

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT AMONG THE DRAGOMANS AND THE LANGUAGE BOYS OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC IN CONSTANTINOPLE (1551–1797)

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Abstract: *The Turkish Language School which started its activity in 1551 at the residence of the Venetian Bailo in Constantinople hosted a number of dragomans and language boys until the abolishment of the Venetian Republic with the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. The intensity of the translational activities and the scarcity in the number of the interpreters caused a change in their duty station and a decrease in the control and the supervision of the Venetian government and the Bailo over them. The discipline which was necessary for the education of the language boys occasionally became flexible. When all these conditions combined with certain economic woes, the ambitions of wealth and promotion, the commitment of certain crimes of the dragomans and the language boys became inevitable. The most common ones among them are infidelity, theft, captive evasion, and absenteeism. These crimes which were narrated in detail in the reports of the Venetian Bailos and Extraordinary Envoys were reciprocated with certain punishments that were sentenced by the Venetian government, Senate, Collegio and wisemen.*

Keywords: *Venice, dragoman, language boy, Constantinople, crime, and punishment.*

Introduction

The dragomans and the “language boys” (*giovani di lingua*, i.e. “students of language”) of Venice¹ should be considered as state functionaries and diplomatic actors rather than ordinary interpreters. There are some reasons that justify this argument. First of all, they were responsible of protecting the Venetian political and economic interests in the Ottoman State. In the documents of the Venetian State Archives related to the dragomans and the language boys the title *fedelissimo* which means “the most loyal” in Italian,

was often used for them. In other words, loyalty was an indispensable criteria of dragomanship for the Venetian Republic. Another responsibility of theirs was keeping in touch with the Ottoman court. They had to inform the Venetian envoys (i.e. ambassadors and bailos) about the decisions of the Ottoman court regarding the Republic of Venice and its subjects. This was crucial for the protection of the economic interests of the Republic in the Ottoman State. For the same cause, they had to be informed of the customs tariffs that were imposed on the Venetian commodities,

¹ This article was penned with the inspiration of the author’s Ph.D. diss.: Dökmeci 2018/1, 71, 119–120, 123, 417–422 and 463–477.

which were carried to Ottoman lands. Because of this responsibility, the title *ministro*, which means “representative”, was used for them in the Venetian documents. They also openly behaved as representatives of the Republic during the negotiations in relation to the Adriatic and Mediterranean border affairs.

The dragomans and the language boys also had to keep good relations with the Ottoman public officials. Some of them took advantage of their good relations with the Ottoman viziers and high rank officers; others had to pay the price of tense relations with their own lives. They also had to know the protocol rules of the Ottoman State. Their capacity of knowledge affected the mutual diplomatic relations and helped them to realize their profession duties peacefully. All these responsibilities gave them an important diplomatic role. For this reason, they should be considered as the diplomatic agents of the Venetian State rather than only intermediaries.

This article aims to analyze the events, which forced the interpreters of Venice in Constantinople into committing certain crimes. It deals with the period between the introduction of the Turkish Language School in 1551 and the abolishment of the Venetian Republic in 1797. As a primary step and in order to collect the required information, it is necessary to focus on the daily and professional lives of the Venetian dragomans and language boys. This will help the researcher to establish a bridge between their lives and the crimes. Their political environment and economic conditions constituted each step of this bridge and determined the conduct of their lives and fates as well as their roles in the negotiations and their relations with the leading Ottoman statesmen. Briefly, this study tries to reflect the synchronic formation of the two phenomena such as crime and punishment through the primary sources which were kept in certain series of the Venetian State Archive (Archivio di Stato di Venezia) such as *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia* (The Five Wise Men Dealing with Merchandise), *Ar-*

chivio Proprio Costantinopoli (Constantinople Private Archives), and *Bailo in Costantinopoli*.

1. The Legal Systems of the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire and Their Perceptions of Crime and Punishment

The merchant noblemen took the absolute control of the government in Venice in the 14th century and they gave a shape to the bureaucracy and the judicial system of the Republic by enacting laws and they did not permit any class except theirs to hold office in the decision and the law – making systems. They created a rationalized, unified and elaborate bureaucracy which enforced the law (Maranini 1974: 1–307; Lane 1973: 95–102). The Republic was under the rule of a written law which was shaped through the interpretation and the consultation of the elected councils and judges in a period when most of the Europe was ruled by the hereditary kings and local noblemen. The target of this Venetian merchant elite was to maintain the social defense. The social defense was the key of their monopoly of power, the provision of stability and peace which was essential for a stable conduct of trade. The ideal basis of the Venetian law system effected the perception of the Venetian authorities in terms of crime and punishment. However, while evaluating the concepts of crime and punishment through the judicial system, the development of penology does not allow the researcher to approach the law as an accurate reflection of actual practice and a conservative institution. On the contrary, the law is a progressing concept which is inspired by the value system which appears in the field of practice through an even daily changeable long period of usage. Although it is possible to separate the law and the custom from each other on the theoretical basis, in practice the law and the custom are interwoven. It was also valid for the Venetian authorities in the Early Renaissance. Similarly, it was not possible for the Venetian government to consider the law

and the custom as separate while enforcing the law and making decision over the crime and the punishment. Besides, this interwinement brought with itself the growing number of councils and their quantity of legislation nearby a complex structure of the Venetian government (Ruggiero 1978: 243; Maranini 1931: 264).

The *Promissione Maleficorum* was formed as the core of the Venetian criminal law in the 13th century and it went through a slight change in the following two centuries. But, the actual practice of the criminal procedure changed in a significant way. Although the legislation procedure witnessed that the law was enforced by many councils of the state, there was a little attempt to integrate the new law with the old one. The complex mass of legislation and the multiplicity of laws forced the nobility to tackle the problem of confusion between the late 13th and the early 14th centuries (Ruggiero 1978: 243). The *Avogaria di Comun* was the major body to deal with the legislation problem. Its three main members were called as *Avogadori*. They were non – professional lawyers who were elected by the peers for a two year's period not for their legal acumen but for the political and social savvy and importance of their families. They were responsible for preparing, arguing and proposing penalties for most crimes before the main judicial councils of Venice. The gap of the legal acumen was filled with the election of non – notable notaries and scribes who attempted to be educated in law to be more permanent on the council. The *Avogadori* were responsible for compiling and arranging the laws in order and serving as a legal reference of the state (Ruggiero 1978: 244).

The *Promissione Maleficorum* started with a long section of theft. This section drew a detailed and large scheme of the violent crimes and penalties. Besides, it handled the theft with no reference to violence, rather with a reference to the quantity of property which was stolen. It also emphasized that the ruling class which codified the law considered the theft with a great concern.

The penalties for theft had different levels of severity on the basis of the value of loss. For example stealing something at the value between 5–10 lire was punished with the loss of an eye while stealing something of which value exceeded 40 lire was resulted with hanging. The law also dealt with the intention of theft and using weapons during the crime (Ruggiero 1978: 245). The following sections of the aforesaid Venetian law code mentioned the crimes of assault and murder but in a shorter way than the previous one. Simple assault was punished with a fine of 25 lire or with the placement of the criminal under a ban of the state. The assaults that drew blood were left to the judge's assessment. While the penalties for the property crimes were codified in detail, the penalties for the crimes of violence were assessed by the judges. This difference created a problem because the cases of violence were evaluated with personal factors while there was left a little space for the judges to evaluate the cases of theft through their discretion (Kohl 2014: 14, 23, 25–26.). The codification of the crime of theft with no reference to violence made the judges to have a difficulty in assessing an act of violence that occurred during a case of theft. This situation created a problem for the judges like being much more concerned with the value of the stolen property rather than examining the levels of violence in the criminal actions. It was visible in the Council of Forty which was the main council that evaluated the crimes of violence. The noble councilors of this body were amateurs in legal matters and they took the roles of both judge and jury for an extended range of crimes and their procedure of trial was complex and personal. The *Avogadori* were the prosecutors of this procedure while the Council of Forty constitute its judges and jury (Ruggiero 1978: 245; De La Croix 1791: 42–44; Rösch 2000: 71–74).

