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DIPLOMATS AS POETS, POETS AS DIPLOMATS

POETIC GIFTS AND LITERARY REFLECTIONS ON THE DUTCH MEDIATIONS BETWEEN POLAND-LITHUANIA AND SWEDEN IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Abstract

This article examines two Dutch diplomatic missions, in 1627–28 and 1635, by which the United Provinces intervened in a Polish-Swedish armed conflict in Prussia. The focus is on ‘diplomatic poetics’: the ways in which literature functioned within diplomatic practice, and how that practice (or the ‘diplomatic moment’) was in turn envisioned in literature. The Polish-Swedish conflict was of great interest to the United Provinces, and was elaborately discussed in various Dutch media, as well as in the correspondences of merchants and politicians. The Dutch embassies to Polish territories themselves, meanwhile, inspired a number of literary works, published mostly in the Republic, but also in for example Danzig and Königsberg. These sources demonstrate how early modern literary and diplomatic practices in Europe overlapped and influenced each other. Firstly, German, French and Dutch poems by Johannes Plavius, Simon van Beaumont and Joost van den Vondel illustrate the blurring of the lines between the realms of diplomacy and literature. Poems could function as diplomatic gifts, enabling both personal, intellectual communication and the widespread transmission of political messages. Moreover, Latin and German plays by Johannes Narssius and Simon Dach, and more importantly Latin poems by Simon van Beaumont and Caspar Barlaeus, as well as an illustrated Dutch account of the first mission by Abraham Booth, reveal that the Dutch envoys featured in literary narratives as both wise peace bringers and travelling poets, and their missions to Poland as both arduous ordeals and epic adventures. Much like poetic gifts, these literary reflections on ‘the diplomatic moment’ had public diplomatic agency, simultaneously voicing political opinions and crafting artistic images of the diplomats themselves.

Keywords: diplomatic poetics, gift exchange, literary representation, Dutch Republic, Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, Danzig

On 31 May 1627, the Amsterdam merchant Joost Brasser (1581–1653) wrote to his cousin, the famed lawmaker Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), saying that ‘we have now mostly lost the Eastern trade because of the war between Sweden and Poland, so that things are starting to look bad here’.¹ Two weeks earlier, the Dutch States-General had sent an embassy to Prussia in order to mediate between the Poles and Swedes, and Brasser was anxious for them to settle the conflict: ‘There is as yet no news of our ambassadors’ arrival there, but I have heard that they have passed the Sound’.²

This article examines two Dutch diplomatic missions, in 1627–28 and 1635, by which the United Provinces intervened in a Polish-Swedish armed conflict in Prussia. Tying in with *New Diplomatic History*,³ which emphasises the relations between diplomacy and culture,⁴ the article engages in ‘diplomatic poetics’.⁵ Firstly, it looks at how literature

¹ Letter from Joost Brasser to Hugo Grotius, 31 May 1627, no. 1151, in *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius*, vol. 3, ed. by P.C. Molhuysen and B.L. Meulenbroek (Martinus Nijhoff: Den Haag, 1961), p. 133: ‘Den Oosterschen handel zijn wij voor desen tijt mede meest quyt door de oorlooge tussen Sweden ende Poolen, zoodat het hyer begint slecht wt te syen’. All translations are my own. I would like to thank my friend George van Hoof for his valuable insights regarding some of the Latin passages. I am also grateful for the comments made by my supervisors Lotte Jensen and Johan Oosterman on a previous version of this paper. Lastly, I owe thanks to Frans Blom, Helmer Helmers, Ineke Huysman and Louis Sicking for supplying me with several relevant publications.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 133–34: ‘Vant arrivement van onse ambassadeurs aldaer es noch geen advys, maer wel dat zij de Sont gepasseert zijn’.

³ John Watkins, ‘Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38, no. 1 (2008), 1–14. Also see: Tracey A. Sowerby, ‘Early Modern Diplomatic History’, *History Compass*, 14, no. 9 (2016), 441–56.

⁴ See, for example: *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Mediation, Transmission, Traffic, 1550–1700*, ed. by Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2009); Lotte Jensen and Marguerite Corporaal, ‘Poetry as an Act of International Diplomacy: English translations of Willem van Haren’s Political Poetry during the War of the Austrian Succession’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39, no. 3 (2016), 377–94; *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁵ See: Timothy Hampton, ‘The Diplomatic Moment: Representing Negotiation in Early Modern Europe’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 67, no. 1 (2006), 81–102; *id.*,

functioned within diplomatic practice. Using the Dutch missions as a case study, the article argues that diplomats performing literary exercises and poets writing compositions with diplomatic agency blurred the lines between the worlds of diplomacy and poetry. This will be demonstrated primarily on the basis of poems which functioned as diplomatic gifts, enabling both personal, intellectual communication and the public transmission of political messages to a wider audience. Secondly, the article discusses how diplomatic practice (or the 'diplomatic moment') was in turn envisioned in literature. An analysis of various works, written by diplomats themselves and other authors, demonstrates that diplomats were popular literary characters, who could feature as both wise peace bringers and travelling poets. In addition, the literary portrayal of the missions' destination influenced the embassies' overall representation, which in Poland's case varied from a challenging and burdensome journey to an exciting quest.

The sources are highly diverse: they include poems written in German, French, Latin and Dutch, a Latin and a German play, and an illustrated Dutch account of the first mission. The topic is all the more interesting as it sheds light on the hardly investigated seventeenth-century diplomatic relations between the Dutch, Poles, Swedes and Danzig, as well as on one of the defining conflicts in the history of the Baltic.

THE FIRST MISSION (1627–28)

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the Dutch were dependent on their Baltic trade. The United Provinces' economic growth, their continued fight against Spain, even their very sustenance rested heavily on a wide web of business relations spanning across the Baltic from Copenhagen to Reval (Tallinn) and from Stockholm to Danzig (Gdańsk). The Baltic trade was of particular importance to Holland, the wealthiest and most powerful of the Dutch provinces, and within Holland mainly to the merchants and regents of Amsterdam.⁶

Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁶ See, for a history of the Dutch Baltic trade in the early modern period: Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989),

Poland-Lithuania and Sweden both provided goods which were essential to the Dutch Republic. The former mainly supplied grain and timber through Danzig, the Baltic's primary port, situated in Royal Prussia, part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁷ The latter provided iron and copper.⁸ However, Dutch diplomatic relations with Sweden were notably better than those with Poland-Lithuania. The Swedes and Dutch in 1614 signed a mutual defence treaty, by which they pledged to support each other in case one of the parties was attacked. Moreover, the fact that both states were predominantly Protestant doubtless contributed to their union.⁹ Meanwhile, the period saw plans

passim. See, for Dutch relations with the Baltic more generally: David Kirby, *Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period: The Baltic World 1492–1772* (London, New York: Longman, 1990), pp. 3–15; Anja Tjaden, 'The Dutch in the Baltic, 1544–1721', in *In Quest of Trade and Security: The Baltic in Power Politics, 1500–1990*, vol. 1: 1500–1890, ed. by Göran Rystad, Klaus-R. Böhme, and Wilhelm M. Carlgren (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994), pp. 61–136; *Goud uit Graan: Nederland en het Oostzeegebied 1600–1850*, ed. by R Emmelt Daalder et al. (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1998).

⁷ Maria Bogucka has devoted numerous publications to early modern Dutch-Polish trade and relations, for example: 'The Role of Baltic Trade in European Development from the XVIth to the XVIIIth Centuries', *Journal of European Economic History*, 9, no. 1 (1980), 5–20. Also see: Milja van Tielhof, *The 'Mother of all Trades': The Baltic Grain Trade in Amsterdam from the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century* (Leiden, Boston, and Köln: Brill, 2002).

⁸ See, for Dutch-Swedish trade: J. Thomas Lindblad, 'Evidence of Dutch-Swedish Trade in the 17th Century', in *Baltic Affairs: Relations between the Netherlands and North-Eastern Europe 1500–1800*, ed. by J.Ph.S. Lemmink and J.S.A.M. van Koningsbrugge (Nijmegen: INOS, 1990), pp. 205–28; Michiel de Jong, 'Dutch entrepreneurs in the Swedish Crown trade in copper and iron, 1580–1630', in *Trade, diplomacy and cultural exchange: Continuity and change in the North Sea area and the Baltic c. 1350–1750*, ed. by Hanno Brand (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2005), pp. 36–74.

⁹ See, for a synopsis of Dutch-Swedish relations in the early seventeenth century: Gunnar Wetterberg, 'Calming the waves of the Baltic Sea', in *The Swedes & the Dutch were made for each other*, ed. by Kristian Gerner (Lund: Historiska Media, 2014), pp. 40–58. Detailed information about Dutch representatives in Sweden and vice versa in the early modern period can be found in: Otto Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in het buitenland, 1584–1810* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 268–81, and: id., *Repertorium der buitenlandse vertegenwoordigers, residerende in Nederland, 1584–1810* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), pp. 485–539.

to forge a Spanish-Polish alliance,¹⁰ and several Polish ambassadors had since the 1580s aggravated the States-General, for example by addressing them with the wrong titles, or by threatening to cut the grain supply if the Dutch would not surrender to their Spanish adversaries.¹¹

The Poles and Swedes had been fighting each other for decades, competing for Estonia and Livonia. King Sigismund III Vasa of Poland (1566–1632) furthermore refused to give up his claim on the Swedish throne, which he had lost in 1599. In 1626, King Gustav II Adolph of Sweden (1594–1632) brought the fight to his enemies' very doorstep: he invaded Royal Prussia and succeeded in capturing several Prussian towns.¹² Danzig, the Baltic's largest prize, remained in Polish hands,

¹⁰ See: Ryszard Skowron, *Oliwares, Wazowie i Bałtyk: Polska w polityce zagranicznej Hiszpanii w latach 1621–1632* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze 'Historia Iagelonica', 2002).

¹¹ At least three Polish ambassadors addressed the States-General prior to the 1627 mission: Krzysztof Głogowski (1586), Paweł Działyński (1597) and Piotr Bereński (1621). According to Ildikó Horn, Balthasar Bathory and Stanisław Sobocki in 1583 also travelled to the Northern Netherlands on a diplomatic mission. See: Ildikó Horn, 'Hendrick Goltzius: somlyói Báthory Boldizsár képmása, 1583', *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 62, no. 2 (2013), 295–301. Schutte lists the early modern Dutch representatives in Poland and Danzig and vice versa on pp. 282–84 (Poland), 225–30 (Danzig) and 540–48 (Poland), 549–50 (Danzig) respectively, but begins only in 1635 with the arrival of Nicolaes de Bye, the first permanent resident of the Polish king in the Dutch Republic. Research concerning early modern Dutch-Polish diplomatic relations is remarkably scant. The most relevant contributions dealing with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are: Aleksander Kraushar, 'Stefan Batory w sprawie walk o niepodległość Niderlandów (1586 roku)', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 8 (1894), 239–44; Ludwik Boratyński, 'Stefan Batory, Hanza i powstanie Niderlandów', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 6, nos 1–3 (1908), 50–65, 173–194, 322–334; Stanisław Miczulski, 'Materiały do projektowanego traktatu polsko-holenderskiego z r. 1654', *Rocznik Gdański*, 19/20 (1960–61), 395–438; *Merkuriusz sarmacki z Niderlandów i Anglii 1597*, trans. by Irena Horbowy, ed. by Ryszard Marciniak (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978).

