

**PRELUDE TO PEACE:
RUSSIAN ENVOYS TO BEIJING, 1619-1674**

by

BRIAN O'DONNELL

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This Thesis examines the experiences and results of the earliest Russian envoys to Beijing through a study of accounts written by both the Russians and the Chinese who participated in them. By examining these historically important events, I clarify the process by which these two empires eventually came to terms. The time period studied encompasses the earliest official contacts between Moscow and Beijing. This thesis challenges the idea that these missions were 'failures.' Individually, the Petlin, Baikov, Ablin and Spafarii missions met with little success, but examined together they are indicative of a broader diplomatic process. By developing a rudimentary framework for mutual understanding, they played a role in later, more successful, contacts.

Keywords: Imperial Russia, Posolskii Prikaz, Petlin, Baikov, Ablin, Spafarii

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Introduction

The history of the earliest contacts between Imperial China and the territory then known as *Rus'* began simply and suddenly. In the 13th century CE, Mongol armies swept across the steppes of Eurasia, quickly subjugating Northern China and much of what was then a politically divided *Rus'*. The massive size of the new Mongol empire, quickly divided though it was, brought the two geographically distinct regions of *Rus'* and China into real contact for the first time.

It was not until 1582, during the reign of Ivan IV, that the Russians again considered making contact with the empire on their rapidly expanding southeastern frontier. Cossacks and hunters had begun to spread throughout Siberia, claiming ever more land in the name of their Tsar. Even then, the Russians only really began to search for a Siberian route to China in order to prevent the British from finding and developing one first.¹ When Ivan IV, the Tsar at the time, died before the mission could be organized, the Tsarist state once again focused its attentions elsewhere. Another attempt was made in 1609, and although it failed to reach Beijing, the concept had taken root in the collective minds of the Russian court. Within ten years, the first Tsarist envoy would finally reach Beijing, the capital of Imperial China, and in so doing, inaugurate a century of frequent, if fitful, economic and political contacts between the two empires.

The 17th century would see several Tsarist envoys sent to Beijing, although no Chinese envoys made the journey from Beijing to Moscow. While the Tsar ruled over a powerful kingdom in Europe, his envoys to China were forced to balance his interests in

¹ Quested 1984, 26.

the region against the fact that the Russian presence in Siberia was still quite fragile, consisting of nothing more than a few, frequently besieged forts. As official emissaries of the Tsar, these envoys had to manage the complex web of customs that dominated court life in Imperial China, significant language barriers, and most crucially, the fundamentally alien (to them) views on the nature of diplomacy held by the Ming and Qing courts. This study will examine the earliest, stuttering steps taken by the Russian envoys as they attempted to navigate this entirely foreign system.

Despite numerous setbacks over the course of the 17th century, these decades concluded with the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, which more or less defined the border between the two empires for the next one hundred and fifty years. Peter Perdue, in his essay on the negotiations at Nerchinsk, highlights the magnitude of this achievement, it was the first formal treaty between Imperial China and a European power and can be compared with the failure, one hundred years later, of the British sponsored MacCartney mission. Perdue attributes the success of Nerchinsk in part to the Russians' flexibility and superior knowledge of the region, relative to the British.² This essay seeks to explore that hypothesis through the experiences of Tsarist envoys to Beijing prior to Nerchinsk. To this end, an in depth analysis of the records from the Russian missions to China from 1619 to 1676 will be carried out, both from the perspective of the Tsarist officials in Moscow who sent them their instructions as well as the envoys themselves, as they met with and negotiated with Imperial Chinese

² Perdue 2010, 345.

officials in an attempt to formalize ties and allow for open trade.³ While most of these missions have been studied in various forms before, the focus has typically been on each mission as a discrete event. By examining the documentary records of the entirety of the Russian missions from this period, however, it becomes clear that each mission built upon the knowledge gleaned from the last, and that as the century wore on, the Russian envoys grew increasingly competent at negotiating with Qing officials, a process which culminated with the mission of Nikolai Spafarii in 1675. While none of the Tsarist envoys sent to Beijing can lay claim to complete success, though one, a Bukhara born merchant named Seitkul Ablin comes close, this slow, steady, and often painful process would prove invaluable to each envoy's successors. As each mission is traced successively, the general outline of Tsarist understanding of Qing China becomes more clear, allowing for an analysis of which lessons the Tsar and his officials were willing to learn, and which compromises they was willing to make.

It is this process that is the focus of this paper. Specifically, it will detail the efforts of various Tsarist envoys to establish a formal relationship with Qing China during the 17th century, preferably, though as will be seen, not necessarily, on European terms, as well as the Qing response to their attempts.

³ This time frame offers several distinct advantages. First, with the exception of the first successful envoy to Beijing, Ivan Petlin, all of these missions occurred during the reign of a single Tsar, who could be expected to have a relatively stable goal in mind. Second, by breaking off before the much more heavily studied period of Nerchinsk, this time frame allows for more space to focus on an area that has received less scholarly attention. For those interested in the topic of Nerchinsk, I would recommend Peter Perdue's article "Boundaries and Trade in the Early Modern World: Negotiations at Nerchinsk and Beijing" for a complete overview.

Literature Review

One of the earliest and most comprehensive analyses of Russian activity in China and Mongolia during this period was John F. Baddeley's record of the relations between these three regions from 1602 to 1676, *Russia, Mongolia, and China*. First published in 1919, it is a collection of primary documents, and is supplemented by Baddeley's own analysis of the various Russian missions to the Far East. Baddeley's main interest lies in the historiography of the topic, and, as such, most of his efforts are concentrated on dispelling various misconceptions about the missions, both in their goals and outcomes.⁴ His overall insights are sound, however, and the range and depth of his work remain impressive.

In addition to Baddeley, there are two full-length scholarly monographs on the subject of Sino-Russian relations in the 17th century. The first, published in 1980 in the Soviet Union by V.S. Miasnikov, takes a particularly negative view of the "feudal" and "anachronistic" approach to diplomacy practiced by the Qing court. However, his work remains a comprehensive and excellent overview of the period, and contains an analysis of every major Tsarist mission to Beijing, and, of equal interest, his views on Qing motives and goals in the region.

The second of the two monographs mentioned above is Vincent Chen's *Sino-Russian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, published in 1966. There is significant overlap between Chen's work and that of Miasnikov, with the primary distinction being Chen's more neutral stance on Qing ritual. Like Miasnikov, Chen provides a

⁴ Baddeley 1963, 204-219. As an example, he takes a recent publication of *A Description of China* to task for failing to realize that the work, attributed to Nikolai Spafarii in the Slavic world, was in fact a direct translation of an earlier Jesuit work.

comprehensive narrative account of the various individual attempts by Russian envoys to negotiate with the Qing court in Beijing.

Another book length study of early Sino-Russian diplomatic contacts is Mark Mancall's *Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728*. Mancall extends the time period of Miasnikov and Chen's studies to the negotiations at Kiakhta in the 1720s, and also provides an excellent account of the Spafarii mission of 1675. His account of Spafarii's work is less conspicuously biased against the Qing than Miasnikov's later study, perhaps because he framed the encounter as the result of two separate ways of seeing the world coming into contact for the first time, or a "Conflict of Assumptions," rather than as a superior viewpoint being rejected by an inferior society in favor of an obsolete ideal.⁵

In addition to his study of Russian and Chinese diplomatic relations, Mancall also produced a general diplomatic history of China from the late 17th century through the late 20th century. His excellent summation of the topic was of particular use as contextual background.

In his *China Marches West*, Peter Perdue examines the practices and expansion of the Qing dynasty. Perdue relates developments during both the Ming and Qing periods to events in Muscovy, and he highlights the comparative elements of Qing conquest of Outer Mongolia and the Muscovite advance into Mongolia and the Amur River basin. In addition to this book-length study of Qing expansionism, Perdue has also written extensively on the negotiations in Nerchinsk, not only on their form, but their place relative to later negotiations conducted between Europeans and the Qing.

⁵ Mancall 1971, 82.

In terms of Chinese language sources, *The Sino-Russian Nerchinsk Treaty of 1669*, by the Qing Dynasty research group at Beijing Normal University gives the Chinese perspective on events. While their accounts of the events that led up to Nerchinsk, including the envoys and Cossack incursions into the Amur River basin are largely similar to those found in English language sources, from a linguistic perspective, significant emphasis is placed on the “invasive” nature of Tsarist actions during the 17th century. Rather than viewing the area as a frontier region, portray it as an integral part of “China,” even then.⁶

Very little has been written about Russians in China proper during the Yuan period. In the primary record, the main extant description of their time there comes from the *Yuan Shi*, or *Chronicles of the Yuan Dynasty*, a history compiled during the early Ming Dynasty. Emil Vasilyevich Bretschneider, who worked as a physician to the Russian Legation in Beijing during the late 19th century, was among the first Europeans to look explicitly at the relationship between the Mongols and Yuan China and their neighbors. Based primarily on Chinese texts purchased by the Imperial Russian government, his work was the first to highlight the Russian presence in China during the Yuan period. His *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* is a fascinating look at the still developing study of the relationship between Yuan China and Western Asia, with a strong focus on primary sources.

Building on the work of Bretschneider, in 1951 the German scholar Herbert Franke published his “Europe in the Historiography of East Asia in the 13th and 14th Centuries.” For the purposes of this study, Franke’s most relevant contribution was the

⁶ Beijing Normal University Qing Dynasty Research Group 1977, 38-99.

translation of important sections of the *Yuan Shi* from classical Chinese into a modern vernacular, with a specific focus on those passages related to Russia and the Russian presence in China.

