


KSENIJA AYKUT


University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, Department of Oriental Studies

 0000-0001-9775-0024

ksenija.aykut@fil.bg.ac.rs

MARIJA MITIĆ

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Italian and Ibero-American Studies

 0009-0001-0931-2444

marija.mitic@ff.uns.ac.rs

**CORRESPONDENCE OF VENETIAN EMISSARIES
IN CONSTANTINOPLE: TURKISMS IN THEIR EPISTLES
AND THEIR LINGUISTIC FORMS IN THE BALKANS**

Abstract: The political and trade ties between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century significantly impacted cultural history and linguistic development. Skilled in the Ottoman language and the art of drafting official epistles, Venetian dragomans facilitated the incorporation of many Ottoman words into Italian, where they persist today. This linguistic exchange is documented in the reports of Venetian envoys in Constantinople, who recorded numerous Turkisms, including, political and economic terminology in particular and terms denoting occupations in the Ottoman Empire. Many of these Turkisms have remained in use in the Balkans. These reports are therefore vital cultural artifacts and valuable sources for researching culture, literature, and linguistics in Turkey, Italy, and the Balkans.

Keywords: Italian comparative studies, Turkisms, epistles, reports, cultural history, literary history, history of language, Ottoman Empire, Republic of Venice, Balkans.

Beginning in the Middle Ages, the Republic of Venice¹ played an important role in establishing relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The reasons for the establishing ties between Venice and the Ottoman Empire were primarily commercial and economic, which is why diplomacy between the two was initiated. Between

¹ The Venetian Republic (*La Repubblica di Venezia*, in some sources also known as the *Serenissima*) existed from 1172 to 1797. It was one of the most prominent city-states that played an important role in trade and economic ties between Europe and the Middle East. In addition to diplomatic and economic ties, this maritime republic also had significant ties with the Middle East related to culture and social exchange (Zorzi 2012: 10–51; Diedo 1751: 23–55).

the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, trade ties became increasingly fruitful, and the Venetians sent representatives to strengthen diplomatic relations with the Ottomans, the most important of whom was the *bailo*² in Constantinople.³

Much valuable information was recorded in the epistles of the Venetian envoys (*lettere missive e lettere familiari*) and in travelogues (*relazioni dei viaggi e diari dei viaggi*) regarding politics, economy, and diplomacy as well as culture, literature and linguistics.⁴ It is precisely for this reason that these documents written by the Venetians in Constantinople are very important sources for studying history and the history of literature and culture; but it is in the domain of language history that they form an important part of Italian cultural heritage. The language in which the epistles were written is fascinating for the study of language history because these epistles are the only surviving sources written in the Venetian dialect of Old Italian,⁵ and they also contain a large number of Provençalisms⁶ and words from Turkish. The presence of a lexicon from Turkish related to politics, culture, and everyday life confirms that the influence of Ottoman culture and language on the study of Italian lexicology during the late Middle Ages, humanism, and the Renaissance was significant.⁷

In this paper, we deal with the lexicon represented in the correspondence of the Venetian envoys in Constantinople, which inevitably became the subject of reports from the Ottoman court. This lexicon reflected to the greatest extent the influence of Turkish during a certain period and includes words that were used in the Venetian dialect in this corpus. Some of these have remained permanently in modern Italian which still uses them and is why we can qualify them as Turkisms in Italian.

Unlike Italian, Turkish had a much greater influence on the languages of the people within the Ottoman Empire, and a large number of Turkish words remained permanently in the vocabularies of primarily Balkan languages. In our analysis of the Turkish words used in Venetian historical writings, we will also show the forms and derivatives adopted into Balkan languages, where they have remained and are completely woven into the linguistic fabric. We will use examples from Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian, which are the languages

² The term *bailo* (lat. *bailus*, *baylos*) means one who rules, that is, one who leads. From the fifteenth century onward, it denoted the Venetian representative in the Ottoman Empire. This term was first used for the Venetian envoy Bartolomeo Marcello, who concluded a peace treaty with the Ottomans on April 18, 1454 (De Vaan 2008: 68).

³ Dursteler 2001: 1–30; Baldocci 2010: 333–342.

⁴ Pedani 2005: 18–21; Mitić 2020: 20–35.

⁵ Old Italian belongs to the Western Romance languages that began forming during the Middle Ages. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire on the Apennine Peninsula, the official language was Latin. However, during the Middle Ages, different variants of Vulgar Latin language began to develop within Late Latinity, from which Italian also originates. Each of the Italian city-states during this period began forming its own variant of the vernacular, often also referred to as the vulgar or *la lingua volgare*. Moreover, starting from the Middle Ages, the tendency to write in the vernacular grew stronger. Thus, some of the most important works of great authors such as Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch were written in the vernacular, that is, the vulgar. As a result the Tuscan dialect became the basis of the literary Italian language. However, in addition to Tuscan, there are other dialects of the Old Italian language. One of them is Venetian. Given that the Italian literary tradition also values works written in dialects, the reports of the Venetian envoys' reports are important testimonies that form part of the cultural and historical heritage (Morandi 1887: 3–25; Cortelazzo: 1982, 59–73).