¹² See, for a description of the war and the eventual truce: Adam Szelągowski, *O ujście Wisły: Wielka wojna pruska* (Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff, 1905); Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), pp. 104–14. The events are also discussed, with an emphasis on Danzig, in: Edmund Cieślak and Czesław Biernat, *History of Gdańsk*, trans. by Bożenna Blaim and George M. Hyde (Gdańsk: Fundacja Biblioteki Gdańskiej, 1995), pp. 155–59.



1. Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Portrait of Andries Bicker*, 1642; Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: SK-A-146

but as the Swedes blocked the port and took control of the Baltic coast, the grain trade suffered badly. Furthermore, crop failures had since the early 1620s led to a significant drop in supplies and, consequently, to high grain prices in Amsterdam.¹³ The troublesome situation in Prussia thus directly influenced the Dutch economy.

Despite their friendly relations with Sweden, therefore, the States-General had to act. In early 1627, they decided to mediate between the warring parties, and on 11 March, they chose their ambassadors: Rochus

¹³ Van Tielhof, p. 47.

van den Honert (1572–1638), member of the High Council of Holland, Zeeland and West-Frisia, Andries Bicker (1586–1652), the mayor of Amsterdam (Fig. 1), and Simon van Beaumont (1574–1654), the Pensionary of Middelburg and Deputy of Zeeland.¹⁴ Their principal aim was to secure ‘Navigatie ende Commerchien’: shipping and commerce.¹⁵

After arriving in Prussia on 1 June, the ambassadors had audiences with the Swedish king, the municipal council of Danzig, the Polish king, queen consort and crown prince in Warsaw, and the elector of Brandenburg in Königsberg. They witnessed several battles, such as the Battle of Dirschau (Tczew, 17–18 August), where the Swedes overpowered the Poles, and the Battle of Oliva (Oliwa, 28 November), where the Polish fleet defeated the Swedes. The ambassadors organised two rounds of negotiations, in September 1627 and February 1628, but the Poles and Swedes could not be reconciled. Ultimately, the company returned to Holland empty-handed on 10 June 1628, more than a year after their departure.¹⁶

¹⁴ Originally, the embassy would also comprise Gijsbert van den Boetzelaer of Utrecht, but he could not travel due to an illness, of which he probably died in 1628.

¹⁵ See, for the ambassadors’ instructions: Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Saken van Staet en Oorlogh, In, ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden*, vol. 1 (’s Graven-Haghe: Johan Veely, Johan Tongerlo, ende Jasper Doll, 1669), pp. 603–06. In addition, on 2 April, the States-General were addressed by Georgius Cammerman, secretary of Danzig, who urged the Dutch to intervene in the conflict. See: *ibid.*, p. 601.

¹⁶ See, for an analysis of the negotiations: Henryk Wisner, ‘Część I: Dyplomacja polska w latach 1572–1648’, in *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 2: 1572–1795, ed. by Zbigniew Wójcik (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1982), pp. 51–56; Janusz Dorobisz, ‘Korespondencja między Zygmuntem III Wazą a komisarzami na rokowania polsko-szwedzkie w Prabutach z początku 1628 roku’, in *Epistolografia w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, vol. 7: *Literatura, historia, język*, ed. by Piotr Borek and Marcei Olma (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2017), pp. 195–200. The relations between the Dutch ambassadors and Danzig are discussed in: Władysław Czapliński, ‘Cz. II.IV: Zatarg z Batorem – Stosunek Gdańska do Planów Bałtyckich Zygmunta III’, in *Historia Gdańska*, vol. 2: 1454–1655, ed. by Edmund Cieślak (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1982), pp. 614–17. See, for a wider context of Dutch interventions in the Baltic: Francis J. Bowman, ‘Dutch Diplomacy and the Baltic Grain Trade, 1600–1660’, *Pacific Historical Review*, 5, no. 4 (1936), 337–48; Louis Sicking, ‘Die offensive Lösung wird fortgesetzt. Das holländische Eingreifen im Ostseeraum im 15. bis 18. Jahrhundert’, in *Hansestädte im Konflikt: Krisenmanagement und bewaffnete Auseinandersetzung vom 13. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert. Hansische Studien XXIII.*, ed. by Orwтин Pelc (Wismar: callidus, 2019), pp. 203–27.



2. Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Sweetsche Schans op de Weiselstroom ...* (detail), Amsterdam 1626; Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: RP-P-1879-A-3655

People in the Republic could keep themselves informed about the war by reading Dutch newspapers, particularly the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* (*Coranto from Italy, Germany etc.*), issued weekly on Saturdays by the Amsterdam publisher Jan van Hilten (c. 1603–1655).¹⁷

¹⁷ For example issues from: 25 July 1626, 26 September 1626, 17 October 1626, 24 October 1626, 6 March 1627, 23 October 1627, 20 November 1627, 26 February 1628, 11 March 1628, 20 May 1628, 24 June 1628, 21 October 1628. Most reports came from Prussia. A pamphlet on a temporary ceasefire was printed in March 1629: *Accoort, Tusschen de Doorl: Coninck van Polen, Sigismund, En de Coninck van Zweden Gustavus Adolph* (Amsterdam: Jacob Pietersz. Wachter, 1629) (Knuttel 3848).

In late 1626, moreover, the Amsterdam printer Claes Jansz. Visscher (1587–1652) published a newsprint, which gave a highly favourable description of Gustav's campaign and showed a view of the Prussian war zone, 'sent from there and handed to me' – probably by Swedish intervention (Fig. 2).¹⁸

Furthermore, the war coincided with the publication of the first book devoted solely to Poland-Lithuania printed on Dutch soil: *Respublica, Sive Status Regni Poloniae, Lithuaniae, Prussiae, Livoniae, etc. diversorum Autorum* (*The Republic, or the Condition of the Realms of Poland, Lithuania, Prussia, Livonia, etc., by various authors*) (Fig. 3). The work is a Latin pocket anthology on Poland, Lithuania, Prussia and Livonia, and was in 1627 published in two differing editions by the famed Elzevier printing house in Leiden, as part of their *Republics* series, started in 1625.¹⁹ It contains (excerpts from) earlier historiographical and ethnographical treatises (for example by Marcin Kromer, Giovanni Botero, Jacques-Auguste de Thou, Alexander Guagnini and John Barclay), but does not discuss the current war. The anthology no doubt served as a general source of information for readers whose interest was piqued by the time's events – and perhaps even as a guide for the Dutch ambassadors.²⁰

In 1628, moreover, the doctor and chronicler Nicolaes van Wassenaer (c. 1570 – c. 1630) related the Polish-Swedish war in two volumes from his historiographical book series, published in Amsterdam.²¹ One of the front pages features a map showing 'the conquest of two forts by the king of Sweden' (Fig. 4), and the book is dedicated to Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654), the Swedish Lord High Chancellor, which clearly indicates

¹⁸ Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: RP-P-1879-A-3655: 'welcke teykeninge van daer is afgesonden en my behandigt'. News prints such as this one could be purchased at the publisher's book shop and hung against the wall. The print also has a German copy, without the Dutch text, published by Frans Hogenberg in Cologne. See Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: RP-P-OB-78.785-399.

¹⁹ A third edition was printed in 1642.

²⁰ The privilege for the first edition was already bestowed upon the publishers on 15 May 1626, around the time of Gustav's invasion of Prussia.

²¹ Nicolaes van Wassenaer, *Het Dertiende Ghedeelt of 'T Vervolgh van het Historisch Verhael aller gedenckwaerdiger geschiedeni[ssen] ...* (Amstelredam: Jan Jansz., 1628); id., *Het Veertiende Deel Of 'T Vervolgh van het Historisch Verhael aller gedenckwaerdiger geschiedeni[ssen] ...* (Amsterdam: Jan Jansz., [1628]).



3. Pieter Serwouters, front page of *Respublica, Sive Status Regni Poloniae, Lituaniae, Prussiae, Livoniae, etc. diversorum Auctorum*, Leiden 1627; Author's collection

the author's allegiance. But while the text contains an elaborate (and distinctly pro-Swedish) description of the war,²² the Dutch ambassadors are hardly mentioned.

The embassy itself, therefore, is remarkably absent from contemporary Dutch media, but that does not mean that no one in the Republic received any information about the mission. For example, Hugo Grotius,

²² For example, the second volume contains a Dutch translation of a pamphlet in which the Swedish king explains why he was compelled to block Danzig. See: *ibid.*, pp. 81v–82.



4. [Gillis van Scheyndel], front page of Nicolaes van Wassenaer's *Het Dertiende Ghe-deelt of 't Vervolgh van het Historisch Verhael aller gedenckwaerdiger geschiedenissen* ... (detail), Amsterdam 1628; Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: BI-B-FM-033N

who at the time lived in exile in Paris, discussed the war and the embassy with his cousin Joost Brassier, mentioned above, but also with the preacher and author Johannes Uytenbogaert (1557–1644), and his brother-in-law Nicolaes van Reigersberch (1584–1654), who was a member of the High Court of Holland. Nicolaes probably received news of the mission from his colleague in the court, the ambassador Rochus van den Honert. On 9 October 1627, for example, he wrote to Grotius: 'In their last letters, the ambassadors write that they hoped to make an agreement between Poland and Sweden'.²³ In order to keep themselves up to

²³ *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius*, vol. 3, p. 181 (no. 1183: letter from Nicolaes van Reigersberch to Hugo Grotius, 9 October 1627): 'De ambassadeurs schrijven bij haer leste brieven, dat sij hoopten tusschen Polen ende Sweden een accoort te treffen'.

date about the embassy's progress, therefore, Grotius and others could in part rely on their personal correspondence – but the information they shared remained reserved for a select group of individuals only.²⁴

THE DIPLOMATIC GIFT OF POETRY

Discussing early modern diplomatic practice in Europe, Timothy Hampton stated that 'diplomacy is [...] a political practice that is also a writing practice'.²⁵ In other words: to be a diplomat in early modern Europe was to write. This can be exemplified by two poems relating to the Dutch mission, intended as diplomatic gifts: a sonnet by the Danziger Johannes Plavius (born *c.* 1600), praising the United Provinces and the envoys, and an ode dedicated to Gustav II Adolph, by the Dutch ambassador and poet Simon van Beaumont. They are not depictions of the 'diplomatic moment'. Instead, they *are* the diplomatic moment. They illustrate that early modern diplomatic practice not only involved writing *about* diplomatic activities, but that writing *itself* could also be one of those activities, bearing a strong and public diplomatic function.²⁶

Not much is known about Johannes Plavius, besides the fact that he was an academic and a prolific poet who lived in Danzig.²⁷ He wrote numerous poems in German, a language widely spoken in Danzig, and certainly also used by the Dutch ambassadors. His *Sonnet über den lang gewünschten Friedens Tractat* (*Sonnet about the long desired peace negotiation*) was printed as a leaflet and probably gifted to the ambassadors

See, for other examples: *ibid.*, p. 192 (no. 1192: letter from Nicolaes van Reigersberch to Hugo Grotius, 23 October 1627), p. 201 (no. 1200: letter from Hugo Grotius to Nicolaes van Reigersberch, 27 November 1627), p. 215 (no. 1204: letter from Johannes Uytenbogaert to Hugo Grotius, 19 December 1627), p. 222 (no. 1213: letter from Johannes Uytenbogaert to Hugo Grotius, 16 January 1628).

