fourny les vergettes le tout avec frange de soye
cramoisie et d'argent
Une vieille toilete de satin de Burges [Bruges] pour mettre dessoubz lesdites besoignes
Restes de velloux violet
Ung bort de martres pour ung saïon

Escarcelles

Une escarcelle de soye violette le fer damasquiné
Une escarcelle de velloux noir toute ouvrée de fil d'or et d'argent sans fer
Une escarcelle de soye noire et de fil d'or faite a l'éguille, ayant fer
Une escarcelle de velloux noir le fer damasquiné
Une autre escarcelle de velloux noir, vieille
Une escarcelle de soie noire, faicte a l'Eguille
Deux escarcelles de cuyr noir
Une escarcelle de mocaiar
Deux saintures dont l'une a les hoppes de soie et d'or

Tappis

Ung grand tappiz de velloux noir large de trois toilles, long 8 brasses, frangé de soie et doublé de toille
Ung tappiz de velloux violet cramoisy frangé de soye cramoisie, et de fil d'argent
2 tappis de veloux pour barque
Ung grand tappis Persian tout de soye, long huit brasses une carte et demye, large quatre brasses et demie
Ung grand tappis Persian dit le Blanc, long de sept brasses et demye et demy quart, large troys brasses troys quarts et demye
Ung grand tapiz Persian dit le Grand, de Pomare,
[f. 81r]
long huict brasses et une quarte, large 3 brasses et demye et demy quart
Ung aultre grand tappiz Persian dit le Petit, de Pomare, long huict brasses, large de troys brasses et demye moing deux doigtz
Deux tapiz Persians avecques de l'or
Ung aultre tapiz moien Persian des Juifz
Ung petit tapiz a mettre sur coffre, tout de soye
Deux tapiz de drap noir

Deux pieces de drap d'or de Levant
Deux pieces de soye de Levant bigarré
Vingt six pieces de toille de Barbarye
Ung Pavilion de toille ouvré de soye cramoisie a la Turquesque

Ung Pavillon de tafetas changeant avec le chaperon de velloux orange frangé d'or
Ung Pavillon de crespé de Bouloigne avec son soubzbasement
Une couverture de lit de Levant, picquée, blanche
Une autre couverture de lit de Levant, ouvrée de soye rouge et noir
Peaulx de Levant de diverses couleurs sont 54
Une piece de cuyr de Levant faicte a mode de couverture de Bulgarie
Six toillettes
Ung paires d'Estrieux dorés
Le fourniment d'un lit d'Escarlatte rouge brodé de veloux noir a double pante avecques le
soubzbasement
Et la couverte de mesmes
Deux oreillers de veloux violet
Une piece de tafetas de Tours
Une piece de baveline de Ferrare.

Trois marremens ouvrés d'or a la Turquie
Six taiz d'oreliers ouvrez d'or et de soye a la Turquie
5 corporalz ouvrés d'or et de soie a la Turquie dont un a au bout des perles
Un mouchoir ouvré a la Turquesque de fil d'or
4 coiffes ouvrés d'or et de soye a la Turquie
4 petits bonnetz picqués de Levant
[f. 81v]
Ung goubellet de cuyr de Levant garny d'argent
Une bource de soye ouvrée a figures d'or et de soye
Trois flascons de mastic
Trois fies damasquinés de Levant
Ung couteau de Levant damasquiné la guaine garnie d'argent doré
Ung simiterre avecques la sainture et fourreau le tout garny d'argent doré
Un arc Turquesque avecques son quarquoys a flesches
Vingt six masques fins
Un molin a bras de fer
Deux portres [portraits] l'un du feu Roy henry et l'aulture de Monsieur le Connestable
Une petite boyte pleine d'uille de Ferrara

Source 4. Passport and certificate for François de Noailles' furniture and suitcases, 20 June 1561. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 28, f. 95r.