There were six main alternating steps in a trial such as accusation, preparation of the *Avogadori* for the case of prosecution, their pleading of the case, the voting of the Council of Forty on the cas-

es of guilt or innocence for convincing the government and society with a certain majority, the proposing of the *Avogadori*, individuals and groups in the Council of Forty about penalties, voting on the penalty for passing it with a certain majority. Despite of this certain scheme of procedure, the law and the procedure themselves gave an extended space to the aforesaid amateur judges and professional noblemen to measure their political and social influences. This wide space caused the existence of a wide range of penalties in the similar crime categories. This situation stemmed from the perception of violence, politics or personalities rather than the spirits of justice and law (Ruggiero 1978, 245–246). In the intellectual and emotional levels the decision – making process of penalties witnessed a continuous tangled tension between punishment and warning and also between the person's revenges and ambitions and the social control mechanism of the state (Ruggiero 1978: 246; Calisse 1969: 175). Briefly, a complex law system shaped the penalties that were passed by the Venetian legal system for the crimes of the dragomans of Venice. This complex system was shaped by the combination of the theoretical basis of a certain law code called as the *Promissione Maleficorum* and its crime categories with a progressing procedure of practice which included different variables such as the perception of crimes, violence, politics, the defense of property, social defense, social stability and the peaceful conduct of trade. On the matter of treason the Doge could normally decide on his own as the primary magistrate. However, especially for the procedure of inquiry he mostly consulted the Council of Ten which was the major decision making body and the leading protector of the rights and interests of the state, noblemen and citizens (De la Croix 1791: 75).

The crimes against properties in the Ottoman Empire were described in the frame of the shari'a law, namely the Hanafi school of law. This law and the Islamic jurisprudence of the Hanafi school determined the rate of arrest, legal procedure and punishment for theft. In the 18th centu-

ry there were no fixed penalties for theft and the kadis decided according to the prior conviction of the accused person. The penalty was limited with a forced labour between a few months and one year. In other words the penalty was flexible and it was shaped by the discretion of the Islamic judges (Zarinebaf 2010: 74).

Differently from the Venetian concept of law, the Ottoman law system made a difference between theft and usurpation, namely *sarika* and *ghasb*. The usurpation was described by the Hanafi jurists as stealing something by force without permission of the owner. The person who committed the crime of usurpation was obliged to restitute the good or to give something that is its equivalent or to pay the discretionary punishment (*ta'zir*) like flogging which was the fixed Quranic corporal punishment. As another fixed Quranic corporal punishment the culprit was also punished with the amputation of his/her right hand for the first time and the left foot for the second one. However, most jurists did not prefer to practice it and they conditioned an evidence and the testimony of at least two upright Muslim male witnesses. Also the culprit had to be a repeat offender to deserve to be punished in such a harsh way. Besides, stealing the low – valued things like wood and hay and the perishables like milk, meat and fresh fruit was not sentenced with a corporal punishment. The place of theft also determined the punishment and its executioner. The Hanafi jurists sentenced custody for private places like a house or a room. But the public places like a bathhouse or a guesthouse (*han*) were under the authority of the secure officials like the governor or the police. The theft of the sailors was under the responsibility of the commander of the navy. Briefly, the punishment of amputation was a deterrent rather than a destroyer. Theft was considered as a tort and the first aim was to restore the loss of the victim rather than punishment. In the 18th century the severe and long forced labour on galleys was replaced with the punishment of amputation. Again differently from the Venetian

legal system, in the Ottoman legal system communal and family rights were superior to the individual rights of property. The jurists also tried to maintain some fixed penalties in the case of extremism (Zarinebaf 2010: 74–75).

In the Ottoman legal system, the violent assaults were mostly sentenced with arrestment and the punishment of forced labour on galleys after the judges heard the witnesses. However, when the soldiers committed such a crime especially against the police force they were executed with hanging (Zarinebaf 2010: 78–79). The Islamic law traditionally considered homicide as a tort to the victim and his or her families and heirs. Most cases of assault and murder did not come to the conclusion in the kadi's court unless the victim, for the case of assault, and his or her heirs, for the case of homicide, started a lawsuit. Criminal intent, evidence and testimony of two Muslim male witnesses were examined before the judge determined over arrestment and punishment (Zarinebaf 2010: 162). After the investigation of the court, the victim, his or her families and heirs had the opportunity to choose one among from retaliation, the demand of blood money or forgiving. The kadis, especially the ones in Istanbul supported blood money rather than retaliation. According to the shari'a law the blood money for the murder of a free Muslim man costed 10.000 silver dirhem. It varied from 40.000 aspers (akçe) to 2500 *piasters* (guruş) between the mid 16th and the 17th centuries. The blood money for women, slaves and non – Muslims costed the half of the one of a free Muslim man. Sometimes the blood money was replaced by hard labour or imprisonment especially in the case of disputes (Zarinebaf 2010: 162–163).

The kadi was at the center of the Ottoman law system and the system was functioning in the formal arena of the courts, the Imperial Council, and informal settings of community, guild and families. The kadi was the most important judicial and administrative official in this system. Both the judicial and administrative power was

in one hand in the Ottoman Empire while there were different institutions for jurisdiction and administration in the Republic of Venice. The kadi was not only a judge. He also had the authority to administrate the law and to try the offenders. Besides the legal ones, he had administrative, municipal and social responsibilities as a governor official in a district. The kadi administrated the law via a court in each district and the court was mostly near a mosque or in a commercial place. Istanbul had four major kadi courts and several districts. Each district had its chief of police and market inspector. There was a night judge who administrated the law at night in his house. There was also a wandering deputy judge who toured around to hear the cases of fraud and drinking of wine. The court also advised with expert witnesses like the court officials, local imams and community leaders. The kadi had a number of scribes and court attendants (Zarinebaf 2010: 143–144). By the seventeenth century, the kadi became a state employee who served for one year with a salary, the incomes of court fees for notary services, registrations of marriage, inheritance and liberation of slaves. The chief kadi of Istanbul had the highest prestige and even he could be *Shaykh – al – Islam*. The chief kadi attended the meetings in the Imperial Council to review the imperial orders which the grand vizier issued. The chief kadi was elected from well – educated and respected religious figures for one year. But, the state had to remove him from office on charges of corruption in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the case of dissatisfaction of the parties of a case about the decision of kadi, the Imperial Council dealt with the cases. It also issued an order to the kadis and the local governors to reexamine a case. The parties also had the right to advise with a mufti and to present his idea to the court (Zarinebaf 2010: 144–145.).

The Ottoman legal system allowed the Jewish, Greek Orthodox and Armenian communities to have a legal autonomy and to punish their members for violating religious and community

codes of conduct. But, in the case of a repeated crime, they turned them over to the Islamic courts, the Imperial Council and the police. The Jewish rabbis had two courts at Balat and Hasköy while the Greek – Orthodox and Armenian communities applied to the ecclesiastical court under the administration of their churches. Residents of European Communities also had legal immunity and the right to try their members in their courts. But in disputes with the Ottoman subjects they had access to the kadi's court and the Imperial Council. Also non – Muslim subjects had access to the Islamic courts to settle disputes with Muslims and their community members. The mediation role of the kadi attracted non – Muslims to the Islamic courts and the Imperial Council and their access to these places for civil and criminal cases increased in the 18th century. They could also act as witnesses against non – Muslim criminals in the Islamic courts (Zarinebaf 2010: 146–147). The Ottoman legal system with all its items and the perceptions of crime and punishment of the Ottoman rulers, judges and communities also effected the cases of dragomans. This system and their perceptions dominated the political attitudes of the Ottoman rulers and the social manners of the Ottoman subjects to the dragomans of the Venetian Republic in Constantinople. The Ottoman legal system and the Ottoman perception of crime and punishment were different from the Venetian ones because of different government regimes, ideologies and different concepts of crimes and penalties which were shaped by different religious and secular variables.

2. The Crimes of the Dragomans and the Language Boys of Venice and Their Punishment

The Venetian dragomanship of Constantinople institutionalized by the opening of the Turkish Language School (Scuola Turca) in 1551 at the residence of the Venetian Bailo. This school functionalized when the Senate deliberated to select and to send two young notaries of the Duchal

Chancellery at the age above 20 for 5 years' period of time. But, in the following years, the post of dragoman was seen as a temporary occupation and exploited by the Venetians to advance in their careers of the notariate of the Duchal Chancellery (Venturini 1905: 346–419; Orhonlu 1975; Lucchetta 1983: 1–28; Lucchetta 1984: 21–61; Lucchetta 1985: 1–43; Faroqhi 1986: 345–384; Lucchetta 1987–1988: 479–498; Lucchetta 1989: 19–40; Marghetitch 1993; Anderson 1993; Hitzel 1995; De Groot 2000: 1–16; Livanios 2000: 1–22; Święcicka 2000: 329–342; Ahışhalı 2001; Aydın 2007: 41–86; Luca 2008/1: 653–675; Luca 2008/2: 105–128, Ağıldere 2009: 1–19; Ağıldere 2010: 693–704; Köse 2011: 1065–1074; Luca 2012: 201–214; Meral 2013: 105–155; Luca 2013/1: 219–234; Luca 2013/2: 39–56; Kerekes 2014: 51–68; Ortega 2014: 15–51; Doğan 2017: 58–63; Dökmeci 2018/1; Dökmeci 2018/2: 95–112). Therefore, the Venetian authorities had to apply to the linguistic experience of the families of the Catholic Community of the Ottoman Empire, the subjects of the Venetian ruled Adriatic regions (especially Capo d'Istria), and the Archipelagos of the Eastern Mediterranean (Yerasimos 2005: 36–43). The intensity of the translation issues and, by contrast with it, the scarcity of the numbers of the interpreters caused the sudden changes in the places of duty of the dragomans and the language boys. This situation obstructed and flexed the discipline and the supervision of the Venetian Bailo over the expanded places of duties. This problem combined with the economic woes and the ambitions of wealth and advancement and it made the dragomans and the language boys more inclined to certain crimes such as infidelity, theft, captive evasion, and absenteeism. The Bailos took their responsibility and they denounced these kinds of actions to the Venetian government. For the critical and long – term resolvable matters, they mostly expected the response of the Venetian Senate or another supervising institution about the case. Occasionally, especially for the emergent cases, they took the

initiative. These kinds of crimes were mostly punished by imprisonment or dismissal, rarely capital punishment. Along with the aforesaid crimes, witchcraft as a strange phenomenon affected the attitudes of both sides and it was seen as a serious crime by the Ottoman rulers and officials. For a detailed study, it is necessary to look through the aforesaid crimes one by one as follows.

