‘A Mess of Russians left us but of late’: Diplomatic Blunder, Literary Satire, and the Muscovite Ambassador’s 1668 Visit to Paris Theatres

CLAUDIA R. JENSEN & JOHN S. POWELL

In October 1672, a highly select audience in Moscow witnessed the court’s first theatrical production, a setting of Artakserksovo deistvo [The Play of Ahasuerus] based on the biblical story of Esther. A month later, in contrast, Parisians would witness the escalating rivalry between Molière and Lully—as the former continued to capitalize on their tragédie-ballet, Psyché [with Lully’s music], while the latter prepared to launch his first French opera, Les Fêtes de l’Amour et de Bacchus (with Molière’s lyrics).¹ At first glance there would seem to be little connection between the fledgling Muscovite theatre at Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s court, which in the event was to be closed down at his death only four years later, and the public theatres of Paris with their lyrical offerings of comédies-ballets, tragédies-ballets and, most recently, pastoral opera. Yet the two are linked in many ways, some subtle and some obvious, and the influences are both mutual and unexpected.

Jacob Reutenfels, a native of Courland who attended the first performance at Tsar Aleksei’s theatre, offered the following explanation of how this remarkable event came about:

A few years ago he [Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich] ordered the foreigners living in Moscow to put on a theatrical performance consisting of dances and the story of Ahasuerus and Esther, presented comically. The fact is that hearing from many ambassadors that, in order to pass the time and disperse boredom, theatrical presentations were often given for European monarchs with choruses and other amusements, he somewhat unexpectedly ordered the presentation of a similar small production for himself, in the form of some sort of French dance.² The play Reutenfels mentions here was written by another resident foreigner, the German pastor Johann Gottfried Gregory, and was performed by young actors recruited from the city’s foreign quarter. Although Reutenfels’s description has engendered endless debate over details of the production, it is perhaps most important as a witness to the complex interrelationships between the Tsar’s court theatre and the theatrical practices of western Europe.³

Historians have long noted that the Tsar’s government had expressed an interest in theatre during the decade preceding the première in 1672. Although elaborate performances of liturgical dramas, especially the story of the Three Boys in the Fiery Furnace (from the Book of Daniel) had ceased before mid-century, Aleksei’s court enjoyed unstaged verse recitations (deklamatsii) organized by Simeon Polotskii, the court’s leading poet and intellectual figure.⁴ In 1664 members of an English embassy to Muscovy produced a play written by their resident musician, which presumably included incidental music. ‘Our Musique-master’, wrote Guy Miege in his chronicle of the mission, ‘composed a handsome Comedie in Prose, which was acted in our House.’ It is not known if any of the Muscovite hosts attended this production, but Miege recalls
many interested Russians listening to their music when the party wintered in Vologda on their way to the capital.\(^9\)

The Tsar also sent abroad for musicians, actors, and those knowledgeable in theatrical production during this period.\(^6\) The most important event in this series of theatrical antecedents occurred early in 1672, when the court witnessed a full-scale production of the Orpheus legend. It was staged and performed by foreigners under the direction of Artemon Matveev, the head of the Foreign Office, in a lavish setting which included instrumental music and song.\(^7\) This production seems to mark the true beginning of the elaborate theatrical performances that characterize the final years of Aleksei’s reign; its director, Matveev, would henceforth be the driving force in organizing theatrical productions at court.

Reutenfels’s reference to the reports of ‘many ambassadors’ is an accurate and important observation of the ongoing process of acquainting the Muscovite élite with occidental dramatic practice. Tsar Aleksei did indeed receive information about western theatrical life from his Foreign Office and from his ambassadors. The summaries of western newspapers drawn up by the Foreign Office include references to lavish entertainments staged by western rulers.\(^8\) V. B. Likhachev described in awe-struck terms what he had seen in a Florentine production while on a diplomatic mission in 1660: ‘an old man came down from the sky in a carriage; and opposite him in another carriage was a most beautiful maiden; and the “horses” harnessed to the carriages moved their legs as if they were alive.’\(^9\) The most extensive contact with western theatre, however, was made nearly ten years later, when the Russian ambassador, Petr Ivanovich Potemkin (1617–c.1700), visited the courts of Spain and France.\(^10\)

Potemkin’s embassy was part of a wider diplomatic effort by Tsar Aleksei that carried a double purpose: to inform other European leaders of the peace treaty drawn up in 1667 between Poland and Muscovy, thereby resolving a conflict stretching back to the earliest years of the seventeenth century; and to garner support for a western, Christian alliance against the Ottoman Turks, whose geographic proximity to Muscovy made the Tsar a leader in this effort. Thus in 1667–8 Tsar Aleksei sent off a series of delegations to London, Vienna, Venice, Madrid, and Paris.\(^11\)

Potemkin, who led the embassy to the kings of France and Spain, had begun his career in the Muscovite military conflicts of the 1650s. He was aided by the powerful A. L. Ordin-Nashchokin, who supported him in his rise through the bureaucracy. Potemkin returned to western Europe in 1674, when he led a mission to Vienna, and again in the early 1680s, on a mission to Spain, England, and France—for which an engraving of his audience with Louis XIV in May of 1681 appeared in the French Almanac (see Plate 2). Thereafter, Potemkin ended his career as a high-ranking member of the Muscovite boyar élite.\(^12\)

During their 1668 mission to the courts of Charles II and Louis XIV, the Muscovite emissaries received royal treatment. This was also the first official embassy from the Tsar to the Spanish court, and the Muscovite party travelled widely through Spain. They arrived at the port of Cadiz in December 1667 and travelled in a leisurely fashion from Toledo to Seville, where they arrived in January 1668. Their entrance into Madrid was on 27 February/8 March 1668 and they had several audiences with the young king and his regent over the course of the next few months; they finally left Madrid to proceed on to France in June.\(^13\) While they were in Spain the Russians toured palace buildings and gardens in Seville, Madrid, and other major cities, and Potemkin’s official diplomatic account (stateinyi spisok) makes several laconic references to entertainments (potekhi) at various residences. However, although the Muscovite party visited the theatrical halls at the Palacio Real during an audience with the young king, they apparently saw no play or other stage production at the Spanish court, as their trip fell within the nearly five-year ban on theatrical performances following the death of Philip IV in 1665.\(^14\)