Finally, two additional monographs merit mention here. The first, Ken Shen Weigh's *Russo-Chinese Diplomacy: 1689-1924*, published in 1928, is largely focused on the then pressing matter of early Sino-Soviet relations and affairs, but he devotes a section to discussing the early relations between Qing China and Tsarist Russia. The second work is R.K.I. Quested's 1984 study *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History*, which, in addition to providing a brief study of pre-Nerchinsk contacts, also contains a comparative history of the two regions under Mongol rule, unique among the various works mentioned here.

The Treaty System

Prior to discussing the missions sent by the Russians to Beijing, it will be useful to first examine what has come to be known as "the treaty system." This system, in reality simply an overarching term invented by scholars to describe the various interlocking obligations and rituals that defined foreign policy according to a Sino-centric worldview, was of vital importance to the experience of all the Russian envoys and merchants in China. Generally speaking, the Chinese did not conceive of boundaries between rival civilizations, only of the boundaries between civilization and barbarians. In order to be considered "civilized," it was necessary to observe certain ceremonies, forms and practices, all of which were designed to reinforce the emperor's

position as the Son of Heaven.⁷ Presentation of tribute to the emperor was thus, as Mancall notes, a “ritual appropriate to maintenance of the world order; recognition not simply or even necessarily of *China’s* superior civilization, but of civilization itself, whose highest point was the emperor of China, whoever he was.”⁸ The emperor would then confer upon the tributary formal recognition through the issuance of patents of office, and send gifts of his own in return, completing the reciprocal but necessarily hierarchical nature of the relationship.⁹

This system was modified over time, and took slightly different forms depending on the dynastic period. Under the Yuan, for example, it was relatively relaxed, and the Qing gave the Mongols special consideration.¹⁰

When it came to the practical implication of this system, certain tenets were more prominent than others. In their negotiations with Nikolai Spafarii in the late 17th century, for example, the Mongolian Office of the Qing court provided a clear and concise description of exactly what they expected of foreign dignitaries, divided into three articles, all designed to reinforce the Emperor’s claim to be the spiritual center of the world. First, every ambassador who visits China “must frame his speech as if he came “up” from a humble and inferior place to an exalted one,” and that in reporting his arrival to the Emperor, the councilors would state “[this Ambassador] has come from such and such a Sovereign, from a lower place to Your most exalted Throne, to strike his forehead on the ground.”¹¹

⁷ Mancall 1971, 4.

⁸ Mancall 1984, 22; 14-39.

⁹ Mancall 1984 38-39.

¹⁰ Brook 2010, 219; Mancall 1971, 4-5.

¹¹ Baddeley 1963, 408.

The second article dictated that “all gifts sent by any sovereign, whosoever, through his ambassador, to the Khan, are called by us in our report not gifts but tribute.” And finally, the third article stated that when the Emperor himself makes gifts to other sovereigns, they should be referred to as “gifts,” or “presents.” Failure to accept these three conditions precluded an ambassador or state from entering into a formal diplomatic relationship with Imperial China. These were the terms that the Qing gave to Spafarii in 1675, and the system they represented would later be the basis of numerous arguments between the Qing and European diplomats during the MacCartney mission, among others.

The Mongolian Office

Shortly before the formal establishment of their dynasty, the Manchu’s created the “Mongolian Office,” to handle all affairs related to the Mongols along the northeastern border of their new empire, and when the Russians arrived in Beijing, it was the Mongolian office that would be responsible for dealing with them.

Russian inclusion under the purview of the Mongolian Office, while perhaps striking at first, is consistent with the long-term trends of Sino-Russian history. Contact between the two regions began in the 13th century, when Mongol armies swept into what is now western Russia, overwhelming the vast majority of the city-states that comprised the region’s political fabric.¹² As the Mongol Empire began to split, the Russian city-states found themselves ruled by the Golden Horde. Subservient to the Great Khan at Khan-Balyk, at least nominally, the first Russians in China were sent as tributes to the Great Khan. As early as 1254 Christian missionaries to Karakorum

¹² Vernadsky 1953, 32-54.

reported encountering Russians in the employ of the Mongol court, and it was not long afterwards that Russian mercenaries and hostages found their way into China itself.

The earliest mention of tributes from *wo-luo-si* (*Rus'*) in the *Chronicles of the Yuan Dynasty* appears in 1331, and is connected with the tribute system.¹³ In 1331, a relation of the Chancellor named Satun “presented 16 Russian families. For this he was rewarded with 107 ingots (*Ting*) of silver and 500 *ting* of Paper money. [The Russians] were ordered to spend the winter in the pastures...they were also given sheep from the state stocks for pasturing.” Franke makes note of three additional instances in the *Yuan Shi* where Russians were given as tribute, all from 1332: one consisting of 170 Russians, another of 2500, and finally one of 30. Each exchange followed the same pattern as Satun’s gift, with the giver being rewarded by the court for his generosity.¹⁴ In addition, while the majority of the tributes were soldiers, it is also clear that there were Russian families living in Yuan China during the 14th century.

By 1330, there were enough Russians in the employ of the Yuan from one source or another to warrant the creation of a bodyguard unit for the Chinese Emperor comprised entirely of Russians. According to the *Yuan Shi*, in the fifth month of that year “the office of ‘captain of the Ten-Thousand unit of the Life guards’ [with the name of] ‘the Herald of Fidelity’ was created...[and it] commanded Russian troops, and was

¹³ Franke 1951, 70.

¹⁴ Franke 1951 71-72. Franke makes an interesting observation here based on the language used in the Chinese original. Of the three gifts presented in 1332, two came from sinicized Mongols, and one from the Golden Horde. In recording the gifts, the officials used the term *hen* or “offered up” to describe the tribute of the former two, and *kung*, or “brought tribute” to describe the latter. As Franke notes, this suggests that members of the Golden Horde were already thought of as ‘foreigners’ in the Yuan court by this time.

subordinate to the Privy Council.”¹⁵ According to Paul Ratchnevsky, the goal of this unit may have been to protect the emperor while on tour.¹⁶ Such arrangements were not uncommon during the Yuan, as Buell notes, and “multinational cadres served also to allay the Mongol minority’s basic distrust of the various ethnic groups over which they ruled.”¹⁷ They provided a source of manpower more likely to be loyal than the native Chinese. The Russians were hardly the only nationality used in this manner, as Franke and Bretschneider note that in addition to the Russians, there were Alans, Tangut, Jurchen, Koreans, and Kipchaks, among others, serving the Yuan at the capital.¹⁸

Whatever their purpose, the unit was both significant enough in size, and permanent enough in conception, that five months later it received a grant of land north of the Mongol capital. “In the 10th month...there was founded north of Tai-tu (modern day Beijing) a settlement for the ‘Ten-Thousand unit of the Life Guards, Heralds of Fidelity.’ There, over 130 k’ing (about 800 acres) of farmland has been turned over from the civilian population and this colony founded.”¹⁹ The Russians also seem to have seen this as a long-term arrangement, soon requesting agricultural implements in order to begin cultivating the land.²⁰

The record of Russian activities in China during this period runs dry shortly after it begins. The last mention of the Russian unit in the *Yuan Shi* is from 1339, when

¹⁵ Franke 1951, 70; Bretschneider 1910, 80; Vernadsky 1953, 87. According to Franke and Bretschneider, the “Privy Council,” as Franke renders it, refers to the top council in charge of military affairs. For the sake of consistency among English language sources, I have here borrowed Vernadsky’s translation of the unit’s name.

¹⁶ Franke 1951, 70.

¹⁷ Buell 1993, 466.

¹⁸ Franke 1951, 70; Bretschneider 1910, 81.

¹⁹ Franke 1951, 70.

²⁰ Franke 1951, 70. The Russians were also forbidden to hunt for their own gain on these lands, and it was recorded that those who broke this rule would be “prosecuted and punished.”

it notes that the Chancellor Bayan had been named the new commander of the unit.

However, two clues hint at the potential existence of both informal and formal ties after the Yuan.

The first of these lies in a report of the 16th century Portuguese traveler Mendez Pinto. While traveling in China, Pinto claimed to have met a group of Russians, either prisoners or servants of the Mongols, in Shanxi in the mid 16th century.²¹ He describes them as “tall blond men from the land of Moscooby armed with long broadswords and wearing robes lined with sables.”²² Their presence there was apparently unknown to the Muscovite government, which was still searching for reliable information on routes to China through Siberia.

Even more intriguing is a note included by Nikolai Spafarii in his account of his negotiations with the Qing in 1674. As part of his instructions, he had been ordered to bring four letters believed to be from the Chinese emperor back to Beijing, so that they might be translated. Two of the letters were of ordinary importance, one recent, the other old, and had been sent by the Manchus to the Tsar over the course of the 17th century. The other two, however, have a far more interesting background. They were not addressed to the Tsar, as they had been sent to local “mandarins” of the Amur during the reign of Zhu Di, the third emperor of the Ming Dynasty, who reigned from 1402 to 1424, over a hundred years before Ivan IV first adopted the title of Tsar.²³ Neither Spafarii nor his host seemed to have a clear idea how they came into the

²¹ Shanxi, or Shaanxi as it has sometimes been transliterated, is a province located in Northern China, not too far from Beijing.

²² Quested 1984, 22; Weigh 1928,4.