⁶ The Provençal dialect was once a separate language from the Occitan dialect of the Ibero-Romance group, which is spoken today in Italy, Monaco, and France (Anglade 1929: XXX-448).

⁷ Viallon 2008: 41–60.

with the largest number of adopted Turkish words, which are referred to in linguistics as Turkisms.⁸ A contrastive analysis will clearly show the influence of Turkish as a language of peripheral contact on Italian and its influence on Slavic languages through direct interference. Also, it is important to note that dispatches were sent from the Ottoman capital to the Italian city-states via parts of the Balkans. In fact, this area was an intermediate space through which all the letters of the Venetian and other envoys traveled. The dispatches were first sent from Constantinople to Kotor, a port center on the Montenegrin coast that was part of the Venetian Republic at the time, and from there they traveled to other Italian cities. Even dispatches from other European countries, such as France, were dispatched in the same way as letters from Italian envoys.⁹ Also, a large number of dragomans engaged in translation work at the *bailo*'s office were of Slavic origin, and in addition to Ottoman Turkish and Venetian, they also knew Serbo-Slavonic. Precisely for these reasons, the study of the influence of words from Turkish on Venetian is an important topic not only for researchers from Italy and Turkey but also for Balkan researchers from the areas where BCMS¹⁰ is spoken.

1. The role of Venetian dragomans in the process of language transfer

Regarding Turkish influence on Venetian, it is important to note that an important part of this process were the translators, better known as dragomans (*tercüman*), who served as interpreters during negotiations at the sultan's court and played an important role in interpreting written documents. In 1551, the Venetians began educating their first cadres of dragomans, known as "young men of the language" (*giovani della lingua*), who studied other Oriental languages spoken in Constantinople in addition to Turkish and also acquired the skill of writing official epistles.¹¹

The study of Oriental languages in Venice began even earlier in the first half of the sixteenth century, and it is linked to the invention of the printing press.¹² However, dragomans have a special place in the process of language transfer, because they served as mediators within a cultural and linguistic context by translating official and unofficial reports by Venetian envoys and books written in Ottoman Turkish.¹³ For example, in *Letteratura Turchesca*, Giambattista Toderini, a Jesuit abbot and philosopher from Venice, mentions translations of several books in Italian: *Traduzioni delle dispute di Ibni Yusuf*, *Storia di Emin Celebi*, *Geografia universale di Chiatib Celebi*, *Spiegaz. della poesia divertimento di Ibrahim Celebi*, and others.¹⁴

Dragomans significantly contributed to the penetration of the Turkish lexicon into the Venetian language not only through their translations but also by writing official and

⁸ Teodosijević 2016: 9–25

⁹ Alberi 1855: XIII–XX.

¹⁰ BCSM: Acronym used to refer to the languages spoken in Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia. For our purposes here, we will use the abbreviation SC.

¹¹ Hitzel 2013: 23–31.

¹² Tiraboschi 1833: 110–111.

¹³ Rothman 2013: 390–421.

¹⁴ Toderini 1737: 60–75.

unofficial epistles. Most likely due to a lack of Italian words for certain terms, they kept the original words from Turkish, which they then adapted to Italian orthography, and as a result, certain words entered Italian and remained as loanwords. This was certainly the case for the corpus we analyzed for this study. For us, loanwords from Turkish in the Venetian epistles are an interesting topic that has not been fully addressed.

Despite a lack of precise linguistic research, there are nevertheless some works dealing with the influence of Oriental cultures on Italian language and culture. Since the nineteenth century, studies on Oriental languages have emerged in Venice and across Italy. For example, in the nineteenth century, the renowned Italian scholar Eugenio Alberi compiled a collection of reports from Italian envoys in Constantinople.¹⁵ Also, the renowned Orientalist Ettore Rossi dealt with the historical connections between Venice and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ Finally, the Orientalist Alessio Bombaci dealt with literary and historical linguistic connections.¹⁷ Within these studies, works translated from Ottoman to Italian are discussed, as are the first Turkish grammars and dictionaries printed in Italy. In the nineteenth century, the Italian historian, encyclopedist, and librarian Francesco Predari published *Origine e progresso dello studio delle lingue orientali in Italia*, in which he pointed out that many prominent Italians such as Lorenzo de' Medici, Pico della Mirandola and Angelo Poliziano wanted to promote Oriental cultures and languages. As Predari claims, many of them were also interested in manuscripts written in Oriental languages, including Gregorio Giorgi, a Venetian who established the first Arabic printing press¹⁸ in Europe in 1514 in the Italian city of Fano.¹⁹

