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Language Students and Interpreters at the Mid-seventeenth-century Habsburg Embassy in Constantinople¹

Abstract: This paper addresses the topic of the early modern Habsburg-Ottoman relationship through the special aspect of interpreting and translating in a multicultural environment at the Sublime Porte. More precisely, it focuses on interpreters – in Ottoman context the so called “dragomans” – of the mid-seventeenth-century Habsburg embassy in Constantinople: Josephus Barbatus, Giovanni Battista Corel and Nicusio Panaiotti. The analysis of their activity as imperial interpreters gives a solid overview of the professional abilities, competences and personal characteristics which were advantageous or disadvantageous for this position; furthermore, it also sheds light upon the various requirements and selection criteria of the imperial government towards interpreters. The paper also reflects investigations concerning the efforts of the Habsburg Court in Vienna in order to create a corps of loyal and competent professional interpreters trained in Constantinople especially for acquiring the necessary skills of Oriental languages in the mentioned period.

Keywords: Habsburg-Ottoman relations – interpreters – Constantinople – 17th Century

Preliminary remarks

It has always been a key question of diplomatic history how diplomatic missions are to perform in multicultural contexts when not only the preferred languages, but also the sociocultural environment of the negotiating partners are extremely different. Contrary to the undoubtedly crucial role of diplomats, interpreters seem to have been proved to be less interesting for scholars, although their pivotal position in multicultural diplomatic negotiations cannot be denied. The complex nature of interpreting is even more striking regarding the relationship between the seventeenth-century Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. This present article addresses Habsburg functionaries performing their mission as translators at the Sublime Porte, which usually required far more than linguistic abilities only. Apart from their linguistic role, these premodern translators –

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according to the contemporary terminology in the Ottoman context, the “dragomans” – are known to have faced various challenges during their service: they regularly visited leading officials of the Ottoman government and negotiated on behalf of the ambassadors, they wrote reports and dispatches concerning substantial background knowledge, and they contributed to the maintenance and functioning of the secret intelligence network supplying the Habsburg embassy with essential information on the Ottoman Empire. At the same time the Viennese Court counted upon them as couriers between the Habsburg and Ottoman territory or as creditors of the poorly financed embassy.² Above all, Habsburg interpreters in Constantinople should be considered as a special group of multi-functional clients, whose exact position in the diplomatic universe of the Habsburgs is still in need of a thorough clarification.

Regarding the professional framework of the investigations I am going to present in the following pages, it has to be noted that I currently cooperate in a project at the University of Szeged (Hungary) that prepares for publication the official reports of the imperial ambassador Simon Reniger von Renningen (1649–1666). Among several issues which contribute to our knowledge concerning the functioning and working conditions of the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople, Reniger’s surviving reports of his long term of service supply the research with promising pieces of evidence related to the activity of the dragomans as well. His reports also shed light upon the efforts of the Habsburg Court to create an appropriate corps of imperial interpreters, which already had its antecedents at the time of the previous resident, Alexander Greiffenklau (1643–1648). The reports of these resident ambassadors concerning the problem of interpreting tempted me to explore further sources related to this topic. Among the documents of primary importance preserved in the “Turcica” collection, records of other Viennese archives – primarily in the Archives of the Aulic Chamber (Hofkammerarchiv) – are being processed with the aim at creating a solid description of the functioning and personnel (including dragomans) in the mid-seventeenth-century Habsburg embassy of Constantinople.³

2 Dóra KERÉKES, *A császári tolmácsok a magyarországi visszafoglaló háborúk idején* [The Imperial Translators during the Great Turkish War], *Századok* 138, 2004, Issue 5, pp. 1189–1228; EADEM, *Transimperial Mediators of Culture: Seventeenth-Century Habsburg Interpreters in Constantinople*, in: Gábor Almási – Szymon Brzeziński – Ildikó Horn – Kees Tszelszky – Áron Zarnóczy, *A Divided Hungary in Europe: Exchanges, Networks and Representations, 1541–1699*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 51–68; Vesna MIOVIĆ, *Dragomans of the Dubrovnik Republic. Their Training and Career*, *Dubrovnik Annals* 5, 2001, pp. 82–83; Peter MEIENBERGER, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn als kaiserlicher Resident in Konstantinopel 1629–1643*, Bern – Frankfurt 1973, pp. 94–95.

3 The archival collections consulted will be henceforth quoted with the following abbreviations: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei I. [ÖStA, HHStA, StaAbt Türkei I.]; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Sonderbestände, Reichsakten [ÖStA, FHKA, SB, RA]; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Finanz- und

However, it has to be taken in account that due to the versatile research possibilities offered by the topic, the issue of translation and interpreting in premodern Habsburg diplomacy has already attracted a number of scholars, especially in the past few decades.⁴ It also motivated investigations focusing on interdisciplinary aspects, with an emphasis on the remarkable analytical prospects in overlapping fields of research between history, sociology, linguistics or translation studies.⁵ From the point of view of a historian focusing on premodern Habsburg-Ottoman relations, it is particularly important to note the distinguished attention that was paid to the Oriental Academy (Orientalische Akademie) of the Habsburg Empire, which was established in 1754 and functioned as an important link between Austria and the Ottoman Empire. The question of premodern interpreting in Habsburg-Ottoman context in the period before the Academy apparently proved to be less attractive so far, which is not surprising considering the research difficulties with the scattered archival material.⁶

Hofkammerarchiv, Alte Hofkammer, Hofffinanz Ungarn [ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, HFU]; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Alte Hofkammer, Hofffinanz Österreich [ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, HFÖ]; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv, Alte Hofkammer, Reichsgedenkbücher [ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, RGB]; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv, Wiener Hofkriegsrat, Hauptreihe, Protokoll-Expedit und Protokoll-Registrierung [ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. and Prot. Reg.].