It was only after the party reached Paris that the Muscovites witnessed the splendour of the European stage. Louis XIV gave the embassy an elaborate reception, with a formal entry into Paris and two audiences at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. According to the Gazette de France, the delegation was received ‘with all of the honours
that are paid to crowned heads of state’. They approached the château, passing by the Company of Swiss Guards who were lined up in rows, and went into the courtyard. The Maréchal de Bellefonds and the Sieur de Berlise disembarked and accompanied them, with their attendants displaying their official credentials, together with presents carried by the Swiss Guards. As their names and titles were announced, the King arose from his throne and removed his hat. Then one of the ambassadors gave a speech in Russian, which his interpreter translated into Latin for the King’s benefit. After this audience the ambassadors presented Louis XIV with a jewel-studded sabre, several rare furs, and rich fabrics. Afterwards, the Muscovite delegation was escorted to the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs Extraordinaires, where they remained for the remainder of their stay.\(^{15}\)

Potemkin’s report of his stay in Paris consists of a nearly day-by-day account of his mission in France, and is filled with details of diplomatic and ceremonial duties together with the intricacies of protocol. But his account falls silent on the period from 1/11 September to 9/19 September, and if it were not for the journal of the Sieur de Catheux, the French official who oversaw the Muscovite mission in France, the activities of this week would be impossible to reconstruct.\(^{16}\) Far beyond the expected rounds of receptions, audiences with the king, and sightseeing trips, the events of this week included visits to art collections, churches and, most importantly, the public theatres:

Le seizième on donna à l’Ambassadeur, à son fils, au chancelier et à toute leur suite le divertissement de la comédie des *Coups de la fortune* représentée par la troupe du Marais avec des changements de théâtre et des entrées de ballets qui les réjouirent fort. Ils demandèrent du vin qu’on leur fit apporter.

Le dix-huitième la troupe du Sieur de Molière représenta *l’Amphitryon* avec des machines et des entrées de ballet qui plurent extrêmement à l’Ambassadeur et à son fils à qui on présenta sur l’amphithéâtre où ils étaient deux grands bassins, l’un de confitures sèches et l’autre de fruits, dont ils ne mangèrent point, mais ils burent et remirent à leurs comédiens; le chancelier qui se trouva mal ne fut point de la partie.\(^{17}\)

The Théâtre du Marais certainly performed *Les Coups d’amour et de fortune* by François Le Metel (dit Boisrobert), and not Quinault’s play of the same title.\(^{18}\) It is noteworthy that Boisrobert’s tragicomedy (which did not call for incidental music) was given with interludes of music and dance; likewise, Molière seems to have performed his machine comedy *Amphitryon* in the manner of a comédie-ballet.\(^{19}\)

In his letter of 29 September 1668, the gazetteer Charles Robinet corroborates Catheux’s account of the Muscovites’ visit to Molière’s theatre, and adds further details: Fiorilli’s *comedia dell’arte* company [which shared the
Les Comédiens de l'Hôtel,
Dans un appareil non tel quel,
Mais beau, je me le remémore,
Car j'en fus le témoin encore,
Etant en loge bien posté,
Ont trois fois dans l'attente été,
Des Moscovites Excellences,
Avec de magnifiques danses,
De beaux Poèmes, des Concerts,
Et même de friands desserts:
Mais ayant alors des affaires,
Plus que les élats nécessaires,
 Ils ne purent, dont m'en chaut peu,
Se rendre dans le susdit lieu.
Mais toujours la Troupe Royale
Ayant préparé son régale,
Les a divertis tout de bon,
Du moins, dans son intention.

Evidently the actors had wished to profit from the presence of the Russians in their theatre—in so far as their scheduled visits were advertised—as an added attraction to the dramatic fare. To avenge this perceived slight, the actor and author Raymond Poisson hastily prepared a boisterous, one-act farce entitled Les Faux Moscovites for performance in October 1668, that is, shortly after the Russians had departed from Paris. In his au lecteur, Poisson explained that since the real Muscovites were obliged to appear for their 'audience de congé' with Louis XIV instead of fulfilling their promise to come to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, he in turn was obliged to concoct some reasonable facsimiles.

Les Moscovites étant à Paris promirent de venir en notre Hôtel: nos annonces, & nos affiches donnèrent avis du jour qu'ils avaient pris pour s'y rendre; mais ayant été mandés ce même jour à Saint-Germain, pour leur audience de congé, ils manquèrent à leur promesse, & nous par conséquent à la nôtre. Néanmoins la foule se trouva si grande chez nous, pour les voir, qu'il n'y aurait point eu de place pour eux, s'ils y fussent venus. Cela m'obligea, avec la sollicitation de quelques-uns de mes camarades, ne pouvant avoir les véritables Moscovites, d'en fagoter de faux; & comme cinq ou six jours suffirent à cette façon, chacun vit aisément que c'étaient des Moscovites faits à la hâte, & ce sont ceux-là que tu verras aisément dans cette Comédie, & dans notre Hôtel, si tu veux, puisqu'ils n'y paraîtront point qu'on ne t'en avertisse.

---

This response to the Muscovite delegation fits a long-established pattern of a European fascination with the exotic—not only in France, but also in the much more frequent English contacts with Russians. Samuel Pepys, for example, describes the huge crowd that assembled in December 1662 to witness the procession of the Muscovite embassy in England. He described their costumes with particular emphasis, noting that the ambassador’s son wore ‘the richest suit for pearl and tissue, that ever I did see, or shall, I believe’. The French ambassador to London, viewing the same diplomats, sent lengthy dispatches back to Paris describing the Muscovites as appearing ‘in their habits and fur caps, very handsome, comely men, and most of them with hawks upon their fists to present to the King’. This striking impression made by the Muscovites in their native ceremonial dress is confirmed by the magnificent portrait of Potemkin in the Prado museum in Madrid (see Plate 3), painted at the time of his second trip to Spain in 1681.

Yet praise of the visiting diplomats’ elaborate costumes did not disguise the fundamentally negative impressions westerners held concerning Muscovy and its inhabitants. Europeans often viewed Russians—with their furs, their strange customs, their fondness for food, drink and women, and their impenetrable language—essentially as well-dressed barbarians. In this, Poisson also may have been drawing upon knowledge of the only other large Muscovite embassy to visit France, in 1654. That undistinguished party, all too closely fitting the expected behaviour, was described by Berlise-Faure, the French diplomat assigned to the group, as incurious and uninformed; another description characterized them as drunk and ill-prepared for their mission. This view is echoed by an anonymous English author, no doubt prompted by the 1662 Russian embassy to London, who wrote that the English ‘value our own fashions enough, to look upon men disguised by the Russian dress, as little better than Anticks, if not as some new kind of Northern Animals’.