2. The first Turkish grammars and dictionaries in Italy

According to Predari, there were Italian Orientalists, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who wrote the first grammars and dictionaries. Among them, he mentions Maggio, who wrote a manual for Arabic and Turkish orthography, published in Rome in 1670. Additionally, he mentions an Italian–Turkish dictionary by Molino, entitled *Dittionario della lingua italiana e turchesca con l'indice degli vocaboli turcheschi e brevi rudimenti di detta lingua*, that was printed in Rome in 1644. Predari also mentions a Tuscan²⁰–Turkish dictionary by a Neapolitan writer named Mascis that was published in Florence in 1677 called *Vocabolario toscano-turchesco arricchito di molte voci arabe, persiane, tartare e grecche, necessarie alla perfetta cognizione della stessa lingua turchesca, con la giunta di alcuni rudimenti grammaticali*

¹⁵ Alberi 1855: 125.

¹⁶ Rossi 1943: 364–369.

¹⁷ Bombaci 1956.

¹⁸ A keen interest in publishing works in Arabic in Venice and in other Italian city-states arose after Alessandro Paganino published the Koran in Arabic in the first half of the sixteenth century. Given that in this period Ottoman was written in the same alphabet as Arabic, interest began to appear in publishing works in the Ottoman language (Barbieri 1991: 127–131).

¹⁹ Predari 1822: 427.

²⁰ The Tuscan dialect is a variety of Italian spoken in the area of Tuscany in Italy on which the modern Italian language is based. The Tuscan language became the official language of all Italian city-states after the formation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 (Giacomelli 1975: 179–191).

*utili per l'impossessarsi del vero idioma turchesco.*²¹

There were, of course, other writers in the seventeenth century. In letters written by the Italian writer, composer, and Orientalist Pietro della Valla, which chronicled his journey to the East (*Viaggi di Pietro della Valle*), he mentions that he had also written a Turkish grammar.²² In the eighteenth century, the vicar apostolic and philologist Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano published a complex Turkish grammar he had written while in Constantinople on a clerical mission. In the introduction, he explains the subject of writing the manual in which there are separate chapters on nouns, verbs, adverbs and various grammatical constructions.²³

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were Italian Orientalists who distinguished themselves as writers of Turkish grammars and dictionaries, and there were certainly Venetian scholars and writers who made significant contributions to the history of language and literature. Much was written in their epistles about Ottoman literacy and divan literature, but some dictionaries and grammars of the Turkish language were also mentioned. For example, Giovanni Battista Donado, a seventeenth century Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople, wrote about Ottoman culture and literature in his memoirs, which were published as *Della letteratura de' Turchi*. In them he also mentioned *Rudimenti della Grammatica Turca* by the consul Andrea di Rier and *Grammatica Turchesca* by Giovanni Agaup, among others.²⁴

Interestingly, *bailo* Donado himself showed a talent for translation and a very good command of Turkish, which is especially evident in his translations of Turkish folk proverbs and verses from divan poetry. He had mostly likely heard these proverbs and verses as part of the oral tradition and recorded them by adapting Turkish words to Italian orthography. He also did some translations for the dragoman Giovanni Rinaldo Carli.²⁵

In addition to Donado, a century later another Venetian representative abbot Giovanni Battista Toderini went to Constantinople, and his *Letteratura Turchesca* was published in Venice in 1787. He also recorded his observations about Turkish literacy and culture and pointed out that there were Turkish grammars available then but they were mostly works by French authors.²⁶

Although these writers made observations about Turkish grammars and references published in Italian city-states,²⁷ there seems to be a lack of significant analyses and studies addressing the influence of the Turkish lexicon on Italian. Therefore, we will focus on analyzing a selected corpus of Turkisms related to politics and the military recorded in the epistles of the Venetian envoys.²⁸

²¹ *Ibid.* 15–16.

²² Della Valle 1843: 8.

²³ De Carbognano 1794:7–8.

²⁴ Donado 1683: 426.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 442–450.

²⁶ Toderini 1787: 78.

²⁷ Italian city-states were politically and territorially independent entities that existed on the Apennine Peninsula from the Middle Ages until the founding of the Kingdom of Italy. Beginning in the eleventh century, many Italian cities such as Venice, Milan, Florence, Genoa, Lucca, Siena, and others became major trade centers and gained independence from their formal rulers, thus becoming city-states (Martines 1988: 7–58).

²⁸ Here we will not consider examples of Turkism recorded in the travelogues of Venetian envoys.