²⁴ In the course of the seventeenth century, diplomats increasingly relied on the press for their news gathering. See: Jason Peasey, "My Friend the Gazeteer": Diplomacy and News in Seventeenth-Century Europe', in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 420–42.

²⁵ Hampton, *Fictions*, p. 7. Also see: *Cultures of Diplomacy*, p. 1.

²⁶ See, for an analysis of early modern public diplomacy: Helmer Helmers, 'Public Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe', *Media History*, 22, nos 3–4 (2016), 401–20.

²⁷ See www.niarts.de/plavius/ for information about Plavius and his oeuvre [accessed 29 September 2019].

when they visited the city in either June or September 1627. Since two copies made it to the Dutch Republic, the poem is likely to have reached a wider audience (Fig. 5).²⁸ Gift exchange was an integral part of early modern diplomatic practice and has in recent years attracted considerable scholarly attention.²⁹ Gifts – for example silverware, medallions or other works of art – have been described as ‘mute diplomats’, as they could be an ‘instrument of diplomatic persuasion, even of seduction’,³⁰ and implied reciprocity.³¹ Poems appear to have been a popular type of diplomatic gift, but they have hardly been studied as such.³²

Poetic gifts are anything but mute. Instead, they convey messages that spoken diplomatic discourse cannot. Moreover, since poetic gifts could easily be reproduced, either by hand or by the printing press, they played an active role in the shaping of public opinions.³³ Plavius praises the Dutch Republic and the ambassadors as experts in the field of war

²⁸ They can be found in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague (National Archives of the Netherlands, hereafter cited as: NL-HaNa), amongst other papers relating to the embassy: Aanwinsten Eerste Afdeling, 1.11.01.01, inv. no. 678.

²⁹ See, for example: Maija Jansson, ‘Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the 17th and 18th Centuries’, *Journal for Early Modern History*, 9, no. 3 (2005), 348–70; Nancy Um and Leah R. Clark, ‘Introduction. The Art of Embassy: Situating Objects and Images in the Early Modern Diplomatic Encounter’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 20, no. 1 (2016), 3–18; *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, ed. by Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen, and Giorgio Riello (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

³⁰ Anthony Colantuono, ‘The Mute Diplomat: Theorizing the Role of Images in Seventeenth-Century Political Negotiations’, in *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy*, ed. by Elizabeth Cropper (Milan: Nuova Alfa, 2000), p. 54.

³¹ Jansson, p. 362; *Global Gifts*, p. 7.

³² Notable exceptions are: Edward Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate: Culture, Politics, and Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 6–36; Murai Shōsuke, ‘Poetry in Chinese as a Diplomatic Art in Premodern Asia’, trans. by Haruko Wakabayashi and Andrew Edmund Goble, in *Tools of Culture: Japan’s Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000–1500s*, ed. by Andrew Edmund Goble, Kenneth R. Robinson, and Haruko Wakabayashi (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 49–69.

³³ See, for an examination of the ways in which literary texts formed public opinions in the early modern Low Countries: Jan Bloemendal and Arjan van Dixhoorn, ‘Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries’, in *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal et al. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 1–35.

and peace, while simultaneously expressing the religious (Protestant) fraternity between the Dutch and Danzig, and voicing the city's hope for successful negotiations:

Those who never fight without God, for God,
 And triumph with God, who has made the high Netherlands,
 The high school of war, known all over the world,
 Free and famous, those princes of soldiers
 Who for freedom's sake have now been at war for so long:
 They seek our peace. From this we well perceive
 The meaning of war and peace, for they advise peace.

(ll. 8–14)³⁴

Even though Danzig was subject to the Polish king, the city maintained its own independent diplomatic contacts with foreign powers. While it remains unclear exactly what role Plavius played in the encounter between the municipal council and the Dutch ambassadors, by writing his poem, he automatically partook in the practice of diplomacy. The functions of early modern European diplomats, envoys, emissaries or agents were highly diverse, ranging from negotiating to gathering intelligence, and from spying to collecting art.³⁵ Many diplomats were accomplished poets as well.³⁶ By writing a diplomatic gift, Plavius the poet blended with Plavius the diplomat, for his poem represented not only its author,³⁷ but the city of Danzig as well – something which is underscored by the imprint at the bottom of the poem.

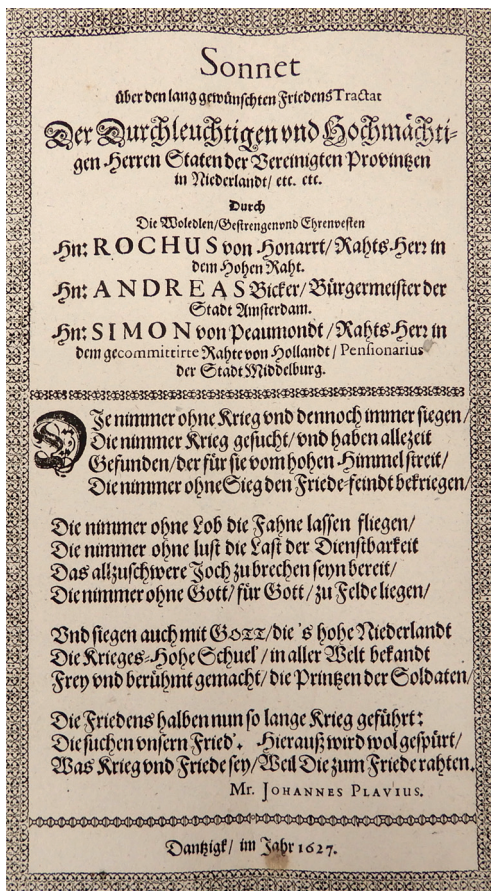
While Plavius took on the role of a diplomatic poet, Simon van Beaumont made himself a poetic diplomat. Having heard that

³⁴ 'Die nimmer ohne Gott | für Gott | zu Felde liegen | Und siegen auch mit Gott | die 's hohe Niederlandt | Die Krieges-Hohe Schuel' | in aller Welt bekindt | Frey und berühmht gemacht | die Prinzen der Soldaten | Die Friedens halben nun so lange Krieg geführt: | Die suchen unsern Fried'. Hierauß wird wol gespürt | Was Krieg und Friede sey | Weil Die zum Friede rahten'.

³⁵ See: *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Marika Koblusek and Badeloch Noldus (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).

³⁶ See, for example: Jensen and Corporaal, p. 378.

³⁷ See: Joanna Craigwood, 'Sidney, Gentili, and the Poetics of Embassy', in *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 84.



5. Johannes Plavius, *Sonnet über den lang gewünschten Friedens Tractat*, Danzig 1627; NL-HaNa: Aanwinsten Eerste Afdeling, 1.11.01.01, inv. no. 678

Gustav II Adolph had been wounded in the Battle of Dirschau, the Dutch ambassador rushed to the Swedish army camp, where he was given an audience with the king.³⁸ In all likelihood, Van Beaumont at that time wrote a French composition in the king's honour, entitled *Sur la blessure du Roy de Suede (On the injury of the King of Sweden)*.

³⁸ Van Aitzema, vol. 1, pp. 624–25; *Gedichten van Simon van Beaumont*, ed. by Johannes Tideman (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1843), p. xii.

He may have offered it to Gustav at some point during the mission, and the poem was in 1638 printed in The Hague, in Van Beaumont's volume of collected works.³⁹ What started as a diplomatic gift thus gained a place as a literary accomplishment amongst Van Beaumont's other compositions.

The poem praises Gustav's bravery in battle, implies that Prussia would benefit from Swedish rule, and states that the king enjoys divine protection:

What are you doing, Grand King of invincible courage,
 Clear Sun warming the cold North,
 Representing the image of Mars, the warring god,
 That your valour terrifies us?
 Vistula, which washes over the Polish bank,
 What a precious token did you cast unto the ground!
 Your fleets are happy that this Monarch lives,
 Saved from grave danger by the grace of the Gods.

(ll. 1–8)⁴⁰

In the rest of the poem, Van Beaumont argues that the Polish soldier who shot Gustav, 'the enemy', thanked God that he had not killed the king. Moreover, the blow was actually a good thing, since it would convince Gustav to be more careful, and that by preserving his own life, he would preserve everyone's. Van Beaumont thus tied his fate to that of the Swedish king.

Since Van Beaumont officially represented the Dutch States-General, his poem indirectly represented them as well. The panegyric implies that the entire Republic supports the Swedes, thus reinforcing the Dutch-Swedish alliance and obliging the Swedes to return the favour.

³⁹ Simon van Beaumont, *Horae succisivae. Tyts-snipperinghen. Rymen ende versen* ('s Graven-Haghe: Anthony Jansz. Tongerloo, 1638), n.p. The poem was reprinted in the collection's second edition: *idem, Horae succisivae. Tyt-Snipperingen* (Rotterdam: Johannes Neranus, 1640), n.p.

⁴⁰ 'Que faites vous, Grand Roy, d'invincible courage, | Clair Soleil eschauffant le froid Septentrion, | De Mars, dieu guerroyant, representant l'image, | Que ta valeur nous met en apprehension? | Vistule, qui baignez la Polonoise rive, | Que tu as mis à terre un gage precieux! | Tes flots sont bienheureux que ce Monarque vive, | Sauvé d'un grand danger par la faveur de Cieux'.

Although it is unclear whether Van Beaumont had the poem published at the time, it was in print in 1638, publicly advertising the author's political allegiance. In addition, the personal and creative character of poetry allowed Van Beaumont to come much closer to Gustav than he could otherwise be.⁴¹ Through the poem, Van Beaumont became an active participant not just of the political, but also of the intellectual discourse of diplomacy. Together, Plavius and Van Beaumont illustrate how blurry the lines between being a diplomat and being a poet in early modern Europe could be.