Poisson offers us detailed insight into how the French viewed these curious Russian beasts, for his play presents thoroughly unflattering stereotypes of Slavic behaviour and appearance. The Muscovite impersonators drink heavily, toast frequently, eat prodigious amounts of meat, and engage in violent exercise before turning in for the night. In some cases, the characters’ behaviour seems to represent simple comic excess, and does not appear to portray anything we know of the manners of Potemkin’s suite. This caricature, however, does resemble the manners of the 1664 Muscovite embassy, in which the ambassador passed every afternoon getting intoxicated with his secretary and another attaché, and that the three of them consumed eight pints of hard liquor each day, and that, in their drunkenness, they quarrelled and even fought like lackeys. Thus in scene 10 of Les Faux Moscovites, La Montagne advises Gorgibus on the finer points of Russian protocol:

LA MONTAGNE. D’abord qu’ils ont diné, qu’ils ont fait bonne chère, tout ce qu’ils veulent faire il leur faut laisser faire.

GORGIBUS. Mais si ces choses-là vont à mon dés honneur.

LA MONTAGNE. Ah! non ce n’est pas là le but du grand Seigneur.

C’est après le repas l’exercice ordinaire, tout sera dans l’honneur; ce que vous devez faire.

Est de vous voir d’abord sur un siège un peu haut,

Pour les voir ou combattre, ou monter à l’assaut,

Ou comme ils sont d’humeur martiale et civile,

Ils représenteront le sac de quelque Ville,

Puis chacun va dormir dans son appartement.

But other passages of the play do paint true-to-life situations, which are drawn from the behaviour of Potemkin and his entourage. Scene 9 of Poisson’s play dramatizes the excitement created by the ‘Russians’ as they made their formal entry into Paris. This was always a high point of an ambassadorial visit, and Potemkin spent a good deal of time both in Spain and France making plans to create imposing entrances. In the play, Lubine describes the crowds that had gathered in the Saint-Antoine quarter in order to gape at these exotic foreigners, and she reassures the anxious innkeeper that he may expect handsome compensation for the hospitality that he has extended to his Russian guests:

LUBINE. Les Moscovites sont au quartier Saint Antoine,

On dit qu’ils sont montés sur de petits Bidets,
Pour les voir on s'étouffe à la porte Baudets,
Tout le monde déjà s'assomme en notre rue,
Et dedans leur chemin par ma foi l'on s'y tue.
Vous voilà dans le gain et dedans le bonheur;
Ah! tout le monde dit que c'est un grand
Seigneur. 33

Yet this reference to the wealth expected from generous guests has already been undercut in the play—in a way that suggests that the playwright was familiar with some specific aspects of Potemkin's trip. In the second scene, the innkeeper Gorgibus complains to Lubin about the money he has advanced the 'Russians', and, in this instance, Gorgibus's admiration of their fancy dress does not mask his fundamentally negative view of them. 34

Gorgibus. J'attends des Etrangers, des gens de
consequence,
Et j'avance pour eux des sommes d'importance.
Leurs Interpretes sont chez moi depuis huit jours,
Qui lèvent des brocarts, des satins, des velours;
J'ai donné mille écus à Monsieur l'Interprète,
C'est bien de l'argent sûr. Mais j'avance, je prête,
Puis ces Interpreux font de fort grands repas,
Leurs Maitres cependant viennent à petits pas,
Je crains bien de passer ici pour une bête. 35

Gorgibus's concern for the mounting bill run up by the 'interpreters' reflects the finances of Potemkin's party, which was plagued by haggles over money. Indeed, this is a recurring theme of Muscovite missions in Europe. Catheux noted in his journal that the Russians had saved most of the 150 écus per diem allowance provided by the King of Spain; 'the Muscovites', he observed, 'loved high living less than they did silver, which is very rare in their country'. Although Louis XIV made them a generous present of 100 pistoles, the Russians felt that they ought to have been reimbursed for 5,000 livres, the money they spent between the border of France and Bordeaux. Potemkin's report begins with this complaint, and he even raised it during the carriage ride to his final audience with Louis XIV; moreover, Potemkin was angered that the King financed his journey only as far as Calais, where the delegation chartered a ship for Amsterdam. 36

Gorgibus's remark about the fake Muscovites' fondness for banquets also reflects reality, for the appetites of the real Muscovite ambassadors were a subject of wonder for the Parisians. 37 Poisson's parody of the Russian language further supports this caricature of Muscovites as primitives, for his Muscovites use many words to express simple ideas, which they punctuate with Neanderthal grunts: 'cricq', 'craq', 'crocq', and 'hio', decidedly foreign to the French language, evidently struck French ears as uncouth and, hence, plausibly Russian. In scene 7 La Montagne and Joliceur hire Lubin to impersonate a Muscovite nobleman, and carefully coach him in the nuances of the Russian language:

LUBIN. Voyons donc, que ferai-je?
LA MONTAGNE. Un Grand de Moscovie
Et tu diras hio lors que tu parleras;
Hio veut dire oui, tu baragouineras
Quelque étrange jargon; mais trouve-nous encore
Des ges pour t'escorter à la grande suite honore,
Tous seront bien vêtus & bien payés de nous. 38

In scene 11 the 'Muscovite' Lubin makes a triumphal entrance speaking Russian, while his employers, pretending to be his interpreters, translate for the bewildered innkeeper. 39 Lubin, however, slips up and speaks French on a number of occasions, which causes Gorgibus to remark gullibly: 'Quand il veut franciser on l'entend assez bien, / Mais quand il moscovise on n'y comprend plus rien' ('when he Frenchifies I can understand him well enough, but when he Moscovizes I no longer understand anything').