²³ Baddeley 1963, 365. Miasnikov 1984, 167. Miasnikov here gives the somewhat unlikely translation of “boyars” of the Amur, instead of Mandarins, which is taken from Baddeley.

possession of the Posolskii Prikaz (the department which had sponsored Spafarii's mission) in Moscow. Unfortunately, Spafarii says no more about these letters, and they do not seem to appear in the documentary record. Still, they suggest that there may have been official contact between Imperial China and Moscow, even after the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty.

In any case, while formal contacts between Imperial China and what would become Tsarist Russia during the period from the end of the 14th century to the beginning of the 17th century are few, they left an impression. While R.K.I. Quedstedt is likely accurate in her assessment of this period as a brief blip in the history of contacts between the regions, in that it did not lead to increased communication or intercourse between the two regions, and that it did not signify any major changes in the status of either Imperial China or Eastern Europe, it did leave a legacy. In the 17th century, both Tsarist Russian and Imperial Chinese officials used their experiences with the Mongols to contextualize their new neighbors.

In their instructions to the various envoys sent to Beijing, the officials of the Posolskii Prikaz refer to the Chinese Emperor as the "Bogdy-Khan Tsar." As for the Qing, they seemed to view the Tsarist state as a continuation of the earlier Mongol Empire in the region, and referred to the Tsar as the "White Khan."²⁴ This may explain why the Qing were so willing to meet with the Tsar's envoys, and why it was assigned to the Mongolian Office to handle them. By splitting the Mongolian Office from the rest of the foreign affairs department, the Qing recognized the vital importance of the peoples residing along their steppe frontier. And the inclusion of the Tsarist state in the

²⁴ Dmytryshyn 1985, 90.

mission of this Office gives a glimpse at the lens with which the Qing viewed their new neighbor. It is important to note, however, that despite the formal separation of these two regions under the Qing, all rulers, regardless of whether they were handled by the Mongolian Office or the general office of foreign affairs were still required to venerate the Emperor in the same manner.²⁵

Posolskii Prikaz

It is somehow fitting, given the nature and background of the Mongolian Office, that the Tsarist department tasked with managing the Tsar's envoys to Imperial China would be the Posolskii Prikaz, or Department of Foreign Affairs, itself a vestige of Mongol rule in Russia. In "The Mongol Origins of Muscovite Political Institutions," Donald Ostrowski argues that much of the Tsarist bureaucracy, including the Posolskii Prikaz, was derived from Mongol institutions borrowed during the period of Golden Horde rule.²⁶ Among the many institutions and customs borrowed by Muscovy during this period was the term *chelom bit'e*, or a petition, which was a loan translation of the Chinese *kou-tou*, via Turkic. According to Ostrowski, it was from the Mongols, and to a certain extent the Chinese, that the Russians borrowed much of their later state structure.²⁷

By the 17th century, the Posolskii Prikaz was one of the larger and more influential departments within the Tsarist state. Responsible for diplomacy, newly conquered frontier areas, prisoners of war and various tax collection sub-departments,

²⁵ Mancall, 1971, 6-8.

²⁶ Ostrowski, 1990, 530-534.

²⁷ Ostrowski 1990, 541-542.

the Posolskii Prikaz had an expansive mission.²⁸ It would fall to the clerks of this office to develop and write the instructions for each Tsarist mission to Beijing. To this end, they would have access to comprehensive records of the previous missions, and reports of all the past envoys, as part of what P.B. Brown termed the “data-mania obsesiveness of the seventeenth century.”²⁹ Thus, while at the beginning of the century they possessed a very limited knowledge of China and its customs, but the 1670s Prikaz clerks were capable of drafting comprehensive and detailed instructions for their envoys.

²⁸ Brown 2009, 494.

²⁹ Brown 2009 487.

Early Failures and Unexpected Successes: Petlin, Baikov and Ablin

The first formal envoy sent by Tsarist Russia to Imperial China, a Cossack by the name of Ivan Petlin, departed in the early 17th century, and it was also the first to meet with difficulty due to these expectations. From Petlin's account, it is clear that whatever institutional memory or general knowledge of Imperial China may have existed in Russia at this time, it apparently did not include familiarity with the ritual of the Chinese court. Only after arriving in Beijing was Petlin made aware of the necessities of the tribute system, and he notes that he "did not have an audience with Emperor Taibun, nor did we even see him, because we had not brought any gifts to him."³⁰ Petlin was not treated poorly, though, and the palace secretary simply informed him of the proper protocol, so that future visits would go more smoothly: "Our custom is that your White Tsar should have sent gifts to our Emperor, whereupon our emperor would have graciously given you an audience."³¹ The "gifts" mentioned here refer to the tribute required of all foreign representatives. It is possible that Petlin referred to them as "gifts" in his report to the Tsar in order to soften the tone of the Qing message. This evident self-censoring reappears in the reports of other Russian envoys from the period, such as Baikov.

Russia's first diplomatic mission to China was thus a failure, though not totally so. Petlin had successfully made it to Beijing, and while he was unable to open formal relations between Tsarist Russia and Ming China, he returned with a wealth of information about Siberia, China and Qing customs. Despite this wealth of new

³⁰ Dmytryshyn 1985, 90. Baddeley notes that this Emperor Taibun was likely the emperor Ta-ming of the late Ming dynasty. Baddeley 1963, 149.

³¹ Dmytryshyn 1985, 90.

knowledge, Petlin was the last formal envoy sent to Ming China by the Tsarist court. By the time of the next mission, some twenty years later, a new dynasty, had been proclaimed. During the interlude, however, Russian hunters, settlers and Cossacks continued to advance further into Siberia. By the early 1650s, the Russian explorer Khabarov had built the fortress of Albazin in the Amur River basin, a move which precipitated half a century of low level frontier conflict between the two empires, making diplomatic agreements all the more important, and all the more difficult.³²

This potential conflict may have contributed to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich's decision to send a second emissary to the Chinese court in 1654.³³ The detailed instructions given to the envoy, Fedor Baikov, give a clear image of the state of Russian knowledge of Chinese customs and protocol at the time, as well as an idea of Tsarist Russia's long term goals in the region.

Before he set out, however, Baikov sent an advance party, led by Seitkul Ablin, a Bukhara based merchant, to announce his coming.³⁴ Ablin's mission was a success, despite his lack of official credentials from the Tsar, and he seemingly engendered a fair amount of goodwill in advance of Baikov's arrival. It was not to last long, however.

It is clear from Baikov's instructions that the Posolskii Prikaz was at least somewhat more familiar with China and Chinese customs than it had been prior to the Petlin mission. Likely basing their assumptions off of Petlin's report, and possibly reports of merchants who had been to the Chinese capital, Baikov was sent bearing "gifts" for the Qing emperor, signifying at least an awareness and acceptance, however

³² Beijing Normal University Qing Dynasty Research Group 1977, 49-64.

³³ Dmytryshyn 1985, 308-313.

³⁴ Baddeley 1963, 135.

grudging, of the realities of the tribute system, even if they were unwilling to use its terminology.³⁵ It is equally clear, however, that Tsarist officials were quite unwilling to allow Baikov to comply with most Qing customs. If the Emperor's officials tried to delay or otherwise prevent Baikov from having a formal audience with the emperor, he was to insist that his letter must be delivered in person, and was repeatedly told not to take no for an answer. The inflexible tone of his instructions on this matter, typified overall attitude of Tsarist Russia towards Qing ritual. If requested by imperial officials to hand over the Tsar's letter, Baikov was ordered to ignore them, and "he is to say that he is to be taken to their sovereign, [the emperor], that he must proceed to him, and that it would be improper to hand over the Tsar's [letter] *because no great sovereign in any realm anywhere follows such a custom.*" The officials who wrote these instructions evince a clear disdain for the superior self-image of the Chinese court, as well as an elevated sense of their own. Prikaz officials requested Baikov to instruct the emperor and his officials on "proper" protocol whenever possible.

Another Chinese ritual that would give so many European missions difficulty over the ensuing centuries was that of the *kou-tou*, and Baikov's instructions indicate that the Tsarist officials tasked with writing them were at least aware of the *kou-tou* and its significance. They took a similar approach to this custom as they did the last, instructing Baikov that if he is ordered to *kou-tou*, he should "refuse firmly" and inform the officials that

"I am speaking as an official, and such an action would not be appropriate. Nowhere is there such a custom as to kowtow [*kou-tou*] at the entrance of an imperial palace. I have been sent by the Great

³⁵ Dmytryshyn 1985 283-5; 288.

Sovereign, His Tsarist Majesty...I will not kowtow before the entrance. This decision is not subject to argument. I will never do this. Such a custom does not exist in the Tsarist Majesty's court, and I would be ashamed even to speak of such a thing.' Fedor is to refuse to discuss the matter further."³⁶

A similar approach is to be used yet again if Baikov is instructed to kiss the emperor's feet. He is instructed to inform the Chinese court that no other kings to whom the Tsar has sent emissaries have required this, and that "it is quite impossible to change customs."³⁷ This resistance to Wing protocol is found throughout the instructions given to Baikov. Taken together, it seems clear that while the Russians were willing to give "gifts" to the emperor, they still would not acquiesce to the Sino-centric system, even going so far as to insist that Baikov refuse the emperor's invitation to any official dinners or feasts if there will be representatives of any other government there, or if the emperor himself would not be in attendance, as this might lessen the Tsar's prestige.³⁸

It is not surprising, then, that the Chinese found Baikov's conduct during his time in Beijing less than ideal. The first mention of "Russia" in the annals of the Qing dynasty is a brief note of how in the year 1656 an envoy from Russia arrived, and "although he was provided with a complimentary address he would only go through the forms in use in his own country; that is, he would only present the address standing: he declined to kneel or kowtow. Under these circumstances the Board advised that, as the envoy was unversed in court forms, he should not be admitted to audience."³⁹ Baikov's formal, political mission was thus at an end, and he was asked to leave shortly

³⁶ Dymtryshyn 1985, 285.