Passeport, et certificat de Monseigneur d'Acqs de ses meubles et cofres qu'il envoie de Venise à la cour de France

Nous Francoys de Noailles Evesque d'Acqs [Catt.er] du Roy et son Ambassadeur aupres de la Seigneurie de Venize, certiffions a tous qui ces presentes verront comme le porteur d'icelles nommé Guillaume de Mandrolois est nostre Serviteur Domesticque auquel nous avons donné charge de conduire nos meubles d'icy a la Court lesquelz sont icy expeciffiez. 4 grandz cofres de bahu pleins de robes et autres habillemens, deux petits cofres carrés pleins de lettres et escriptures, ung grand cofre de bois carré plein de fourrures, ung aultre cofre carré dans lequel y a ung escriptoire d'Allemaigne, 2 autres cofres carrés pleins de lettres pour le Roy, la Royne et le Roy de Navarre, neuf balles pleines de tapiz et cuirs de Levant et autres meubles de maison, ung cofre long et estroict plein de portraits et autres peintures, une table d'ebene le pied de ladite table qu'est aussi d'ebene, deux chaires de sandal et yvoire vieilles, ung petit cofre plein de masques, ung autre petit cofre plein de chandelles de cire, ung petit coffret plein de confitures et une malle. Par-ce nous prions a tous Capitaines, Lieutenants, Potestats, Juges, Chevaliers, Piageurs, Datiers, Maistres de pontz & a tous autres Ministres et Officiers, de quel Prince Chrestien qu'ilz soient, que selon la bonne paix et amitié qu'est entre sa Majesté & lesdites Princes, ilz laissent et permetent passer ledit Guillaume et meubles, francz exemptz et libres de tous piages, passages, daxes, palas ou autres impositions pour le respect qu'on doibt avoir aux personnes publiques & le vouloir accommoder de vivres et autres choses necessaires pour son passage comme il se fera en toutes les occasions corespondantes de ce qui fera besoing pour semblable service desdites Princes. Et en foy de tout ce que dessus avons soubzsigné la présente de nostre propre main et a icelle avons faict apposer et mettre le secl de noz armes. Donné en nostre Palaiz a Venize le XXe jour de Juing 1561.

Source 5. Carpets in the collection of Jean Cavenac de la Vigne, taken from his inventory, n.d. [October 1559]. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 16, ff. 325r-328r.

[f. 325r]

Due tapeti di seta lavorati d'oro a fiori, et animali d'oro n°2

[...]

Uno tapeto persiano di seta con oro lavorato, et lettere Turchesche n°1

[f. 326v]

Sei tapetti da casse n°6

Item due grandi da tavola n°2

[f. 327r]

Nella balla signata de n°1 dentrovi

[f. 327v]

Tapeti azemini grandi velutadi colorati dui n°2

Azemino piccolo velutato con campo azzuro uno n°1

Azemini piccoli di lana fina colarti quatro n°4

Cagierini piccoli dua n°2

Nella balla signata de n°2 dentrovi

Azemino velutato grande aconzato d'oro uno n°1

Azemino colorato di lana fina uno n°1

Azemini rossi di lana mancofina dui n°2

Nella balla signata de n°3 dentrovi

Azemini non tanto fini tre n°3

Azemini fini colarati de quale uno e lavorato d'oro n°2

Nella balla signata de n°4 dentrovi

Azemino grande de lana non tanto fino uno n°1

Caierino grande e longo uno n°1

Azemino velutato grandetto uno n°1

Caierini piccoli dua n°2

Nella balla signata de n°5 dentrovi

Tapeti azemini grandi fini dua n°2

Nella balla signata n°6 dentrovi

Azemini grandi fini dua n°2

Azemino piccolo fino uno n°1

Cagierino piccolo uno n°1

Nella balla signata de n°7 dentrovi

Azemini grandi fini dua n°2

Cagierini piccoli tre n°3

Nella balla signata de n°8 dentrovi

Azemini grandi tre n°3

Cagierino grandetto uno n°1

[f. 328r]

Nella balla signata de n°11 dentrovi

Tapeto grande azemesco uno n°1

Tapeti cagierini piccoli dui n°2

Source 6. Letter from François de Noailles to Secretary of State Fleurimont Robertet, Lord d'Aluye, 10 October 1560. AMAE, Correspondance Politique (Origines-1896), Venise, vol. 22, ff. 475-477.