HOW TO REPRESENT A FAILED EMBASSY

Gustav's injury inspired another Dutchman, the king's court poet Johannes Narssius (1580–1637), to compose a tragedy entitled *Gustavus Saucius* (*The Wounded Gustav*), which was first published in Copenhagen in 1628.⁴² Near the end of the play, when Gustav has been injured in battle, the Swedish Field Marshall Johan Banér (1596–1641) exclaims that

Bicker, Honert and Van Beaumont,
The mediators of a long desired peace,
Sent by the Batavian people,
Will have come in vain.⁴³

⁴¹ This was also the case with a poem by Daniel Whistler, dedicated to Queen Christina I of Sweden. See: Holberton, p. 20. See, on the personal and intellectual aspects of poetic gift exchange in the early seventeenth-century Dutch Republic: Irma Thoen, *Strategic Affection? Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), pp. 86–89, 121–28, 184–94.

⁴² Johannes Narssius, *Gustavus Saucius Tragoedia: In qua res Sueco-Polonicae in Borussia gestae Anno MDCXXVII majore ex parte enarrantur* (Hafniae: Typis Salomonis Sartorii, 1628). The play is discussed in: Raija Sarasti-Wilenius, 'Latin Drama in the Nordic Countries', in *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 674–77. More information about both Polish and Swedish propaganda in epic literature during the Prussian War can be found in: Jakub Niedźwiedz, 'Polska i szwedzka epika propagandowa w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku', *Napis*, Seria XII (2006), 319–30.

⁴³ I have made use of the second edition: Johannes Narssius, *Gustavus Saucius Tragoedia: In qua res Sueco-Polonicae in Borussia gestae Anno MDCXXVII majore ex*

Besides giving and receiving poetic gifts, the Dutch ambassadors were thus also immortalised in literature, signalling that they were deemed ‘worthy of narrative’.⁴⁴ In this case, their brief appearance as bystanders in an epic play about the Swedish king was enough to acknowledge their efforts. However, the envoys themselves also contributed significantly to the literary representation of the embassy. This section discusses how they managed to give a positive impression to the wider public of a mission which had essentially been a fiasco.

For Narssius was not wrong: the Dutch ambassadors really had come in vain. The war in Prussia dragged on until it was finally suspended by the Truce of Altmark (Stary Targ), signed on 26 September 1629 for the duration of six years. The terms of the truce were highly favourable to the Swedes, who remained in possession of numerous cities in both Royal and Ducal Prussia, and who could now collect a 3.5 per cent toll on Danzig’s trade.⁴⁵ Even though the Dutch favoured Sweden over Poland-Lithuania, therefore, they were probably not best pleased with the eventual truce, as it did little to protect Dutch interests. In short, the mission had failed.⁴⁶

However, to quote Timothy Hampton once again: ‘diplomatic success may have less to do with what one *does* as an ambassador than it has to do with what one *writes* about what one does as an ambassador’.⁴⁷ Van Baeumont knew this full well. Upon the embassy’s return, he continued the poetic practice of diplomacy by writing *In reditu è Polonia* (*On the*

parte enarrantur (Francofurti ad Moenium: Typis Wolffgangi Hoffmanni, 1633), p. 53: ‘Pacis optatae diu | Frustra sequestri venerint Bickerius, | Honardus atque Bellimontus, Batavâ | A gente missi’. Narssius also wrote a collection of poems eulogising Gustav’s Prussian campaign: *Meva Pomerelliae obsidione Polonorum liberata ductu augustissimi Sueciae &c. Regis Gustavi Adolphi* (Stocholmiae: Typis Reusnerianis, 1627).

⁴⁴ *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature*, p. 3.

⁴⁵ See, for news reports of the truce: *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 10 November 1629, 17 November 1629. The latter issue contains an abridged version of the terms of the truce.

⁴⁶ To make matters worse, the devastations of the war and a bad harvest in 1630 led to enormous grain shortages and unprecedented high grain prices. See: Van Tielhof, pp. 47–48.

⁴⁷ Hampton, *Fictions*, p. 7.

return from Poland). While we know nothing about the distribution of the poem at the time of its probable inception, it was published together with the ode to Gustav in 1638.⁴⁸

Diplomats often made use of literary tropes and vocabularies to describe their actions,⁴⁹ for example presenting their missions as arduous journeys to distant places.⁵⁰ That is exactly what Van Beaumont did. Using terminology and *topoi* borrowed from classical literature, he described the embassy as a veritable odyssey. His main example was Ovid, who in his *Tristia* (*Lamentations*) and *Epistulae ex Ponto* (*Black Sea Letters*) deplored his banishment to Tomis (modern-day Constanța in Romania) on the Black Sea coast.⁵¹ Ovid regularly presented his place of exile as Scythia, and as a land on the edge of the world.⁵² The Roman there lived alongside the Sarmatians (or Sauromatians), an ancient people who primarily inhabited the plains of what is currently Ukraine and southwestern Russia. As the Polish nobility in Van Beaumont's time strongly identified with these Sarmatians,⁵³ and the Dutchman had travelled to Polish territories on the Baltic coast, the comparison was

⁴⁸ The piece was reprinted in the 1640 volume, as well as in an edition from 1644, which contains only Van Beaumont's Latin poems: Simon van Beaumont, *Horae succisivae* (Hagae-Comitis: Ex Officina Theodori Maire, 1644), pp. 45–48. In this edition, the title of the poem was changed to *In reditu è Legatione ad Reges Sueciae, & Poloniae* (*On the return from the Embassy to the Kings of Sweden and Poland*).

⁴⁹ Hampton, *Fictions*, pp. 6–7; *Cultures of Diplomacy*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ See, for example: Lovro Kunčević, 'The city whose 'ships sail on every wind': Representations of diplomacy in the literature of early modern Ragusa (Dubrovnik)', in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410–1800*, ed. by Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings (London, New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 65–79.

⁵¹ Ovid's exile poetry has been the subject of much scholarly debate, with some scholars even arguing that he was not banished at all. Elaborate studies of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* are provided by: Gareth D. Williams, *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's exile poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Matthew M. McGowan, *Ovid in Exile: Power and Poetic Redress in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009).

⁵² See, for example: *Trist.* I, 3.61, *Pont.* II, 2.66.

⁵³ Literature on this subject is very extensive. See, for example: Stanisław Cynarski, 'The Ideology of Sarmatism in Poland (16th–18th Centuries)', *Polish Western Affairs*, 33, no. 2 (1992), 25–43 (trans. Janina Dorosz); Maria Bogucka, *Kultura Sarmatyzmu w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku* (Warszawa: Neriton, 2016).

obvious: similarly to Ovid, Van Beaumont had visited the ‘Sarmatian shores’ and reflected on it in Latin verse.

The poem’s opening immediately refers to Ovid, as Van Beaumont mentions coming close to Arctos, the Great Bear, a constellation associated by the Roman poet with the cold northern climate of Scythia.⁵⁴ Van Beaumont writes:

After we had left the Batavian shores,
 And had seen from up close how restricted Arctos
 Was splashed by the salty stream of the sea,⁵⁵
 The Titan traversed the constellations twice six times,⁵⁶
 Filling his orbit with as many months.

(ll. 1–5)⁵⁷

Next, Van Beaumont explains how, even at his old age – he was in his fifties during the embassy – he had to interrupt his pleasant way of life and travel to the inhospitable land of the bellicose Poles. This too is a reference to Ovid, who regularly complained about being forced from his civilised, affluent and peaceful Roman home to the primitive, barren and war-torn abode of the ‘barbarous’ Sarmatians.⁵⁸ This type of stereotypical representation naturally was not meant as an accurate description of historical and geographical realities, but rather served as a literary instrument to contrast Ovid’s place of exile with Rome.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ See, for example: *Trist.* III, 10.5–12, *Pont.* IV, 10.37–42.

⁵⁵ In classical mythology, the Great Bear was forbidden to touch the surface of the sea. This explained why it did not set below the horizon. ‘Arctos’ is sometimes also translated as the Big Dipper, which is part of the Great Bear, or as both the Great and Small Bear together.

⁵⁶ The Titan is Helius, god of the sun. The passage is reminiscent of Seneca the Younger’s *Thyestes* 836–838, where ‘the leader of the stars’ is ‘guiding the procession of the years’.

⁵⁷ ‘Postquam Batavis solvimus oris, | Maris & salso gurgite tingi | Vetitam propius vidimus Arcton, | Bis sex Titan signa peregit | Implens totidem mensibus orbem’.

⁵⁸ See, for example: *Trist.* III, 3.5–14, III, 10.51–78, V, 7.13–24. Ovid’s representation of Tomis was for a large part inspired by Virgil’s *Aeneid* and *Georgics*. See: Williams, pp. 10, 21–25.

⁵⁹ McGowan, pp. 18–19. See, for an elaborate discussion of Ovid’s description of Tomis: Williams, pp. 8–25.

Accordingly, Van Beaumont portrays Poland as a savage land, with filthy dwellings scattered across a vast, uncultivated and wooded country, inhabited by cruel Sarmatians, Scythians, Poles and Cossacks – all of which seem to be synonyms. Much like Ovid, therefore, Van Beaumont characterises these peoples as the barbaric and exotic ‘other’, thus adding a sense of both hardship and wonder to his journey.⁶⁰

The Roman poet often mentioned the dangers of living amongst the warlike Sarmatians. Similarly, Van Beaumont found himself amid a raging battle between the Swedes and their Polish enemies:

The horrors of war stood all around us,
 And the war trumpet struck our nervous ears,
 And the raucous drums hit us with a dreadful beat.
 Before our eyes, across wide fields,
 An iron battle line entered
 The terrible combats of raging Mars.

(ll. 51–56)⁶¹

Luckily, Gustav II Adolph, ‘the greatest ruler of the ice-cold world’,⁶² defeated the Poles. In the end, Van Beaumont argues, it was all worth the trouble, because he got to admire Gustav’s countenance, touch his famous hand and hear him speak:

⁶⁰ Van Beaumont’s representation of Poland shows striking similarities with the poetic responses to Russia by George Turberville (c. 1540 – before 1597), discussed by Jan Hennings as ‘textual ambassadors’: literary texts with diplomatic agency, which simultaneously shaped opinions about Russia. See: Jan Hennings, ‘Textual Ambassadors and Ambassadorial Texts: Literary Representation and Diplomatic Practice in George Turberville’s and Thomas Randolph’s Accounts of Russia (1568–9)’, in *Cultures of Diplomacy*, pp. 175–89. Cf. a similar description of Poland by John Barclay in his *Icon animorum*, which featured in the second edition of Elzevier’s *Respublica sive status regni Poloniae, Lithuaniae, Prussiae, Livoniae, etc. diversorum auctorum*, published in Leiden in 1627. It is possible that Van Beaumont made use of this text (vide supra).

⁶¹ ‘Belli circum nos stetit horror, | Et tuba trepidas perculit aures, | Raucaque torvo tympana pulsu. | Ferrea nostris acies oculis | Subdita, patulis iniit campis | Horrida saevi praelia Martis’. This is probably yet another description of the Battle of Dirschau. In *Trist.* IV, 10.111, Ovid is also surrounded by ‘the sound of arms’.