- 4 Alastair HAMILTON, *An Egyptian Traveller in the Republic of Letters: Josephus Barbatus or Abudacnus the Copt*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57, 1994, pp. 123–150; IDEM, *Michel D'Asquier, Imperial Interpreter and Bibliophile*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 72, 2009, pp. 237–241; Frédéric HITZEL, *Enfants de langue et drogmans*, Istanbul 1995; E. Natalie ROTHMAN, *Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, 2009, Issue 4, pp. 771–800; Michaela WOLF, „Diplomatenlehrebuben“ oder angehende „Dragomane“? Zur Rekonstruktion des sozialen „Dolmetschfeldes“ in der Habsburgermonarchie, in: Marlene Kurz et al. (Hg.), *Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie: Akten des Internationalen Kongresses zum 150-jährigen Bestehen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung Wien*, 22.–25. September 2004, Wien 2005, pp. 503–514; Páridej toto: Gábor KÁRMÁN, *Zülfikár aga portai főtolmács* [Zülfikár Aga, Chief-interpreter at the Sublime Porte], *Aetas Történettudományi Folyóirat* 31, 2016, Issue 3, pp. 54–76.
- 5 Cécile BALBOUS, *Das Sprachknaben-Institut der Habsburgermonarchie in Konstantinopel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des historischen Kontexts des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Masterarbeit, Wien 2014; EADEM, *Das Sprachknaben-Institut der Habsburgermonarchie in Konstantinopel*, Berlin 2015; Clara REITER, *In Habsburgs sprachlichem Hofdienst. Translation in den diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen den habsburgischen Höfen von Madrid und Wien in der Frühen Neuzeit*, PhD-Dissertation, Graz 2015.
- 6 Franz BABINGER, *Die türkischen Studien in Europa bis zum Auftreten von Josef von Hammer-Purgstall*, *Zeitschrift der deutschen Gesellschaft für Islamkunde* 7, 1919, Issue 3–4, pp. 103–129; Heinrich A. BARB, *Über die Zwecke der k. und k. orientalischen Akademie*, Wien 1876; Herbert HASSINGER, *Die erste Wiener orientalische Handelskompagnie 1667–1683*, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 35, 1942, Issue 1, pp. 1–53; Ernst Dieter PETRITSCH, *Erziehung in „guten Sitten, Andacht und Gehorsam“. Die 1754 gegründete orientalische Akademie in Wien*, in: M. Kurz (Hg.), *Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie*, pp. 491–502; Heinrich

In order to contribute to this field of research, my present paper shall address the question of recruiting interpreters for the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople, mainly during the 1640s and 1650s. In this framework, two main problems shall be discussed. Firstly, I will give a brief overview of the most important local interpreters hired in Constantinople by the Habsburg ambassadors in this period, with an emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages of Ottoman subjects as imperial interpreters. Secondly, the objectives and efforts of the project shall be discussed in which the imperial government tried to create a loyal staff of professional interpreters by educating young men of German origin in the Ottoman capital. The topic of this present article is also inspired by my previous investigations related to the general conditions of Simon Reniger's election to the post of resident ambassador in Constantinople, which also targeted a wider context of eligibility criteria of imperial functionaries in the field of oriental diplomacy.⁷ In order to address the same issue from another point of view, I will also try here to answer the question, which were the most important requirements, abilities and personal characteristics needed to become a successful translator in the Habsburg-Ottoman affairs and, accordingly, which group of interpreters – Ottoman or German subjects – turned out to be more useful for the Habsburg emperor.

The dragomans and the problem of interpreting

Considering the difficulties of pre-modern interpreting at the historical crossroads of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, the importance of translators in the Habsburg-Ottoman relationship needs no further emphasis. Yet the multifunctional character of this position should be pointed out again, for interpreters were facing numerous challenges during their translating work, both on the Habsburg and on the Ottoman side, which required a range of competences. Scholars have already shown that besides the required language proficiency (including the thorough knowledge of the curial style of the relevant chancelleries), interpreters had to be aware of cultural characteristics, be able to settle

PFUSTERSCHMID-HARDTENSTEIN, *Kleine Geschichte der Diplomatischen Akademie Wien*, Wien 2008; Oliver RATHKOLB (Hg.), *250 Jahre – von der Orientalischen zur Diplomatischen Akademie in Wien*, Innsbruck 2004.

7 Zsuzsanna CZIRÁKI, *Habsburg-oszmán diplomácia a 17. század közepén. Simon Reniger konstantinápolyi Habsburg rezidens kinevezésének tanúságai (1647–1649)* [Habsburg-Ottoman Diplomacy in the Middle of the Seventeenth Century. Some Remarks on the Appointment of Simon Reniger Imperial Resident Ambassador in Constantinople (1647–1649)], *Századok* 149, 2015, Issue 4, pp. 835–871; EADEM, *Zur Person und Erwählung des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel, Simon Reniger von Renningen (1649–1666)*, in: eadem et al., *Wiener Archivforschungen: Festschrift für den ungarischen Archivdelegierten in Wien*, István Fazekas, Wien 2014, pp. 157–164.

the differences of the distinct diplomatic protocols, and, of course, should have been well informed of the current negotiations and their background. All in all, interpreters served not only as communicative support personnel, but also as an important diplomatic link between the Ottoman and Habsburg Courts, notwithstanding, in a position formerly subordinated to the official emissaries.⁸

Considering the 17th century, even after the closing of the Long Ottoman War in 1606, the frequency and intensity of bilateral negotiating did not decrease, and translators were continuously needed, both in the Imperial Court in Vienna and at the Habsburg Embassy in Constantinople.⁹ Regarding the complex challenges depicted briefly above, it is not surprising that hiring an appropriate interpreter turned out to be a problematic point for the Habsburg government in general. Relevant measures and decisions were practically made in the Aulic War Council, the body responsible for Oriental affairs. More precisely, there must have been a form of a special bureau within the War Council involving councillors and secretaries specialised in Ottoman diplomacy towards Constantinople, Ottoman-Hungary and the borderland. The War Council operated with a small number of translators acting primarily in Vienna, although the service of interpreters was clearly also needed on several locations of Habsburg-Ottoman communication, such as in Graz or Győr (Raab).¹⁰