[f. 475]

Monsieur, il fault que je vous confesse que de toutes des affections que j'ay aujourd'huy en ce monde (apres l'honneur de Dieu) la plus grande et la principale est le bien et l'avancement de mes freres, mais tout ainsi que je desire infiniment cela, aussi suis je extremement tourmenté de voir les services et vertu de l'un et l'autre assez cogneuz et mal recompensez. Monsieur de Noailles mon frere aîné n'a cessé depuis quarante ans de servir continuellement dedans et dehors le Royaulme, a la Guerre, et a la Paix, d'esperit de corps et de bourse plus toutesfois heureusement pour les affaires du maistre que utillement pour les siens. Car il se trouve en sa maison chargé de longues années de frequentes malladies, et de plusieurs filles a marier sans aulcun notable biensfaict ny tiltre ou qualité apparente dont il se puisse honorer parmy ses semblables. Monsieur de L'Isle mon autre frere apres avoir exercité son entendement et faict cognoistre la pureté de sa conscience en une court souveraine sept ou huict ans, s'est enfin manifesté au maniemment des affaires d'Estat, desquelles il a par deux charges rapporté tesmoignage des qualitez necessaires a ung

[f. 476]

sincere et suffisant ministre; et neantmoins on l'a tiré devant le temps d'un lieu ou il faisoit service pour le tenir ailleurs inutillement et luy fair consumer les meilleurs ans qui luy restent sans luy communiquer le pain que le Roy donne a tant d'autres qui ne le gagnent pas mieulx qu'il feroit si on le mettoit en besoing. Monsieur, c'est un paradoxe fort estrange qu'il faille que la mutation intervenant en nostre Royaulme ait empiré la condition des bons et de ceulx a qui on ne peult rien opposer que la vertu. Je ne le dis pas pour moy. Car Dieu mercy, Monsieur, je me trouve en meilleur estat, et mes affaires en plus seure esperance que je ne l'eusse osé desirer avant que vous eussiez entrepris d'en avoir le soing. Mais il me faict bien mal de veoir ceulx qui m'atouchent de si pres en si mauvais termes.

Monsieur, je vous prie vouloir considerer ceste mienne douleur qui me ronge incessamment et s'il y a en toute l'amitié qu'il vous plaist me porter quelque remede pour remettre mon jeune frere (qui est celuy qui a plus de besoing d'ayde) en train d'estre employé, je vous supplie, Monsieur, que ce seul effect me soit compté comme le premier et le plus important que je puis rechercher et esperer de mon meilleur amy. Et pour ce que je scay qu'il ne s'y est jamais laissé chatoüiller de l'ambition et encores moins de l'avarice, et que pour ce regard il

a mis a nonchaloir son particulier proffict, craignant d'estre plus moleste a autruy que son propre mal ne luy est ennuyeux, je l'ay de tant plus estimé digne d'estre aydé convié et tiré au publicque labeur que je luy voys fuir toutes les occasions d'en estre importun a personne qui sont, je vous promets, Monsieur, des respects qu'il a toute sa vie continuez non seulement aux Princes et a voz semblables, mais a ses propres freres. De sorte qu'il a fallu faire violence a son naturel pour le conduire par ou il a passé qui me faict croire que le cognoissant tel que veritablement je vous le paincts, vous l'en aymerez d'avantage et aurez moins de regret a ce que vous ferez pour luy. Or, Monsieur, vous aurez peu veoir

[f. 477]

avant la reception de ceste cy, ce que j'escricts a Monseigneur le Cardinal pour le regard de mon successeur, et de quelles qualitez il me semble qu'il doibve estre pourveu tant pour manier le baston que je tiens, que pour conduire et gouverner la barque de Levant. A quoy je ne vouldrois pas soustenir que mondit frere ayt tout ce qui y seroit bien requis et necessaire, mais j'auze bien garantir sur mon honneur, si l'amour ne me trompe, qu'on n'y envoyera personne qui le face mieulx que luy, et si par ce moyen il feroit la mesme eschelle que nous avons fait Monsieur de Selve et moy, qui est de venir d'Angleterre a Venize ou j'amenay mondict frere et y demeura sept ou huict mois ayant telle part en ma negociation que je l'y pouvois prendre moy mesme, et vous diray d'avantage, que encores que je sois bien deliberé (comme il est tres raisonnable) de communiquer franchement tout ce que j'ay entre mains a qui conque me succedera, si est ce que j'ouvriray plus volontiers tous les secrets de ma boutique a mon frere que je ne ferois a ung autre, tant pour me voir renaistre en luy que pour l'oppinion que j'ay que je debvrois avoir quelque suffrage a me forger ung successeur.