³⁷ Dymtryshyn 1985 286-287. Baikov is also instructed to lecture the Chinese emperor on proper protocol regarding small talk. More specifically that the emperor should ask Baikov about the Tsar's health, as this "is customary among all great sovereigns."

³⁸ Dymtryshyn 1985, 291.

³⁹ Baddeley 1963, 154.

thereafter. Baikov's instructions reveal two other missions, however, both of which cast light on Tsarist Russia's true goals with regards to Imperial China.

In addition to meeting with the Emperor, Baikov was instructed to gather as much information about Chinese markets, trading practices, and prices as he could. Special orders were given to discover those goods which the Chinese market desired most, and which could be provided by Russians at a profit.⁴⁰ In addition to trade, Baikov was also instructed to act as a sort of spy, and was told to "use every possible means to secure secret information by gaining the confidence of officials or of other local people through offering them food and drink...he is to proffer whatever gifts he has to offer," in order to gain their favor.⁴¹ In conjunction with this, he was ordered to collect geographical information on routes into and within the Chinese empire, as well as much general, linguistic, and military information as possible.⁴² All of this suggests the Tsarist state was strongly motivated to learn more about the empire on their southeastern frontier.

As for the remainder of his political mission, in his official report to the Tsar, Baikov made a detailed account of the various affronts he believed he was subjected to by Qing officials. Upon arriving in China, as had been predicted by the officials who wrote his instructions, he was met by various councilors, who insisted on taking his gifts and letter prior to him meeting with the Chinese emperor. When he repeatedly refused, the Chinese eventually took the gifts "by force." When he continued to refuse to either conform to court protocol, or to give the letter to the court councilors, the gifts

⁴⁰ Dymtryshyn 1985, 294.

⁴¹ Dymtryshyn 1985, 293.

⁴² Dymtryshyn 1985, 297.

were returned and he was asked to leave.⁴³ Despite these problems, however, he was able to bring back invaluable information on the situation and customs of early Qing China, information that would later influence the language of instructions given to future Tsarist envoys.

He also made a report on the presence of Dutch and Portuguese traders, as well as Jesuit missionaries within the capital. Perhaps as a result of his desire to downplay his own failure, he did not highlight their achievements in building stable communities in the Qing capital, though he did note how helpful it was to get a more experienced perspective on China from fellow Europeans. The Dutch account of his mission differs considerably from Baikov's own, however. The Dutch envoy at the time made note of how a month after the Russians arrived, "having meantime conducted themselves badly—forcing their way into the brothels so common in Peking (Beijing) and provoking noise and scandals, — their liberty was restricted."⁴⁴

Interestingly, Baikov's failure to meet with the emperor, might be in part attributed to Ablin's success a few months prior, and in many ways Ablin's mission was more successful than Baikov's own.

According to the official Qing record of Baikov's mission, the confusion of the officials tasked with convincing Baikov to abide by court protocol was at least partially

⁴³ Baddeley 1963, 145; 153. It is worth noting that the Dutch envoy in Beijing at this time had a slightly different recollection of events. His account made note of the behavior of the Russians in Beijing, stating how a month after they arrived, "having meantime conducted themselves badly—forcing their way into the brothels so common in Peking (Beijing) and provoking noise and scandals, — their liberty was restricted

⁴⁴ Baddeley 1963, 153.

compounded by Ablin's earlier willingness to do so when he had arrived in Beijing.⁴⁵

Baikov himself notes the response of the Chinese officials to his refusal.

“[The Emperor] has ordered those friendly gifts⁴⁶ to be given back to you, because you have failed altogether to obey his commands... Yet, before you, there came from your great Sovereign, an ambassador, Peter Yarizhkin [a companion of Ablin's], his great master's principal servant, and he fulfilled all the commands of our [emperor]: he came to the Ministry, to the State Officials; and, falling on his knees, bowed down...”⁴⁷

While the Emperor's officials overstated Ablin and his companions' importance, it is still clear that the merchant was far more willing to conform to Qing ritual in the name of accomplishing his mission. As a result, even though he did not have a written letter to present, he was “dismissed honorably.”⁴⁸

Ablin's willingness to follow Qing custom had succeeded where Baikov's rigidity had not. It was an important lesson that the Tsarist bureaucracy would take care to learn. From this point on Ablin was employed as an envoy to China multiple times, and the instructions given to future Tsarist envoys reflected many of the lessons learned from Ablin's successes and Baikov's failure.

Perhaps as a result of this, over the following twenty years, it was Ablin who functioned as the primary conduit for official relations between Tsarist Russia and Qing China. As Baikov's instructions suggested, the Tsarist bureaucracy was primarily concerned with trade and economic opportunities, and the experienced merchant Ablin

⁴⁵ Baddeley 1963, 154.

⁴⁶ This seems to be another instance of a Russian envoy “editing” the message given to him by Qing officials to soften it. While the meaning behind the “gifts” was fairly clear, the Russians insisted on referring to them in their own records as “gifts” and not “tribute” for the duration of this period.

⁴⁷ Baddeley 1963, 145-146.

⁴⁸ Baddeley 1963, 154; Chen 1966, 58.

was an ideal candidate to lead these missions.⁴⁹ Ablin's next journey to Beijing on behalf of the Tsar came almost immediately after Baikov's return to Moscow, and was almost exclusively economic in nature. Ablin was instructed to procure an official sanction for trade by giving gifts to the Qing emperor, mainly sables and furs.⁵⁰ He was then to "engage in trade and exchange Russian goods for rubies, lapis lazuli, sapphires, emeralds and pearls, which they are to obtain as cheaply as possible, so as to bring great profit to the [Tsar's] Treasury."⁵¹

In addition to procuring valuable and precious gems, Ablin was ordered to recruit craftsmen and artisans willing to ply their trade in Moscow, specifically metalworkers, diamond cutters, and smelters, and was told what salary he is authorized to give them, though judging by his report, he was unsuccessful in this regard.⁵²

All of this suggests that almost immediately after Ablin's first journey and Baikov's return, the Posolskii Prikaz recognized the utility of sending merchants, who had far more experience in such matters than did the Russian gentry, to pursue their economic interests in Qing China. To that end, they seemed willing to ignore the fact that Ablin obeyed Qing ritual, including allowing the Tsar's gifts to be termed tribute by the Qing and Ablin to perform the ritual *kou-tou*. This may have been because of Ablin's lack of rank, or possibly because of his status as a native of Bukhara and not an ethnic Russian. Whatever the reason, he was a highly successful middleman, and Miasnikov credits Ablin's success his second mission as marking the official opening of

⁴⁹ Quested 1984, 26. Quested here suggests that "the Russian drive east may have been motivated by a British request to open a China trade route through Russia via the Ob." Additionally, he notes that the first mention of a mission to China, by Ivan the Terrible in 1582, had the aim of opening a trade route as well, though Ivan died before it could be carried out.

⁵⁰ Baddeley 1963, 168.

⁵¹ Dymtryshyn 1985, 338.

⁵² Dymtryshyn 1985, 339.; Baddeley 1963, 168.

relations between Tsarist Russia and Qing China.⁵³ Fittingly, it would be Ablin who would be the first Russian envoy to earn an audience with the Qing Emperor, in 1671.

That year, Ablin was again commissioned by the Tsar to lead a large trading mission, comprised largely of fellow merchants from Bukhara, to Beijing. After a journey of forty-eight weeks, which was recorded in detail for the benefit of future envoys and travelers, Ablin reached the Qing capital. Upon being formally received by Qing officials, Ablin and his companions were ordered to appear at an audience with the Emperor. Upon proffering their tribute they were led into the summer palace.⁵⁴

Ablin recounted the meeting in his report:

“When they approached the [Emperor], he was sitting on his throne which had been placed on carpets and pillows. He did not rise. He is young, about twenty years old. He inquired about the health of the [Russian] Sovereign while he was still sitting...Then he asked [Ablin] and his companions about their own health, and offered them wine and invited them to dine with him...After the meal he told them they could trade their goods at will for food and drink, and he sent them back to the ambassadorial court, and soon afterward sent them food and drink.”⁵⁵

The mere fact that this meeting occurred at all informs us that Ablin and his party conformed to all of those elements of Qing court ritual which had derailed Baikov’s mission. Besides the tribute, he would have been required to perform the *kou-tou*, a fact omitted, perhaps purposefully, from the official Russian account produced on his return.

Another area where Ablin’s actions differed from the official instructions presented to Baikov was his willingness to dine and attend formal feasts without the Qing emperor being present. He reported that he “dined at the Chinese [emperor’s] invitation three times in the garden during [his] stay...[he] and his companions were

⁵³ Miasnikov 1985, 117-123.

⁵⁴ Dymtryshyn 1985 390-391

⁵⁵ Dymtryshyn 1985, 391.

always seated higher than the others, but the Emperor was never present at these feasts.”⁵⁶ Ablin, likely recognizing the invitation for what it was, an honor and an act of hospitality, accepted, thus avoiding the possibility of offending his hosts.