3. 1. Turkisms in the military and political lexicons

Words from Turkish make up a large part of the military and political terminology in the epistles written by the Venetians in Constantinople. This can be seen in examples of official letters (*lettere missive*) which include reports and dispatches (*relazioni e dispacci*). The bulk of these documents originates from the sixteenth century, but there are also important sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the more significant documents is a report written by the bailo Pietro Bragadin,²⁹ which dates from the first half of the sixteenth century. This is a passage from Bragadin's report which includes military and political terminology:

Sono due bilarbei, uno della Grecia, ch'è Ebraim bassà ed ha sotto di sè 35 sangiacchi, ed uno della Natolia, qual ha etiam sangiacchi 35; è unghero, vecchio. [...]
Disse d' ciaùs, capiçi, solachi e salitari, che son certi officj; item dello agà de gianizzeri e che il signor ha gianizzeri 10,000 in piedi tutti. [...]
Poi disse del caso delle fuste prese per il nostro proveditor dell' armata Busdam Rais qual scrisse una lettera dolendosi molto. [...]³⁰

Similar vocabulary also appears in a report from the second half of the sixteenth century by the *bailo* Antonio Erizzo.³¹

La spesa ordinaria che esce dalla casnà si paga di questo modo ed è tale:
Alli gianizzeri e alli spai.
Alli arcieri e altri stipendiati a cavallo.
Alli capiçi della porta.
Alli agi della casa. [...]
Alli azamoglani gianizzerari.
All' emin dell' arsenale.
All saremin per le spese della strada della città e fuori, e dei sertagli, delle donne e delli garzoni.
Al beglierbei di Buda.³²

In Antonio Erizzo's report, there is also an explanation related to the title of the Ottoman sultan. Interestingly, the bailo provides the name of this title in different languages.

Examples of Turkisms related to military and political terminology can also be seen in a report by the bailo Paolo Contarini³³ from the sixteenth century:

Appresso questa milizia di timatoti vi sono 10 000 spai della Porta, pagati ogni tre mesi dal casnà compartiti sotto sei squadre, ma chiamati ora con due soli nomi, cioè spaoglani e salitari [...]³⁴

A report by the bailo Gianfrancesco Morosini³⁵ from the same period also contains

²⁹ Pietro Bragadin was the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople from 1523 to 1526 (Alberi 1855: 93–94).

³⁰ *Ibid.* 106–108.

³¹ Antonio Erizzo was the *bailo* in Constantinople from 1554 to 1556 (*Ibid.* 125).

³² *Ibid.* 130.

³³ Paolo Contarini served as the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople from 1580 to 1583. (*Ibid.* 212–214)

³⁴ *Ibid.* 219.

³⁵ Gianfrancesco Morosini was Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople from 1582 to 1585 (Soranzo 1885: 132).

some examples of Turkisms from this field:

[...] E di continuo sono frattenuti con soldo ordinario 500 reis, che noi chiamiamo sopracomiti, e numero grande di assap, che servono per marinaresca[...]³⁶

Epistles from seventeenth-century Venetian envoys contain similar military and political terminology. This is evidenced by examples of Turkism in the writings of the bailos Agostino Nani³⁷ and Simone Contarini³⁸ published in a collection of reports edited by Barozzi and Berchet:

[...] La famiglia dell' ambasciator di Francia Chiaus Bassi con più di cento Chiaussi seco erano molti altri principali Turchi. Gianizzeri, Spai ed Amoglani [...] ³⁹
Giunto a Constantinopoli dipoi, fu dal Gran Signore a contempazione Murat, dichiarato Visir e Beglierbei della Grecia, e dipoi Bassà a Babilonia. [...]
Poco inanzi al mio partire morì il vecchio Capi Agà che poco sempre valse per sè, e nulla per gli altri.⁴⁰

Here is an example of an epistle from the eighteenth century in which similar terminology appears. It is one of the bailo Francesco Foscari's⁴¹ dispatches from a collection edited and published by Filippo Maria Paladini. These excerpts contain Turkisms that were present during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries:

Incontrato colà il primo visir, lo seguitissimo, ed avanzatimi nel primo, poscia nel secondo cortile, apparvero distese le numerose file de' gianizzeri ed altre molte delli differenti uffizi e serviggi di quella vasta casa di gran signore. [...]
Supplite le formalità precedenti all' ingresso nella camera del sultano, viene condotto dal chiaus-bassi al atrio del ultimo cortile.[...]
Gl'eunuchi-bianchi formarano due lunghe ali distesi alle pareti del vestibolo.⁴²

From the examples from these passages, we have identified the following loanwords from Ottoman Turkish as appearing most frequently in Venetian:

- ***bilarbei*, *beglierbei*** (from tur. *beylerbeyi*, derived from *beyler* [pl.] and *bey* [sing.]) – the supreme military and civil commander of a larger area or province that consisted of several sanjaks. In the Balkans, a derivative was created in the form of anthroponyms, e.g., the surname *Beglerbegović*.⁴³
- ***bassà*** (in some sources *bascià*, from *paşa*) a title for high dignitaries and military personnel with the rank of general. This title was always placed after the name.