An important initiative aimed at solving the constantly threatening lack of qualified translator personnel came from Emperor Ferdinand III – obviously on the advice of the Aulic War Council – in 1644, related to a mission of Hermann Czernin to the Ottoman Porte. In his instructions from the 27th of June 1644, the emperor ordered Czernin to find fully trained dragomans in Constantinople who would be willing to enter imperial service, primarily in Vienna, but also at the resident embassy in the Ottoman capital. Concerning the exact requirements which should be fulfilled by an applicant for the position of an imperial interpreter, the document does not reveal much: only a good command of spoken and written Turkish and loyalty towards the Emperor were expected from the applicants.¹¹

8 A. HAMILTON, *Michel D'Asquier*, pp. 237–238.

9 P. MEIENBERGER, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 80–82.

10 D. KEREKES, *A császári tolmácsok*, pp. 1199–1200.

11 Instructions of Ferdinand III. to his ambassador Hermann Czernin. ÖStA, HHStA, StaAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 117, Konv. 2, fol. 362–391. See more on the mission of Czernin: Georg WAGNER, *Österreich und die Osmanen im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Hermann Graf Czernins Großbotschaft nach Konstantinopel 1644/45*, Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchiv Linz 14, 1984, pp. 325–392; Petr ŠTĚPÁNEK, *War and Peace in the West (1644/45): A Dilemma at the Threshold of Felicity?*, *Achív Orientální* 79, 2001, Issue 2, pp. 327–340.

Besides the constant demand of having appropriate translators in the secretary of the Aulic War Council, the Habsburg court was keen on hiring at least one new translator specifically for the embassy in Constantinople. This remote diplomatic outpost operated only with a single official dragoman at that time: the well-known Coptic bibliophile and scholar **Josephus Barbatus**. However, he was unlikely to be able to continue serving over a longer period and had to be replaced urgently because of his advanced age and bad state of health. The present article does not address the impressive career path of Barbatus, which has been thoroughly explored by Alaister Hamilton already.¹² Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to map up his most significant actions in imperial service, with a special interest in the general conditions of interpreting at the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople.

Originating from Alexandria, after spending almost two decades in Europe as a well-known master of several European and oriental tongues, Barbatus accepted an invitation to Vienna from the imperial librarian Sebastian Tengnagel in 1622. He made important acquaintances with leading officials of the oriental diplomacy in the imperial capital and a few months after his arrival he entered imperial service as an interpreter of oriental languages in the Aulic War Council. Furnished with the support of the imperial chief-interpreter Michel D'Asquier, Barbatus was sent to Constantinople in 1623 in order to occupy the post of the Habsburg dragoman at the Sublime Porte.¹³ He appears to have been disappointed with his position soon and tried to find a way back to Europe – in vain. He served under the resident ambassadors Sebastian Lustrier (1625–1629), Johann Rudolf Schmid (1629–1643) and Alexander Greiffenklau (1643–1648) probably until 1645, when he was dismissed.¹⁴ In this long period of a declining career, he experienced the hardship of the mission in Constantinople: the inconvenient living conditions,¹⁵ the

12 A. HAMILTON, *An Egyptian Traveller*, pp. 123–150.

13 Memorial of Michel D'Asquier for the War Council, s. d. l. [1641]. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 115, Konv. 2, fol. 194–195.

14 A. HAMILTON, *An Egyptian Traveller*, pp. 139–144. For more detailed data concerning the career of Josephus Barbatus in imperial service see the memorial of Michel D'Asquier written for the War Council, s. d. l. [1641] in ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt Türkei I., Kart. 115, Konv. 2, fol. 194–195. Barbatus was suspended from service in May 1643, but, probably on account of the lack of an appropriate successor for his position, he seems to have been employed further. Cf. Extract from the letter of resident ambassador Johann Rudolf Schmid for Michel D'Asquier from Constantinople, 18. 5. 1643 (ibidem, Kart. 116, Konv. 2, fol. 70–72); Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 13. 5. 1644 (ibidem, Kart. 117, Konv. 2, fol. 296–313); Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 31. 10. 1644 (ibidem, fol. 573–580); Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646 (ibidem, Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173).

15 Report of resident ambassador Johann Rudolf Schmidt to emperor Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 8. 9. 1640. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 116, Konv. 2, fol. 70–72.

constant lack of money,¹⁶ the persecution of Ottoman functionaries and the intrigues of various political groups in both capitals.¹⁷ Considering this long tale of woe, it is not surprising that he was hardly able to perform missions in Greiffenklau's term of office either as interpreter or as the resident's assistant. Greiffenklau often pointed out his incapacity and described the old dragoman aged 83 in 1645 as "emeritus et indecibilis" who was not fit for the day-to-day dealings of the embassy anymore.¹⁸

Strong though the complaints of the resident were, he still had to content himself with Barbatus because it was not easy to replace him with a person who fulfilled the requirements of the Aulic War Council. In order to come closer to what kind of criteria of eligibility the Habsburg Court had in the 1640s and 1650s, we shall analyse the abilities of the new interpreters they finally hired for the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople. Nevertheless, the comparison of Corel and Panaiotti has many conclusions to offer in itself: according to the relevant literature and archival material, Corel proved to be the worst and Panaiotti the best translator of the following years.¹⁹ In this case the obvious questions arise: what makes a good interpreter and why was one of them an excellent and the other a poor dragoman?

Firstly, some remarks on the career path of **Gian Battista Corel**. He appears to have been recommended both by the outgoing translator Barbatus and the resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau, albeit the first evidence of his presence in the communication of the War Council dates back to the year 1644 in accordance with the mission of Hermann Czernin.²⁰ Unfortunately, the remaining pieces of information do not reveal the exact conditions of him being contacted by the ambassador. Czernin only mentions a talented Arab interpreter from Aleppo, aged about 30, speaking Arabic, Turkish and Italian, who

16 Report of resident ambassador Johann Rudolf Schmidt to emperor Ferdinand III, Constantinople, s. d. [1640] (ibidem, Kart. 115, Konv. 1, fol. 236–239); The War Council to Ferdinand III, Vienna, 20. 9. 1641 (ibidem, Kart. 115, Konv. 2, fol. 175–176).