⁶² ‘At tu gelidi maxime mundi | Rector’ (ll. 64–65).

For us,
 This was a great reward for such a journey,
 And a just end to hard labour.

(ll. 73–75)⁶³

Van Beaumont thus formulated various diplomatic messages, which due to his use of Latin would primarily have reached a learned (international) readership. Firstly, the comparison to Ovid brings into focus Van Beaumont's role as a travelling poet, while it also helps to represent his diplomatic mission as a trying journey into the unknown. However, the end of the poem moves away from Ovid's example. For whereas the Roman author eventually died in Tomis – leaving his *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* without a happy ending – Van Beaumont's troubles are ended, as it were, by the fact that the savage Poles are vanquished by Gustav II Adolph, whom Van Beaumont eulogises. The Dutchman thus once again expresses his (and, by extension, the Dutch Republic's) support for Sweden and antipathy towards Poland. By celebrating Gustav's victories so effusively, moreover, as well as by highlighting the author's close contact with him, Van Beaumont makes it seem as if the journey was, in fact, a success. Indeed, he makes no mention whatsoever of the peace negotiations themselves – which had, of course, led to nothing. To sum up, Van Beaumont had perfected diplomatic practice as a 'representative art'.⁶⁴

Interestingly, a published account of the embassy makes a similar impression, even though the artistic representation of the mission is achieved by distinctly other means than by allusions to classical literature. In 1632, the Amsterdam publisher Michiel Colijn issued the *Journal, Vande Legatie gedaen in de Jaren 1627. en 1628. (Journal of the embassy made in the years 1627 and 1628)*, written by Abraham Booth (1606–1636), one of the mission's secretaries (signed 'A.B.').⁶⁵

⁶³ 'magnum tanti | Fuit hoc nobis pretium cursus, | Iustaque longi meta laboris'.

⁶⁴ Craigwood, p. 82.

⁶⁵ [Abraham Booth], *Journal, Vande Legatie, gedaen inde Jaren 1627. en 1628.* (Amsterdam: Michiel Colijn, 1632). This is probably the journal which has sometimes been ascribed to Rochus van den Honert, for example in: *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek*, vol. 3, ed. by P.C. Molhuysen, P.J. Blok, and Fr.K.H. Kossmann (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1930), pp. 817–19. Booth also wrote an account of his journey to England in the years 1629–30. See: *Een Dienaer der Oost-Indische Compagnie te*

The edition is based on several richly illustrated handwritten versions, also by Booth, which can nowadays be found in Utrecht, Amsterdam and Gdańsk.⁶⁶ The appearance and writing style of Booth's book strongly resemble another account, of the Dutch mediations between Sweden and Russia in 1615–16, written by the envoy Anthonis Goeteeris (dates unknown) and published in The Hague in 1619.⁶⁷ It seems possible that Goeteeris's journal inspired Booth, as both volumes form a day to day account of the missions, and include numerous engravings of sights which the travellers came across along the way. The oblong format – typical of travel journals – is also the same. The goals of both accounts were probably comparable as well: entice a well-to-do Dutch audience with a high-quality publication about a thrilling journey to faraway lands and peoples, and underscore the international connections and influence of the Dutch Republic and its ambassadors.⁶⁸

The exotic appeal of Booth's journal is captured by the book's subtitle, which says that it will showcase 'the strange dispositions of both the land and people of Poland'.⁶⁹ These 'strange dispositions' include vast forests, bad accommodations, huge swarms of flies and mosquitos, and curiously dressed soldiers who display various acts of cruelty.⁷⁰ Even though Booth was not unappreciative of Warsaw and Danzig, and the Dutch were at times graciously received by Polish nobles,⁷¹ the Poles are clearly seen as less familiar than the Swedes: whereas Gustav II Adolph

Londen in 1629: Journael van Abram Booth en zijn Descriptie van Engelandt, ed. by A. Merens ('s-Gravenhage: A.A.M. Stols, 1942). The other secretary on the mission to Poland was Jodocus Schultsen.

⁶⁶ Utrecht: Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht (University Library Utrecht, UBU), coll. hss. 1782; Amsterdam: Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Hs-0445, inv. no. A.0145(026); Gdańsk: Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku (State Archives in Gdańsk, APG), 1016, inv. no. 58.

⁶⁷ Anthonis Goeteeris, *Journael Der Legatie ghedaen inde Jaren 1615. ende 1616.* (s'Graven-Hage: Aert Meuris, 1619). See, for a modern edition: *Op Reis voor Vrede: Met het Journael van de Nederlandse Vredesmissie naar Zweden en Rusland, 1615–1616*, ed. by Frans R.E. Blom and Peter W.A. Bas-Backer (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2014).

⁶⁸ See, for an analysis of Goeteeris's account and its context: *ibid.*, pp. 11–38.

⁶⁹ 'vreemde ghesteltenisse soo vant Landt als de Inwoonders in Polen'.

⁷⁰ [Booth], pp. 18 (forests), 29 (accommodation), 41 (flies and mosquitos), 13, 46 and 68 (Polish cruelty).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25 (Warsaw), 51–52 (Danzig), 22 and 45 (Polish nobles).



6. [Abraham Booth], *De Handelsplaetse*, in: id., *Journal vande legatie gedaen inde Jaeren 1627. ende 1628.*, [1627–28], fol. 51; Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam: Hs-0445, inv. no. A.0145(026)

spoke a Low German dialect, for example, an interpreter was needed to communicate with the Poles.⁷² In short, Poland-Lithuania is once again presented as the distant ‘other’.⁷³

Booth also recounts the negotiations themselves, the actual ‘diplomatic moment’. He tells the reader where and when the talks took place and who was present. His focus, however, lies almost entirely on outward appearances. That is because the contents of the negotiations themselves were strictly confidential, and offered only to the States-General in an official handwritten report, called a *Verbael*.⁷⁴ Booth’s account, on the

⁷² Ibid., pp. 10 (Gustav II Adolph), 15 (interpreter). However, sources show that communication with the Polish officials was mainly conducted in Latin.

⁷³ This also applies to Goeteeris’s representation of the Russians. See: Goeteeris, p. 22.

⁷⁴ NL-HaNa, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv. no. 8356. According to A.H.H. van der Burgh, *Gezantschappen door Zweden en Nederland wederzijds afgevaardigd gedurende*

other hand, has a distinctly more ‘popular’ purpose: it aims to amuse, rather than to inform. In one handwritten version, Booth made a drawing of the ‘place of negotiations’ in September 1627, showing the tents of the parties involved – the Dutch tent being the one in the middle (Fig. 6). In the printed edition, this representation has been vastly expanded, showing the troops which had come in support of both the Poles and Swedes (Fig. 7). Booth thus brings the event to life in the reader’s imagination. Neither of the accounts, however, handwritten or printed, gives any information about what went on inside the tents. Instead, Booth makes rather simple statements, such as:

On the morning of 13 [September], the Noble Lords and the Polish Lords Representatives travelled to the negotiations for the seventh time, where the Swedish Lords Representatives arrived and entered their tent. The Noble Lords went back and forth several times, without any of the two parties meeting each other, and negotiations were interrupted again in the evening.⁷⁵

de jaren 1592–1795 (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1886), p. 3, the writer of the *Verbael* was Hendrik Ruisch. In the 1650s and 1660s, the *Verbael* was used by the Dutch historian and diplomat Lieuwe van Aitzema, who gave a detailed description of the mission in his historiographical series *Saken van Staet en Oorlogh*. Latin and Polish letters, speeches and accounts concerning the war and the embassy can furthermore be found in: *Biblioteka starożytna pisarzy polskich*, vol. 5, ed. by Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki (Warszawa: S. Orgelbrand, 1844), pp. 50–77; Warsaw: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (The Central Archives of Historical Records, AGAD), AKW 3, 11^a, inv. nos 2–7; Wrocław: Ossolineum, rkps 200/II, fols 385v–88, rkps 208/II, fols 27v–29, 32v–37, rkps 209/II, fols 1–322v; Gdańsk: Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences), Ms 724, fols 134–138; Lviv: Stefanyk National Science Library, DE-457, fols 30–35. Still more sources are mentioned in: Dorobisz, *passim*. Of great importance, too, is a seventeenth-century German history of the Polish-Swedish conflict, written by Israel Hoppe. See the nineteenth-century edition: Israel Hoppe, *Geschichte des ersten schwedisch-polnischen Krieges in Preussen. Nebst Anhang*, ed. by Max Toeppen (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1887).

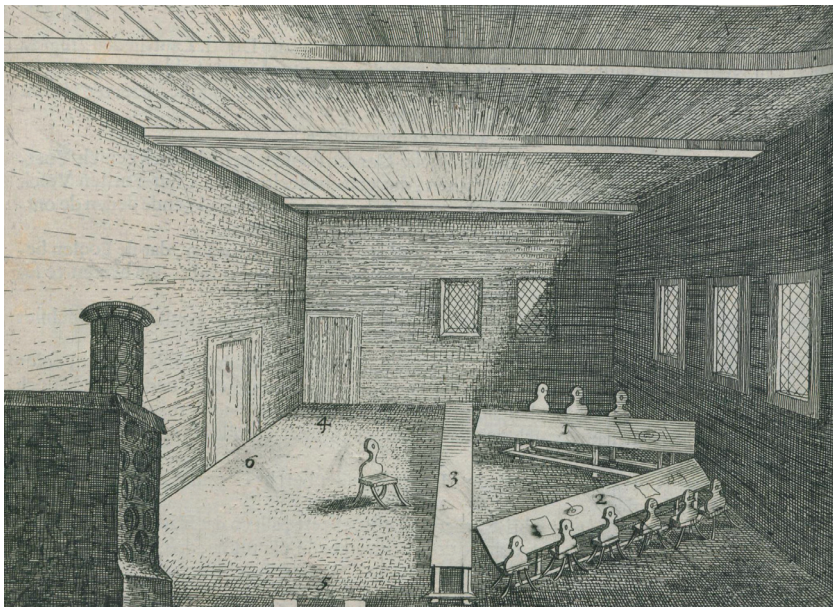
⁷⁵ [Booth], p. 46: ‘Den 13. s’morghens, zijn Haer Ed. mette Heeren Poolsche Commissarisen voor de sevende-mael naer de Handel-plaets verreyest, alwaer d’Heeren Sweetsche Commissarisen terstont mede aenghecomen ende in haer Tente ghegaen zijnde, zijn Haer Ed. tot verscheyde-malen over ende weder gheweest, sonder dat eenighe van de twee partijen by den anderen syn ghecomen, ende is de handelinghe teghen den avont wederom ghescheyden’.