³⁶ Alberi, *op.cit.*, 263.

³⁷ Agostino Nani was the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople from 1601 to 1603 (Cicogna 1853: 549).

³⁸ Simone Contarini served as the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople from 1608 to 1610 (Del Lungo 1894: 425).

³⁹ Barozzi, Berchet 1866; 23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 146–147.

⁴¹ Francesco Foscari was an eighteenth-century Venetian bailo and ambassador in Constantinople (Preto 1997).

⁴² Paladini 2007: 25–26.

⁴³ Škaljić 1966: 130.

In Serbo-Croatian (SC) there is the derivative *pašaluk*,⁴⁴ meaning either a territory under the administration of a pasha or the office held by a pasha. Personal names have also been recorded (the feminine *Pašana* and masculine *Pašan*,⁴⁵) and surnames such as *Pašić*, *Pašalić*, *Pašagić*.⁴⁶

- **sangiacchi**, sing. *sangiaccio* (in some sources *sanzacco*, from tur. *sancak*) – 1) flag, banner; 2) a region in the Ottoman Empire 3) a region in Serbia mostly inhabited by Muslims and whose name is domesticated in use in the spoken language.
- **solachi**, sing. *solaco* (from tur. *solak*) – 1) left-handed; 2) a member of a special janissary detachment.⁴⁷
- **chaùs** (from tur. *çavuş*) – in the Ottoman Empire, a chaush was initially an officer's rank, but in the Janissary units, a chaush was a military commander. A Chaush was also an assistant in a craft organization, a keeper of a telegraph line, or a leader of wedding guests in a wedding procession. In a military band, the *mehter çavuş* was also at the head of the column in the Balkans. In the Balkan region, the surname *Čaušević* is a derivative.⁴⁸
- **chaùs-bassi** (compound formed by the possessive construction⁴⁹ *çavuş - başı* from tur. *çavuş i baş*) - head of the causa, sergeant.
- **agà** (in some sources *agha*, from tur. *ağa*) - the original meaning was great, elder, and later gentleman, champion, or landowner. Also, this is a term that referred to all military commanders in the Turkish mercenary army and is added as a title after a personal name (eg., Ahmet-aga).⁵⁰
- **gianizzeri**, sing. *gianizzero* (in some sources *iannizzero*, from tur. *yeni-çeri*, from *yeni* = new i *çeri* = army) –Janissaries were members of the elite infantry units that comprised the Ottoman sultan's household troops, which were the first modern standing army in Europe.
- **spai** (in some sources *spachidi*, from tur. *sipahi* < pers. *sipahi*) – in Serbian *spahija*⁵¹ one who owns a *timar* or *spahiluk* (in SC *spahiluk* is the possession of a *spahija*). The surnames *Spahić* and *Spaho*, which are most often found in Bosnia and Herzegovina, are derived from this word,.
- **azamoglani**, sing. *azamoglano* (in some sources *azamiglio*, from tur. *acemi* < ar. *agamīyy*, from tur. *acem* < ar. *agam*) - trainee Janissary, candidate Janissaries, a

⁴⁴ In accordance with phonetic characteristics, the Turkish four-variant suffix *-lık*, *-lik*, *-luk*, *-lük* in SC was retained only in the form *-luk*.

⁴⁵ Škaljić, *op.cit.*, 512.

⁴⁶ Aykut 2009: 87.

⁴⁷ Škaljić, *op.cit.*, 569.

⁴⁸ Aykut, *op.cit.* 87

⁴⁹ In Turkish, the semantic and syntactic possessive relation of the genitive construction consists of two nouns. The first noun (lat. *determinans*) closely determines the second (lat. *determinatum*) and functions as its attribute. Therefore, it often stands instead of an adjective. This attribute function of the noun is called the indefinite possessive (genitive) construction (*belirsiz isim tamlaması*).

⁵⁰ Škaljić, *op.cit.*, 72.

⁵¹ In the Slavic languages of Balkan region, it is characteristic to add the additional suffix *-ja* to the already existing suffixes *-ci* and *-li* to enable declension according to grammatical rules. (Aykut 2021: 81–94).

young male conscript.