17 A. HAMILTON, *An Egyptian Traveller*, pp. 139–144; István HILLER, *A tolmácsper. A bécsi Haditanács és a Habsburgok tolmácsai a 17. század első felében* [The Process of Interpreters. The Viennese War Council and the Interpreters of the Habsburgs in the First Half of the 17th Century], *Történelmi Szemle* 33, 1991, Issue 3–4, pp. 203–214.

18 Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to emperor Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 23. 5. 1645 (ÖStA, FHKA, SB, RA, Fasc. 186, fol. 151–155); Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning the dismissal of Barbatus, June of 1645 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1645, fol. 263^v).

19 A profound contemporary comparison of their competences with the same conclusion was given by Johann Rudolf Schmid. See: Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 13. 8. 1649. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 229–232.

20 Instruction of Ferdinand III. to his ambassador Hermann Czernin (ibidem, Kart. 117, Konv. 2, fol. 362–391); Application of Giovanni Battista Corel for the position of an imperial interpreter in oriental languages, s. d. l. [1645] (ibidem, Kart. 119, Konv. 1, fol. 482).

was apparently willing to enter the imperial service, although preferably in Austria.²¹ After a short hesitation, the ambassador employed him for the position of imperial translator, albeit at first for the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople, in order to be secured of his competences.²² Accordingly, he served as a “supplementary interpreter” in the staff of the extraordinary ambassador, supporting the old dragoman Barbatus, who seems to have been frequently corrected by him during the negotiations.²³ After a half year of further service as dragoman of the Habsburg resident Greiffenklau, Corel was brought to Vienna and a few months later to Graz, where he served as an interpreter of oriental languages in a subordinated body of the War Council.²⁴

There is no evidence of any problems during his service in Habsburg territory, but as he returned to the Ottoman Empire in 1649 as an interpreter in the retinue of the extraordinary ambassador (internuncius) Johann Rudolf Schmid, he became rather inconvenient for the emperor. It has to be mentioned that Schmid was not simply an interim ambassador sent to the Ottoman capital in order to prolong the peace treaty between the two empires, as the title internuncius would suggest.²⁵ He was the most influential member of the Viennese War Council and the leading imperial expert of Oriental affairs. His abilities were indeed exceptional: he had a good command of Turkish and a wide experience of Habsburg-Ottoman negotiations.²⁶ Within a few weeks, he

21 Report of extraordinary ambassador Hermann Czernin to emperor Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 3. 12. 1644. Ibidem, Kart. 117, Konv. 2, fol. 607.

22 Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning the assignment of Giovanni Battista Corel supported by Alexander Greiffenklau and Hermann Czernin, July of 1645 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1645, fol. 266^v); Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council referring to the fifteen-month service of Corel, 13. 1. 1646 (ibidem, Prot. Exp. 1646, fol. 2^r–3^r).

23 Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173.

24 Application of Giovanni Battista Corel for the position of an imperial interpreter in oriental languages, s. d. l. [1645] (ibidem, Kart. 119, Konv. 1, fol. 482); Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning an appropriate accommodation for Corel, 2. 8. 1645 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Reg. 1645, fol. 258^r); Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council referring to the fifteen-month service of Corel, 13. 1. 1646 (ibidem, Prot. Exp. 1646, fol. 2^r–3^r).

25 Schmid realized two missions in 1649–1650 related to the renewal of the peace treaty of Szőny (1643), see: P. MEIENBERGER, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 16–34; István HILLER, *Palatin Nikolaus Esterházy. Die ungarische Rolle in der Habsburgerdiplomatie 1625–1645*, Wien u. a. 1992, pp. 33–35, 62–69; Mark HENGERER, *Kaiser Ferdinand III. (1608–1657) Eine Biographie*, Wien – Köln – Weimar 2013, pp. 260–277; Robert J. W. EVANS, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*, Oxford 1979, pp. 275–310.

26 On his person and activity in more detail, see: P. MEIENBERGER, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*; Sarah DUREGGER, *Diplomatische Kommunikation zwischen Kaiserhof und Hoher Pforte. Die Berichte der kaiserlichen Residenten Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn und Alexander Greiffenklau von Vollraths*, Akademikerverlag 2015. His reports from his term of office as imperial resident ambassador in Constantinople are edited by István Fazekas and Dóra Kerekes

discovered that the language knowledge of Corel was not sufficient at the Ottoman Porte (the Ottoman functionaries complained of his poor Turkish, with too much Arabic influence); moreover, he got involved in shady financial affairs and sold secret information to Ottoman officials. This all questioned his loyalty towards the emperor and could have been dangerous not only for his person, but for the entire Habsburg embassy as well. Consequently, Corel was removed from service by Schmid in the same year. It is also noteworthy that the Aulic War Council was continuously worried about Corel's affairs with Ottoman authorities in the following years. Finally, on account of his confrontations with some Ottoman officials, the former dragoman had to convert to Islam in April 1652 and soon became the secretary of a higher Ottoman functionary (kislar aga).²⁷

Unlike Corel, a young interpreter of Greek origin, **Nicusio Panaiotti** (or **Panagiotis Nikousios**), proved to be well-qualified and reliable from the first time he was offered a position as imperial dragoman in 1645–1646.²⁸ His person and remarkable career as an interpreter have already been thoroughly studied by scholars such as Gunnar Hering or Damian Janos,²⁹ and here I will refer only to his most important competencies as an imperial interpreter. First of all, I would like to highlight his extraordinary language skills: besides Greek, Italian, Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arabic he also mastered Latin, which was exceptional among Levantine dragomans operating at the Sublime Porte. In contrast to Corel, he was also aware of the ceremonial skills of negotiating in the

(still in manuscript). See also: István HILLER, *A Habsburgok török diplomáciája a 17. század első felében* [The Ottoman Diplomacy of the Habsburgs in the First Half of the 17th Century], in: Pál Fodor – Géza Pálffy – István György Tóth (eds.), *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére*, Budapest 2002, pp. 215–227.