The Russian predisposition toward verbal effusion also becomes the object of satire when Lubin compliments his host on the meal, and delivers a long-winded toast in pidgin Russian: 40

Gorgibus. Là l'on apporte la table toute servie.
Voilà le dîner prêt, il va se mettre à table;
Des sièges.
LA MONTAGNE fait un long jargon en coupant les viandes et les présentant aux autres.
JOLICEUR. Cricq.
LA MONTAGNE. Cricq.
LUBIN, en avalant il baragouine. Crocq.
JOLICEUR. Le cochon est, dit-il, admirable.
LUBIN, baragouine longtemps le verre à la main.
LA MONTAGNE, aux dames. Il boit à vos santés.
M. AMINTHE. Que ce langage est sol!
Quoi! parler si longtemps pour ne dire qu'un mot! 41
Not listed in the cast of characters, Mme Aminthe appears only in scene 10, where she reacts with indignation at Lubin’s unwanted attentions. Unlike what one might expect from these northern ‘animals’, Ambassador Potemkin displayed a remarkable fidelity to his wife. According to the Sieur de Catheux, while Potemkin was in Orléans several beautiful women were presented to him. I asked him to tell me what he thought of them, and he responded that he had taken one [for wife] in his country, and that it was no longer permitted him to look upon others at length so as to be able to discuss his feelings. Evidently the playwright Poisson had heard of this episode, and gives it a comic spin when the fake Muscovite (through his ‘translator’) abruptly dismisses the lady with a backhanded compliment:

**La Montagne.** Il vient de boire à vous, il faut faire de même; N’hésitez pas, Madame.

**Mme Aminthe.** Ah, la rigueur extrême!

**Joligép.** C’est la marque & le sceau de son affection.

**Mme Aminthe.** Parce qu’il m’aime il faut souffrir la question?

**Vous croiay que je boie un verre d’eau-de-vie!**

**La Montagne.** C’est l’ordre du Pays.

**Mme Aminthe.** He! suis-je en Moscovie?

**Susan.** Allez-le supplier de vous en dispenser.

**Lubin jargonne.**

**La Montagne.** Il vous fait signe au moins de ne pas avancer, Madame. Il dit qu’il est à sa femme fidèle, Et qu’il ne veut avoir de l’amour que pour elle.

**Mme Aminthe.** Comment?

**Joligép.** Il ne faut point vous en mettre en courroux;
Il en a refusé d’aussi belles que vous.

This proximity of ‘Russian’ speech noted earlier by Mme Aminthe would seem to be the anti-theosis of the lingua franca spoken by the Turkish impersonators in Act IV, sc. 4 of Molière’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670), where the ‘interpreter’ gives a long-winded translation of the Mufti’s command ‘Bel-men’: ‘Il dit que vous alliez vite avec lui vous préparer pour la cérémonie, afin de voir ensuite votre fille, et de conclure le mariage’ (‘He says that you are to go quickly with him to prepare yourself for the ceremony, so that he may see your daughter afterwards, and conclude the marriage’). When Monsieur Jourdain incredulously asks ‘Tant de choses en deux mots?’ he is informed that, ‘Oui, la langue turque est comme cela, elle dit beaucoup en peu de paroles.’

The relationship between these two linguistic parodies is not fortuitous, for the French associated Russians—with their long hair and beards, their caftans and fur caps, and their obsession with ceremony and protocol—with Turks. Furthermore, in many ways the Russian affair anticipates the more scandalous Turkish incident of the following year, when on 27 September 1669 the Turks captured Candia from the Venetians, at the cost of a number of French lives. Moreover, Sultan Mohammed IV did not extend diplomatic immunity to the French ambassador in Constantinople, whom he imprisoned and later sent home. The unenviable task of restoring diplomatic relations with France fell upon Soliman Aga, a Turkish ambassador of a sullen and melancholic nature who possessed little political talent. Accustomed to the oriental splendour of the Persian court, this ‘muta ferraca’ made no attempt to disguise his indifference to the grandeur of the court of the Sun King and the magnificent ‘Turkish’ reception that Hugues de Lionne, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, held in his honour. This perceived effrontery caused a furor in Paris, and afterwards Louis XIV requested a masquerade from Molière and Lully that would burlesque Turkish manners and customs. Consequently, the ‘Cérémonie turque’ of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* owes its existence, as does Poisson’s *Les Faux Moscovites*, to a faux pas in foreign diplomacy.

Poisson’s stylized and unflattering satire of Muscovite manners and customs is one way in which Russians were represented on western European stages. In some instances Muscovy itself was used as a prop, a shorthand for the exotic and the strange. For example, in Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour Lost* some characters appear disguised as ‘frozen Muscovits’; although there are small references to specifically Russian qualities, the disguises might have represented any exotic and cold foreign place. Likewise, the Russians who appear in the *Troisième Entrée* of the Ballet Royal de l’Impatience (1661) serve as a comic foil when ‘two dancing
masters grow impatient while teaching the courante to some Muscovites. Their failure at that quintessentially French exercise seems to stand for the ineptitude of foreigners in general, rather than specifically Russian clumsiness.

Other western productions explored the political and familial drama of the Muscovite Time of Troubles—familiar to the seventeenth century from the many diplomatic and popular reports of uprisings and pretenders to the throne (as dramatized in Musorgskii’s later operatic setting). The story of the false Dmitrii found its most important European expression in Lope de Vega’s *El gran duque di Moscovia y emperador perseguido* (published 1617), probably based on the account of Antonio Possevino.50 In England, John Fletcher’s play, *The Loyal Subject* (1618), was based loosely on the events in Muscovy at the turn of the century; the topic was taken up later by Mary Pix in *The Tsar of Muscovy* (1701).51 Dramatic presentations of the Dmitrii story cropped up in Italy as well, with Giuseppe Theodoli’s *Il Demetrio Moscovita* (Bologna, 1652).52

Within these contexts—as either exotic decoration or as political sensation—Poisson’s satire stands apart. Although it retains the long-standing European stereotypes of Muscovite behaviour, the work emerged from actual contact with specific Russians. The pompous Muscovite nobleman of the play is not an abstract stereotype, but recalled to the audience the mystifying habits of the recently departed ambassadorial party and its leader, Petr Ivanovich Potemkin. Furthermore, Poisson seems to have been unusually well informed about his subject, for much of his caricature of the habits and customs of the Muscovite envoys can be corroborated by Catheux’s journal. The satire is thus specific and, because of this, bitingly effective.53

The consequences, then, of the Potemkin mission to Paris are varied. On the French side, we learn from the accounts of the Russians’ visits to the public theatres that Parisian theatre companies would add music and dance to otherwise non-musical plays for special performances, and that this practice extended beyond performances given at the court of Louis XIV. Clearly, the impact of ballet de cour upon spoken drama was more widespread than is generally recognized, and it would seem that the comédies-ballets of Molière and Lully represent not only a hybrid genre but also a style of theatrical performance that was fashionable at the time.