7. [Abraham Booth], [*Negotiations between the Poles and Swedes in September 1627*], in: id., *Journal, Vande Legatie, gedaen inde Jaren 1627. en 1628.*, Amsterdam 1632, p. 43v; Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag: 182 G 19

A similar situation occurs when Booth describes the second round of negotiations. The printed edition contains an engraving showing the room in which the mediations were to take place (Fig. 8), including information on who would sit at what table (on the facing page). However, Booth also tells the reader that the room was never actually used for the purpose and that the mediators once again went back and forth between the Swedish and Polish representatives, who had settled in two separate farmhouses. Through this engraving, Booth seemingly takes the reader right to the negotiating table, offering an inside look at the diplomats' workshop, but all the while he says nothing about what was actually going on.

Booth's account thus seems to be a prose version of Van Beaumont's poem. Naturally, there is no comparison to Ovid, and thus no implied



8. [Abraham Booth], [*The intended place of negotiations in February 1628*], in: id., *Journael, Vande Legatie, gedaen inde Jaren 1627. en 1628.*, Amsterdam 1632, p. 68v; Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag: 182 G 19

perception of the ambassadors as travelling poets. Other aspects are, however, distinctly familiar. Like Van Beaumont, Booth presents Poland as ‘strange’, culturally different and somewhat backward, thus imbuing the mission with a mixture of exotic fascination and challenging unpleasantness. Indeed, Booth even ends by saying that the embassy had not been devoid of ‘great danger and discomfort’.⁷⁶ Again, too, the failure of the mediations is left unmentioned, and the reader’s attention is instead focussed on the diplomats’ audiences with the Polish and Swedish kings and other high-ranking individuals, as well as on the fact that there *were* mediations in the first place.⁷⁷ The Dutch ambassadors were probably pleased to see themselves be presented to the wider public as dauntless

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 84: ‘[...] niet sonder groot pericul ende ongemack’.

⁷⁷ This is probably why the embassy’s poor reception in Warsaw is not discussed. See: Van Aitzema, vol. 1, pp. 613–14.

explorers who helped mediate in an important conflict on the other side of Europe.⁷⁸

THE SECOND MISSION (1635)

In 1632, both Gustav II Adolph and Sigismund III passed away. Sigismund was succeeded by his son Ladislaus IV (1595–1648), while Christina I (1626–1689), Gustav's underage daughter, became Sweden's new monarch. However, Dutch relations with Poland and Sweden were not significantly altered. Ladislaus invited the States-General to his coronation, but they kindly declined.⁷⁹ Next, he proposed an alliance and asked for the States' help in a conflict with Sweden concerning the 3.5 per cent toll collected in Danzig.⁸⁰ The Dutch, however, would not be swayed. They answered only 'in generalibus',⁸¹ thereby safeguarding their neutrality, but indirectly supporting the Swedes. Meanwhile, the States-General remained displeased with the titles given to them by Polish envoys.⁸²

⁷⁸ Booth's account has until now not been investigated. A detailed comparison between the handwritten and published versions could potentially reveal more about the choices he made with regard to the representation of the mission.

⁷⁹ The States' decision may have been influenced by the fact that the ambassador, the Lithuanian Prince Janusz Radziwiłł, who at the time studied in the United Provinces, in early 1632 became embroiled in a scandal in Leiden. See, for a somewhat subjective, but still informative discussion of the event: Robert T. Tomczak, 'Podróż młodego magnata do szkół – książę Janusz Radziwiłł w cudzych krajach (1628–1633)', in *Spoleczne i kulturowe uwarunkowania edukacji Rzeczypospolitej XVI–XVIII wieku: Materiały z badań, część druga*, ed. by Kazimierz Puchowski (Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2018), pp. 125–48.

⁸⁰ See, for the speech by the Polish ambassador Jan Zawadzki and the response given by his Swedish counterpart Ludwig Camerarius: *Propositie vanden Ambassadeur van Polen, Gedaen ter vergaderinge vande Ho. Mo. Heeren Staten Generael der vereenigde Nederlanden. Mitsgaders een Schrifteelick Antwoordt van den Ambassadeur van Sweden: Ghesonden aende Ho. Moghende Heeren Staten Ghenerael voornoemt* ([no place]: [no publ.], 1633) (not in Knuttel).

⁸¹ Lieuwe van Aitzema, *Saken van Staet en Oorlogh, In, ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden*, vol. 2 ('s Graven-Haghe: Johan Veely, Johan Tongerlo, ende Jasper Doll, 1669), p. 8.

⁸² See: Jan Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat: Over de plaats der Vereenigde Nederlanden in het diplomatieke leven van de zeventiende eeuw* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1961), pp. 296–300.

In 1635, the year in which the Truce of Altmark would expire, the States-General sent a second mission to Poland-Lithuania, led once more by Rochus van den Honert and Andries Bicker, who were joined this time by Joachim Andreae (c. 1586–1655), member of the High Court of Frisia (Simon van Beaumont did not participate). They arrived in Danzig in May. As all the parties involved were in or around Prussia, the company did not travel south of Thorn (Toruń) or east of Königsberg. The Dutch diplomats participated in the peace negotiations, and along with French and English mediators eventually helped establish the Treaty of Stuhmsdorf (Sztumska Wieś) on 12 September 1635, signed for twenty-six years, by which the Swedes retreated from Prussia and gave up their right to collect toll on the Danzig trade. The United Provinces could breathe a sigh of relief, and the triumphant ambassadors returned home in October.

Again, however, the Dutch press remained relatively silent about the embassy, reporting predominantly about the eventual truce,⁸³ and again Hugo Grotius – who by then was Sweden’s ambassador in Paris – corresponded about it.⁸⁴ Again, too, the States-General were offered an official *Verbael* upon the embassy’s return.⁸⁵ Furthermore, one of the mission’s secretaries, Joan Huydecoper (1599–1661), the future mayor

⁸³ See, for example: *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 15 September 1635, 5 October 1635. Jan van Hilten also printed the articles of the treaty: *Vrede Articulen | Diewelcke tusschen Syne Majest. van Polen, Ende den Croon Sweden afghehandelt zijn.* (Amsterdam: Jan van Hilten, 1635) (not in Knuttel). According to the imprint, the publication was based on a copy issued in Hamburg. Another Dutch version of the articles was published by Joost Broersz.: *Articulen der Stumsdorpsche Vereeninge* (Amsterdam: Joost Broersz., 1635) (Knuttel 4375).

⁸⁴ See, for example: *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius*, vol. 5, pp. 514–15 (no. 2125: letter from Petter Spiring Silvercrona to Hugo Grotius, 30 May 1635), vol. 6, p. 5 (no. 2132: letter from Hugo Grotius to Nicolaes van Reigersberch, 5 June 1635), p. 74 (no. 2176: letter from Nicolaes van Reigersberch to Hugo Grotius, 9 July 1635), p. 224 (no. 2277: letter from Nicolaes van Reigersberch to Hugo Grotius, 17 September 1635). Grotius also corresponded with Queen Christina I of Sweden, Axel Oxenstierna and Ludwig Camerarius. Unsurprisingly, his partiality for Sweden is clearly felt throughout his correspondence.

⁸⁵ NL-HaNa, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv. nos 8375, 8376, 8377, 8378; NL-HaNa, Familiearchief De Wit Beijerman, 3.20.66.01, inv. no. 18. A collection of others papers relating to the mission can furthermore be found in: NL-HaNa, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv. no. 7311.

of Amsterdam, wrote an unofficial day to day account of the journey.⁸⁶ This text was not published, however, possibly because Booth's journal had only been on the market for three years and a similar publication might have seemed redundant. Moreover, Huydecoper's account lacks illustrations and does not present the embassy as an exotic journey in the way that Booth's journal did. Instead, Huydecoper gives more information about his personal experiences.

APPLAUDING THE AMBASSADORS

However, the embassy did inspire several poetic appraisals of the Dutch ambassadors, written by the prolific theologian, poet and historian Caspar Barlaeus (1584–1648), who at the time was a professor of philosophy and rhetoric at the Amsterdam *Athenaeum Illustre*. These panegyrics illustrate how diplomats and their activities could be reflected on in literature, as well as how important poetry could be to diplomats themselves. Once again, therefore, they are a testament to the interconnectedness between the realms of early modern poetry and diplomacy.

Barlaeus's poetic oeuvre contains no less than five Latin epigrams relating to the 1635 mission: one addressed to all the ambassadors, two written for Rochus van den Honert and one for Andries Bicker and Joachim Andreae each. Barlaeus's published correspondence reveals why he wrote these poems: in a letter addressed to his friend Joachim de Wicquefort (c. 1600–1670), dated 20 April 1635, Barlaeus remarks that he dined with the ambassadors the day before, and that Van den Honert himself 'asked me to see the legates off with epigrams'.⁸⁷ He then says that he wrote something that morning and that he will post it (presumably to Van den Honert) next week. A letter to Van den Honert, dated 25 April 1635, shows that he did so shortly before the company left for Poland: 'I am seeing you off with epigrams [...]. I have addressed

⁸⁶ Utrecht: Het Utrechts Archief, 67 Familie Huydecoper, inv. no. 2.1.04.3.41.

⁸⁷ Letter from Caspar Barlaeus to Joachim de Wicquefort, 20 April 1635, no. 287, in *Casparis Barlaei Epistolarum Liber. Pars altera* (Amstelodami: Apud Joannem Blaeu, 1667), p. 598: 'Petiit, ut Epigrammate prosequerer Legatos'. 'Epigrammate' is strictly speaking singular, but I have translated it as a plural to express the fact that there are multiple poems.

you all together and individually. [...] When you will have settled your goods on the ship, and you will be lying more comfortably, read these'.⁸⁸

Barlaeus ends his letter with the first three verses of Horace's ode I.3, in which the author appeals to the gods to safely carry his friend Virgil to Greece. A similar theme pervades the first of the five epigrams, entitled *Ad Legatos Federatorum Ordinum, componendis bellis inter Poloniae & Sueciae reges missos* (*To the Legates of the States of the United Provinces, sent to settle the wars between the kings of Poland and Sweden*). Echoing Horace, Barlaeus asks that the gods of the sea be gentle with the Dutch envoys and their ship:

Spare, Nereids, the ships which the olive of mild peace adorns,⁸⁹
 While they leave our shore.
 Do not thrust stormy billows into their sails,
 So that an ominous tempest does not injure these sacred men.
 You carry legates, Neptune, and the beloved wise men
 Of Belgium, so many brilliant lights of my fatherland.
 (ll. 1–6)⁹⁰

The references to classical mythology give the journey of the Dutch envoys an almost epic status, comparable, for example, to the quest of the Argonauts to faraway Colchis. In addition, the allusion to Horace's ode to Virgil is meant to draw the reader's attention to the literary skills of the ambassadors, specifically those of Rochus van den Honert, who wrote at least two Latin plays and numerous epigrams.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Letter from Caspar Barlaeus to Rochus van den Honert, 25 April 1635, no. 288 in *ibid.*, p. 599: 'Prosequor vos Epigrammate [...]. Alloquutus sum vos universim & viritim. [...] Ubi in navi composueris res, & jacebis mollius, ista lege'.