2.1. Infidelity

The borders of fidelity should be analyzed carefully from the aspect of the Venetian Republic and its powerholders. Of course, it was decided on the basis of the assignment of the person under surveillance and order. For dragomans, the origin was determinative for this concept. The Venetian – originated ones were always under more severe supervision. Because they should have been protected in terms of traditions, Christian and regional identities. The dragomans from the Ottoman society who served the Republic can be evaluated in three different groups within the concept of fidelity: Greek Orthodox, Jewish and rarely employed Muslim ones. The Greek ones were mostly seen in doubt by the Venetian Bailos and envoys. Because, at any moment, their Ottoman Muslim rulers may have exercised their control, influence, and pressure over these hesitant Christian minorities. However, the Jewish and Muslim originated ones were more free from the supervision of fidelity of Venice. Because they had less Ottoman pressure than the Greek ones when they served a Christian envoy. Thanks to this advantage they could establish a powerful network of relations with the Ottoman rulers and Christian states' subjects, especially the merchants. Briefly, they were talented brokers of politics and economics (Rothman 2012: 205–228). Dragoman Hürrem Bey (Orimbei in the Venetian documents) was the typical example of this group and established a complex relations including the Ottoman Empire, Venice, Habsburgs's Spain and Austria, and other many states. His perspicacity and close relations with

the Ottoman statesmen brought him a fortune which he accumulated from the aforesaid Christian states' treasures, mainly Venice (Gürkan 2018: 61, 118, 241).

The authorities and the rulers of the Venetian Republic were very sensitive about the concept of loyalty. They preferred to employ faithful interpreters because they should have kept the secrets of the state for the proper administration of the state and diplomatic issues. Especially during the periods of tensions and crises between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic loyalty affected the course of events and could recover the Venetian subjects from difficult situations and it could protect them from some harmful results. The Bailo, as the main supervisor and observer of the dragomans, was responsible for the behaviours of the dragomans under his order and protection. Therefore, he always kept observing the relations of the dragomans with the Ottoman rulers and officials and the envoys of other European states in Constantinople.

The event of Pietro Maruffo was an example of infidelity from the 16th century. Maruffo was assigned as a *Public Dragoman* with a letter of the Senate which was sent to the Bailo Daniele Barbarigo under the date of the 15th November 1562. He was also charged as the Turkish tutor of the language boys. He firstly caused a crisis in the Ottoman – Venetian relations when a Janissary, his guardian disappeared suddenly and he was accused of murder and put into jail. Luckily, the missing Janissary was found and he was bailed with the payment of a high amount of money. The Bailo Barbarigo mentioned his misbehaviours and multitudinous complaints about him in a report (*relazione*) which he presented to the Senate in 1564. According to his report, this dragoman had bad relations with other dragomans and they were always complaining about him (Albèri 1844: 1, 54–55; Pedani 2011: 173–174, Appendix 1). They also claimed that he was a spy and took a certain amount of money from the French ambassador who offered 200 ducats

of annual salary to the dragoman to replace his deceased dragoman Nicoletto Guerini. A reliable secretary of the Bailo affirmed all these claims and Maruffo was dismissed².

In 1563, just a year before Pietro Maruffo, the Grand Dragoman Michiele Cernovichio (Mihail Černović) was dismissed with the accusation of information leakage to the Austrian consul despite of his great contributions to the border negotiations in Dalmatia and his linguistic and diplomatical talent (Lamanskii 1968: 70–73; Bertelè 1932: 140, n. 106; Gürkan 2018: 245). The story of his betrayal started in 1556 when he became the counselor and the spy of Maximilian the 2nd who was the Archduke of Austria at that time and who would be the Holy Roman Emperor two years later. Cernovichio was a merchant and a dragoman from a noble prestigious family of Macedonia. His ancestors came from Montenegro in the 15th century and his family's origin even went back to a medieval Serbian – originated dynasty called as Crnojevići. Cernovichio took a part in the courtage of Zaccaria Delfino who was the Venetian – originated Bishop of Hvar (Lesina) and the Papal legate at the court of Ferdinand the 1st. During that time Cernovichio took attention of the Austrian Archduke thanks to the advice of his patron Delfino to the Archduke, his cognition in Turkish, his fluent speech in this language and his familiarity with the city of Constantinople where he visited frequently because of his diplomatic mission and translation service under the patronage of the Bailo of the Venetian Republic. Maximilian the 2nd persuaded this dragoman into serving as his precious spy in Constantinople and other Ottoman lands. The reputation and notability of his family made him rather trustworthy in the eyes of the Archduke in addition to his linguistic skill. The deaths of Niccolò Freducci from Ancona and Michiele Bucignolo (Mihail

Bučinić) from Ragusa who formerly reported Vienna about the events of the Ottoman Empire expedited the process of his employment (Žontar 1972: 169–170). He consolidated his status as a favourable spy by informing Vienna about the Bailo's important dispatches, especially about the correspondences related to the Protestant activities via certain messengers. He also benefitted from his commercial relations with Bosnia under the Ottoman rule. In 1556, he collected information about the attack plans of the Ottoman Sultan against Hungary through his acquaintance with the governor of the sanjak of Bosnia and conveyed this valuable information to Vienna immediately. The mobilization activities of the Ottoman army and navy, the military preparations of the sanjak governors in the Ottoman – Habsburg borders were discussed in his letters in detail. In between 1556 and 1559 he visited Constantinople, Adrianople and Eregli (Heraclea Pontica) and conveyed information about the happenings in the Orient to Vienna through his letters in the numbers of 11 in 1556, 31 in 1557, 29 in 1558, and 22 in 1559. It took at least 30 and at most 50 days for Ferdinand the 1st and his son Maximilian the 2nd to learn about the events in the Ottoman Empire thanks to the devoted service of Cernovichio (Žontar 1972: 170–172). Despite of the whispers about his espionage, his capability of preventing and solving the commercial crises of the Venetian merchants in Constantinople kept the Bailo silent. The competition between the French ambassador Jean Cavenac de la Vigne and the Venetian Bailo Antonio Erizzo about employing Cernovichio strengthened the position of this dragoman in the service of the Venetian Republic and he declared his dedication to the Republic and rejected the French ambassador's offer of a salary at the amount of 2400 Francs. His assignment as the Grand Dragoman of the Venetian Bailo in 1558 made him more responsible to the Venetian Republic. During his mission in the border disputes of the Venetian Republic with the Ottomans in Dalmatia, his negotiations about

² ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 2. 1560–1564. The letter from the Senate to the Bailo Daniele Barbarigo, dated of 15 November 1562, 72 v.

the permission of the Venetian galleys for charging the Ottoman wheat and about the ransoms of the Venetian subject captives, he had difficulty in establishing a balance between his espionage and his interests and gains in the service of the Republic (Žontar 1972: 172–173). Ibrahim Bey, the Grand Dragoman of the Ottoman Empire, accused him of taking a pension from Ferdinand the 1st and sharing the Ottoman secrets with him but he could get rid of this accusation with the help of Rustem Pasha who trusted Cernovichio a lot (Lesure 1983: 127). However, the new Bailo Daniele Barbarigo was observing him diligently. He found the codified letters that Cernovichio was about to send to the Kaiser. He broke the codes of these letters which were dated as 23 January, 4 and 17 February 1563. The dragoman's good relations with the Ottoman elite came to an end when he was revealed to be a spy (Žontar 1972: 208–209). The Bishop Zaccaria Delfino, the patron of Cernovichio, was the person who organized all this traitorship and the Venetian Republic declared that he was banned from travelling to any territory under the Venetian rule. But the Republic could not persuade the Pope Pius the 4th about this crime and he suspected that Delfino was a victim of a conspiracy (Lesure 1983: 128). Meanwhile, the Senate gave an order to the Bailo about two alternatives like executing the dragoman secretly or surrendering him in chain to the Venetian authorities (Lesure 1972: 128; Žontar 1972: 209). Nevertheless, his efforts were in vain. Because, in 1564, Cernovichio disappeared suddenly and succeeded to escape to Ragusa with his family. He was afraid that he may have been killed with the order of Ali Pasha to whom the Bailo Barbarigo told about the story. Although Barbarigo persuaded this pasha to give an order for his arrest, it was too late (Žontar 1972: 209–210). According to the inquiries of the Venetian Council of Ten Cernovichio did not remain at Ragusa. On the contrary, he travelled alternately to Puglia, Naples, Rome, Milan and Vienna and he was welcomed by the Holy Roman Emperor

Maximilian the 2nd and his entourage which was pretty familiar with the dragoman. In between 1564 and 1565, he was even honoured with the mission of accompanying the cortege of Jakob von Betzek during his ambassadorship in Constantinople (Lesure 1983: 129).