- **emin** (from tur. *emin* < ar. *amin*)- faithful, safe, trustworthy man. In the Balkans, the personal names *Emin* and *Emina* were derived from this adjective.
- **saremin** (from pers. *sar* “head” and from tur. *emin*, from ar. *amīn*). Although this word is not found as a term in the available literature, based on the context of a specific epistle, it seems to refer to the head chamberlain (*ser* + *emin*) who accompanied the Sultana and her sons when leaving the palace.
- **sertagli** hypercorrection according to *seraglio* (from tur. *saray* < pers. *seray*) - court, palace. In the Balkans, this word gave rise to the name of the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina: *Sarajevo* (Saraj-Bosna/ Saraybosna), as well as the inhabitants of Sarajevo in the form *Sarajlija*.
- **patisciah** (from tur. *padişah* < pers. *padišah*)- ruler, sultan, king.
- **sciach** (from pers. *padišah*) – ruler, king.
- **cunchiar** (from pers. *hünkâr*) – It appears from the context of this epistle that the writer was referring to the ruler, i.e., the sultan, since the sentence containing it enumerates the titles of rulers within the Ottoman Empire.
- **timarioti**, sing. *timariota* (from tur. *umar* < ar. *timar*) – a feudal estate in the Ottoman Empire that brought in up to 20,000 akçi annually. In SC, it has remained as a historical term that is a synonym for *spahiluk*.
- **salatari**, sing. *slitaro* (from tur. *silahdar* < tur. *silah* < ar. *silah* + persian suffix –dar) – the title of an official of a vizier or pasha who was an armorer and took care of weapons. In SC it is found in historical literary sources as *silahdar* and *silahdar* and has two phonetic variants - dar/-tar.
- **spaoglani**, sing. *spaoglano* (from tur. *sipahi oğlan* < pers. *sipahi* + tur. *oğlan*) - This expression rarely appears in the sources as a term. It is mostly mentioned as its literal meaning “son of Spahia.” For this sense, see the example provided in Shaw’s *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, in which *sipahi* children are mentioned.⁵²
- **visir** (from tur. *vezir* < ar. *wazir*) – vizier – a high official in the Ottoman Empire). In the Balkans, the word *vezir* is used as a historical term.
- **sultano** (in some sources *soldano*, from tur. *sultan* ar. *sultān*) – emperor, ruler. In SC, the derivatives *sultan* for the masculine gender, i.e., for sultans and their sons and brothers, and *sultania* for the feminine gender, i.e., for the wives and daughters of sultans, appear as Turkisms.

In general, most of these Turkish words originate from Persian or Arabic, and they also form compounds with originally Turkish words. It is evident that these words came to Venetian through Ottoman Turkish. Also, we noted that all terms and expressions were adapted to Italian orthography and pronunciation with major or minor differences compared to the original version.⁵³

⁵² Shaw 1976: 124.

⁵³ Rocchi 2007: 6–10.

3. 2. Terminology related to occupations

Interestingly, terminology related to occupations also appears in the Venetian envoys' epistles in addition to military and political terms. For example, in a seventeenth century report, the Venetian *bailo* Ottaviano Bon⁵⁴ provided and clearly explained a list of occupations that existed in the Ottoman Empire, as can be seen in this excerpt:

Il Solicitar Agà – Quello che porta spada al re
Il Scodradar Agà – Quello che gli porta il veste
Il Miriacubar Agà – Palafraniere maggiore
Il Masdrabà Agà – Quello che gli porta il vaso dell' acqua
Il Dulbendar Agà – Quello che porta e fa il dulipante
Il Capiglier chiaiaassi – Cameriere maggiore
Il Casnagir Bassi – Scalco maggiore
Il Chilerghi Bassi – Credenziere maggiore
Il Denangi Bassi – Falconiero maggiore
Il Scarabdar Bassi – Coppiero maggiore
Il Casnadar Bassi – Contista maggiore del tesoro
Il Turnachi Bassi – Quello che gli taglia le unghie
Il Berberi Bassi – Barbiero maggiore
L' Amanghi Bassi – Quello che lo lava in stufa.⁵⁵

We have extracted the following corpus of Turkisms from this list in Ottaviano Bon's report:

- ***salicitar agà***, in some sources *slitaro* (from tur. *silahdar* < tur. *silah* < ar. *silah* + per. suffix *-dar/tar* = weapon, and from tur. *ağa*= *commander; elder*) – the title of an official of a vizier or pasha who was an armorer and took care of weapons, as previously mentioned.
- ***scodradar agà*** - (from gr. *skodra* < lat. *scodra*, -ae < it. *scutari*, loanword from Latin via Italian and from Turkish *ağa* = *commander; elder*). Based on the meaning provided in the epistle, we believe it may be a chamberlain who was in charge of the sultan's clothes.