⁸⁹ In classical mythology, the Nereids were sea nymphs, who were believed to be friendly to sailors, such as the Argonauts.

⁹⁰ Caspar Barlaeus, *Poematum Pars II, Elegiarum et Miscellaneorum Carminum* (Amstelodami: Apud Joannem Blaeu, 1646), p. 168: 'Parcite Nereides, nostro dum littore solvunt, | Quas placidae pingit pacis oliva, rates. | Neve procellosos in carbasa trudite fluctus, | Ne violet sacros dira procella viros. | Legatos, Neptune, vehis, dilectaque Belgî | Corcula, tot patriae lumina clara meae'.

⁹¹ *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek*, vol. 8, p. 819. The epigrams were never published and may have been lost.

At the end of the poem, Barlaeus makes a reference to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the Romans, who are beset by illness, send an embassy to Aesculapius's temple at Epidaurus, in Greece. The ambassadors then take the god, in his serpent form, with them, so as to cure the Roman people.⁹² Barlaeus writes:

When the Latin ships carried the gods of Epidaurus,
 It is said that the sea pacified its waters.
 Make, Neptune, that these ships, as they promise the advantages
 Of a pleasant peace, also go with gentle southern winds.
 (ll. 11–14)⁹³

The comparison with the Roman delegates emphasises the importance of the mission, the implication being that the diplomats' actions will 'heal' the Dutch Republic, as it too will benefit from peace between the Poles and Swedes.

The other poems deal with each ambassador individually, and so highlight different topics. Bicker is presented as a magnificent lawgiver and just judge, who will surely reconcile the warring parties,⁹⁴ while the epigram to Andreae features the Frisian envoy arguing in favour of peace.⁹⁵ Interestingly, the two poems dedicated to Van den Honert focus on his own poetic talents. Mention is made, for example, of a tragedy he had published in 1611, entitled *Thamara*.⁹⁶ Van den Honert's literary activities probably explain why Barlaeus appears to have known him better than the other envoys, and why he devoted significantly more attention to him: not only did Van den Honert receive two poems, the first is also nearly as long as the two epigrams addressed to Bicker and Andreae put together. The second, shorter poem is particularly interesting, however, as it perfectly captures the strong relationship between the worlds of early modern poetry and diplomacy. In the epigram, entitled

⁹² See: Ovid *Met.* XV.622–745.

⁹³ Barlaeus, *Poematum Pars II*, p. 169: 'Cum Latiae veherent Epidauri numina puppes, | Composuisse suas dicitur aequor aquas. | Has quoque, cum blandae promittant commoda pacis, | Fac, Neptune, Notis mollibus ire rates'.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Ad Illustrem Virum R. Honerdum, Legatum (*To the Illustrious Gentleman R. van den Honert, Legate*), the addressee personifies the combination of the ‘vates’, the poetic seer, and the ‘sapiens’, the wise counsellor:

Share now your worries with the sea and land,
 Learned old man, now that you consider a journey across the sea.
 May the seas – although they are less apt for it – regard you as a poet.
 May the Sarmatian shore grow wise because of your counsels.
 May you play here, where the Naiads play with Phorcys.⁹⁷
 And may the Siren listen favourably to your elegant sounds.
 May you spread your wisdom where the court is made tasteful by royal splendour,
 And the gleaming purple ascends the snow-white ivory.
 Wherever you go, the role of so great a Batavian is twofold:
 You fulfil the tasks of either a poet or a sage.⁹⁸

The obvious comparison with Ovid reinforces the identification of Van den Honert as a poet: similarly to Van Beaumont’s *In reditu è Polonia*, the opening of the epigram is meant to be read as a reference to Ovid’s exile poetry. Hence the encouragement to Van den Honert to keep writing poems during his journey to the ‘Sarmatian shore’.⁹⁹ Overall, then, Barlaeus’s compositions liken Van den Honert to both Virgil and Ovid.

Unfortunately, we do not know how Van den Honert responded to the epigrams, even though several other compositions by Barlaeus reveal

⁹⁷ The Naiads were freshwater nymphs. Phorcys was an ancient sea god.

⁹⁸ Barlaeus, *Poematum Pars II*, pp. 171–72: ‘Cum pelago terraque tuas jam divide curas, | Docte senex, pelago dum meditaris iter. | Aequora te credant, quamvis minus apta, poëtam. | Consilii sapiat Sarmatis ora tuis. | Hic ludas, ubi Naiades cum Phorcide ludunt. | Et Siren lepidus audiat aequa sonos. | Hic sapias, ubi regali sapit aula paratu, | Et niveum fulgens purpura scandit ebur. | Quà graderis, tanti duplex persona Batavi est, | Seu vatis partes, seu sapientis obit’.

⁹⁹ The ‘Sarmatian shore’ features literally in: *Trist.* IV, 10.109, V, 3.5, and *Pont.* II, 7.71. In addition, Ovid himself stated that the writing of poetry comforted him: *Trist.* IV, 1.87–88, and IV, 10.112. According to Matthew M. McGowan, poetry as a remedy for suffering is one of the main themes of Ovid’s exile poems. See: McGowan, pp. 1–2. The combination ‘pelago terraque’, used by Barlaeus in the first verse, also features in *Trist.* III, 2.7, and (though slightly differently) in IV, 10.107; both are passages in which Ovid bewails the misfortunes he bore ‘on sea and land’. Furthermore, the purple and ivory refer to Ovid’s *Fasti* 1.79–80.

that the two continued exchanging poetry after the mission.¹⁰⁰ The fact that Van den Honert explicitly asked Barlaeus to write poems in his and his colleagues' honour is, however, indicative of the value ascribed to poetry within the practice of diplomacy. While it remains unclear if anyone apart from the addressees read the epigrams during the mission, the poetic favour granted by Barlaeus to Van den Honert probably served not only as an intellectual exercise, but also as an enhancement of the ambassadors' prestige. As they were written in Latin, Van den Honert could, in theory, showcase the epigrams to the learned Poles, Swedes and others he would meet along the way, thus giving them a clear diplomatic purpose. This might also explain why the epigrams do not take sides with either the Swedes or Poles. Barlaeus himself published the poems in his collected works volume in 1646,¹⁰¹ where they are accompanied by numerous other diplomatic compositions, for example addressed to the Swedish legate Johan Oxenstierna (1661–1657),¹⁰² son of the aforementioned Lord High Chancellor, or to the English diplomat Dudley Carleton (1573–1632).¹⁰³

The fact that the Dutch envoys' actions were acknowledged and appreciated in the war zone itself is once again proved by a play, this time from Prussia. In June 1635, upon the occasion of king Ladislaus IV's visit to Königsberg (at that time the capital of Ducal Prussia, a fiefdom of the Polish Crown), Simon Dach (1605–1659) wrote a play entitled *Cleomedes*, in which the nymph Venda (Poland) finds shelter with the herdsman Cleomedes (Ladislaus IV) and vies with another nymph,

¹⁰⁰ Barlaeus, *Poematum Pars II*, pp. 175, 190–92, 449–53, 456, 466–67. In the poem on p. 175, Barlaeus mentions that Van den Honert's 'eloquence' had pacified the Polish and Swedish kings, and that he was now writing an epic poem (the topic remains unmentioned). Also see the letter from Caspar Barlaeus to Rochus van den Honert, 26 June 1636, no. 331, in *Casparis Barlaei Epistolarum Liber*, pp. 663–64.

¹⁰¹ Barlaeus, *Poematum Pars II*, pp. 168–72. The poems would later be reprinted in: id., *Poematum Pars II, Elegiarum et Miscellaneorum Carminum* (Amstelodami: Apud Joannem Blaeu, 1655), pp. 168–72; id., *Poematum Pars II, Elegiarum et Miscellaneorum Carminum* (Francofurti & Lipsiae: Apud Johann. Christophorum Föllginer, 1689), pp. 168–72.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 272–75.

named Herophile (Sweden).¹⁰⁴ The United Provinces also have a small part in the play. They are personified by one Euspondus, whose name can be translated as ‘good mediator’. Euspondus lives up to his name, and in his brief four lines of text captures the local perception of the role played by the Dutch during the Polish-Swedish conflict:

I tell you likewise:
 Whatever effort I can muster,
 I will commit to your calmness,
 And that I may bring you to peace.¹⁰⁵

RETURNING THE POETIC FAVOUR

Following the signing of the Treaty of Stuhmsdorf, the event was celebrated by several authors in Danzig, for example by Martin Opitz (1597–1639).¹⁰⁶ A common feature of these reactions is that they praise

¹⁰⁴ Simon Dach, *Cleomedes. Der allerwehrteste und lobwürdigste trewe Hirt der Crohn Pohlen* (Königsberg: Lorentz Segebaden, 1636). The text can be found in *Die gelehrte Welt des 17. Jahrhunderts über Polen*, ed. by Elida Maria Szarota (Wien, München, and Zürich: Europaverlag, 1972), pp. 244–60. The front page lists the *dramatis personae*, and signals who the characters personify. See, for an analysis of the play: Christiane Caemmerer, *Siegender Cupido oder Triumphierende Keuschheit: Deutsche Schäferspiele des 17. Jahrhunderts, dargestellt in einzelnen Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart, Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1998), pp. 143–68.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 256: ‘Ich sag euch gleichfalls zu: | Was ich bey mir an Arbeit kan erzwingen | Das wend’ ich an zu ewrer Ruh | Und dass ich sie zum Frieden möge bringen’.

¹⁰⁶ Martin Opitz, *Lobgedicht An die Königliche Majestät zu Polen und Schweden* (Danzig: Andreas Hünefeldt, 1636). Two other examples are: *Friedens-Triumph | Wegen der vergleichung die Durch Gottes Gnad | und Zuthun Vieler christlicher Könige | Fürsten | und Stände darzu verordneten Herrn Abgesandten. Zwischen Der Kron Pohlen und Schweden zu Stumdorff in Preussen glücklichen getroffen ist. Im Jahr Christi 1635. im Monat Septemb.* ([no place]: [no publ.], [1635]), and *De Pace Auspiciis Pii Felicis Pacifici Heroi Vladislai IV, Poloniae & Sueciae Regis Borussiae restituta, ad Senatam Populumque Dantiscanum Applausus Gratulatorius* ([no place]: [no publ.], 1635), which has been ascribed to Johannes Mochinger. The two German poems can be found in Szarota, pp. 230–43. A Polish summary of the Latin poem features in *Gdańsk w literaturze: Bibliografia od roku 997 do dzisiaj*, vol. 2: 1601–1700, part 1: *Do 1656*, ed. by Zofia Tylewska-Ostrowska (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2015), p. 121.

King Ladislaus IV of Poland as a peace bringer, but leave the Dutch ambassadors unmentioned.¹⁰⁷ Although the same applies to the final poem under investigation, it does allow one last reflection on poetic diplomatic gifts.

Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679), one of the most renowned Dutch poets of the seventeenth century, composed a eulogy of the truce between Poland-Lithuania and Sweden, which was printed as a broadsheet, probably intended as a pamphlet to be distributed in and around Amsterdam. The ode is entitled *Bestand tusschen Polen en Sweden. Aen Dantzick (Truce between Poland and Sweden. To Danzig)*. The first few lines, in which Vondel addresses Danzig, immediately make clear the importance of the city: it is hailed as the ‘Beautiful Star of fertile Prussia, | Queen of the Northern region’.¹⁰⁸ The appraisal goes on:

Pearl in the crown of Poland,¹⁰⁹
 Which you honour in good times and bad:
 Beehive, great corn shed,
 To whom the livelihood has been entrusted

¹⁰⁷ The envoys are however associated with the treaty in a collection of Latin speeches given at the Gymnasium in Danzig: *Orationes XV. De Variis Argumentis In Athenaeo Urbis Gedanensis Dictae Edente Rhetore Gymnasii Ibidem prodire*, ed. by Johannes Mochinger (Gedani: E Typographeo Rhetiano, 1637). The fourth text, *De Conservata Borussia & Pace Restituta*, contains a speech delivered by the Dutch ambassadors on 27 September 1635 (pp. 62–75), in which they praise the established peace and the role played by the Polish king.

¹⁰⁸ *De werken van Vondel*, vol. 3, ed. by J.F.M. Sterck et al. (Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1929), p. 428: ‘Schoone Star van ’t vruchtbre Pruissen, | Koningin van ’t Noordsch gewest’ (ll. 1–2). These lines strongly resemble a few verses from Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski’s ode to Danzig, first printed in 1632 in Antwerp by the Plantin-Moretus press (*Lyrica* IV, 8.3–5). Research into the relationship between Vondel and the ‘Christian Horace’ Sarbiewski, a Polish Neo-Latin poet who gained international fame in the 1620s and 1630s, could reveal more similarities, particularly as both authors eulogised Poland and Ladislaus IV on multiple occasions. See, for several other Polish motifs in Vondel’s works for example: Arent van Nieuwerkerken, ‘Polonica w dwóch wierszach Vondela’, *Pamiętnik Literacki: czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej*, 84, no. 2 (1993), 119–25.

¹⁰⁹ Vondel may be referring to the *Korona*, or the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland, the political denomination of the leading provinces and heart of the Commonwealth.

Of so many lands and realms:
 Many people's keep and refuge.
 (ll. 7–12)¹¹⁰

Unlike Van Beaumont, Vondel does not channel any anti-Polish sentiments. On the contrary: whereas Van Beaumont presented Poland as a barren, uncultivated wasteland, Vondel praises the country for its fertility. In addition, he applauds Danzig for its loyalty to the Polish king and – much like Martin Opitz and others – lavishly praises Ladislaus IV for establishing peace and defeating the Turks. This poetic rapprochement with Poland might partly be explained by Vondel's Remonstrant sympathies,¹¹¹ but it is also an acknowledgement of the restoration of Poland's power over Prussia. Danzig, the mighty port to which the ode is addressed, is congratulated in particular, as it can focus once again on the grain trade:

I see how the Vistula from its barges
 Shakes, without opposition,
 Into your open lap
 A mass of piled-up grains.
 Once again, I hear of your wealth,
 Now that the drum is silent.
 (ll. 43–48)¹¹²

Whether or not Vondel had been commissioned to write the poem remains unclear, but it seems likely that he expected some kind of favourable treatment by the Amsterdam regents in return.¹¹³ Most of them will have

¹¹⁰ *De werken van Vondel*, vol. 3, p. 428: 'Parel aen de kroon van Polen, | Die ghy eert in soet en suur: | Bijkorf, groote korenschuur, | Wie de noodruft is bevolen | Van soo menigh land en Rijkck: | Veler menschen burgh en wijck'.

¹¹¹ Indeed, Vondel even turned Catholic around the year 1640. See: Judith Pollmann, 'Vondel's Religion', in *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 85–100.

¹¹² *De werken van Vondel*, vol. 3, p. 429: 'k Sie den Wyssel uit sijn kaenen | Schudden sonder tegenstoot | In uw' opgedaenen schoot | Maght van opgeleide graenen. | 'k Hoor uw weelde wederom, | Na het swygen van de trom'.

¹¹³ See, on the concept of poetical patronage in Amsterdam in the case of Vondel's contemporary Jan Vos: Nina Geerdink, 'Stadsdichterschap in de Zeventiende Eeuw. Jan Vos (1610–1667) en Amsterdam', *Spiegel der Letteren*, 53, no. 4 (2011), 443–60.

shared his joy over the treaty, as it meant that the all-important trade with Danzig could go on unhindered.¹¹⁴ By applauding the truce, moreover, Vondel indirectly praised the diplomatic achievements of the Dutch ambassadors, among whom was Andries Bicker, the mayor of Amsterdam.

In addition, the eulogy's title implies that the ode was intended to be read by residents of Danzig itself as well. Many Danzigers could read Dutch, and Vondel's poem would no doubt be welcomed as an expression of solidarity. The ode can thus not only be interpreted as a Dutch celebration over the signing of a peace treaty and the blossoming of commercial ties, but also as a diplomatic tool within these relations, a poetic gift bolstering the bonds between Amsterdam and Danzig. Importantly, this is not the only internationally oriented poem with diplomatic agency in Vondel's vast oeuvre. Among numerous other examples, Vondel had in 1632 composed a eulogy of Gustav II Adolph,¹¹⁵ and many years later, in 1657, during the next Polish-Swedish war, he would write an appraisal of Tobiasz Morsztyn (*c.* 1624–1664), the Polish ambassador in Copenhagen.¹¹⁶

Looking at Vondel's ode to Danzig in a diplomatic context, it is tempting to interpret the composition as a response to the sonnet by Johannes Plavius, even though there is no proof that Vondel knew this work. Like all diplomatic gifts, Plavius's sonnet demanded reciprocity, a favour which had not yet been returned. Similarly to Plavius, Vondel took on the role of a diplomat by offering Danzig a poem which spoke not just on behalf of himself, but on behalf of Amsterdam, Holland and perhaps even the entire Dutch Republic. Even though he was not officially involved, therefore, Vondel engaged in public diplomacy. It is as if he were saying to Plavius: 'We have heard your call for peace, we have delivered it, and now we celebrate it with you'.

¹¹⁴ Vondel's role as a public figure is discussed in Mieke B. Smits-Veldt and Marijke Spies, 'Vondel's Life', in *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age*, ed. by Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 51–83, esp. 61–66. Additionally, Vondel might have been personally involved as well: Joost Nieuwerkerck, an Amsterdam grain merchant who went bankrupt in 1629, had been married to Vondel's sister Sara, who had died in 1630.

¹¹⁵ *De werken van Vondel*, vol. 3, pp. 377–99.

¹¹⁶ *De werken van Vondel*, vol. 8, ed. by J.F.M. Sterck et al. (Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1935), pp. 622–24.

CONCLUSION

The Dutch mediations between Poland-Lithuania and Sweden in 1627–28 and 1635 shed new light on the relations between diplomacy and literature in early modern Europe. The Polish-Swedish war in Prussia was of great interest to the United Provinces, and was elaborately discussed in newspapers and -prints, pamphlets, personal correspondence and historiographical treatises. Even though the embassies themselves did not feature prominently in contemporary Dutch news media, they did inspire various literary works. These sources illustrate how early modern European literary and diplomatic practices overlapped and influenced each other.

Firstly, poems played an important role as diplomatic gifts, through which the authors participated in the intellectual discourse of diplomacy, and expressed feelings of solidarity, gratitude, joy, hope and other emotions. The personal and creative character of poems made it possible to communicate closely with the addressee, presenting the author's own talents and opinions. At the same time, diplomatic poetry used literary vocabularies to transmit messages about the allegiances and endeavours of the states the authors represented. Poems – especially printed poems – generally did not stay confined to the palaces of princes and regents, but could be distributed amongst a wider audience. In other words, poems such as these were *public* diplomatic gifts: depending on their distribution, they could reach a vast and varied readership.

Moreover, the cases of Johannes Plavius, Simon van Beaumont and Joost van den Vondel illustrate how fluid the functions of diplomats and poets were. Being a diplomat in early modern Europe often involved being a poet as well. Hence a poet could just as easily become a part-time diplomat: both could use the tool of poetry in diplomatic practice. Poets not only *commented* on the political situation, therefore. Instead, they were *part* of it, actively shaping public opinions and international relations – in various languages. Simon van Beaumont tried to win the Swedish king's good opinion with his French eulogy, while Johannes Plavius attempted to strengthen the ties between Danzig and the United Provinces with his German sonnet. Joost van den Vondel then returned the favour with his Dutch appraisal of Danzig, while also reaching out to Poland-Lithuania as a whole by complementing Ladislaus IV.

The value ascribed to poetry within the practice of diplomacy is furthermore underscored by the request to Caspar Barlaeus by Rochus van den Honert, to see him and his fellow delegates off with a number of Latin epigrams.

While literature formed an integral and essential part of diplomacy, diplomacy was also a favourite subject within literature itself. Various both textual and visual sources have revealed how the ambassadors and their missions were perceived and presented. The plays by Johannes Narssius and Simon Dach broadcast the role of the Dutch – albeit briefly – as the bringers of peace. In other sources – those in which the Dutch embassies take centre stage – the image of the ambassadors and their activities is significantly more intricate. The Latin poems by Simon van Beaumont and Caspar Barlaeus demonstrate their awareness of the entanglement between the realms of diplomacy and poetry. In particular, their references to Ovid – the exiled poet who lived amongst the Sarmatians – accentuate the Dutch diplomats' role as poets. Barlaeus made the implication explicit, moreover, by stating that Rochus van den Honert was both a 'sapiens' and a 'vates'. The compatibility of these functions was thus not only proved by active practice, but also poetically acknowledged and encouraged.

A second motif, which recurs in the works by Van Beaumont and Booth, is that of the embassies as arduous and dangerous journeys into the far-flung and wild unknown. This is accomplished mostly by the foregrounding of Poland's 'otherness', which Van Beaumont crafted out of classical allusions and Booth defined by the country's 'strange dispositions'. In combination with Van Beaumont's description of his close contact with the triumphant Gustav II Adolph, as well as Booth's tempting yet limited portrayal of the mediations, the exotic nature of the expedition in turn helped to camouflage the fact that the mission was, in fact, a failure. The relativity of this type of representation is, however, illustrated by Barlaeus. He also used references to classical literature, but as his epigrams do not paint a negative picture of Poland *per se*, they present the second embassy as the positive counterpart of the first: instead of a strenuous journey full of hardship, it seems more like an epic quest in the style of the Argonauts, or of the Roman envoys to Epidaurus. Much like poetic gifts, these literary reflections on 'the

diplomatic moment' had public diplomatic agency, simultaneously voicing political opinions and creating artistic images of the diplomats themselves.

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