- 27 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 10. 5. 1649 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 96–97); Extracts from the reports of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Michel D'Asquier, Constantinople, 30. 5. 1649 and 2. 6. 1649 (ibidem, fol. 105–110); Extract from the report of Simon Reniger, Constantinople, 29. 8. 1649 (ibidem, fol. 236–237); Report of Simon Reniger to Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn, Constantinople, 15. 2. 1650 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 122, Konv. 1, fol. 67–72); Report of Simon Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 16. 4. 1652 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 125, Konv. 2, fol. 20–24); Extract from the report of Simon Reniger to Johann Rudolf Schmid, Constantinople, 31. 7. 1652 (ibidem, fol. 153–154).
- 28 Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173); Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council referring to the first salary of Panaiotti sent by imperial runner Johann Dietz, 20. 7. 1646 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1646, fol. 278^v); Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 10. 5. 1649 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 96–97).
- 29 Damien JANOS, *Panaiotis Nicousios and Alexander Mavrocordatos: The Rise of the Phanariots and the Office of Grand Dragoman in the Ottoman Administration in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century*, *Archivum Ottomanicum* 23, 2005–2006, pp. 177–196; Gunnar HERING, *Panagiotis Nikousios als Dragoman der kaiserlichen Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel*, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 44, 1994, pp. 143–178.

Ottoman environment. As a member of the Greek community in Fener (Phanar), he knew Constantinople quite well and had his own network of natives who functioned as a source of information or as unofficial support in negotiations with Ottoman functionaries. Above all, he came from a wealthy family, which ensured him to survive in hard times when his salary granted by the Emperor was issued late. He was young and healthy, also quite calm, and preferred a settled and respectful life among his family members and in his Greek community. His loyalty towards his imperial employer could not have been questioned at that time,³⁰ which was also a rather unusual characteristic among dragomans who were Ottoman subjects. He probably also had good communicative skills, because his ability for cooperation and negotiation with both Ottoman and Habsburg authorities is documented to have been one of the best among his contemporaries. All in all, he was the best choice available for the position of an imperial interpreter in Constantinople – a fact beyond any doubts already from the remarks of resident ambassador Greiffenklau, who claimed that Panaiotti was esteemed so much that other European embassies competed for him as well.³¹

Table 1: The qualities of the dragomans Barbatus, Corel and Panaiotti

	Josephus Barbatus	Gian Battista Corel	Nicusio Panaiotti
<i>Languages spoken and written</i>			
Common Turkish	good	good	good
Ottoman-Turkish	?	poor	good
Persian	?	poor	good
Arabic	poor	good	–
Italian	good	good	good
German	–	–	–
Greek	good	–	good
Latin	poor	–	good
<i>Protocol</i>	bad	bad	good
<i>Personal network</i>	?	bad	good
<i>Communicative skills</i>	bad	bad	good
<i>Personal characteristics</i>			
Personality	negative	negative	positive

30 Panaiotti was often described as a functionary of indisputable loyalty in the relevant literature. He undoubtedly did his utmost in imperial service, however, recent research has shown that he sold information to Transylvanians and Spaniards as well. See: Gábor KÁRMÁN, *A Seventeenth-Century Odyssey in East Central Europe: The Life of Jakab Harsányi Nagy*, Leiden – Boston 2015, pp. 68–69; Miguel CONDE PAZOS, *La embajada turca en Madrid y el envío de Alegreto de Allegretti a Constantinopla (1649–1650)*, in: URL: <<http://www.librosdelacorte.es>> [cit. 14. 11. 2015].

31 Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173.

Loyalty	bad	bad	good
Physical and mental status	bad	good enough	good enough
Financial status	bad	bad	good
Religion	Roman Catholic [converted from the Coptic Church]	Non-Muslim	Greek Orthodox
Other characteristics			
Salary in imperial service	500 Rf/year ³²	500 Rf/year ³³	600–1000 Rf/year ³⁴
Nationality	“Arab” (Copt)	“Arab” (Syrian)	“Greek” (Phanariot)

Establishing the institute of language students (“Sprachknaben”)

Considering the utmost confidential character of their commissions in imperial service, the post of an interpreter seems to have been entrusted to Ottoman subjects only for the reason that there was a lack of trustworthy imperial subjects with profound knowledge of oriental languages. This resulted most probably from the relatively low interest in oriental customs and languages in general, for the language of the “infidels” was not preferred in the European Christian states. Only a few speakers of oriental languages are known from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries – primarily scholars and merchants –, who must have had a special professional interest in acquiring the language of the “enemy” and the “Barbars”. For this reason, it is not surprising that most of the European outposts in Constantinople operated with Levantines as interpreters, a characteristic group of Ottoman subjects with diverse ethnicity – they were above all Greeks, Armenians, Jews or converted Arabs – and in many cases with an attachment to some Christian church in the Orient.³⁵

However, on account of queries about “alien” interpreters, various efforts can be detected to obtain well-qualified translator personnel from one’s own nation in most

32 Report of the Aulic Chamber on the supplications of Alexander Greiffenklau and Josephus Barbatius, s. d. l. [1645]. ÖStA, FHKA, SB, RA, Fasc. 186, fol. 146–150.

33 His salary was elevated to 60 Rf per month after joining imperial service in Vienna. Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council referring to the salary of Corel, January 1646 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1646, fol. 21^v). The original proposal concerned 90 Rf, which was most likely approved only after his commission to Graz. Entries in the Registry of the Viennese War Council referring to Corel, 13. January 1646 (ibidem, fol. 2^r–3^r) and June of 1646 (ibidem, fol. 211^v).

34 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmidt to Ferdinand III. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 123, Konv. 3, fol. 187–205.