Moreover, the farcical depiction of the dress, manners, and customs of foreigners in *Les Faux Moscovites* also derives from French court ballet, where foreign cultures were often depicted by means of outlandish costumes and unusual props. This kind of stylized exoticism had become the subject of numerous tragi-comedies of the 1640s—Sallebray’s *La Belle Egyptienne* (1642), Georges de Scudéry’s *Ibrahim* (1643), and Rotrou’s *La Sœur* (1647)—which feature the first French attempts at conveying linguistic exoticism. The task of combining pseudo-exotic music and lingua franca lyrics will be left to a handful of comédies-ballets of the 1660s: Montfleury’s *Le Mari sans femme* (1663), Molière’s *Le Sicilien* (1667) and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670).

On the Russian side, the situation is more complex, but quite suggestive. It is difficult to claim direct or specific influence for Potemkin’s views of Molière and Boisrobert in 1668, for the official diplomatic report, after all, does not mention them. Yet on his return to Moscow, Potemkin was in precisely the right milieu—the Tsar’s Foreign Office—at precisely the right time to find an interested audience for his tales of the Parisian stage. Artemon Matveev, who was to head the Foreign Office within a few years, would be the central organizer of the court theatre and apparently produced some kind of private theatricals at his home in the years just after Potemkin’s return.54 Over the next two decades Potemkin himself went on to become an important and well-travelled representative for the Tsar, and one with a decided taste for the theatre. Although he did not write down his experiences in his official report, he certainly remembered them—for he once more attended stage productions when he returned to the west in 1681–2. In London Potemkin requested to be taken to the theatre, and in Paris Louis XIV regaled him with a banquet, a comedy, and some ballet entrées.55 Potemkin’s visits to the Parisian theatres in 1668 thus give substance to Reutenfels’s claim that the Tsar learned about western dramatic practices through his diplomats. For historians of Russian
theatre, Potemkin’s experiences suggest that diplomatic accounts and affairs offer new avenues for exploration of Muscovite culture.36

Claudia R. Jensen is Adjunct Lecturer at the School of Music, University of Washington at Seattle, and John S. Powell is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Tulsa.

Notes

1. Psyché had been a collaboration between Molière [who designed the tragedie-ballet, wrote it in prose form, and began the versification], Pierre Corneille [who completed the versification], Philippe Quinault [who provided the sung lyrics], and Lully [who composed the music], after its première at court in January 1671. Molière gave a commercial production of Psyché at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal beginning in July of that year. Lully’s first opera, Les Fêtes de l’Amour et de Bacchus, inaugurated the Académie Royale de Musique on 15 November 1672; this amounted to a pastiche of musical episodes culled from several of his comedies-ballets with Molière [Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme specifically, Le Ballet des ballets, La Pastorela comique, Les Amants magnifiques, and George Dandin], which were loosely tied together in a libretto by Quinault.

2. Jacob Reutenfels, De Rebus Moschoviticiis ad Serenissimum Magnum Heturiae Ducem Cosmon Tertium [Padua, 1680], pp. 104–5: ‘Idemque proxime retractis annis scenam saltatoriam, necnon Ahasueri, & Estheraeae historiam, comice descriptam, praesentari sibi ab externis, Moscaeae degentibus, sustinuit. Cum enim ex nuntius passim intellexisset, Europae Principibus varios interdum ludos, choraeas, aliaeque delectamenta, ad fallenda temporis fastidio, exhiberet, speciem eius rei in tripudio aliquo Gallico drepentis fieri iussit.’ A Russian translation is in Jakov Reutenfels’s, Skaza niia svetleishemu gertsogu toskanskemu Kozme tret’emu o Moskovi’, trans. and ed. A. Stankevich, Chetvri v Imperatorskom Obschestve Istorii i Drevnosti Rossisskikh pri Moskovskom Universitete [henceforth abbreviated ChODIR] 3, chast’ 2 [1905], p. 88. Many thanks to Dr Martha Lahana for providing the text of Reutenfels’s original and to E. Kent Webb for advice on translating the Latin.


5. The embassy was headed by Charles Howard, first Earl of Carlisle. See the account in [Guy Mige], A Relation of Three Embassies from His Sacred Majestie Charles II to the Great Duke of Muscovie, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark [London, 1669], p. 142 [on the comedy] and pp. 99–100 (the winter of 1663–4 in Vologda): ‘Our Musique was most commonly at Dinner, at which time there was nothing to be heard but Trumpets and viols, whose delightful and agreeable Harmony, did sometimes so charm the Russes, that it drew great Company of them to hear it. And indeed the Musique was very good, being managed by one of the best experienced Musicians of England, who from time to time composed new airs.’

6. These requests are summarized in Jensen, ‘Music for the Tsar’, pp. 372 and 384.


9. V. B. Likhachev travelled to Florence in late 1699; he arrived there in January 1660. An English translation of a portion of Likhachev’s report to the Foreign Office, cited here, is in Longworth, Alexis, p. 210. Likhachev’s full report is published in Drevniaia Rosskaia Vivlofil’ka [henceforth abbreviated DRV] vol. 4 [Moscow, 1788], where the description of the theatrical presentation is on pp. 350–1. The production Likhachev saw consisted of three sections: the ascents and descents from oceans and clouds, excerpted above, a scene showing the dead on a field of battle, with sailors piloting small ships on an ocean, and a land battle, with firearms. There was also dancing and other performances. Likhachev also saw other musical entertainments during his stay. An account by his Italian hosts is reproduced in M. D. Buturlin, Bamagi florentinskago isenural’nago arkhipa kasatushchiasia do Rossi / Documenti che si conservano nel R. Archivio di Stato in Firenze, Sezione Medecina, Reguardanti l’antica Moscovia (Russia) [Moscow, 1871], especially document XXVIII on pp. 44–7 [Italian] and pp. 212–18 [Russian].


12. Potemkin's career is outlined in *Russkii biograficheskii slovar* (St Petersburg, 1905; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1962), s.v. 'Potemkin, Pet Ivanovich'; see also Likhachev, *Puteshestviia russkih poslov* [1966], pp. 426-7, n. 2; and Crumme, *Aristocrats and Servitors*, pp. 42, 100-1, and 207.

13. During the seventeenth century, the Russian calendar was ten days behind the Western system and Muscovite diplomats used the Russian calendar in their reports; in this paper, dates are usually presented in both systems. Potemkin's itinerary is based on the account in *DRV* 4: the arrival at the cities of Cadiz (p. 360), Toledo (p. 376), and Seville (p. 371). On their preparations for their entry into Madrid, see *DRV* 4, 376-78. Jack Weiner, *Manitlas in Mushovy: The Spanish Golden Age Theatre in Tsarist Russia, 1672-1917*, University of Kansas Humanistic Studies, no. 41 [Lawrence, Kansas, 1970], 1, citing Gabriel Maura y Gamazo, *Carlo II y su corte* [Madrid, 1911], p. 308 confirms that the party entered the city on 8 March 1668.