The potential relative bonds of the dragomans' sons and daughters with influential families caused their loyalty to be interrogated by the Venetian authorities. Of course, this was valid for the families who increased their power at the expense of the Venetian hegemony. For example, in September 1641 the Dragoman Giovanni Antonio Grillo suddenly decided to engage his son, the language boy Ambrogio the 2nd with Ruxandra, the daughter of the voivode of Principality of Moldavia Vasile Lupu. Therefore, the *Collegio*³ had a suspicion about his faithfulness and ordered the Bailo to observe the manners of the dragoman, report the effects of the aforesaid family over him and check if he would behave against the interests of the Republic⁴. When the aforesaid language boy demanded to visit the voivode of Moldavia, his future father – in – law, the Venetian Senate interfered with the matter and ordered the Bailo Giovanni Soranzo to permit him to stay there for not more than few months. Apparent-

³ *Pien Collegio* or *Collegio* was the decision-making mechanism that consisted of 26 members that included the Doge, six Councilors, three headmen of the Council of the Forty of Offense, six Council Seniors, five Seniors of *Terra Ferma* (The Outer Lands around Venice), five Seniors of Order (Savii agli Ordini). When the Doge was away from Venice, the eldest Senior of the Council governed this decision-making body by putting on a black cap. This decision-making body determined the political and administrative matters that would be discussed in the Senate. It also made decision over other topics in which the Senate could be interested. This body called up the envoys of foreign states, the ecclesiastic emissaries of the cities under the Venetian rule and the citys' *rettores* and consulted with them before bringing the matter to the table of the Senate. Boerio 1829: 139.

⁴ *ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 26. 1640–1641, The letter from the Collegio to the Bailo Girolamo Trevisano (1640–1642), dated 29 October 1641, 164 v and 166 r.*

ly the Senate did not want him to be alienated from his profession and the service for Venice⁵. The Senate ratified his permission on condition that he would not entertain in Moldavia for a long time and would keep serving the Republic⁶. However, Giovanni Antonio Grillo and his son did not lose the trust of the Venetian Republic by leaking information to Venice about the events and the news in the court of the aforesaid voivode. When the voivode learned about their plans and discovered the letters of Ambrogio to his father and the Bailo Giovanni Soranzo, he felt to be insulted and broke off the engagement immediately. The engagement was no longer in question and Ambrogio Grillo was arrested in Moldavia with the accusation of treason. Other diplomats also followed the engagement issue. For example, Rudolf Schmidt, the diplomat of Habsburgs in Constantinople disapproved the engagement through the emphasis on the class distinction between the families. The reaction of the voivode was conveyed to the Ottoman Grand Vizier and this caused his father's arrest and imprisonment in the Dungeons of the Seven Towers. The Bailo's attempts and negotiations with the Ottoman ruling elite did not work in a time of the tension which was caused by the War of Crete between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic. As a result, the Grand Dragoman was executed by the Ottomans with strangling. At least his son Ambrogio was set free and sent by the voivode to Constantinople in 1649 because of the Bailo's diplomatic effort (Luca 2008/1: 665–666; Luca 2008/2: 121–123).

The dragomans of Venice did not feel any obligation to secure that their sons would serve the same state with them. But this was not welcomed

by the Venetian authorities. It was pretty well – known that the consuls of other nations were in competition with the Venetian Bailo in employing the most qualified dragoman or language boy and they often offered higher salaries to attract them to their sides. The service of the son for another nation always created anxiety over the Bailo and the Venetian government in terms of fidelity. For example, the *Protector Dragoman*⁷ of Venice, Pasquale the 2nd Navone presented to the Genoese ambassador Giovanni Agostino Durazzo a petition and requested him to employ his son as a language boy. The *Collegio* approached this manner in doubt and ordered the Venetian Charge D'Affaires (Secretary) Giovanni Battista Ballarino to observe this dragoman carefully. According to its another order he would influence the negotiation of the Genoese ambassador and collect information about him⁸. However, the *Collegio*'s worries came to nothing because of the loyal attitude and the hard – working efforts of the Dragoman Pasquale the 2nd Navone, his brothers and his sons and their contribution to the negotiations with the Ottoman ruling elite. The Bailo Alvise Molin always praised the merit of the family

⁵ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 27. 1642–1643. The letter from the Senate to the Bailo Girolamo Trevisano (21 March 1642), 13 r.

⁶ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 27. 1642–1643. The letter from the Senate to the Charge D'Affaires (Secretary) Angelo degli Alessandri (27 June 1642), 22 v.

⁷ The duty of the *Protector Dragoman* (Dragomano Proteggiero/Proteiere) was to be present in the Ottoman customs house in Constantinople and to defend the commercial rights and interests of the Venetian merchants and the subjects of Venice. They struggled for preventing the customs duty overtaxing. This dragoman post was often mentioned in various letters of the Bailos and extraordinary envoys of the Venetian Republic in 1625, 1633 and 1634. ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli. Ambasciatore a Costantinopoli. Busta 13. Reg. 18/34–52. No. XLI. The letter of the Extraordinary Envoy Simeone Contarini (1624–1640) to the Doge of Venice Giovanni Corner (1625–1630) dated of 12 January 1625, 33 v – 34 r and 35 v; ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 22. 1633–1634. The letters from the Collegio and Senate to the Bailo Pietro Foscari (1 December 1633, 8 July, 31 October and 24 February 1634), 123 v, 124 v, 223 r, 224 v, 250 r, 281 v, 282 r – 282 v.

⁸ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 31. 1657–1667. The letter from the Collegio to the Charge D'Affaires Giovanni Battista Ballarino (15 September 1666), 178 r and 179 v – 180 r.

Navone. Alessandro Navone, the brother of Pasquale the 2nd Navone served as a dragoman of the Venetian Bailo between 1641 and 1652. His another brother Tommaso the 2nd Navone was in the same service between 1641 and 1681. Pasquale the 3rd, the son of Pasquale the 2nd Navone was accepted as a language boy by the Venetian Bailo in 1671. During their missions they always kept being loyal to the Bailo and the Venetian Republic (Luca 2012: 206–209).

The dragomans from other nations, especially from the Ottoman Greek community were generally seen as disloyal by the Bailos. The Bailo Andrea the 1st Memmo was captivated by the Ottomans in 1715, during the Morean War. One year before his captivity, he realized that the Greek originated dragomans were not loyal to him and he wrote this in his secret letter to the Senate on the date of 20 December 1714. On the other hand, he boasted the loyalty of the Venetian originated ones like Dragoman Gian Rinaldo Carli whose wife was an Ottoman subject, and the Language Boy Bartolomeo the 3rd Bruti⁹. He also underlined that the Tarsia family members like Carlo and Cristoforo the 2nd Tarsia and the Ralli family were exceptionally loyal despite of their non – Venetian origins (Foscolo 1840: 18–19; Brunelli Boretti: 1935–1936).