35 F. BABINGER, *Die türkischen Studien in Europa*, pp. 108–111; A. HAMILTON, *Michel D’Asquier*, pp. 237–238; IDEM, *An Egyptian Traveller*, pp. 123–125.

of the European states who were linked to the Ottoman Empire,³⁶ just as it was the case with the Habsburg administration in Oriental affairs. Regarding the required abilities referred to above, the most desired characteristics of an interpreter were the sufficient language skills and an unquestionable loyalty towards the Emperor. In order to get more translators who would fulfil both requirements at the same time, Vienna attempted to obtain own interpreters by training them from a young age specifically for this function. Aiming at realizing this idea, ambassador Czernin was not only expected in 1644/45 to find new interpreters for the Aulic War Council, but he also had to take four young boys of poor descent with him in order to educate them under the supervision of the resident ambassador in Constantinople and create loyal and qualified imperial interpreters out of them – according to the Viennese hopes, within four to five years.³⁷

Before answering the question, whether they fulfilled the requirements of the Habsburg government or not, it should be examined briefly what exactly happened to these boys during their training in Constantinople. Regarding their professional education, in the first four years almost nothing happened. One of them died soon after having arrived at the city, and another one converted to Islam and left the imperial service.³⁸ Only two of them, Hans Georg Zemper and Heinrich Julius Wachin/Wogin remained at the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople. According to the imperial decree concerning the number of the language students, the War Council seems to have been eager to complete the group. Regarding the obstacles to bringing newly appointed language students to Constantinople within a short a time, there was hardly another possibility to refill the vacant posts of the lost two students than choosing locals again who were thought to be suitable for imperial service in the future. These newcomers must have been the Levantines Francesco Navone/

36 Francesca LUCCHETTA, *La scuola dei „giovani di lingua” veneti nei secoli XVI e XVII*, Quaderni die studi arabici 7, 1989, pp. 19–40; Andrei PIPPIDI, *Drogmans et enfants de langues: la France de Constantinople au XVIIe siècle*, in: Frédéric Hitzel (ed.), *Istanbul et les langues orientales: actes de colloque organisé par l'IFÉA et l'INALCO à l'occasion du bicentenaire de l'École des Langues Orientales*, Istanbul 29.–31. mai 1995, Paris 1995, pp. 131–140. New research outcomes have been published on interpreters of Ottoman vassal states recently, see: G. KÁRMÁN, *A seventeenth-century Odyssey*; IDEM, *Translation at the Seventeenth-century Transylvanian Embassy in Constantinople*, in: Robert Born – Andreas Puth (Hg.), *Osmanischer Orient und Ostmitteleuropa. Perzeptionen und Interaktionen in den Grenzzonen zwischen dem 16. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2014, pp. 253–277; V. MIOVIĆ, *Dragomans of the Dubrovnik Republic*, pp. 81–94.

37 See the document quoted in note 8. This was not the first plan attempting to educate German students in Constantinople. However, the proposition of the War Council remained without long-term success. See: P. MEIENBERGER, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, p. 95.

38 Extracts from the reports of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Michel D'Asquier, Constantinople, 30. 5. 1649 and 2. 6. 1649. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 105–110.

Naon³⁹ and – probably ad interim – Natale di Paulo, whose assignment and further career are well-documented in the Viennese archival material.⁴⁰ Their appearance also provides further information on the internal relations and rankings among the pupils, for it is very likely that there was a certain hierarchy established among the students: Francesco Navone, obviously already with an advanced knowledge in Turkish, was assigned to the position of a vice-interpreter, most probably at the side of the chief-interpreter Panaiotti.⁴¹

According to financial obligations related to the creation of the language student group, the emperor sent a sum of 200 tallers for their settlement in the embassy in 1644. Ferdinand III also granted 500 tallers per annum for covering the extra costs incurring through their presence. This was submitted to his resident ambassador, Greiffenklau, who was responsible for the education of the boys. Furthermore, there was a plan to supply the students with a modest monthly financial help.⁴² Yet it also has to be mentioned that these students – similarly to the other functionaries and servants of the diplomatic outpost – were in reality not paid regularly.⁴³ Especially in this particular period of the last phase of the Thirty Years War, the Imperial Court could not finance even the maintenance of the embassy in Constantinople. The years between 1645 and 1648 count as the poorest in the history of the Habsburg embassy in the Ottoman capital; it

39 Francesco Navone was member of the famous dragoman-dynasty Navone di Pera, his brother served as interpreter of the Venetian embassy in Constantinople. Extracts from the reports of Johann Rudolf Schmid between 30. 4. and 2. 6. 1649, Constantinople. Ibidem, fol. 60–81.

40 Extract from the reports of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau, Constantinople, 23. 11. and 6. 12. 1647. Ibidem, Kart. 120, Konv. 1, fol. 203–205, 216.

41 Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning the application of Francesco Navone for the position of an interpreter in the Habsburg embassy of Constantinople, June of 1645. ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1645, fol. 505^r. Navone was also involved in confidential affairs of the embassy, see: Zsuzsanna CZIRÁKI, *Követ vagy szélhámos? A Habsburg diplomácia útvesztői egy konstantinápolyi gyilkosság tükrében* [Ambassador or Swindler? The diplomatic labyrinth of the Habsburgs through a murder in Constantinople], *Aetas Történettudományi Folyóirat* 31, 2016, Issue 3, pp. 22–39.

42 Communication of the Aulic Chamber dated 26. and 27. 6. 1644 (ÖStA, FHK, AHK, RGB 1644, Vol. 487, fol. 69^r–70^r); Procedure of the Aulic Chamber related to the payments for the language student Hans Georg Zemper with resolution of Ferdinand III dated 22. 9. 1651 (ÖStA, FHK, AHK, HFU, Kart. 434, r. Nr. 186, September – Dezember 1651, Konv. September, fol. 112–117, 129–133).

43 The salaries of the lower functionaries employed in the field of Oriental diplomacy were paid usually from the incomes of the Hungarian Chamber. Among the countless examples in the collections of the Aulic Chamber's Archives see especially the procedures concerning the payments for couriers and interpreters: Supplication of Natale di Paulo registered on 14. 3. 1650 (ÖStA, FHK, AHK, HFU, Kart. 424, r. Nr. 182, Januar – Juni 1650, Konv. März, fol. 193–199); Procedure of the Aulic Chamber related to the default payments for Josephus Barbatus registered on 30. 4. 1650 (ibidem, Konv. April, fol. 130–133); Supplication of Vincenzo Bratutti registered on 18. 5. 1650 (ibidem, Konv. Mai, fol. 193–199); Procedure of the Aulic Chamber related to the payments for the language student Hans Georg Zemper with resolution of Ferdinand III dated 22. 9. 1651 (ÖStA, FHK, AHK, HFU, Kart. 434, r. Nr. 186, September – Dezember 1651, Konv. September, fol. 112–117, 129–133).