16. The events of this week are found in *Une ambassade russe à la cour de Louis XIV*, [henceforth cited as 'Catheu's journal'] on pp. 20-2. Potemkin's account, in Likhachev, *Puteshestviia russkih poslov*, 278, resumes on 10/20 September.

17. 'On the sixteenth the Ambassador, his son, the Chancellor, and all their entourage attended the performance of the comedy *Les Coups de la fortune*, performed by the Marais troupe with set-changes and ballet entries, which they greatly enjoyed. They requested some wine, which was brought to them. On the eighteenth the troupe of Sieur de Molière performed *Amphitryon* with machines and ballet entrées, which greatly pleased the Ambassador and his son— to whom two great basins, one with dried fruits and the other with fresh fruit, were presented on the amphitheatre where they were seated. They did not eat of this, but drank and thanked the actors. The chancellor [Rumiantsev] had fallen ill and was not of the party.' [Catheu's journal, p. 22 — the French spelling has been modernized in all quotations]. Potemkin's visits to the Parisian theatres have been mentioned in musicological literature; see, for example, N. Findeizen, *Ocherki po istorii muzyki v Rossii* [Moscow, 1928], vol. 1, p. 314.

18. When the rival theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne premiered Quinault's *Le Cid* soon thereafter, Boisrobert accused Quinault of plagiarism. There was some justification to the charge, since Quinault based his version in part on Boisrobert's play as well as on its Spanish source, Calderón's *Lancés de amor y fortuna*. Since the Marais theatre had originally premiered Boisrobert's play, it would be reasonable to assume that Potemkin saw a revival there on 16 September.

19. It became increasingly common in the mid-1660s to perform spoken plays with interludes of music and dance for special occasions. In July of 1664, the Troupe Royale of the Hôtel de Bourgogne performed Corneille's tragedy *Œdipe* with dramatically related entracte ballet by Lully (*Entr'actes d'Œdipe*, LWV 23). The following summer, Molière's company participated in a fête given in the gardens of Versailles, where the actors performed *Le Favori* by Marie-Catherine Desjardins [better known as Mme de Villiedieu] as a comédie-ballet, with musical intermèdes by Molière and Lully. Afterwards, refreshments were served on stage, and then the guests retired to the labyrinth—where a torchlit banquet accompanied by an ensemble of strings, winds, and various court singers awaited them. For further discussion of this Versailles performance, see Perry Gethner, ed., *The Luminous Lover and Other Plays by French Women of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1994), pp. 35-8.
of the planned and then cancelled visit to the Hôtel de Bourgogne. See Likhachev, Puteshestviia russkikh poslov, pp. 278–97. (There is a similar one-week gap in Potemkin’s account following his meeting with the Spanish king on 7 March; see DRV 4, pp. 388–95.)

21. Les Faux Moscovites was first published in 1669 (Paris: Quinet). Poisson’s comedy is available in Victor Fournel, Les Contemporains de Molière (Paris, 1863), vol. 1, pp. 455–76. This was not the first play given on a Russian theme, for the Memoire de Mahelot lists ‘La Moscovite, pièce de Mr Canu’—a lost tragicomedy that was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in the early 1630s (see H. Carrington Lancaster, ed., Le Memoire de Mahelot, Laurent, et d’autres décoreurs de l’Hôtel de Bourgogne et de la Comédie-Française au xviif siècle (Paris, 1920), p. 73, and Virginia Scott, The Commedia dell’Arte in Paris, 1644–1697 (Charlottesville, VA : University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 129–37).

22. The play begins with Lubin raving at his drunken husband Gorgibus, a former thief who is now forced to peddle bootblack. Seeking employment, Lubine approaches the innkeeper Gorgibus, who awaits the arrival of a Muscovite nobleman and his entourage. Meanwhile, two Russian ‘interpreters’ have been enjoying the hospitality of the inn for over a week, where they have been running up a substantial bill. In reality, the interpreters (La Montagne and Jolicoeur) are imposters, engaged by the Baron de Jonquille to gain access to Gorgibus’s home in order to carry off his daughter, Suson. La Montagne and Jolicoeur meet up with Lubine, who complains to them about her husband Lubin and wants to ask the Muscovite nobleman to annul her marriage. After she leaves, Lubine enters singing a chanson de guerre (‘En revenant de Canadas’). La Montagne and Jolicoeur, pretending to be ex-soldiers, greet Lubin as a comrade in arms, question him about his military service, and engage him to impersonate the Muscovite nobleman. Meanwhile, Gorgibus has had enough with the two interpreters and has sent for the police—in spite of Suson’s protestations that they are honest men. Lubin, pretending to be the Muscovite nobleman, makes a triumphal entrance speaking pidgin Russian while La Montagne and Jolicoeur interpret for him, and enjoys a feast that Gorgibus has prepared. Lubine enters, throws herself at the Muscovite nobleman’s feet, and requests that he annul her marriage on the grounds of Lubin’s impotence. Lubine is then pursued offstage by the enraged Lubin, while La Montagne explains to Gorgibus that he is merely mounting the customary siege that serves as after-dinner exercise. La Montagne orders the innkeeper to blow a trumpet, which is the cue for Suson’s abduction. Lubine reveals the ruse to Gorgibus, but the Baron de Jonquille returns with Suson and asks the innkeeper for his daughter’s hand in marriage. Gorgibus agrees, and when Lubine returns in fear for her life, Suson offers her protection to the unhappy wife.

23. ‘The Muscovites, being in Paris, promised to come to our playhouse, and our announcements and playbills advised of the day of their arrival; but having been summoned that same day to Saint-Germain for their final audience [with the king], they broke their promise and, consequently, we broke ours. Nevertheless, the crowd that came to our playhouse to see them was so large that there would have been no room for them had they come after all. This obliged me, on the encouragement of several of my comrades, not being able to have the real Muscovites, to cook up some fake ones. And since five or six days sufficed for this, everyone easily sees that these Muscovites were made in haste; and it is the latter ones that you will readily see in this comedy, and in our playhouse, if you wish, since they will not appear there except as advertised.’ [Preface to Les Faux Moscovites, cited in Parfait, X, pp. 337–8.]


