



Seminar

JAN HENNINGS

Fellow, SCAS.

Associate Professor of History, Central European University, Vienna

*Diplomacy and Empire:
Peter Tolstoi in Istanbul and Russian-Ottoman
Entanglements in the Age of Tsar Peter the Great*

Tuesday, 26 January 2021, 2:15 p.m.

Due to the precautions imposed by the current Corona pandemic, the Thunberg Hall will be closed to the public until further notice.

You are therefore invited to join the seminar via Zoom instead:

<https://uu-se.zoom.us/j/62602890475>

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ABOUT JAN HENNINGS

Jan Hennings holds a BA in both History and German Language and Literature from the University of Rostock and an MPhil and a PhD in History from the University of Cambridge. He was a Junior Research Fellow at St John's College, Oxford, from 2009 to 2013 and spent two years as Gerda Henkel Fellow and Visiting Professor at Sabanci University in Istanbul before joining the faculty of Central European University. Hennings is an Associate Editor of the *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* and serves on the editorial board of *Diplomatica: A Journal of Diplomacy and Society*. He is a member of the Junge Akademie at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina.

Hennings is a historian of the early modern period, specializing in Russian-European and, more recently, Russian-Ottoman relations. He is the author of *Russia and Courty Europe: Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648-1725* (Cambridge, 2016), which won the 2017 Book Prize of the Early Slavic Studies Association, an affiliate organization of the Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). His research has yielded several journal articles and book chapters in the field, and he co-edited *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, c. 1410-1800* (London, New York, 2017).

While at SCAS, Hennings will work on a monograph-length study of Russian-Ottoman relations in the early eighteenth century, exploring the life and office of the first Russian Resident Ambassador in Istanbul, Peter A. Tolstoi.

ABSTRACT

European identity is closely linked to Europe's historical relations with Turkey and Russia and the two multi-ethnic, multi-confessional land empires from which they emerged. By the same token, Europe (or "the West") served as an important reference point for both self-identification and self-demarcation in the history of the Russian and Ottoman Empires. While these "East-West" exchanges have always figured strongly in Russian and Ottoman studies, the relations between Moscow and Istanbul themselves remain a fascinating but little studied field in early modern history. To uncover the complex relations between the two empires, that Europeans often portrayed as their "oriental" counterparts, I study diplomatic practice as a space of cultural, religious, and political entanglements within and between these "orients." The main objective is to locate the two empires in a political order which is not limited to the idea of an exclusive states system of emerging European great powers but that takes account of early modern foreign relations as a process of global exchanges between societies with different socio-political norms, notions of sovereignty, and forms of diplomatic representation. The focus of the resulting monograph is on the first Russian resident embassy in Istanbul at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The book asks how a specific type of an early modern institution – the permanent ambassador – emerged in imperial contexts.

In my presentation, I will give a brief overview of the book project and then discuss the question of how empires represented themselves to each other by exploring performances of sovereignty and ritualized encounters between the Russian ambassador, the Ottoman court, and members of the European diplomatic corps in Istanbul.