practically collapsed, as the resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau died in the June of 1648 because of an accident. Most of the employees left their positions or debauched.⁴⁴ The affairs were managed by Panaiotti who acted with the permission of Vienna as a kind of a “supplementary agent” until the new resident arrived almost a year later.⁴⁵

In this critical situation, the Aulic War Council was not able to support the language students either, who are reported to have fooled away their days in Constantinople. Probably the only person who really cared about them was Nicusio Panaiotti, who had been involved in their education still in the lifetime of Greiffenklau and taught them oriental languages, primarily Turkish.⁴⁶ In spite of all existential hardship and the vices of the city, the boys might have acquired some skills. The new resident ambassador, Simon Reniger – unfortunately, a beginner in Oriental affairs, who arrived at Constantinople in the spring of 1649 and took over the embassy as fully credentialed functionary at the beginning of 1650⁴⁷ – mentioned upon his arrival that the language students already were able to speak Turkish. Apart from this one particular compliment, he complained of the boys a lot in his first reports: they were said to be too lazy, making no advance in Ottoman curial style and spending most of their time with roaming around the capital. They also were reported to have been drinking a lot and to have had dangerous affairs with Turkish women. The students also created terrible debts, which is not surprising, regarding the lack of any financial support from Vienna. Nevertheless, they appear to have been accommodated in Constantinople in a way, for Reniger noted bitterly that they dressed like the locals and looked entirely like Turks, so it was almost impossible for him to find them on the streets.⁴⁸

Alongside a detailed discussion concerning the various conflicts related to the language students, it has to be emphasized that Reniger finally managed to discipline them, although he was not completely satisfied henceforth either: in particular he missed

44 Related to the various forms of temptations in Constantinople see Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173; V. MIOVIĆ, *Dragomans of the Dubrovnik Republic*, p. 85.

45 Letter Nicusio Panaiotti's to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 17. 6. 1648 (ibidem, Kart. 120, Konv. 2, fol. 118–121); Report Johann Rudolf Schmid's to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 28. 3. 1649 (ibidem, Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 42–44).

46 Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646 (ibidem, Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173). However, Josephus Barbatus is known to have contributed to their teaching in some extents too. See: Communication between Imperial War Council and Aulic Chamber dated 8. 2. 1650. ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, HFÖ, Kart. 813, r. Nr. 317, Januar – März 1650, sin fol.

47 In more detail see: Z. CZIRÁKI, *Habsburg-oszmán diplomácia a 17. század közepén*, p. 840.

48 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 10. 5. 1649 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 96–97); Extracts from the reports of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Michel D'Asquier, Constantinople, 30. 5. and 2. 6. 1649 (ibidem, fol. 105–110).

diligence and commitment in the young men.⁴⁹ However, Zemper and Wogin seem to have advanced in the Turkish language, and both were eventually taken back to Vienna.⁵⁰ It is questionable whether they acquired all of the necessary qualifications required for a fully authorized interpreter in Habsburg-Ottoman diplomatic affairs, although their activities are documented at the side of imperial translator Michel D'Asquier.⁵¹ This did not however mean that they could not be useful for the Habsburg government at all. Their acquaintance with the Turkish language, customs and morals made them competent for obtaining a role in the Habsburg administration by all means. Zemper and Wogin were employed ad interim as “Turkish couriers”⁵² by the War Council – that is runners who linked German and Ottoman functionaries by transporting letters and messages using their language competence and previous experiences on the long and dangerous routes connecting both empires; furthermore, they were commissioned with negotiations in day-to-day conflicts with the Ottomans.⁵³

Concluding remarks

Returning to the initial questions about the requirements, advantages and disadvantages of Levantines and Germans as imperial interpreters, we have reached to point of telling which of them proved to be more useful for the Habsburg government. Based on the conclusions of the studied material, the answer is: neither the Levantines, nor the Germans

49 See especially the letter of disappointment from Reniger: Extract from the report of Simon Reniger, Constantinople, 13. 7. 1651 (ibidem, Kart. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 60); Report of Simon Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 16. and 20. 11. 1651 (ibidem, Kart. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 64–70).

50 Both in 1651, albeit not at the same time. See: Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 8. 6. 1651. Ibidem, Kart. 123, Konv. 3, fol. 187–205.

51 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 8. 6. 1651. Ibidem.

52 Regarding the term of “Turkish courier” see e. g. the supplication of Natale di Paulo for his salary as “Turkish courier” registered on 24. 3. 1650 which also highlights the important background information that couriers acting between Vienna and Constantinople were financed through the Hungarian Chamber, including the assent of Ferdinand III. ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, HFU, Kart. 424, r. Nr. 182, Januar – Juni 1650, Konv. März, fol. 193–199.

53 D. KERÉKES, *A császári tolmácsok*, p. 1198. Some examples for the assignment of elder students advanced in Turkish language as couriers: Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning the sending of Natale di Paulo, 6. 11. 1645 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1645, fol. 317^v). Francesco Navone attempted assignments as imperial runner in the 1640's. Extract from the reports of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau, Constantinople, 23. 11. and 6. 12. 1647 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 120, Konv. 1, fol. 203–205, 216). See also the missions of Hans Georg Zemper in the years 1649–1650. Extract from the report of Simon Reniger, Constantinople, 14. 8. 1649 (ibidem, Kart. 121, Konv. 1, fol. 248–250); Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to the War Council, Constantinople, 3. 12. 1649 (ibidem, Kart. 121, Konv. 2, fol. 255–261); Report of Simon Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 13. 12. 1650 (ibidem, Kart. 123, Konv. 1, fol. 171–174).

can be considered to be solely suitable. The ideal interpreter might have been a mixture of them, somebody who would have possessed all the communicative abilities which were required in Oriental affairs and who would have been faithful to the Emperor at all times – a concept that was quite far from the reality of that time.