Monsieur, toutes ces considerations servent de quelque chose a contenter mon oppinion mais je scay qu'elles ne seront point de mise ailleurs si n'est entant que vous les rendrez vallables, et que la bonne volonté vostre envers moy et les miens, vous feront trouver et mettre en oeuvre ce que deffault a mondict frere. Qui me faict vous supplier tres humblement, Monsieur, vouloir assister ceste mienne affection et en faire vostre particulier desseing comme de chose dont outre l'infinie obligation de laquelle vous aurez pour jamais estrainct et lié les trois freres, et tous les gens de bien qui leur appartiennent, vous pouvez esperer aultant d'honneur et satisfaction que d'autre subject duquel vous entrepreniez l'avancement. Et pour ce que de ceste verité, je ne vous puis donner plus seure caution que mon honneur et ma parolle dont j'attendray le reproche, je veulx que la presente vous demeure pour gage de ma foy et pour vous estre continuel et domesticque tesmoing de

l'amitié et servitu que je vous ay voucé. Mais c'est d'aussi bon cueur que je desire estre humblement recommandé a vostre bonne grace, priant Dieu.

III. FIGURES



Figure 1. Pieter van Schuppen, *Portrait of François de Noailles*, c. 1695-1701, engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Collection Clairambault (vol. 1170, no. 48), Paris.¹

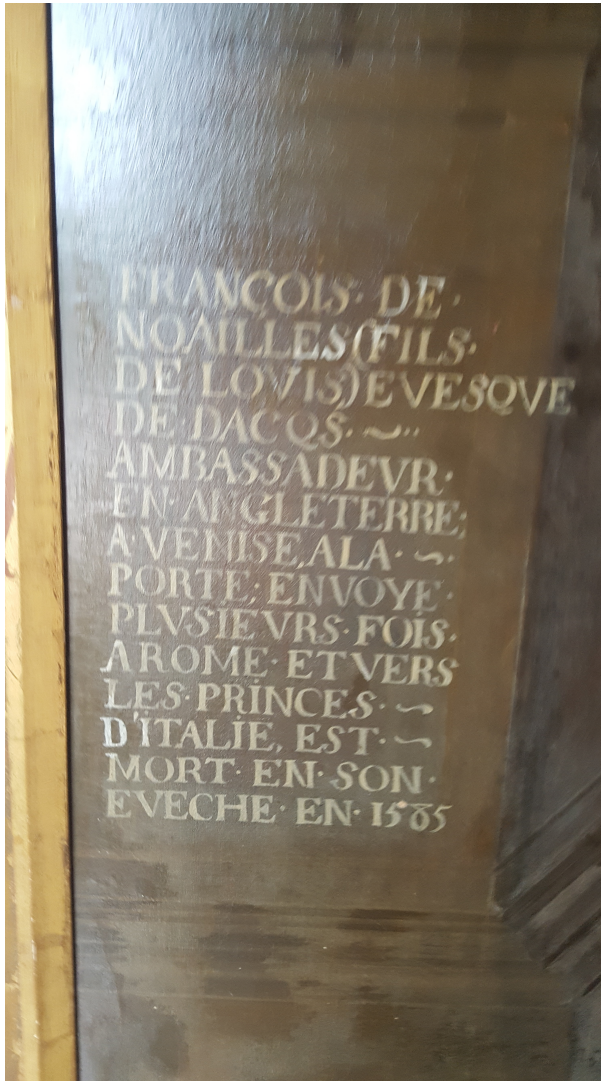
¹ This engraving was made as part of a collection about the history of the Order of the Holy Spirit (*Ordre du Saint-Esprit*) of which a descendant of François de Noailles, Anne-Jules de Noailles, was a member. Fage, “Les Noailles Peints par Oudry”, 49.



Figure 2. Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Portrait of François de Noailles*, c. 1713-1725, ink and aquarelle on paper. Louvre, Department of Prints and Drawings (Album by Jean-Baptiste Oudry, vol. 2, f. 67), Paris.



Figure 3. Jean-Baptiste Oudry, *Portrait of François de Noailles*, c. 1713-1725, oil on canvas, 268 × 167 cm. Château de Mouchy, Private collection of the Duke of Mouchy and Poix, Mouchy-le-Châtel. Photograph by and used with the permission of Antoine de Noailles, duke of Mouchy and Poix.



Details from Oudry, *Portrait of François de Noailles*. Photographs by and used with the permission of Antoine de Noailles, Duke of Mouchy and Poix.



Figure 4. Artist unknown, *Portrait of François de Noailles*, year unknown, oil on canvas, 225 × 120 cm. Château de Maintenon, Maintenon. Published in: Vincent Guichenuy, "Portraits Méconnus et Inédits d'Évêques de Dax," *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* 498, no. 2 (2010), 150.