Taken together, Ablin’s actions while on his missions from the Tsar suggest that he was employed as a merchant first, and an official representative of the Tsar second. Consequently, he was willing to perform the necessary duties expected of foreign envoys in the Qing court, and was therefore able to succeed in personally presenting a letter from the Tsar to the Chinese emperor. By performing these duties, he was technically acknowledging the superiority of the Qing emperor over the Tsar in Moscow, but either he did not care, or he recognized the entirely symbolic nature of the gesture, and was willing to perform it in exchange for the far more tangible economic gain it provided.⁵⁷ And indeed, it was reported that his mission, despite being set upon by bandits in Mongolian lands, was highly profitable.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Dymtryshyn 1985, 392.

⁵⁷ It is worth noting that at this point Qing knowledge of Russia was still quite vague. When Ablin was preparing to depart, he was summoned to the “Mongolia” office of the Qing bureaucracy to receive the Emperor’s gifts, suggesting that the Qing believed the Russians to be cousins of the Mongols. This is further reinforced by the appellation used to describe the Tsar in the Qing records: Khan.

⁵⁸ Baddeley 1963, 194.

The Spafarii Mission: 1675

Ablin's successes, and his subsequent reports to the Tsar, seem to have laid the groundwork for a slight softening the Tsar's stance towards Chinese protocol, which was reflected in the instructions given to Nikolai G. Spafarii, the next official envoy sent by the Tsar to Beijing.

Prior to Spafarii's arrival, however another Russian envoy reached Beijing, though this one was not sent by the Tsar. Danilo Arshinskii, the voevoda, or military administrator, of Nerchinsk, and a man with little knowledge of China, sent an illiterate Cossack, Ignashka Milovanov to Beijing to propose that the Kangxi emperor submit to Tsarist dominion of the Amur River basin. Vincent Chen notes that these passages of his letter were likely suppressed by the interpreters, a fact which seems to be confirmed by the fact that Milovanov was granted an audience with the Emperor, where he performed the ritual *kou-tou* and was dismissed "honorably."⁵⁹ The Milovanov mission, while notable for its boldness, if nothing else, symbolized the difficulties in communication the two sides faced throughout this period. Sent to demand Qing acceptance of Russian power, Milovanov found himself performing the ritual *kou-tou* instead, and the letter of response he was given by the Kangxi emperor suggested the Russians should instead submit to Qing rule.⁶⁰ The mission also symbolized the ways in which the actions of the relatively independent voevody could impact the sensitive negotiations between the Tsar and the Qing emperor. As the Emperor's letter was written was written in Manchu, the Russians were unable to read it, and simply did not

⁵⁹ Chen 1966, 59-60. Baddeley 195-205.

⁶⁰ The Qing were apparently under the impression that these forts were under the control of bandits, or deserters from the Russian Tsar, and not the Empire itself.

reply, avoiding further escalation.⁶¹ It was into this inauspicious context that the next Russian envoy, Nikolai Spafarii, arrived.

Born in Moldavia of Greek heritage, Nikolai G. Spafarii was educated in Constantinople, and was consequently well versed in languages, including Russian, Latin and Turkish. An itinerant advisor, he had served rulers in Bradenburg, Moldavia and Stettin, before arriving in Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich's court in 1671. He was recommended for the journey to China by his patron in the Tsarist court, and in 1675 set out from Moscow on his mission.⁶²

Spafarii received his instructions to organize a mission to China in 1675, or approximately four years after Ablin's meeting with the Qing emperor and almost twenty after Baikov's mission. Mark Mancall has stated that his journey "occasioned nothing less than a direct confrontation between European and East Asian diplomatic systems, in which the protagonists were superb representatives of essentially incompatible views of the world."⁶³ This is perhaps an exaggeration, as the Prikaz had already softened their instructions significantly, as we shall see. Spafarii's orders differed from Baikov's in several key respects, which suggests that the Tsarist bureaucracy had internalized many of the lessons of the previous twenty years, and were willing to accommodate Qing ritual in the name of increased trade.

Economics was the most important driver of this change of heart. Almost every mission sent to China during this period was instructed to find which Russian products

⁶¹ Chen 1966, 62.

⁶² Baddeley 1963, 204-207; Mancall 1971, 70-74. The Tsar would die before Spafarii returned, and he was denied recognition for his efforts. Spafarii's mission was unique in another respect, while most of the envoys set out from Tobolsk, Spafarii did so from Moscow.

⁶³ Mancall 1971, 65.

would fetch the highest price in Chinese markets and to promote a strong and mutual trade between the two empires. To this end, Spafarii was given 1,500 rubles of sable pelts to trade for “precious stones, silver, velvet, satin, silk and other things, whatever he may find.”⁶⁴ Additionally, while Baikov’s instructions included a note that he should inform the Chinese that their traders would be treated generously should they visit Russia and not taxed. Nikolai, on the other hand, was specifically instructed to “suggest that the [Emperor’s] councilors levy a tax for the [Qing] on Nikolai’s purchases, so that in the future we can levy such a purchase tax on any Chinese who come to the Russian Empire.”⁶⁵ This suggests that the Russians were optimistic about the future of trade between the two empires, and in particular, reciprocal trade, believing that Chinese merchants would be interested in traveling in the Russian Empire for this purpose.

Spafarii’s instructions also reveal a greater willingness to conform to Qing protocol in the name of friendly relations and trade. If the emperor’s advisors informed Spafarii that the Qing emperor would not meet with foreign ambassadors, Spafarii, like Baikov, was to be “very resolute and inform the [emperor’s] councilors that it is imperative that he be allowed to present the [Tsar’s letter] and his gifts to the Khan in person, and conduct his ambassadorial business in person with him also.” But if the councilors persisted in refusing him, Spafarii was instructed to reply that while it is vital he be allowed to meet with the emperor, “he will conduct himself in accordance with the will of [the emperor], and whatever he decrees will be done.”⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Dymtryshyn 1985, 398.

⁶⁵ Dymtryshyn 1985, 293; 408.

⁶⁶ Dymtryshyn 1985, 403.

Spafarii's instructions also leave considerably more room for interpretation on the issue of the *kou-tou* than did Baikov's. The practice is not explicitly discussed, but Spafarii is also not forbidden from performing it as Baikov was. Instead, when given an audience with the Emperor, Spafarii is only told to "go to [him] in accordance with ambassadorial custom," and that upon entering, he is to "bow to [the emperor] on behalf of the Great Sovereign Tsar."⁶⁷ The Tsarist officials in charge of Spafarii's instructions seem to have decided that it was best not to mention it, and hope Spafarii was able to manage on his own. Still, these instructions differed significantly from Baikov's, who in addition to being expressly forbidden from performing the *kou-tou*, was also ordered to request the Qing emperor himself bow in the direction of the Tsar before Baikov set out on his return journey to Moscow, as was "customary in relations with all great sovereigns."⁶⁸

Spafarii's orders also shed light on the various ways the Prikaz had adapted to the demands of Qing ritual. In particular, they suggest the primacy the Prikaz attached to trade and profit. While Baikov's mission might have hoped to establish strong political ties between Tsarist Russia and Imperial China, later envoys focused on more mercantile ventures. Ablin was more than willing to follow Qing ritual if it meant gaining access to Qing markets, and Ablin's success seems to have convinced the Russians of the utility of flexibility; a willingness to grant largely symbolic concessions in exchange for access to Chinese silks and precious stones.

These were Spafarii's instructions, but equally important to understanding the way Russian envoys of the time viewed their duties is the manner in which he carried

⁶⁷ Dymtryshyn 1985, 400.

⁶⁸ Dymtryshyn 1985, 298.

them out. Upon arriving in the Qing capital, he declared to Qing officials that he was an “ambassador” from the Great Tsar of Moscow. Over the next several months, he recorded a detailed account of the rituals and customs of the Qing court, how he was treated, and how he behaved. His official report reflects an outspoken defiance to any custom he deemed derogatory to the Tsar, but also a clear, if grudging, willingness to compromise if it would help him in his overarching mission. From his experience, it seems clear that both sides were willing to make concessions as long as they were left with enough room to maintain plausible deniability that what they had done had not caused either monarch to lose face..

Spafarii’s arrival in Beijing was welcomed by Qing officials of the Kangxi emperor. Any goodwill his arrival may have engendered was not to last, however, as Spafarii soon proved himself a nettlesome guest. The first quarrel between Spafarii and his counterparts in the Mongolian Office arose over the matter of the Tsar’s letter.⁶⁹ These officials, citing longstanding custom, insisted that it would be impossible for Spafarii to present the letter to the emperor without it first being read by the emperor’s board. Spafarii’s refusal of this arrangement led to weeks of tense bargaining between Spafarii and the officials tasked to manage him.⁷⁰ Spafarii had the Tsar’s explicit permission to deliver the letter to Qing officials, should they insist, but it is clear from his actions that Spafarii intended to rely on this only as a last resort. At one point, Spafarii directly informed the Qing officials, that “if the Tsar had written that I, his Ambassador, was to do in all things according to your custom, I should not have a word

⁶⁹ Mancall 1971, 4-5The Russians evidently fell under the jurisdiction of the office designated to handle tributary requests from the Mongols and other nomadic peoples of the steppe.