To be more precise, occupying a post of importance should have required loyalty, above all in regards confidential information, which was often sold by the dragomans like Corel, Barbatus, but even by Panaiotti as well.⁵⁴ The problem of loyalty is even more striking if we consider the fact that interpreters and language students were not employed as translating personnel only. On account of the fluid border between fields of activity in terms of premodern functionaries, their multiple obligations as couriers, interpreters, and sometimes as “supplementary diplomats” generated wide possibilities to mishandle important pieces of confidential information. Even worse, the bad paid and sometimes rather debauched functionaries and students often came into contact with obscure persons – e. g. creditors, tavern-keepers, criminals – which could result in further dangers to the imperial affairs.

Regarding their linguistic abilities, the ideal interpreter should have mastered several languages of the communication at the Sublime Porte: Turkish, Italian, Greek and – according to the opinion of Reniger – a Slavonic language as well, which proved to also be quite useful with regards to the great number of renegades in the Ottoman administration. As familiarity with the curial Ottoman style had certainly a special importance, the new dragomans – both fully trained outsiders and language students educated on the emperor’s costs – were accepted only after proving their relevant competences. This aim was realised usually primarily through a “language exam”: a sample of text written in Ottoman-Turkish was sent to Vienna and proofread by an experienced professional, usually by imperial chief interpreter, Michel D’Asquier.⁵⁵ Another opportunity to test the abilities of the candidate was his cooperation in an audience of the imperial ambassador at the Sublime Porte where he was expected to translate under the supervision of another, well-trained dragoman. It also has to be mentioned that the communication between the imperial representatives and their Levantine dragoman was realised mainly in Italian. In

54 Report of resident ambassador Alexander Greiffenklau to the Aulic Chamber, Constantinople, 29. 7. 1646. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 119, Konv. 2, fol. 172–173.

55 Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning requiring a sample of text in order to testify the language abilities of Panaiotti, 1. 8. 1645 (ÖStA, KA, HKR, HR, Prot. Exp. 1645, fol. 255^r); Entry in the Registry of the Viennese War Council concerning the supervision of incoming samples of texts by Michel D’Asquier, March of 1646 (ibidem, Prot. Exp. 1646, fol. 94^v).

order to involve the German language as well, Reniger was keen on schooling the new generation of language students of Levantine origin in this tongue as well.⁵⁶

The period of the 1640s and 1650s appears to have had special importance in the development of education aiming at creating a group of loyal and competent imperial interpreters. According to the educational and financial difficulties related to the language students in Constantinople, the summer of 1651 seems to have been a turning point as the Aulic War Council almost gave up on training the pupils.⁵⁷ However, in accordance with the opinion with Johann Rudolf Schmid, Reniger raised a possibility which might have saved the institution of imperial language students in Constantinople. After a few years of experimenting, Reniger observed that it could be much more fruitful to train young boys of Catholic communities from Constantinople, mainly of Italian or Greek descent. He also gave the reasons why: they already had a good command of Turkish and Italian or Greek as native speakers; moreover, the Ottoman world was their home, so they already had a profound everyday-experience in the Orient – which characteristics were undoubtedly advantageous considering the time-consuming training of the Germans both in languages and customs of the Orient.⁵⁸

It is quite interesting that Reniger – after a few years of experience – opted definitely against the education of German pupils in Constantinople. He appears to have been extremely discontent with Zemper and Wogin. He complained continuously not only about their behaviour, but of the high pretension of “German students”, their impetuous attitude and their inability to acquire Oriental languages with efficiency. It was not surprising that he would have rather had two or three locals of poor origin who already had some knowledge in the required languages and would have been contented easily by granting them only poor clothing, food and education in the Habsburg embassy.⁵⁹

In 1653, the Viennese Aulic War Council accepted the proposal, and consequently Reniger was allowed to train local Levantine students commended by his closer acquaintanceship – above all by Panaiotti and the Jesuits – in the Ottoman capital.⁶⁰

56 Extract from the report of Simon Reniger to Johann Rudolf Schmid, Constantinople, 12. 7. 1653. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 126, Konv. 2, fol. 3–4.

57 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 8. 6. 1651 (ibidem, Kart. 123, Konv. 3, fol. 187–205); Letter of introduction including samples of text written in Ottoman-Turkish from Marcantonio Mammucca della Torre to Johann Rudolf Schmid, Constantinople, 14. 4. 1654 (ibidem, Kart. 126, Konv. 4, fol. 73–74).

58 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 8. 6. 1651. Ibidem, Kart. 123, Konv. 3, fol. 187–205.

59 Extract from the report of Simon Reniger to Johann Rudolf Schmid, Constantinople, 12. 7. 1653. Ibidem, Kart. 126, Konv. 2, fol. 3–4.

60 Opinion of the War Council, Vienna, 2. 8. 1653 (ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, HFU, Kart. 443, r. Nr. 191, Juli – August 1653, Konv. August, fol. 211–215); Extract from the report of Simon Reniger to Johann

This initiative finally ended with success: Reniger assisted the rise of dragomans like Marcantonio Mammucca della Torre or Giorgio Cleronome, whose outstanding career as interpreters started as imperial language students in the second half of the 1650s.⁶¹ However, this solution emphasises the most significant discrepancy between the most wanted abilities – loyalty and professional knowledge – of the imperial dragomans: Germans were thought to be loyal, but regarding the required language skills, it was more rentable to get Levantines. Consenting to preferring the latter group, the War Council – following the advice of Reniger – tried to make sure that they would serve loyally in another way: Roman Catholics had to be preferred among the newly recruited languages students. This seems to have taken over the importance of being a Habsburg imperial subject.⁶² All in all, it is probably safe to conclude that Reniger's initiative of aiming at educating young boys of Levantine origin but with strong attachments to the Habsburg embassy can be interpreted as a second best way of ensuring appropriate subjects to enter the imperial translator service.

Rudolf Schmid, Constantinople, 12. 7. 1653 (ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 126, Konv. 2, fol. 3–4); Report of Simon Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 25. 7. 1654 (ibidem, Kart. 126, Konv. 4, fol. 113–114).

61 Extract from the report of Simon Reniger, Constantinople, 13. 7. 1651 (ibidem, Kart. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 60). On Mammucca della Torre and Cleronome in more detail: D. KERÉKES, *A császári tolmácsok*, pp. 1202–1212.

62 Report of Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 8. 6. 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Türkei I., Kart. 123, Konv. 3, fol. 187–205.