The reason behind the trust of the Venetian Republic on the leading three families Tarsia, Carli and Ralli can be explained through their family histories which witnessed their obvious dedication, appreciated efforts and merits. The

family of Tarsia went back to 1275 and took its roots from its previous notable ancestor Simone Tarsia. Among the following members of the family there were some persons who succeeded to elevate as the counts under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire. As dragomans, the members became effective in the Venetian diplomacy in Constantinople between the 17th and 18th centuries. It started with the assignment of Tommaso Tarsia as dragoman in 1671 and he dealt with the border issues in Zara (Zadar) and negotiated these matters with the governor of Bosnia. When he became the Grand Dragoman of the Bailo in 1683 he was invited to the presence of the Ottoman Grand Vizier and he requested this dragoman to deal with the appeasement of the border disputes in Dalmatia. Tommaso Tarsia, his brother Giacomo Tarsia and his nephew Gian Rinaldo Carli participated in the negotiations of the Treaty of Carlowitz and played an important role in its enforcement. The activities of the Tarsia family kept going through the following dragoman members like Cristoforo the 1st Tarsia who became the Grand Dragoman in 1673 and wrote an important chronicle about the 2nd Siege of Vienna and his son Dragoman Giacomo Tarsia who translated the History of Vecihî from Turkish to Italian (Foscarini 1722: 20–21; Diedo 1751: 360; Stancovich 1826: 159–160; Venturini 1906: 46–52, 55, 59–60; Pippidi 2006: 68, 70, 146; Luca 2013/1: 219–223; Luca 2013/2: 40–41; Gardina: 57–58).

The family of Carli established relative bonds with the family of Tarsia. Its most noteworthy member was the Dragoman Gian Rinaldo Carli. He started his career as a language boy in 1670, served for the Venetian *Provveditore Generale* of Albany and Dalmatia in 1677 and returned to Istanbul in 1680 to help his maternal uncle, the Grand Dragoman Tommaso Tarsia in his translation works. In 1718 he was imprisoned in the Dungeons of the Seven Towers together with the Bailo Andrea the 1st Memmo and his uncle. After their liberation his uncle died and

⁹ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 37. 1708–1715. Bailo Alvise Mocenigo's (duty: 1709–1714) letter, dated 28 October 1713. The letters to the Bailo Andrea the 1st Memmo (1714–1720), dated 6 October and 26 January 1714 and 13 July 1715, 235 v, 237 v, 260 v, 261 v, 266 r – 266 v, 273 r; ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Dispacci degli Ambasciatori. Costantinopoli. Filza 172. Dispaccio No. 17. The letter of the Bailo I. Andrea the 1st Memmo's (1714–1720), dated 20 December 1714, 139 v – 141 v; ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Dispacci degli Ambasciatori. Costantinopoli. Filza 172. Dispaccio No. 24 and 25, 195 r, 196 r, 206 v – 207 r.

Gian Rinaldo took his place and became the new Grand Dragoman. Carli played a primary role in the translation activities of the Bailo Giovanni Battista Donado who was the author of *Della Letteratura dei Turchi* (On the Literature of Turks) which was published as the first European book about the Ottoman literature in 1688. He contributed to the Italian translations of the Oriental languages, especially Turkish. He translated from Turkish into Italian the famous work of Hacı Halife Mustafa, namely Kâtip Çelebi. It was published in Italian with the title of *Cronologica Historia Scritta in Lingua Turca, Persiana ed Araba di Hazi Halifè Mustafà* /The Historical Chronology of Hâjji Khalifa Mustapha in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic (Foscolo 1840: 18–19; Brunelli – Boretti 1935–1936: 213–239; Paladino 1917: 198–200; Stancovich 1829: 261–262; Infelise 1997: 189–198).

The leading dragoman members of the family of Ralli were Isacco Ralli, his son Cristoforo the 2nd Ralli and Giovanni Ralli who was from their following generation (Pederin 1988: 213.) Isacco Ralli dealt with the borders disputes in Dalmatia from 1695 until his death as the Grand Dragoman in 1733¹⁰. Cristoforo the 2nd became a dragoman in 1721¹¹ few years later than he was assigned as a language boy. He played an important role in the negotiations related to the Venetian subjects, especially the merchants and the affairs of the corsairs in Adriatic¹². He conveyed these matters to the Ottoman ruling elite at the Sublime Porte with the presentation of various

valuable gifts, especially the silk fabrics¹³. He continued his effect in the Venetian diplomacy until his death as the Grand Dragoman in 1781¹⁴. Another important member of the family, Giovanni Ralli inherited the influential diplomatic role of his lineage when he became a dragoman in 1766¹⁵. He also protected the rights of the Venetian subjects at the Sublime Porte successfully. One of the important matters which he dealt with was the matter of the corsairs of Ulcinj and the support of the governor of Shkodër for them¹⁶. The role of Giovanni Ralli even continued when the Venetian Republic was abolished with the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797 and his new patron was the Bailo Francesco Vendramin who was under the service of Austria which occupied Venice at that time¹⁷.

The doubt about the non – Venetian dragomans goes back to 1551 when the Turkish Language School¹⁸ was introduced (Palumbo Fossati – Casa

¹⁰ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 42. 1733–1735. The letter of the Venetian Senate to the Extraordinary Envoy and Bailo Angelo Emo (1730–1734), dated 24 September, 60 r, 61 v.

¹¹ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 38. 1718–1723. The letter of the Venetian Senate to the Bailo Angelo Giovanni Emo under the Date of 18 February 1722, 233 v.

¹² ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 43. 1736–1738. The letters of the Venetian Senate to the Bailo Simeone Contarini (1734–1739), dated 15 December 1736 and 5 October 1737, 78 r, 112 v, 114 r.

¹³ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 43. 1736–1738. The letters of the Venetian Senate to the Bailo Simeone Contarini (1734–1739), dated 13 April and 22 February 1737, 93 r, 94 r, 125 r, 127 r – 127 v; ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 45. 1742–1747. The letter of the Venetian Senate to the Bailo Giovanni Donado (1742–1745), dated of 1 May 1745, 258 r – 259 r.

¹⁴ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 55. 1779–1781. The letter of the Senate to the Bailo the 2nd Andrea Memmo (1778–1781), dated of 5 May 1781, 209 v – 210 v.

¹⁵ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 50. 1765–1766. The letter of the Venetian Senate to the Bailo Giovanni Antonio Ruzzini (1764–1767), dated of 1 March 1766, 135 r – 136 r.

¹⁶ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 57. 1785–1786. The Pregadi's, dated 3 and 19 December 1785, No.109, 110, 117, 118, 119; The letter of the Senate to the Bailo Girolamo Zulian (1785–1788), dated 15 April 1786, 91 r – 91 v, 95 r – 96 r, 182 r, 183 v.

¹⁷ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 60. 1795–1796. The letter of the Senate to the Bailo Francesco Vendramin (1796), dated 21 January 1796; the Pregadi's of the same date. No. 79 and 80, 135 r – 135 v.

¹⁸ The introduction of the Turkish Language School is narrated in detail in the documents of the Venetian State

1995: 109–122; Mantran 1995: 105–108; Speelman – Özkan 2013: 53–72). The Bailo Bernardo Navagero (1550–1552) reported his recommend over the selection criteria of the dragomans in these words: “The dragomans should be selected from the Venetian subject. They are more loyal and brave than the Ottoman (Christian) subjects.” (Lucchetta 1984: 22–23, 56–57; Lucchetta 1989: 26). The Bailo Antonio Tiepolo (1573–1575) complained about the timidity of the dragomans which came from the Ottoman subjects in the following sentences: “Despite of being an Ottoman subject, because of being Christian, the dragoman is naturally afraid. This situation decreases our rightfulness in the Ottoman eyes. Because of the timidity of the dragoman – the bailos have never had such an inclination – the Pasha (Grand Vizier) approaches every matter negatively and makes it more difficult even if it is easy to be resolved (Albèri 1844: 185–186).

2.2. Theft

Among the dragomans and the language boys, the theft was more common crime than infidelity. The main reasons which pushed them into this crime were their economic woes and accumulated debts. The dragoman Simon Niholihi (Simon Nicolini or Simone Raguseo) from the 17th century was one of the protagonists of such an unfortunate event. He was from the Ragusean origin and he was born in Sofia. In between 1607 and 1608 he accompanied the Bailo Simone Contarini as a road dragoman (*dragomano di strada*) from Venice to Constantinople. In the years following their arrival to the Ottoman capital, Simeone Contarini had to deal with various complaints of other dragomans and the Ottoman merchants who asserted that Simon Niholihi did not pay high amounts of debts¹⁹. These com-

plaints were also conveyed to the Ottoman authorities in 1611. Furthermore, according to the Bailo, Niholihi was not sufficiently qualified. He was unable to speak Turkish fluently and he was not good at comprehending the Turkish speakers and interpreting their speech correctly and rapidly. He also left the Bailo in a very difficult situation when he conversed with the Persian envoy and obviously blamed that the Christian states did not help Persia against the Ottoman Sultan. He also often quarreled with the Dragoman Marc’Antonio Borissi. But the event that caused his dismissal occurred when he tried to steal the Bailo’s 500 ducat valued jewellery and was caught by him red handed (Barozzi and Berchet 1871: 125 and 250–251; Brown 1922: 66).