27. The other prominent Russian presence in France prior to Potemkin’s embassy was the attendance of two diplomats, Kondyrev and Neverov, at Louis XIII’s wedding at Bordeaux in 1615. Other diplomatic connections between France and Russia in the intervening years were affairs; the most complete discussion is in Alfred Rambaud, Recueil des Instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France depuis les traités de Westphalie jusqu’à la Révolution française: Russie, Vol. 1 (Paris, 1890).

the king. According to Catheux’s journal (p. 19), Potemkin ‘fasted until evening rather than dine before his audience, because he needed to have his wits about him when speaking to His Majesty, and that he would not want one to attribute the good or evil that he might do to the meats that he might have eaten, or to the wine that he might have drunk’.


30. According to Catheux’s journal (p. 10), ‘this same day they began to eat some meat, and requested that they might not be served hares, rabbits, or pigeons, nor young veal, for they say that hares and rabbits are too common, pigeons are too innocent, and veal is not good under a year old; what they like best are gosling, ducks, and sucking pig’.


32. **La Montagne.** As soon as they have dined and lived it up, you must let them do whatever they want. **Gorgibus.** But if those things might be dishonorable to me.

**La Montagne.** Ah! no, this is not the intent of the great lord. This is the normal exercise after the meal, everything will be honorable; what you must do is to position yourself immediately on a high chair to watch them either fight, or raise a siege, or if they are of a martial and civil mood they will re-enact the plunder of some city, then each will go to his chamber to sleep.

33. **Lubine.** And to inspect the storehouse of hay and oats, the Muscovites are in the Saint-Antoine district, they say that they are mounted on little ponies, to see them one must pack into the Baudet gate. Everyone is already crowding around in our street, and to get in their path would be to face certain death. You’ll certainly be wealthy and fortunate: Ah! everyone says that he is a great lord.

34. According to Manuel Couvreur, the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne borrowed costumes used in a recent Russian masquerade that had been inspired by the Muscovite embassy; see Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Musique et drameurie au service du Prince* (Bruxelles, 1992), p. 208, n. 150.

35. **Gorgibus.** I await some foreigners, some men of distinction, and I’ve paid out on their behalf a considerable sum. Their interpreters have been living here for eight days, and have helped themselves to my brocade, satin, and velour. I have given a thousand écus to Monsieur the Interpreter, and that’s hard cash indeed. But I advance, I lend, while these interpreters partake of great banquets, their masters come at a snail’s pace. And I fear I’m being taken for a fool.

36. Catheux in Galigni, ‘Une ambassade russe’, pp. 2 and 26–28 and Potemkin in Likhachev, *Puteshestvija russkikh poslov*, pp. 284–5; see also n. 16. The Russian expected their ambassadorial parties to be fully supported when in the host country; see Likhachev, *Puteshestvija russkikh poslov*, p. 430, n. 16. On the background of this ‘tradition’, see Vinogradoff, ‘Russian Missions to London’, p. 38. The Muscovites were seen as particularly niggardly in rewarding those who had served them: for accompanying him from 9 August until 3 October, Potemkin gave the Sieur de Catheux a pair of fur mittens, a little knife with a sheath, and the fur collar from his robe. Catheux is mentioned by name in Potemkin’s account as receiving parting gifts of sable pelts, a common currency of Muscovite embassies (Likhachev, *Puteshestvija russkikh poslov*, p. 298 [other parting gifts are listed on p. 297]). Sir Charles Cotrell, the Master of Ceremonies at the English court, made the same complaint after the disappointing parting gifts following the Vinius mission in 1673: ‘It is their custome to think whatsoever they get, too little, and whatever they give, too much.’ Quoted in Vinogradoff, ‘Russian Missions to London’, pp. 38 and 54.


38. **Lubine.** Let’s see then, what will I be.

**La Montagne.** A noble from Muscovy and you will say ‘hio’ when you speak; ‘hio’ means ‘yes’, you will jabber some foreign jargon; but we still need to find some men to escort you in a grand ceremony, everyone will be well dressed and paid by us.

39. Robinet’s letter of 27 October refers to the lively performances of Raymond Poisson and Claude Deschamps, Sieur de Villiers, who probably played the parts of Gorgibus and Lubin; see Parfait, X, pp. 338–9n.

40. Catheux’s journal (p. 18) remarks on the same custom among his Muscovite charges: The ambassador observed a ceremony that he repeated exactly every day while dining and supping; which was to stand up, remove his hat, and to deliver a rather long speech interspersed with compliments and prayers, which an interpreter explained in a few words, after which the ambassador drank to the health of the Tsar and of the King—for which all those who were at the table, taking up their glasses at the same time, would join in.’ A high proportion of Potemkin’s account is made up of what purport to be verbatim transcriptions of these highly stylized toasts and speeches.

41. **Gorgibus.** There the table is brought all prepared. When he speaks in French I can understand him well enough, but when he Muscovizes I no longer understand anything. Here, the dinner is ready; he can come sit at the table. Bring some seats.

