

Languages of Diplomacy in the Eighteenth-Century World

International conference

Moscow, January 13-14, 2022

German Historical Institute in Moscow

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Eighteenth-century diplomacy adopted French as its main professional language, moving away from Latin and German. However, we know little about the pace and the mechanisms of and the reasons for this global linguistic shift. For example, linguistic practices of nobility influenced the choice of languages in diplomacy. Indeed, major posts in diplomacy were at the time occupied by aristocrats who embraced a model of education where the ability to socialize in French played a central role, while Latin gradually ceased to be an important part of curricula in the education of nobility. We propose to explore this change through case studies focused on the polities that were the leading players in international politics of that period and for many of whom languages were an important element of their identity and political agenda: France, the Habsburg monarchy, the Russian Empire, Great Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, and, towards the end of the period, the USA. Studies on other countries and language communities are welcome as well. We are inviting submissions of papers presenting the results of original research on this topic, including, but not limited to, the following aspects:

- the choice of languages in various genres and types of communication among diplomats;
- new trends in language use and persistence in some geographic areas of traditional languages of diplomacy (Latin, German, Spanish);
- normative prescriptions and official policies regarding language use;
- new trends in sociability among diplomats and the use of languages by them in non-professional settings;
- teaching languages to future diplomats and translators in diplomatic services, in formal and informal settings;
- translation and the formation of diplomatic terminology;
- language lobbying in negotiations, preparation of diplomatic treaties and other diplomatic documents, etc.

Specialists in various disciplines such as historical sociolinguistics and social history of languages, new diplomatic history, history of education and of sociability are welcome to submit their proposals. The period under consideration is the “long” eighteenth century stretching from the middle of the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.

Proposals (including title, name and affiliation of the participant, abstract of about 200 words) should be submitted to: vladislav.rjeoutski@dhi-moskau.org

The deadline for proposal submission is **September 15, 2021**.

Prospective participants will be notified about acceptance or rejection of their proposals by the end of September, 2021.

Depending on the situation with COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the conference will be held online or in a mixed offline/online format. The organizers might be able offer financial and visa support for the participants travelling to Moscow.

Working languages of the conference are English and Russian (working languages can be modified depending on the languages of the proposals submitted).