2.3. Captive Evasion

The liberation and the exchange of captives constitute a significant topic of negotiations for both the Venetians and the Ottomans. Both of these two states tried to consider the laws and customs which were predominant in the Mediterranean. However, the trade of slaves and high amounts of ransoms pushed the subjects of the two sides into certain illegal actions. Captive evasion was one of them and this crime perverted some dragomans and language boys of Venice due to economic reasons, namely promised amounts of money rather than the charity of rescuing a coreligionist captive from the Ottoman hands. In 1595, a similar crime was committed by the Language Boy Girolamo Alberti²⁰ and it was re-

Archive and in some articles. *ASVe. Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia. No. 61. Memoria Mercantile: Dragomani, Interpreti, Gioveni di Lingua, Utilità et Altro. No. 155, The decree of the Venetian Collegio, dated 20 February 1550.*

¹⁹ CBOA. *Düvel – i Ecnebiye Defterleri. 13/1. No. 208–209, 24; No. 270, 30; No. 389, 40.*

²⁰ This Girolamo Alberti who was assigned in 1582 as a language boy should not be confused with another Girolamo Alberti who was assigned with the same title in 1620 and who would be later included in the commercial relations between Venice, Constantinople and the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia when he would be a dragoman. Differently from the latter one, the protagonist of this event was born in Venice in 1561. His father, Secretary Gasparo Alberti requested the Venetian Senate to send his son to Constantinople as a language boy in 1582. The Senate approved the assignment in the same year. All this information is visible in Rothman’s article: Rothman 2009: 786; For the report of another Girolamo

ported in detail by the Bailo Ottaviano Bon to the Venetian authorities through various alternating letters. He cooperated with another language boy Tommaso the 1st Navone, the son of the *Protector Dragoman* Pasquale the 1st Navone, in order to evade some captives. The Bailo, after a long interrogation, found out that Alberti broke the padlock of a woodyard which was close to the room of Tommaso the 1st Navone. They transferred the slaves from his room to the woodyard and they escaped by using a secret passage overthere. The entourage of the Bailo, especially the Grand Dragoman Stefano dei Gioveni and the Dragoman Gianettino the 2nd Salvago eyewitnessed this crime and bore testimony to the Bailo. Tommaso the 1st Navone, during his interrogation, primarily denied the crime and later confessed everything. But he stated that he did not cooperate with Alberti with his own will. He claimed that Alberti threatened him, coerced him into taking part in the crime and offered him a certain amount of money as a sop to cerberus. During his confession, he shed tears, threw himself at the feet of the Bailo to appeal for mercy and stated that he had to be silent because he could not permit Alberti to destroy his life and he was afraid of feeling ashamed in front of his all relatives²¹.

The statements of the witnesses helped the Bailo to find the real wrongdoer. The Road Dragoman Gianettino the 2nd Salvago stated that he saw a secret passage in the woodyard while another witness, Ottavio Scalco narrated that the two language boys made a secret passage by dismantling the beam woods of the woodyard and creating a hole there. The Bailo also listened to the testimony

of a relative of Alberti, Andrea Terrari. This relative claimed that the language boy Navone borrowed a high amount of money from Alberti and built a big wall near the garden of his house with this money. He also stated that Alberti wanted to borrow 50 sequins (cecchini/zecchini) from him and he gave up giving his jewelleries to Alberti at the last minute because of his doubtful and unreliable manners.

The language boy Alberti had a bad reputation of theft before this event happened. He was included in another case during the tenure of the Bailo Girolamo Lippomano (1590–1591). The Bailo sent him to Candia with a big caramursel (a kind of galley) to bring some amount of cereals. During his return, he visited Castel Rosso in the Archipelagos to charge some more cereal. Around there he saw the two Maltese galleys coming towards his ship and came abroad in panic. He primarily carried the cannons and other valuable charges of his ship to the coast. The 1000 sequins, the money which the Bailo gave him to buy the cereals from Castel Rosso was also lost. He claimed that he hid one half to a shrubbery and hid another half under a small bridge in a further safe place with the help of one of two Janissaries who accompanied him in his voyage. According to his statement to the Bailo, he came back later and checked the spaces where he hid the money, but he could not find anything. The Bailo Lippomano did not believe what he narrated about the so – called lost money. He was in doubt about his behaviours and told the language boy to pay the money back. The people around the language boy were narrating that he bought expensive clothes ornamented with the precious stones at his arrival and they claimed that he stole the aforesaid 1000 sequins and he lied about its loss. The language boy returned to Venice together with Lippomano during the carnival and he took the attention of the Bailo with his high amounts of expenditures. The two Janissaries who were with him during the aforesaid event said to the Grand Dragoman Stefano Giovenni that he lied about the money. Dragoman Gianettino the 2nd Salvago was also a

who was assigned in 1620: *ASVē. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 13. 1620–1621. The letter of the Senate to the Bailo Giorgio Giustinian, dated of 3 April 1620, 57 r.*

²¹ *ASVē. Senato. Secreta. Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli. Ambasciatore a Costantinopoli. Busta 4. Reg. 8. The letters from the Extraordinary Envoy Leonardo Donado (1595–1600) to the Venetian Doge Marino Grimani (1595–1605), dated 24, 25 and 27 February 1595 and 3 March 1596, 245 r – 255 v, 265 r – 266 r. Zeno 1847: 138, 150.*

witness in this case. According to his claim, Alberti said that 500 sequins were stolen and one of the Janissaries suddenly disappeared for a while at Edirnekapi and escaped with another half²².

Battistina Alberti, the mother of Girolamo consigned a petition to the Bailo Marco Veniero (1593–1596) who was in charge when the case continued to be processed and she requested him to forgive her son. The language boy Navone accepted that he made a great mistake by being in league with Alberti and stated that he was consent to every kind of punishment. He emphasized his regret and expressed that his immaturity and the threats of Alberti resulted in his guilt. According to his allegation, Alberti helped him quite a lot times, pretended to behave in his favour, gained his trust, manipulated, deceived him by this way, and later uttered threats in order to make him do what he wanted²³. Some letters were sent by the Venetian *Collegio* and the Senate to the Balo Marco Venier in the same year. These letters give a clue about that Alberti was not dismissed but he was sent to Venice as a precaution because of his mother's demand. Because, there was also a claim of that Girolamo Alberti may have converted to Islam during his stay in the house of an Armenian patriarch²⁴.

2.4. Absenteeism

The difficult living and working conditions, and homesickness pushed some dragomans, especially the language boys to go back to their

home and hearth. They obtained permission with justification of their ailments or the ones of their family members in their homeland. The elderly dragomans mostly preferred to spend last days of their lives in their birth place. But they hardly obtained permission because of the scarcity of experienced dragomans in Constantinople and the Venetian government struggled for keeping them in Constantinople with some solutions like charging some language boys as their assistants and increasing their salaries. Some dragomans tried to prolong the time of their stay in Venice by producing some excuses and they were reluctant to return to their duty station in Constantinople. The ambition of career and advance in the Duchal Chancellery may have been a reason for their absenteeism and especially the language boys tried to exploit this post as a step to this kind of career in Venice.

In 1625, the Bailos had some trouble with the number of the language boys which decreased to just 2. The Bailo Giorgio Giustiniano (1620–1626) complained to the government that just two language boys had been assigned for a decade and they had difficulty in completing the translation work before the dead line²⁵. Therewith, the Senate issued a decision under the date of 21 October 1625 and increased the number of language boys to 4 with the annual payment of 60 ducats. By leaving aside the principle of employing the Venetian originated ones for loyalty, it also had to encourage the selection of language boys from the Christian families of Pera²⁶. But it never seemed to delay the concept of loyalty itself and it ordered the Bailo to select the most loyal and capable ones. He would also be able to select them from the Venetian subject or other Christian families of the Archipelagos (the Aegean Islands), Damasucus, Aleppo and

²² ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli. Ambasciatore a Costantinopoli. Busta 4. Reg. 8. The letters from the Extraordinary Envoy Leonardo Donado (1595–1600) to the Venetian Doge Marino Grimani (1595–1605), dated 24, 25, and 27 February 1595, and 3 March 1596, 245 r–255 v, 265 r–266 r. Zeno 1847: 138, 150.

²³ ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Archivio Proprio Costantinopoli. Ambasciatore a Costantinopoli. Busta 4. Reg. 8. The Letter of the Bailo Marco Venier (1593–1596), dated 6 March 1596, 282 r–283 r.

²⁴ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 9. 1595–1602. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Marco Venier, dated 5 April 1595 and 21 March 1596, 26 r, 27 r, 55 r, 56 r.

²⁵ ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Dispacci degli Ambasciatori. Costantinopoli. Filza 100. Dispaccio No. 514. The Despatch (Dispaccio) of the Bailo Giorgio Giustiniano (27 August 1625), 254 v–255 v.