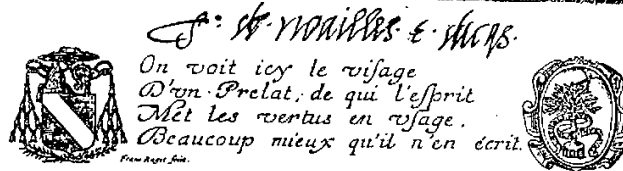


Figure 5. Artist unknown, *Portrait of François de Noailles*, year unknown. Opening page of: Jean-Baptiste Gabarra, *Un Évêque de Dax, François de Noailles* (Dax: Imprimerie Typographique et Lithographique Hazael Labèque, 1888).²

² The text reads: *On voy icy le visage / D'un Prelat; de quy l'esprit / Met les vertus en usage. / Beaucoup mieux qu'il n'en écrit.* On the left we see the coat of arms of the Noailles family and on the right their motto: *Lethale haud laedimur auro* (Our wounds are not from murderous gold). Vincent Guichenuy, "Portraits Méconnus et Inédits d'Évêques de Dax," *Bulletin de La Société de Borda* 498, no. 2 (2010), 143.



Figure 6. Map of the Venetian lagoon with St. Mark's Square and the islands of San Secondo, Santo Spirito and Santa Maria della Grazia © Google Earth.



Figure 7. Luca Carlevarijs, *The Entry of the French Ambassador Henri-Charles Arnaud de Pomponne in Venice in 1706*, c. 1706-1708, oil on canvas, 130 × 260 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Figure 8. Luca Carlevarijs, *The Entry of the British Ambassador Charles Montagu in Venice in 1707*, c. 1707-1708, oil on canvas, 132 × 264 cm. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham.



Figure 9. Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *The Entry of the French Ambassador Jacques-Vincent Languet, Count de Gergy, in Venice in 1726*, c. 1727, oil on canvas, 181 × 259.5 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.



Figure 10. Andrea Michieli, called il Vicentino, *The Arrival of Henri III at the Lido*, 1593, oil on canvas, 367 × 791 cm. Doge's Palace, Sala delle Quattro Porte, Venice.



Figure 11. Gabriele and Carletto Caliari, *Doge Leonardo Loredan Giving Copies of the Laws of Venice to the Ambassadors from Nuremberg*, c. 1590-1595, oil on canvas. Doge's Palace, Sala delle Quattro Porte, Venice.



Figure 12. Gabriele Caliari, *Doge Marino Grimani Receiving the Persian Ambassador*, c. 1603-1605, oil on canvas. Doge's Palace, Sala delle Quattro Porte, Venice.