The name of the Istanbul district *Üsküdar* also originated from the same root as did the names of Lake Skadar located between Albania and Montenegro and the city of Shkodër in Albania. In the oral and written tradition of Serbian literature, Shkodër is depicted as the city of *Skadar* in legend. A well-known bohemian quarter Belgrade is called Skadarlija and its main street is called Skadarska Street.

- ***miriacubar agà*** (from tur. *miri* < pers. *miri* < pers. *mir* < ar. *amir* = *ruler, commander, cubar* from tur. *kubur* = *small gun* and from tur. *ağa* = *commander, elder*) - it has the following meanings: 1) land holdings standardized with a

⁵⁴ Ottaviano Bon was famous Venetian diplomat who served as the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople from 1604 to 1609 (Pasdera 1969: 421–24).

⁵⁵ Barozzi, Berchet, *op.cit.*,84.

special legal regulation, standardized according to the so-called Ramadan law. Erazikanunnama. 2) Imperial property, imperial treasure, peace in the Balkans, called *mirija*.⁵⁶

- ***masrabà agà*** 1. (from tur. *maşraba*, *maşrapa* < ar. *misraba* = that from which to drink, 2. from tur. *matara* < ar. *matara* = water container and from tur. *ağa* = *commander*, *elder*) - chief courtier in charge of water. *Mataradžija*, a surname found in the Balkans, originated from it.⁵⁷
- ***dulbendar agà*** (from tur. *tülbent*, from which the French word *turban*, a woman's head covering in the form of a turban that was fashionable in the West in the 1920s, was later derived, and from tur. *ağa* = *commander*, *elder*). The Balkan Ottomanist Šabanović also mentions the terms *tülbend gulami* or *tülbend-ağa*, a personal courtier responsible for his master's turbans, *chamashirs*, and *saruks*, and for dressing him in these garments as needed.⁵⁸
- ***capiglier chiaiassi*** (from tur. *kapı* = *door* and from tur. *kâhya* and *kihaya* < pers. *kadxuda* < tur. *kethüda*, meaning manager of a house or estate). Šabanović mentions the same term as being present in the Balkans during the Ottoman rule, *kapidžilar-čehaja* (from tur. *kapicilar kethüdasi* and *kethüda-i bevaban*) - refers to the head doorkeeper and denotes the title held by all doorkeepers at the Ottoman court.⁵⁹
- ***casnagir bassi*** (from tur. *hazine* and *hazna* < ar. *hazina* = *treasury*, and from tur. *baş* = *head*, *peak*, *beginning*, *head*, *elder*) - gave rise to the SC compound *haznadar-aga* and *haznadarbaşa*, which means guardian of the treasury, chief treasurer. The treasurers served under the Bosnian governors and appeared as early as the fifteenth century in various missions in Dubrovnik.⁶⁰
- ***chilerghi bassi*** (from tur. *kiler* < pers. *kilar* < lat. *cella*, *cellarum*, and from tur. *baş* = *head*, *top*, *beginning*, *head*, *elder*). In Šabanović, we were able to find an equivalent that was used in the Balkans, *kilardžibaşa* (tur. *kilarcibaşı*), denoting a personal courtier responsible for attending to the master's treasury.⁶¹
- ***denanghi bassi*** – (from tur. *doğan* = *falcon* and tur. *baş* = *elder*) According to our research, a *Doğancı başı* is a falconer. It's worth noting that the person who wrote this word transcribed what he heard because he could not read the Ottoman text, which resulted in a significant phonetic modification.
- ***scarabdar bassi*** (from tur. *şarap* < ar. *şarab* = *drink* and from pers. suffix *-dar* = to hold. *Dar* is used as a suffix in Turkish compounds denoting occupations. Another word *bassi* is from tur. *baş* = *head*, *top*, *beginning*, *head*, *elder*) - this compound means the chief cup bearer at the ruler's court. This occupation is also

⁵⁶ Nişanyan 2000–2022: available at: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/mir> (05/06/2023); Škaljić, *op.cit.*, 421–465.

⁵⁷ Škaljić, *op.cit.*, 448.

⁵⁸ Šabanović 1973: 24.

⁵⁹ Nişanyan, available at: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/kahya> (05/06/2023); Šabanović, *op.cit.*, 29.

⁶⁰ Nişanyan, available at: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/kiler> (05/06/2023); Šabanović, *op.cit.*, 36.