**Lubin gives a long speech in pidgin Russian while cutting the meats and presenting them to the others.**

**Jolicoeur.** Cricq.

**La Montagne.** Cricq.
LUBIN, while swallowing he jabbers nonsense. Crocq.
JOLICOUR, The pig, he says, is admirable.
LUBIN jabbers at length with glass in hand.
LA MONTAGNE, to the ladies. He drinks to your health.
Mme AMINTHE. How idiotic this language is!
What! to talk on and on in order to say but one word!
42. Catheux's journal, pp. 10–11.
43. LA MONTAGNE. He has drunk to you, now you must do the same; do not hesitate, Madame.
Mme AMINTHE. Ah, spare me!
JOLICOUR. It is the mark and seal of his affection.
Mme AMINTHE. Because he loves me must I put up with this?
You would have me drink a glass of hard liqueur?
LA MONTAGNE. 'Tis the custom of the land.
Mme AMINTHE. Why, am I in Moscow?
SUSAN. Go ask him to excuse you from doing it.
LUBIN babbles.
LA MONTAGNE. He signals you to advance no nearer, Madame. He says that he is faithful to his wife, and that he means to have love only for her.
Mme AMINTHE. How's that?
JOLICOUR. No need to get angry, he has refused many women as beautiful as you.
44. This point is made in Depping, ‘Une ambassade russe à Paris en 1654’, p. 143.
45. Laurent d'Arville was assigned to accompany the Turkish envoy, and left a description of this visit (and Aga's disdain of the French court) in his Mémoires [Paris, 1728], vol. IV, p. 185.
48. A general overview of specifically English attitudes is in Anderson, 'English Views'.
49. The Muscovites appear in Love's Labour Lost, V.ii, from which the quotation that heads this article is also taken. European fascination with the Muscovite cold is discussed in Loewenson, 'The Works of Robert Boyle', passim. A Russian ambassadorial party may be connected with another Shakespearian play: see Leslie Hotson, The First Night of 'Twelfth Night' [New York: Macmillan, 1954]. Although the proposed identification of the character Orsino with the visiting Duke Orsino is controversial, the author does include lengthy translations from the account of the visiting Russian ambassador from Tsar Boris, Grigori Mikulin.
50. Alekseev, Ocherki, 11-12 and nn. 19-20 on sources for Lope de Vega; see also N. I. Balashov, 'Recessansnaia problematika ispanskiia dramy XVII v. na vostochnoslavianskie temy', Slavianskie literatury: Doklady sovetskoi delegatsii V Mezdunarodnyi s'ezd slavistov [Moscow, 1963], pp. 89-124. The drama Principe perseguido - Infeliz Juan Basilio (manuscript carries censor's stamp from 1650) by the Spanish dramatists Moreto, Belmonte Bermudo, and Martinez de Menses was based on Lope's work. See Badalov, 'Renessansnaia problema', pp. 115-21, citing Ruth Kennedy, 'The Dramatic Art of Moreto' [Ph.D. dissertation, Smith College, Philadelphia, 1932], where a synopsis of the play is given on pp. 191-3; an important study considering the date, sources, and later influences of Lope's work is Ervin C. Brody, The Demetrios Legend and its Literary Treatment in the Age of the Baroque [Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, c.1972]; Brody offers a thorough discussion of Lope's possible sources on pp. 34-70; he discusses other European sources using the Dmitrii theme and the influence of Lope's drama on pp. 131-2.
52. Cited in Anderson, 'English Views', 149, n. 73 and in Alekseev, 'Boris Godunov', pp. 96-7. It has not been possible to establish if the other Italian work cited by Anderson and Alekseev, Bianco Bianchi's Il Demetrio [Lucca, 1645], is actually on a Russian theme. Alekseev, Boris Godunov, pp. 98-9, citing Rudolf von Gottschall, 'Dramaturgische Parallelen: 3. Die Demetrius Dramen' in Studien zur neuen deutschen Litteratur [Berlin, 1892], p. 100, mentions a commedia dell'arte presentation of the Dmitrii theme by Boccaobadetti, popular in a French translation in the early eighteenth century. Although Alekseev and Gottschall are somewhat unreliable in their information (for example, the Aubry play they mention is not on the Dmitrii theme), one might note that there was a commedia character with a Slavic background. See Louise George Clubb, 'Italian Renaissance Theatre' in The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre, ed. John Russell Brown [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 131; see also Clubb's Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], p. 262, where she discusses the probable Dalmatian provenance of one of Francesco Andreini's commedia roles.
53. John Fletcher's The Loyal Subject, mentioned above, might also fit into this category. The playwright was the nephew of the diplomat Giles Fletcher, who served as Elizabeth's ambassador to Russia; John used his uncle's Of the Russe Commonwealth [1591] as a source while working on his play. Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 58, s.v. 'Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher', by Cyrus Hoy; see also the detailed discussion in Brody, The Demetrios Legend, pp. 156-64.
54. The private performances at Matveev's home are cited in most literature on Muscovite music and are based on the petition of Vasily Repskii, who complained of his position of 'slavery' in Matveev's home, where he was forced to play music against his will; see K. V. Kharlampovich, Malorossiiskoe vitanie na velikorusskuiia tserkovnuiia zhizn' [Kazan', 1914; reprint, Slavistic Printings and Reprints,
vol. 119, ed. C. H. van Schooneveld, The Hague, 1968], 105. An English summary is in Jensen, 'Music for the Tsar', 381. There is no direct evidence that Tsar Aleksei attended these performances, although he was very close to Matveev during these years.

55. Potemkin's return visit to Paris in 1681 is described briefly in Robert M. Isherwood, Music in the Service of the King: France in the 17th Century [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973], pp. 302–3; contemporary documents are published in the Sbornik Imperatorskago russkago istoricheskago obshchestva [St. Petersburg, 1881], vol. 34, pp. 1–10. Potemkin's trips to the London theatres are outlined in William Van Lennep, ed., The London Stage 1660–1800, Part 1: 1660–1700 [Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965], pp. 304 and 308. On 12 January 1682 the Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series, Jan. 1st to Dec. 31, 1682, ed. F. H. Blackburne Daniell [London, 1932], p. 24 notes the following (emphasis added): 'By the ambassador's particular command a play called the Tempest was played yesterday, at which he was present . . . On Friday the second part of the Siege of Jerusalem is acted by his particular command and on Monday he goes home.' See also Van Lennep, The London Stage, p. 304, where the plays are identified as an alteration of Shakespeare's The Tempest by Thomas Shadwell [Wednesday, 11 January 1682] and Part II of John Crowne's The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian [Friday, 13 January 1682]; see also the comment for Tuesday, 10 January 1682. Vinogradoff, 'Russian Missions to London', p. 61, quotes the report of the Master of Ceremonies on the 10 January performance: 'Upon the invitation of Mr. Killegrew, Master of the Revels and of the Kings Play House, to the Amb: to see a Play, he went this day; was placed in the Kings Box; he was entertained with very fine Daunces between the Acts; and at the end of the first with a great Basket of Fruit; and as I think, he gave not one farthing either for that or the Play.'

56. Molière's Amphitryon was part of the repertory of the theatre established by Peter the Great, Aleksei's son and eventual successor, in Moscow in 1701–4, this was the next attempt at forming a sustained theatrical venue in Russia, following the closure of the court theatre after Aleksei's death in 1676. The choice of this play is almost certainly not related to Potemkin's viewing in 1668: the ambassador was dead by the time the theatre was formed, and its repertory was imported, like the actors, ready-made from the West. On this theatrical troupe and its repertory (which included adaptations of other plays of Molière), see Simon Karlinsky, Russian Drama from its Beginnings to the Age of Pushkin [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985], pp. 46–9 and V. N. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, Istoriia russkogo dramaticheskogo teatra: Ot istokov do kontsa XVIII veka, vol. 1 of Istoriia russkogo dramaticheskogo teatra v semi tomakh [Moscow, 1977], pp. 90–5.