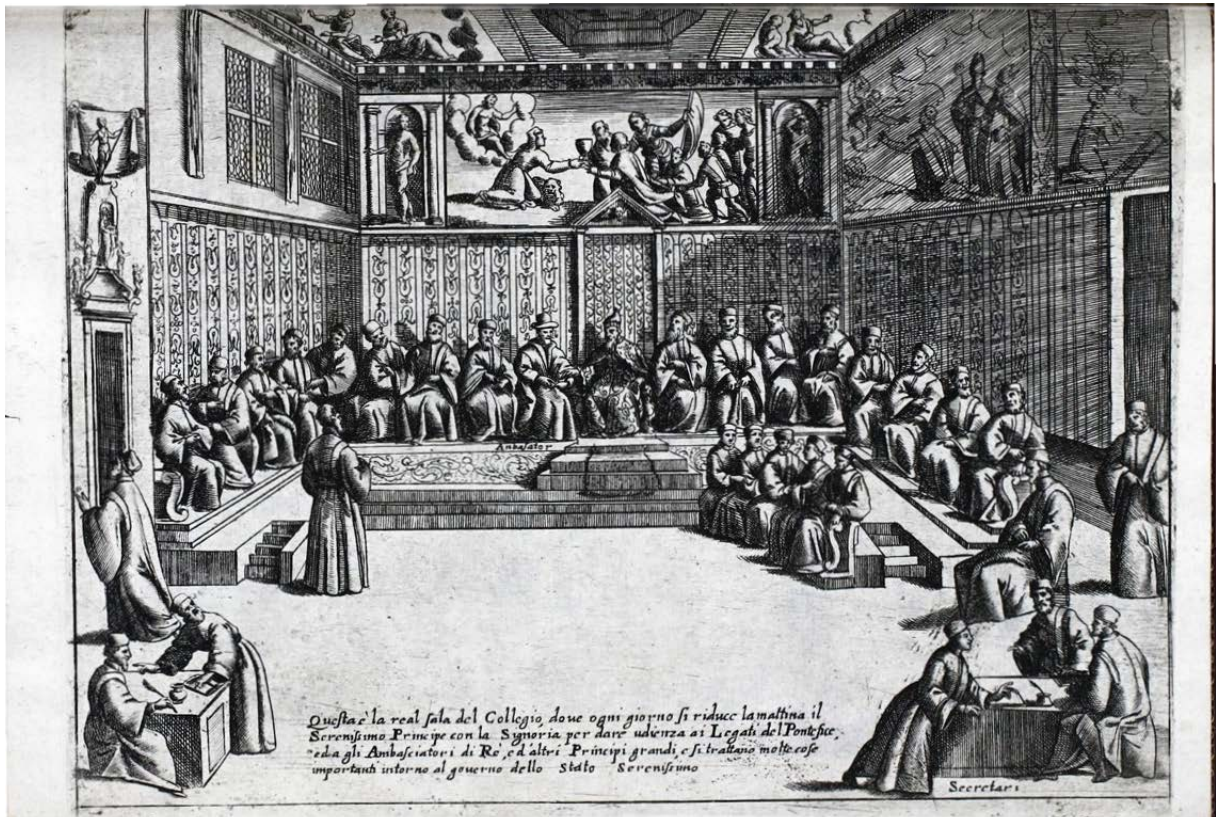


Figure 13. Giacomo Franco, *Questa è la Real Sala del Collegio...*, c. 1610, engraving, approximately 17 × 25.3 cm. Published in: Giacomo Franco, *Habiti d' Huomeni et Donne Venetiane, con la Processione della Serenissima Signoria et Altri Particolari, cioè Trionfi, Feste et Cerimonie Publiche della Nobilissima Città di Venetia* (Venice: 1610).



Figure 14. Odoardo Fialetti, *Doge Leonardo Donà Giving Audience to Sir Henry Wotton*, c. 1600-1620, oil on canvas, 147.3 × 218.4 cm. Hampton Court Palace, The Royal Collection, London.



Figure 15. Pietro Malombra, *Doge Leonardo Donà Giving Audience to Alonso de la Cuera*, c. 1606-1618, oil on canvas, 170 × 214 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 16. Artist unknown, *The Audience of Dutch Ambassador Cornelis van der Mijle with the Doge in 1609*, year unknown, oil on canvas, 133 × 200 cm. City hall of Veere, Veere.



Detail from *The Audience of Dutch Ambassador Cornelis van der Mijle with the Doge in 1609*.



Figure 17. Funeral of Dogaressa Zilia Dandola on 13 October 1566. ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, Reg. 1, f. 35r.



Figure 18. Funeral of Dogaressa Loredana Marcello on 11 December 1572. ASV, Collegio, Cerimoniali, Reg. 1, f. 41v.



Figure 19. Hotel Ca' Vendramin, Rio di Santa Fosca, Fondamenta de Ca' Vendramin 2400 © Hotel Ca' Vendramin.



Figure 20. Palazzo Vendramin, Rio di Santa Fosca, Fondamenta de Ca' Vendramin © Views on Venice Estates S.R.L. and Savills plc.



Figure 21. Palazzo Vendramin, corner of Rio di Trapolin and Rio di Noale © Views on Venice Estates S.R.L. and Savills plc.



Figure 22. Palazzo Vendramin, *portego* © Views on Venice Estates S.R.L. and Savills plc.



Figure 23. Palazzo Vendramin, entrance hall © Views on Venice Estates S.R.L. and Savills plc.



Figure 24. Palazzo Michiel, Rio della Sensa, Fondamento della Sensa 3218.