⁷⁰ Baddeley 1963, 330-354.

to say: but it is one thing to write about titles--another thing about customs.”⁷¹ Of course, the Tsar had ordered him on multiple occasions to comply with Qing customs if necessary, and told him that he should “conduct himself in accordance with the will of [the emperor], and whatever he decrees [should] be done.”⁷² After more than a month and a half of wrangling, Spafarii finally relented, making a concession in the matter of the letter so that he would not jeopardize his overall mission to gain official audience with the Qing Emperor.

It is interesting, then, that after such a protracted struggle over the matter of the letter, that the issue of the *kou-tou* was resolved with relative alacrity, at least at first. When originally informed of the necessity of the custom, which Spafarii had evidently learned of from Dutch and Portuguese reports, he replied that he would watch to see how he was treated by the Qing officials, and “to what degree the Dutch and Portuguese were advanced; and if he were indeed shown further honor, he would kowtow after their fashion.”⁷³ After thus agreeing, however tentatively, to perform the *kou-tou*, he was then led to the Emperor’s palace for a formal audience. Placed approximately one thousand feet away from the throne, he was requested to perform the *kou-tou*, and, his entire report on the matter is included below.

“Presently came two [officials] who told the Jesuit the time had come for the Ambassador to go and kowtow...The ground was again struck three times with triple strokes; the music played, the bell rang out, the drums responded; and the same man cried out 'bow down!' and the Ambassador began bowing quickly and not to the ground, so that the two [officials]

⁷¹ Baddeley 1963, 342.

⁷² Dymtryshyn 1985, 403.

⁷³ Baddeley 1963, 355. He was evidently quite surprised to learn that the Qing emperor would be horrified if he removed his hat during the ceremony, as was the European custom, and shared a moment of good humor with the Qing officials sent to explain this cultural difference.

told the Jesuit to tell him he must bow down to the ground and less quickly, as we had seen those mandarins do before.

"But the Ambassador said, those men are the servants and slaves of the Khan and know how to do it--but we are not his servants and bow in our own fashion. And the crier seeing that the Ambassador bowed quickly began also to call out in haste. However, the Ambassador and his people did the kowtow in that way, bending neither low nor slowly, after which his people and the two mandarins and the Jesuit led the Ambassador and his people back to the place where they had sat."⁷⁴

It is clear from this account that if Spafarii in fact performed anything like a true *kou-tou*, the resemblance was slight, at best. And yet the Qing court seems to have accepted the gesture for what it was meant to be, and Spafarii was presently led closer to the throne, asked to bow once more, and allowed to participate in the royal tea ceremony. This seeming contrast with the idea of Qing rigidity on issues of ritual might be explained rather simply. Spafarii had told the court officials he had met with of his willingness to *kou-tou*, and while he had, from the Qing point of view, made a mess of it, he had still bowed, and it was likely simpler for both sides to pretend: Spafarii that he had not really performed so humiliating an act as the *kou-tou*, and the Qing that he had accorded the emperor due respect, even if he was clearly unschooled in proper form.

Further evidence of official Qing acceptance of Spafarii's performance of the *kou-tou* came the next day, when Qing officials informed him that the gates to the diplomatic compound would be opened, so that he might buy and sell from local merchants. It was this action, seemingly a show of good faith, that would again spark conflict between Spafarii and his hosts.

⁷⁴ Baddeley 1963, 359-360.

Over the previous twenty years, the vast majority of Tsarist contact with China had been managed through the intermediary of Ablin, whose primary interest in China was economic, not political. As a result, Spafarii was evidently unaware of the vastly different treatment accorded to merchants and ambassadors in Beijing, which greatly limited his ability to combine his diplomatic goals with his economic ones. According to Chinese custom, Spafarii and his men were to be housed in a diplomatic compound and were not allowed out to trade with local merchants.⁷⁵ To the Qing, this was an honor, but to Spafarii, who had brought with him a significant quantity of sables and pelts, it was a nuisance that felt distinctly like imprisonment. He suspected those merchants who did come to visit as being in league with the officials of the Mongol Office, and believed that they were trying to pressure him into selling his goods for far less than they were worth. Miasnikov notes that the issue may have been further compounded by the fact that while en route to Beijing, he had met a Russian merchant, who spoke of being received “graciously,” and allowed to trade openly in the capital.⁷⁶

It was not long before many of the adjectives so commonly applied to the Chinese in subsequent centuries began to surface in Spafarii’s notes. He described a potential concession offered by a Qing official as “mere cunning,” meant to trick him. More to the point, he informs the Tsar in his report that “there are no such thieves as the Chinese; if a man be not careful they will cut the buttons from his clothes! There are

⁷⁵ Baddeley 1963, 383.

⁷⁶ Miasnikov 147. This merchant reported that his mission had been less than successful, however, as they had arrived at the same time as a large caravan from Bukhara.

many swindlers amongst them, and they stole many good caps; the mandarins' servants likewise did much pilfering.”⁷⁷

These cross-cultural conflicts were exacerbated by an unlikely source, the Jesuit priests then present in Beijing. Quinn has noted the important role the Jesuits played 15 years later in the negotiations over the Treaty of Nerchinsk. Their role here, while no less important, is somewhat problematic. As at Nerchinsk, the Jesuits in Beijing at this time played the role of intermediaries and translators, but whereas they could theoretically have helped to smooth over the various cultural differences between Spafarii and his hosts, in practice they tended towards the opposite end of the spectrum, and helped convince Spafarii of Qing dishonesty.

The Jesuits entered into the negotiations at an early stage. Both Spafarii and the Qing mistrusted their Mongol interpreters, and frequently condemned them as “incompetent.”⁷⁸ Consequently, when a Jesuit accompanied a Qing official to a meeting with Spafarii, he was delighted. Fluent in Latin, Spafarii frequently leaned on

⁷⁷ Baddeley 1963, 394.

⁷⁸ Baddeley 1963, 407.

the Jesuits during the negotiations to get a clearer, more accurate view of what the Qing court wanted.⁷⁹

The Jesuits, however, would frequently contradict what the Qing advisors were saying. During one such conversation, the Jesuit translator informed him that the Qing councilor's statement "was a lie."⁸⁰ During another, "the Jesuit told [Spafarii] that he was glad to serve the Tsar as best he might, for Christianity's sake...but he regretted that an embassy should have arrived from so glorious a monarch, seeing that the Chinese were barbarians, who rendered honor to no ambassadors...and other contemptuous treatment there is, of which he would tell me another time."⁸¹

The role of the Jesuits here was an interesting instance of foreshadowing of their later role at Nerchinsk. "Wherefore the Ambassador [Spafarii], recognizing the importance of what was being said, and realizing that our interpreters were incapable of explaining it correctly, begged the Kolai to repeat these things in Chinese [Manchu?] to the Jesuit, and let the Jesuit translate them into Latin, that the Ambassador might better comprehend them. The Kolai agreed, and the Jesuit translated everything clearly

⁷⁹ Baddeley 1963, 407-408. It was an interesting instance of foreshadowing of their later role at Nerchinsk. "Wherefore the Ambassador [Spafarii], recognizing the importance of what was being said, and realizing that our interpreters were incapable of explaining it correctly, begged the Kolai to repeat these things in Chinese [Manchu?] to the Jesuit, and let the Jesuit translate them into Latin, that the Ambassador might better comprehend them. The Kolai agreed, and the Jesuit translated everything clearly enough; but the Ambassador, to make quite sure, re-translated all that the Jesuit told him in Latin, to the interpreter, in Russian; and he, in turn, asked the Alkhamba for confirmation in Mongol, agreement being come to through all those languages. It was an interesting instance of foreshadowing of their later role at Nerchinsk. "Wherefore the Ambassador [Spafarii], recognizing the importance of what was being said, and realizing that our interpreters were incapable of explaining it correctly, begged the Kolai to repeat these things in Chinese [Manchu?] to the Jesuit, and let the Jesuit translate them into Latin, that the Ambassador might better comprehend them. The Kolai agreed, and the Jesuit translated everything clearly enough; but the Ambassador, to make quite sure, re-translated all that the Jesuit told him in Latin, to the interpreter, in Russian; and he, in turn, asked the Alkhamba for confirmation in Mongol, agreement being come to through all those languages.

⁸⁰ Baddeley 1963 340-341.

⁸¹ Baddeley 1963, 337.

enough; but the Ambassador, to make quite sure, re-translated all that the Jesuit told him in Latin, to the interpreter, in Russian; and he, in turn, asked the Alkhamba for confirmation in Mongol, agreement being come to through all those languages.⁸²

The conduct of the Jesuits here may have been related to the still recent conquest of China by the Manchus, to whom the Jesuits apparently felt little loyalty. Baddeley makes note of one particular instance where Jesuit information proved quite prescient. They warned Spafarii that unless the Russians gave up Gantimur, a Mongol chieftain who had defected to the Russians, they should be sure to garrison their forts along the Amur strongly, otherwise the Qing would attack, as they would a decade later. According to the Jesuits, they “were glad to serve the Tsar as they serve God, for they love not the Manchus, as they did the Chinese.”⁸³

Still, despite all of the difficulties he encountered, Spafarii’s mission had, to this point, been a success. Some weeks after his audience with the Kangxi emperor, he was invited to a formal dinner in the emperor’s presence. One element of this audience stands out in particular. Spafarii, by his own account, evidently performed the *kou-tou* on multiple occasions, and abided by the ritual of the Qing court without complaint. “[The councilor] gave the word to bow down, and [Spafarii and his attendants] bowed down to the Khan as before, going down nine times on their knees and bowing the head each time.”⁸⁴ There are a number of reasons Spafarii might have agreed to perform the *kou-tou* here. Perhaps he recognized that there was little harm in submitting to Qing customs in the name of a better relationship, or perhaps he was simply unwilling to risk

⁸² Baddeley 1963, 407-408.