²⁶ ASVe. Senato Mar. Reg. 83, 211 r–v; Bertelè 1932: 141, n. 108.

Cairo²⁷. In the same year, the Senate took severe precautions to prevent quick return of the dragoman and language boys to Venice. It conditioned to stay in the duty station at least 7 years. The ones who would return with no valid reason would be dismissed and deprived of the public posts²⁸. The severe precautions were no longer in use when health was about the matter. Similarly, the Bailo Sebastiano Veniero (1626–1629) reported the return of two of the 5 language boys to Venice due to the health problems²⁹.

In 1745 and 1746, some important deliberations were proclaimed by the Venetian *Collegio* and Senate. With the deliberations of 25 September 1745 and 6 August 1746, they allowed the dragomans and the language boys to have a 4 months' permission to stay in Venice or their homeland with a valid reason. When it expired, they were expected to be at least in the *lazaretto* (quarantine station) of Split. If they would not abide by the rule, they would be deprived of salary, provisions, and suchlike funds. Some dragomans had to exceed the 4 months' time limit due to the prolongation of the state mission or the delay of the departure of the Bailo from Venice. In such exceptional cases, their rights, posts and payments were protected within the borders of law³⁰. In 1746, the *Collegio* and the Senate deliberated to give them an extra 4 months in these cases. An affirmative vote at the rate of 4/5 must have been provided in one of these two authoritative figures of the Republic. When the extra time

span was exceeded, they would suspend the provision funds and all other payments³¹. The funds of the language boys who were licensed to stay in Venice for the aforesaid time would be paid according to their advance in profession. If they would not make any progress, since then they would not be given any funds and they would be prohibited to apply for and to exploit the funds³².

Apart from the ordinary license time, the deliberations of 25 September 1745 and 6 August 1746 talked about the time limit of the newly assigned Venetian language boys. The deliberations conditioned that they must have been in Constantinople in 6 months. This time included the completion of their necessary documents and travel from Venice to Constantinople with the Bailo³³. Any exceeding this time limit was tolerated by the *Collegio* and the Senate on the basis of state mission and good qualification of the language boy. The language boy Agostino Bellato experienced such a case in 1769. According to the letter of the Venetian *Collegio* and the Senate to the Bailo, this language boy was sent to Kotor to help his father Dragoman Giovanni Bellato in a difficult, dangerous, and important mission. His father presented a petition to the Venetian authorities to tolerate his son's delay to Constantinople. The *Collegio* and the Senate accepted the petition and put it in process because of the difficulty of the mission, dedicacy and talent of this dragoman family³⁴. In the same year and approximately a month ago, the language boy Giovanni Battista the 2nd Calegari was tolerated

²⁷ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 16. 1625. The letter of the Bailo Giorgio Giustiniano (21 October 1625), 123 r – v.

²⁸ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 16. 1625. The Letter from the Senate to the Bailo Giorgio Giustiniano (21 February 1625), 197 v – 198 r.

²⁹ ASVe. Senato. Secreta. Dispacci degli Ambasciatori. Costantinopoli. Filza 140. Dispaccio No. 11. The Despatch of the Bailo Sebastiano Venier, 160 r – 161 v.

³⁰ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 45. 1742–1747. 280 r – 281 r and 322 v – 323 r; ASVe. Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia. Serie I. Busta 955; Preto 1975, 110–111, No. 55.

³¹ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 45. 1742–1747. The Deliberation, dated 6 August 1746, 321 v – 322 r, 323 r.

³² ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 45. 1742–1747. The Deliberation, dated of 25 September 1745, 279 v, 281 v – 282 r.

³³ ASVe. Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia. No. 955. Dragomani e Giovani di Lingua in Costantinopoli: Decreti del Senato dal 1719 al 1787 con Sommario. No. 6–7.

³⁴ ASVe. Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia. No. 955. Dragomani e Giovani di Lingua in Costantinopoli: Decreti del Senato dal 1719 al 1787 con Sommario. No. 6. – 7 and No. 32.

with the same reason when he accompanied his father Dragoman Giovanni Maria Calegari who was charged as an interpreter of the Venetian army until Corfu and prolonged his stay there for a while³⁵. Both of the language boys could take their salaries and benefit from their funds and any raise in their salaries³⁶. Another acceptable reason for the delay was the late departure of the Bailo. The unexpected late departure of the Bailo Paolo Renier (1771–1775) caused the language boys Agostino Bellato and Giovanni Battista the 2nd Calegari to exceed the aforesaid 6 month's time limit in between 1770 and 1771. Primarily, according to the deliberations of 1745 and 1746, their salaries and funds were cut off for a certain time. But, later, on the basis of a deliberation under the date of 25 August 1770 their salaries and funds were restituted and by this way a possible unjust treatment was prevented. Bellato was assigned as a language boy 10 months and 20 days before the restitution. As for Calegari, he had been the language boy for 9 months³⁷.

The life was not easy for the elderly dragomans too. The Venetian government also struggled to keep them in Constantinople and to retard their return to homeland for more time all the way. They had to comply with certain rules to be retired. The *Collegio* and the Senate were not consent about any easy and early retirement especially if the dragoman was well experienced (Dökmeçi 2018/2: 95–112). Because, it was not easy to have a long – lived dragoman in the dangerous conditions of war, diseases (especially plague), captivity, and any probable execution by the Ot-

toman rulers during the secret handling of various ciphered letters of an incarcerated Bailo. It was hard to find an experienced dragoman who survived for ages so that he could become a master in the mutual diplomatic relations and could transfer his valuable cognisance to his apprentices and successors. In 1746, the Venetian authorities made difficult the retirement of the elderly dragomans and conditioned an affirmative vote of the *Collegio* or the Senate for the retirement with age limit or ailment. The reports of the Bailos who returned to homeland, the opinion of the Deputies and Adjuncts of the Monetary Provision (*I Deputati ed Aggiunti alla Provision del Denaro*), the report of the 5 Seniors (*Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*) were determinant in the decision of retirement. When it became definite, the dragomans were paid an annual pension of 100 sequins (cecchini/zecchini)³⁸.

The relations of the dragoman families with the Ottoman rulers affected the concept of fidelity, the institution of Grand Dragomanship, accordingly the state of retirement, and the persistency in the duty station. For example, when the brother of the Grand Dragoman Giovanni Ralli was assigned as a dragoman by the Ottomans in 1787, the Venetian government started to approach this family doubtfully. Although it was apparently emphasized by the government that this situation would not decrease the fidelity of Giovanni Ralli, the *Collegio* and the Senate were actually unwilling to rely on him in the issues with the Sublime Porte. They even planned to replace Giovanni Maria Mascellini in his post. For this reason, the Bailo Girolamo Zulian (1785–1788) with their order, wrote a letter to the *Provveditore Generale* of Dalmatia and Albany and demanded him to send Mascellini back to Constantinople. According to their schedule, Ralli would be sent to Venice and he would be charged in the translation issues of the Duchal Chancellery with the excuses of his elderliness and chronic dis-

³⁵ ASVe. *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*. No. 955. *Dragomani e Giovani di Lingua in Costantinopoli: Decreti del Senato dal 1719 al 1787 con Sommario. The Letter, dated of 24 February 1769*. No. 33.

³⁶ ASVe. *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*. No. 955. *Dragomani e Giovani di Lingua in Costantinopoli: Decreti del Senato dal 1719 al 1787 con Sommario. The Letter, dated 20 March 1786*. No. 84.

³⁷ ASVe. *Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 52. 1770–1773. The Pregadi, dated 2 May 1772*, 172 r – v.