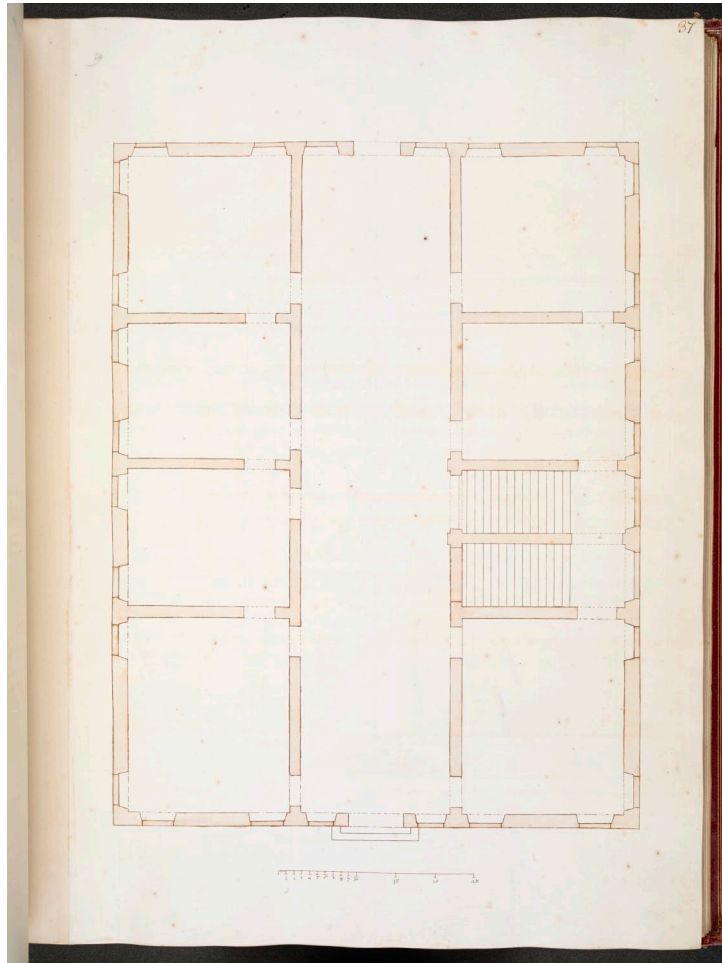


Figure 25. Antonio Visentini, Floor plan Palazzo Michiel, c. 1730-1740. British Library, King George III Topographical Collection, London.