⁸³ Baddeley 1963, 395-396. Baddeley also notes that this warning was ignored by the Russians. Still, he believes that this marked the moment where the “Jesuit betrayal of Kangxi seemed complete.”

⁸⁴ Baddeley 1963, 387.

offending the emperor in such close proximity (he reports being less than sixty feet away from the throne at this point). Regardless of the reason, that the Russian ambassador felt comfortable performing the *kou-tou* is significant, and suggests that the Russians were not quite as rigid in their behavior as, for example, the MacCartney mission would be some hundred years later.

There would, however, be one final controversy that would taint Spafarii's mission in the eyes of the Qing. Shortly before his departure, the Qing councilor attached to Spafarii's mission arrived at the diplomatic compound with gifts from the Kangxi emperor. Before giving them to Spafarii, he informed the Russian ambassador that he should receive them on his knees, as was Qing custom.⁸⁵ Here, at a remove from the Emperor himself, Spafarii refused, and said he would do the same if forced to accept the Emperor's letter in a similar fashion.

At issue here was the Tsar's status relative to that of the Kangxi Emperor. Spafarii refused to pay obeisance in such a manner, as by implying the Tsar's subservience to the Qing Emperor, it would be "a great disgrace to the Tsar," and one he was not particularly interested in answering for back in Moscow.⁸⁶ By this point, Spafarii was likely just as frustrated as the Qing officials. He had been prevented from trading in the manner he saw fit, forced to make numerous concessions quite out of line with general European diplomatic practice, and now was being told to perform the *kou-tou* on behalf of his Tsar towards a cart of gifts, gifts which he moreover deemed to be

⁸⁵ Baddeley 1963, 397. Spafarii made sure to note with especial distaste that the ground was muddy at this time.

⁸⁶ Baddeley 1963, 397-398. Spafarii here records something of a mutiny amongst his men, who when asked through interpreters whether they would be willing to take the Emperor's letter to Moscow, regardless of content, universally answered in the affirmative, provoking a strong rebuke from Spafarii, who reminded them in no uncertain words that it was *his* head at stake, and not theirs. Still, this suggests that his own men did not view the Qing officials to be acting particularly egregiously.

of poor value. Relations between Spafarii and his hosts had been, at least superficially, fairly cordial during his four months in Beijing, but here they finally broke. The Qing councilors let him know that they expected him to leave Beijing in short order, and to inform the Tsar that any future envoy would have to obey Court protocol if they wished to be received. Spafarii was additionally not granted a letter from the Emperor to present to the Tsar, as he let it be known that he would refuse any such message if it did not refer to the Tsar as an equal, an impossible request for the Qing government.

In large part due to this last minute failure of protocol, the Qing remembered Spafarii in a fairly hostile and negative light. The emperor Kangxi, writing in 1712, 40 years after Spafarii's mission, informed one of his envoys due to meet with a Russian counterpart that he should "particularly mention to the messenger of the [Tsar] that formerly when Mi-ko-lai (Spafarii) of his kingdom came to China, his conduct was very perverse and reprehensible."⁸⁷

Despite this rebuke, it seems clear that throughout his mission, Spafarii displayed both his linguistic and diplomatic skills in great measure, pairing them with a certain diplomatic stubbornness to concede nothing but what the situation absolutely required. Still, he was unable to normalize relations with the Qing Empire to the extent that he had hoped. Miasnikov uses this failure to make the bold claim that "the results of Spafarii's embassy were still less satisfactory than those of Baikov's. The Russians

⁸⁷ Baddeley 1963, 204; 388. Baddeley notes that Spafarii's conduct was perhaps even mythologized in the Qing court. In 1719, upon receiving another Russian mission, the Qing councilors warned the envoy not to repeat Spafarii's insolence, recalling how when asked whether he knew astrology, he replied in the affirmative. When the Emperor asked about a certain star, the Qing officials said that Spafarii had replied "I was never in the sky, and do not know the names of the stars." Spafarii makes no mention of any follow up questions, and such a reply would seem to have been an uncharacteristic break from form in the presence of the Emperor. The remark, Baddeley notes, certainly does not seem to have been translated at the time.

were refused relations with the [Qing] Empire until they fulfilled the demands of the Manchu[s]. Nor had Spafarii's journey yielded any profit to the treasury, because this time trading had been most unsatisfactory."⁸⁸ This assertion seems unduly harsh. Spafarii had succeeded in meeting with the emperor, and had presented the Tsar's letter of friendship. As for trade, he can hardly be blamed for the general unawareness among the Russians of the restrictions placed on an ambassador's movement in Beijing. He fulfilled as many of the instructions given to him as possible, and only failed to reach agreement with the Qing at the last possible moment.⁸⁹ Certainly, his mission does suggest that the Russians, far from being overly rigid in their negotiations with the Qing, were willing to be flexible and deal with the Qing on their terms when beneficial to them. In addition, despite the eventual obstinacy on both sides that had led to the expulsion of the mission, his experience suggests that pragmatic concessions could lead to workable solutions for both sides. In almost all cases, both Spafarii and the Qing were willing to make concessions and look the other way in order to save face see the mission through. The primary Qing official assigned to communicate with Spafarii admitted as much himself when he conceded that "[the Qing court is] well aware that your master [the Tsar] is no subject of the [Qing Emperor]; but time out of mind, our custom has been to speak and to write in that fashion—and that applies to all countries of the world, nor can it be changed."⁹⁰ It was this willingness to look the other way on such matters that would serve both sides well in the later negotiations at Nerchinsk.

⁸⁸ Miasnikov 1985, 180.

⁸⁹ Ablin, it will be recalled, presented himself as a merchant, and not as an ambassador, and was thus allowed to trade freely within the city, while Spafarii was contained.

⁹⁰ Baddeley 1963, 409; Mancall 1971, 108.

There is one additional element of Spafarii's account that merits discussion, that which relates to the small population of Russians in Beijing at that time. Spafarii makes especial note of these, mostly "deserters" from the sacked Russian forts along the Amur. According to the Qing, there were a total of 13 such Russians living in Beijing at this point. Spafarii noted the practice by which, "the Manchus take them and send them without delay to Peking. Here the [emperor] assigns them wages, has them married, and entered into his service. At present they are teaching the Chinese to use their muskets on horseback and on foot." One of them was employed as "an interpreter at the Board here, knowing Russian both to read and to write, and having learnt Chinese: so that he can translate any Russian writings."⁹¹ The Qing apparently did not trust this interpreter, however, as he was never brought to their meetings with Spafarii. While these Russians hardly constituted a significant presence in the Qing capital at this point, they represented the beginning of the growing community of Russians in the Qing capital in the early 18th century.⁹²

⁹¹ Baddeley 1963, 377-378.

⁹² Weigh 1928, 14.

Conclusion

Spafarii was the last formal envoy sent to Beijing prior to the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, and the last to be sent by Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, who died before Spafarii could return. While Spafarii ultimately failed in his mission to bring back a formal letter from the Kangxi emperor, his journey and dealings with the Qing Court represented over half a century of Tsarist learning and adaptation to the requirements of diplomacy in Beijing. The Muscovite envoys had come a long way from their humble beginnings. Whereas only fifty years prior Petlin had been turned away for lack of tribute, and thirty years after that Baikov had been ordered to leave for refusing to comply with basic requests, Spafarii earned an audience with the Kangxi emperor, successfully navigated the *kou-tou* question, at least initially, and made valuable contacts among the Jesuits of the capital. While he did not quite match Ablin's standard of success, it would be unfair to compare the two too strictly. As a merchant, Ablin was given freedom of movement within the capital and was under less pressure to conform to Tsarist or European styles of diplomacy. Spafarii was apparently wholly unaware of both the relative honor given to formal ambassadors in the Beijing court, and the restrictions that accompanied it.

While Spafarii's mission was a tense affair that nearly fell apart on numerous occasions, the knowledge gleaned from fifty years of contacts by the Posolskii Prikaz served the him well. The unfortunate end of his mission leaves room for debate, however. While it is difficult to know for sure, it seems unlikely that the question of performing the *kou-tou* would have prevented the Russians from sending envoys for long. During their periods of official inactivity, the Russians had made frequent use of

Ablin as a formal envoy, and apparently other Bukharans as well, and it is doubtful that they were totally ignorant of the merchant's willingness to perform the rituals required by the court, having been informed of them on multiple occasions. The Tsar did not seem to mind, so long as Chinese goods continued to flow into his treasury. Even without for the formal treaties of Nerchinsk (1689) or Kiakhta (1727), it is likely that such missions could have continued, to the mutual benefit of both sides.

Ultimately, the Tsarist envoys sent to Beijing during the 17th century were not merely self contained historical events, they functioned as fact finding missions, bringing back invaluable information about the political, social, and economic institutions of the Qing that would greatly impact later missions. For every Danilo Arshinskii, convinced that the Qing were simply another minor power in a region full of them, there was a Spafarii, who made use of all of the information at his disposal. And with each mission, even with each failure, the two empires came closer to a mutual understanding, however tentative. This, I would argue, was the true legacy of the Russian missions to Beijing in the 17th century. Individually, they amounted to a string of failures, punctuated by brief, and mostly Bukhara accented, successes. Cumulatively, they represent the process by which Imperial Russia and Qing China sized each other up, tested for weaknesses, and probed for points of common interest. It was a long, difficult process, but one that would serve them well in the coming century.