³⁸ ASVe. *Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 45. 1742–1747. The Deliberation, dated 6 August 1746*, 321 v, 323 v.

eases³⁹. In deed, they were doubtful about that he could share the secrets of the state with the Ottoman rulers with the influence of his brother. But the practice did not agree with the plans of the Venetian authorities and the concept of experience made the concept of fidelity more flexible. The experience which was gained by Ralli in the issues with the Porte kept him in his post and made him the most preferable Grand Dragoman in the eyes of the Bailos. Mascellini who waited for a while in Constantinople was sent back to Dalmatia with a subsistence at the amount of 800 piasters⁴⁰. His experience, regional expertness and cognisance in the matters of Dalmatia paved the way for this decision. As a result, he restarted to deal with the border negotiations in Dalmatia. As a solution, instead of Ralli, Pietro Navone was sent to Venice and he dealt with the translation issues of the Duchal Chancery⁴¹. The Grand Dragoman Ralli, because of his irreplaceable success, experience and cognisance, had to remain in his post and despite of his petition of the year 1791⁴² he had to wait for his retirement⁴³

until 1795⁴⁴ when his diseases became unbearably suffering (Cosmai and Sorteni 1996: 8–9). Until this time he was charged with transferring his cognisance about the Ottoman laws, customs and protocols to a language boy who was assigned as his assistant.⁴⁵

Conclusion

The lives of the dragomans and the language boys of the Venetian Republic in Constantinople constituted an inseparable part of the Venetian and Ottoman histories. Political, cultural, socio – economic and religious motives gave shape to the conduct of their lives and professions. In conformity with their profession they had to overcome a wide array of consecutive risks and troubles that stemmed from the tense nature of the mutual wars, competition of power in the Mediterranean between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. Some of them searched for the ways of being rich, some struggled to salvage the day by taking the advantage of doing their profession in a significant center of diplomacy like Constantinople where it was possible to find a tutelar in the Ottoman ruling elite or among other state's envoys. As having been fascinated by the diplomatic means and opportunities of mediation, and drifted with the tide of certain financial worries and monetary ambitions, the dragomans and the language boys could be inclined to commit various crimes in different levels of seriousness. The crimes of infidelity and information leakage were the most serious ones and they were faced by both the Venetian and Ottoman rulers with a strict pun-

³⁹ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 58. 1787–1790. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Girolamo Zulian (1785–1788), dated 12 April and 30 June 1788, 148 r – 148 v, 157 r – v.

⁴⁰ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 58. 1787–1790. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Niccolò Foscarini (1788–1792), dated 11 April 1789. The Pregadi No. 7, 217 r, 218 r.

⁴¹ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 58. 1787–1790. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Girolamo Zulian and His Successor Niccolò Foscarini (1788–1792), dated of 6 December 1788. The Pregadi's with the numbers of 105 and 106. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Girolamo Zulian and the Provveditore Generale of Dalmatia and Albany (24 January 1788), 182 v – 183 v and 189 r – v.

⁴² ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 59. 1791–1794. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Niccolò Foscarini, dated 30 March 1791. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Niccolò Foscarini and the Provveditore Generale of Dalmatia and Albany (3 September 1791), 20 v – 21 r, 32 r – v.

⁴³ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 59. 1791–1794. The letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Niccolò Foscarini and his successor the

Bailo Federico Foscari (1792–1796), dated 29 September 1792. The Pregadi's of the same date with No. 55 and 56, 101 v, 102 v; Cosmai and Sorteni 1996: 18.

⁴⁴ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 60. 1795–1796. The Letters from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Federico Foscari. The Pregadi's with No. 7, 8, 9, and 11 (14 March and 4 April 1795), 31 r – 33 r.

⁴⁵ ASVe. Senato. Deliberazioni. Registri. Costantinopoli. Reg. 60. 1795–1796. The letter from the Collegio and the Senate to the Bailo Federico Foscari dated 7 March 1795. The Pregadi's of the Same Date with No. 1 and 2, 28 r – 28 v.

ishment that could bring the malefactor to the gallows. The crime of theft was not so frightening as seen in the aforementioned two example cases but it could result in a decision of dismissal and remandment. Absenteeism was another crime but it was not more serious than the aforesaid ones. However, it could affect the lives of the dragomans and language boys in a negative way through its sad outcomes like dismissal and deprivation of the public service, funds, and salaries. The slave evasion was another crime that could deteriorate mutual diplomatical relations. The motivation of this crime was occasionally monetary based rather than a charity of rescuing a coreligionist.

Through various example cases, it is possible to observe how the concepts of crime and punishment were perceived by the dragomans and the language boys of the Venetian Republic in Constantinople. The reactions, responses, precautions and decisions of the Venetian government, rulers and jurists determined the conduct of the events and the level of effect of these events upon the dragomans and the language boys. The Ottoman ruling elite interfered with some events when it included its domestic policy, especially in the cases of the captive or slave evasion.

The crime of infidelity was seen as the most serious crime that a dragoman or another official of Venice could commit. The Bailos and envoys were generally very strict about the concept of fidelity particularly if the dragoman was from the Christian origin, especially the Venetian one. The Muslim originity among the dragomans and the language boys was a rare case. Hürrem Bey can be given as an example. But he was the most free dragoman of Venice in terms of the concept of fidelity. The Venetian Bailos and envoys enjoyed his close relations with the Ottoman ruling elite and subjects and they did not expect any kind of fidelity from him because of his Muslim origin. His ingenuity was much more important for them. However, the close relations of the Christian originated dragomans with the Christian

state's envoys were not welcomed by the Venetian envoys, rulers, and officials. That was why Michiele Cernovichio (Mihail Černović) payed his close relations with the Austrian consul with his dismissal in 1563 and Pietro Maruffo experienced the same thing in 1564 due to his close relations with the French consul. The Greek originated ones were generally approached in doubt. But some dragomans were seen as exceptions depending upon their loyal behaviours in the cases of wars and tensions. The Jewish originated ones were not common, and they were not trusted so much. But, their close relations with the Ottoman rulers and public were benefitted well by the Venetians.

The crime of theft was the most common crime among the dragomans and the language boys. The economic problems and financial ambitions were the main reasons that brought them to this crime. But it was not unforgivable if they were talented and regretful. The Ragusean originated Dragoman Simon Niholihi could not benefit from such a toleration when he was caught while stealing the Bailo's jewellery. His unsuccessful performance of profession, his huge amount of debts to the Ottoman subjects, and the crisis that he created through his idle talk to the Persian envoy at the Ottoman expense destroyed any possibility of toleration and he was dismissed in 1612. In an example of the year 1595, the contrary case happened and the Language Boy Girolamo Alberti was forgiven through his mothers' petition that was presented to the Bailo despite of his crimes of stealing an entrusted money, showing a false security deposit to the Ottoman subjects for borrowing and his inclusion in a case of captive evasion. This toleration may have occurred because of his regret, youthness and talent.

The crime of captive evasion was significant from the aspect of the mutual relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. Although it provided liberation of a coreligionist, the Venetian government did not support the captive evasion and it preferred to solve the prob-

lem in legal ways like negotiation, ransom and exchange of captives. The Republic gave importance to the maintenance of peace and fellowship with the Ottomans. For that reason, The Language Boy Girolamo Alberti was interrogated with accusation of captive evasion by using the woodyard at the residence of the Bailo and he was dissuaded from this crime as soon as possible. The Bailo and other Venetian officials solved the problem by sending him to Venice back without taking attention of the Ottoman rulers any way.

Absenteeism was another crime. But it was not as serious as the aforesaid ones. The Venetian government took precautions and proclaimed some amendments against the long stay of the Venetian dragomans and language boys in the family hearth. It decided over a 4 months' time limit and they were to be in Constantinople be-

fore it was up. On the contrary case, they would lose their occupation, salary and public funds and would be deprived of public service employment. The ailments and the late departures of the Bailos and the Extraordinary Envoys prevented this rule from functioning well in practice and the government had to tolerate the delays but it conditioned the four – fifth majority of the affirmative vote in one of the *Collegio* and the Senate for permission and continuation of funds and public service.

All these crimes can not explained just with the living conditions of the dragomans and the language boys or with the discipline system of the Bailo. They should be evaluated in the frames of the Venetian and the Ottoman judicial and political systems, the perceptions of crimes and penalties of their rulers and societies.

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- Abbreviations:**
ASVe: Archivio di Stato di Venezia.
CBOA: Cumhurbaşkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (Presidency Ottoman Archives).
Reg.: Registro.

ПРЕСТЪПЛЕНИЯ И НАКАЗАНИЯ СРЕД ПРЕВОДАЧИТЕ И МОМЧЕТАТА ПРЕВОДАЧИ НА ВЕНЕЦИАНСКАТА РЕПУБЛИКА В КОНСТАНТИНОПОЛ (1551 – 1797)

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Резюме: Турското езиково училище, което започва дейността си в резиденцията на венецианския байло в Истанбул през 1551 г., подготвя много преводачи (драгомани) и момчета преводачи до 1797 г., тоест до края на Република Венеция с договора от Кампо Формио. Интензивността на преводаческата дейност и малкият брой преводачи довеждат до непрекъсната смяна на техните места на служба и намаляване на контрола и надзора на венецианското правителство и генералния консул (байло) над тях. Дисциплината, необходима за обучението на момчетата преводачи, също е облекчена от време на време по същите причини. Когато всички тези условия се комбинират с определени икономически грижи, богатство и амбиция за напредък, става неизбежно преводачите да извършат някои престъпления. Най-честите от тях са нелоялност, кражби, отвлечане и отсъствие. За тези престъпления, които са описани подробно в докладите на венецианския генерален консул и извънредните посланици, са наложени определени наказания от венецианското правителство, Сената, Консултативния съвет (Колегията) и Борда на петимата мъдреци на търговията.

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