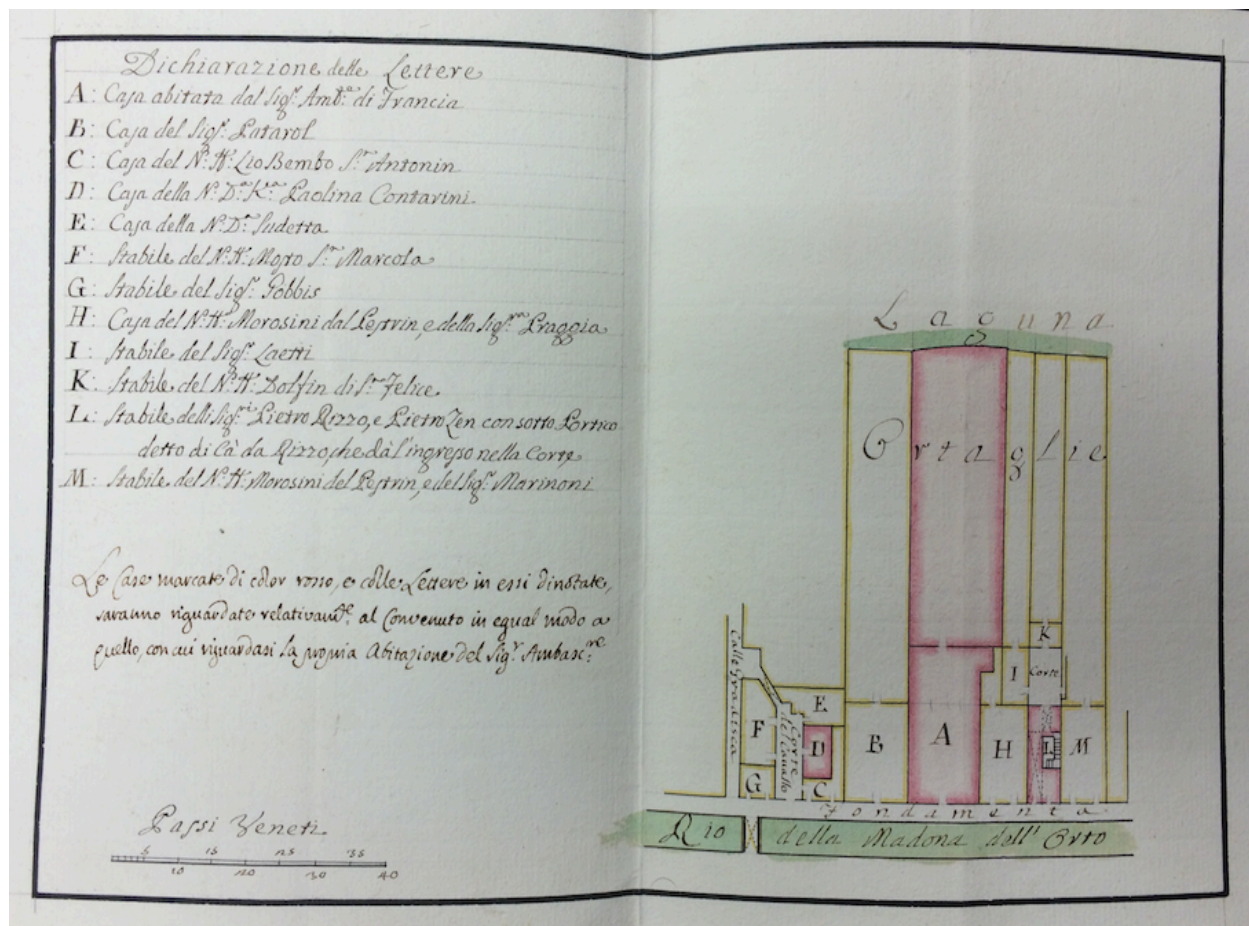


Figure 26. Plan of Palazzo Rizzo-Patarol, indicating the ambassador's quarters and adjacent buildings with their gardens. ASV, Inquisitori di Stato, b. 916, insert 2: Disegni.



Figure 27. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Portrait of Ferry Carondelet with His Secretaries*, c. 1510-1512, oil on canvas, 112.5 × 87 cm. Museum Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.



Figure 28. Titian, *Cardinal Georges d'Armagnac and His Secretary Guillaume Philandrier*, c. 1536-1538, oil on canvas, 104 × 114 cm. Alnwick Castle, Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, Northumberland.



Figure 29. Ca' da Mosto, *portego*. Published in: Patricia Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 72.



Figure 30. Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *The Entry of the Imperial Ambassador Giuseppe Bolagnos in the Doge's Palace*, c. 1729, oil on canvas, 184 × 265 cm. The Diocesan Museum, Collection Crespi, Milan.



Figure 31. Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, *The Bucintoro Returning to the Molo on Ascension Day*, c. 1729, oil on canvas, 182 × 259 cm. The Diocesan Museum, Collection Crespi, Milan.



Figure 32. Cesare Vecellio (engraver) and Christoph Krieger (woodcutter), *Ambasciatori, & Consoli*, c. 1590, woodcut, approximately 16.7 × 12.5 cm. Published in: Cesare Vecellio, *Habiti Antichi et Moderni*, eds. Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2010), 140.



Figure 33. Outfit worn by Swedish Ambassador Nils Nilsson Brahe at the Spanish court, 1655. Skokloster Castle, Sweden © Museo del Traje, Madrid.



Figure 34. Siegmund von Herberstein wearing Russian robes of honour presented during his second embassy to Russia (1526), woodcut, approximately 16.8 × 10.8 cm (attributed to Johann Lautensack). Published in: Siegmund von Herberstein, *Gratae Posteritati Sigismundus Liber Baro in Herberstain Neyperg et Guettenhag, Primarius Ducatus Carinthiae Haereditariusque et Camerarius et Dapifer etc. Immunitate Meritorum Ergo Donatus, Actiones Suas a Puerio ad Annum usque Aetatis Suae Septuagesimum Quartum, Brevi Commentariolo Notatas Reliquit* (Vienna: Raphael Hofhalter, 1560).



Figure 35. Siegmund von Herberstein wearing Ottoman robes of honour presented by the sultan during his embassy to the Ottoman Empire (1541), woodcut, approximately 16.8 × 10.8 cm (attributed to Johann Lautensack). Published in: Siegmund von Herberstein, *Gratae Posteritati Sigismundus Liber Baro in Herberstain Neyperg et Guettenhag, Primarius Ducatus Carinthiae Haereditariusque et Camerarius et Dapifer etc. Immunitate Meritorum Ergo Donatus, Actiones Suas a Puerio ad Annum usque Aetatis Suae Septuagesimum Quartum, Brevi Commentariolo Notatas Reliquit* (Vienna: Raphael Hofhalter, 1560).



Figure 36. Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 × 209.5 cm. The National Gallery, London.

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