Bibliography

Atwood, Christopher Pratt. 2004. *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol empire*. New York, NY: Facts On File.

I primarily used this encyclopedia for its general articles on Russia and the Mongols, as well as for help identifying the names of places and people while translating documents.

Baddeley, John F. 1963. *Russia, Mongolia, China*. New York: B. Franklin.

A massive two-volume compendium of documents and commentary on events in China, Mongolia, and Russia in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Contains numerous excellent primary sources, and in particular, Volume 1 has a large number of beautifully reproduced maps from the period. Baddeley contains rare English translations of the entire Spafarii mission to Beijing, as well as other translated documents related to the Baikov, Ablin, and Peltin missions. It was one of the sources I used the most over the course of writing my thesis.

The Sino Russian Treaty of 1689. 1977. Beijing Normal University. Beijing.

A comprehensive overview of the negotiations at Nerchinsk, and the events that led up to them produced by a research group and Beijing Normal University. In terms of facts, it did not cover anything that wasn't in the various English language sources I consulted, but it did provide a different perspective on events, particularly as it relates to Russian motives in the region.

Bretschneider, Emil. 1910. *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources. Fragments Towards the Knowledge of the Geography and History of Central and Western Asia from the 13th to the 17th century*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.

Bretschneider was likely the first (European) researcher to notice the presence of the Russian garrison in China during the Yuan period. He summarized much of the information Franke would later translate, and provided a useful commentary that helped me frame my arguments.

Brook, Timothy. 2010. *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press.

As far as my thesis goes, I used this work primarily for the description of the Tribute System under the Yuan. More broadly speaking, Brook makes the case for the fundamental closeness of the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, rather than taking the more traditional view that they should be separated. His chapter “Khan and Emperor” was also of particular interest.

Brown, Peter. 2009. "How Muscovy Governed: Seventeenth-Century Russian Central Administration". *Russian History*. 36 (4): 459-529.

A strong overall analysis and historiography of the institutions of the 17th century Russian bureaucracy. Especially useful for background information on the Posolskii Prikaz.

Chang Hsing-Lang. 1938. “The Rebellion of the Persian Garrison in Ch’ün-chou (A.D. 1357-1366).” *Monumenta Serica* 3: 611-627.

This article is largely concerned with a revolt by a division of Persian guards during the late Yuan period. It is of interest to me for both its brief mention of the Russian presence in China, and also its description of the mechanics of these divisions, as well as the fact that it was commanded by Persians.

Chen, Vincent. 1966. *Sino-Russian relations in the seventeenth century*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Chen, a professor at St. Johns University, provided a neutral and comprehensive account and analysis of the primary source documents I was working with. His work overlaps with that of Mancall and Miasnikov, though Chen is by far the most neutral of the three.

Chen, Yuan, Hsing-hai Ch'ien, and L. Carrington Goodrich. 1989. *Western and Central Asians in China under the Mongols: Their Transformation into Chinese*. Los Angeles, California: Monumenta Serica.

I had hope to use this work, which included a fascinating section on the sinicization of Western Asians during the Yuan, for my research on the Russian garrison in China, but had to give up for lack of source material. It was still an excellent read, however.

Dmytryshyn, Basil, E. A. P. Crownhart-Vaughan, and Thomas Vaughan. 1985. *Russia's Conquest of Siberia, 1558-1700: A Documentary Record*. Portland, Or: Western Imprints, The Press of the Oregon Historical Society.

Published by the Oregon Historical Society, this volume contains an excellent and useful introduction that covers much of Russia's Siberian expansion. The meat of the volume, however, lies in its 500 pages of translated primary source documents from the late 16th through the 17th centuries. Of most value to me during the process were the documents detailing the instructions given by the Prikaz in Moscow to the various envoys sent to Beijing in the 17th century.

Franke, Herbert. 1951. "Europa in der ostasiatischen Geschichtschreibung des 13. Und 14 Jahrhunderts." *Saeculum* 2: 65-75.

This is the main source I have found describing the Russian presence in China during the Yuan period. Originally written in German, I have (roughly) translated most of it into English. It contains valuable translations from the *Yuan Shi*, or Chronicles of the Yuan Dynasty, which detail firsthand the various events related to the Russians in China.

Gafurov, B. G., and Yuriĭ Vladimirovich Gankovskiĭ. 1968. *Fifty Years of Soviet Oriental Studies; Brief Reviews. 1917-1967*. Moscow: "Nauka" Pub. House, Central Dept. of Oriental Literature.

I was particularly interested in the volume "Synology," which gave an in depth historiography of Soviet historical research on China. The volume on "Mongolia" was also of interest, though it was more oriented towards modern Mongol studies.

Gurevich, Boris Pavlovich, and S. L. Tihvinskij. 1979. *Mezhdunarodniye Otnoshenia v Centralnoj Azii v XVII - Pervoj Polovine XIX v.* Moskva: Nauka.

A compendium of primary source documents written in Russian from the 17th and 18th centuries. I was primarily interested in a report made by Ablin, but I later found an English translation of this same document.

Langlois, John D. 1981. *China Under Mongol Rule.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

I primarily used this work to get background information on the parameters of life under the Mongols during the Yuan period. Originally I planned to use it to examine the lives of the Russian garrison, but ultimately I had to abandon this goal for lack of source material. An excellent background reference, though.

Mancall, Mark. 1971. *Russia and China; Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mancall's history of Russo-Chinese contacts prior to Kiakhta was a fascinating read. Two interpretational differences separate him from Chen and Miasnikoff. First, Mancall takes a sympathetic view of both sides of these early diplomatic struggles, and second, he extends the period of his focus past the Treaty of Nerchinsk.

Mancall, Mark. 1984. *China at the Center: 300 Years of Foreign Policy.* New York: Free Press.

I primarily used this source for information on the workings of the Tribute System, as Mancall goes into greater depth on the topic here than in *Russia and China*. With that said, while this work's focus is on later times, its section on the 17th century provided good background information.

Miasnikov, V. S. 1985. *The Ch'ing Empire and the Russian State in the 17th century*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Miasnikoff gives an excellent, if rather biased, look at this period in Sino-Russian relations. His tendency to accuse the Qing of malfeasance, even after admitting there's no real evidence of such, was difficult to overlook, but since it was so blatant, it could generally be accounted for by reading it in tandem with Chen.

Ostrowski, Donald. 1990. "The Mongol Origins of Muscovite Political Institutions". *Slavic Review*. 49 (4): 525-542.

Ostrowski gives an account of the Mongol origins of some of the earliest Muscovite bureaucratic institutions, including the Posolskii Prikaz. He clearly adopts the stance that the Mongols did influence the Russian state, and that this influence was not entirely negative. He also argues that Muscovite borrowing from the Mongols was a positive development, and not something that Russians should be ashamed of.

Perdue, Peter C. 2005. *China Marches West: the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press.

A book length study of Qing campaigns and policy in Central Asia. Has a section that deals with early Qing and Russian contacts. Particularly useful when it comes to understanding the motives of the Qing during this period.

Perdue, Peter C. 2010. "Boundaries and Trade in the Early Modern World: Negotiations at Nerchinsk and Beijing". *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 43 (3): 341-356.

An in depth study of the negotiations at Nerchinsk that led to the treaty of Nerchinsk. He primarily focuses on the role of the Jesuit interpreters in facilitating dialog between the two empires. Through their status as outsiders to both Russia and China, they were able to apply enough pressure to get both sides to back down.

Rachewiltz, Igor de. 1993. *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan period (1200-1300)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

A collection of biographies of important figures from the Yuan period. At first I used this to try and find whether any Russians merited inclusion, but with no luck. Then I found a biography of a man I believed to be the last mentioned commander of the unit, though this too, was a false alarm (a different Bayan). Despite these setbacks, a few of the biographies included gave a great overview of the period, and were quite well written.

Quested, R. K. I. 1984. *Sino-Russian Relations: a Short History*. Sydney: G. Allen & Unwin.

Like Mancall's more recent work, Quested's primary focus on periods well after mine, but like Mancall, she gives a good introduction to 17th century Sino-Russian affairs. Interestingly, she is the only one who wrote a section detailing the experience both regions had under the Mongols, drawing a parallel that other writers had ignored.

Vernadsky, George, Michael Karpovich. 1943. *A History of Russia*. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press.

Specifically Volume III, *The Mongols and Russia*. An excellent overview of Russia during the Mongol period. Vernadsky covers a lot of ground quickly, and has a much more nuanced, more favorable view of the Mongols' impact on Russian history than most Russian historians. Consequently, he doesn't necessarily portray them as harshly as most historians of the period do. In addition, his bibliography was hugely helpful in tracking down sources for the project, especially Franke and Bretschneider.

Weigh, Ken Shen. 1967. *Russo-Chinese Diplomacy 1689-1924*. Bangor, Me: University Prints

Russo-Chinese Diplomacy, written in the 1920's by a Chinese national, is naturally focused on the still new relationship between the KMT and the Soviet Union. It's opening chapter, however, provides a slightly different, if largely similar account of the events analyzed in Mancall, Quested, Miasnikov and Chen