⁶¹ Škaljić, *op.cit.*, 122; Šabanović, *op.cit.*, 27.

mentioned at the court of the Bosnian Beglerbegs in the fifteenth century.⁶²

- **turnachi bassi** (from tur. *turnak*, which means human nail or raptor's nail. The word originated from the Old Turkish verb *turna-* and *turma= to scratch*, with the suffix *(-ik)*, and from tur. *baş = head, top, beginning, head, elder*) – refers to a courtier who attended to and trimmed the ruler's nails once a week. The term for this occupation in Turkish is *turnakçıbaşı*, and it underwent phonetic modifications during the transition to Italian. Primarily, we observe two changes in Italian. The vowel *ı* from Turkish transformed into the vowel *U* in Italian. Additionally, the *Ç* sound was lost, replaced by the equivalent *C* sound in Italian.
- **berberi bassi** (from tur. *berber* < it. *barbier* and *barbiere*= one who shaves the beard < it. *barba= beard*) – refers to the chief barber responsible for shaving the master at court (Turkish *berberbaşı*). In the Balkans, the term *berberin* is utilized.⁶³
- **amanghi bassi** (from tur. *hamamcı* < tur. *hamam = bathroom* and from tur. *baş = head, top, beginning, head, elder*) – means the manager of a public bath. In the Balkans, there are the words *hamamdžija* and *amamdžija*.⁶⁴ In the Balkan region, these Turkisms originated from the word *hamamcıbaşı*. In Italian, it underwent phonetic modification. The group –GH in Italian replaced the sound *C* in Turkish, and de-voicing occurred.

In examining these Turkisms, we observed varying degrees of difference compared to the original words transcribed in Turkish. Some of these words have etymological roots in Arabic or Persian. In these occupational nouns, we identified endings that differ from those typically found in Latin and other Romance languages or in words of Germanic or Greek origin. The most common suffixes in these Turkisms denoting occupations are <*gi*>, <*chi*>, <*ghi*>, <*dar*>, <*ir*>, <*ri*>, <*i*>.⁶⁵ The equivalents in the Turkish language are: *-ci, -cu, -cü; -çi, -çi, -çu, -çü; <tar>, <gift>; -lık, -lik, -lük, -lük*.⁶⁶

4. Conclusion

Based on analyses of complete or partial epistles written by Venetian envoys in Constantinople from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, we have found that, in addition to loanwords from other Romance languages, there were also numerous words from Ottoman Turkish. They were primarily used to denote terms in military, political, and economic contexts and to denote occupations. We also observed certain phonetic and morphological changes in the Italian language. However, in terms of semantics, we found that the meanings of words derived from Turkish mostly remained the same. Dragomans played a crucial role in facilitating the transfer of language. Although

⁶² Nişanyan, available at: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/%C5%9Farap> (05/06/2023); Šabanović, *op. cit.*, 28; Škaljić, *op. cit.*, 22.

⁶³ Nişanyan, available at: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/berber> (05/06/2023); Šabanović, *op. cit.*, 28.

⁶⁴ Škaljić, *op. cit.*, 308.

⁶⁵ Fornaciari 1872: 84–95.

⁶⁶ Aykut 2014: 133–149.

they were trained as translators, when transcribing words from Turkish they relied heavily on what they heard. Given that many of the terms we analyzed from the corpus found in the epistles of the Venetian envoys are also present in SC-speaking regions, they are an important source for scholars, historians, and linguists from Turkey and Italy as well as those from the Balkans.

REFERENCES:

Sources:

- Alberi, E. *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, Tomo I, Firenze: Società editrice fiorentina, 1855.
- _____. *Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, Serie III, Vol. III, Firenze: Società editrice fiorentina, 1855.
- Barozzi, N., Berchet, G. *Le relazioni degli stati europei lette al Senato dagli ambasciatori Veneziani*, Serie V, Volume Unico, Venezia: Dalla prem. tip. di Pietro Naratovich, 1866.
- Paladini, F. M. *Francesco Foscari, Dispacci da Constantinopoli 1757–1762*, Venezia: La Malcontenta, 2007.

References:

- Anglade, J. *Grammaire de l'Ancien Provençal: Ou Ancienne Langue d'Oc*, Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1929.
- Aykut, K. 'Türkçe'nin Sırp Dilinde Kullanılan Soyadları Üzerindeki Etkisi', *Uluslararası 'Türkçe'nin Balkan Dilleri Üzerine Etkisi' Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, 29 Mayıs, Üsküp. Univerzitet Sv. Kiril i Metodij, 2009, 83–93.
- _____. 'Türkçenin Sırpça Üzerindeki Etkilerinin En Kalıcı Unsuru Olan Yapım Ekleri', in: E. Doğan (ed.), VIII. *Milletlerarası Türkoloji Kongresi*, 30 Eylül-04 Ekim 2013, İstanbul: Bildiri Kitabı, 2014, 133–149.
- _____. 'Turski- netipičan balkanski jezik', in M. Marinković and M. Krijezi (eds.), *Mapping Balkan Routes 2: Literary, Cultural and Linguistic Landscapes-European Perspectives, Thematic Collection of Papers*, Belgrade: Filološki fakultet, 2021, 81–94.
- Baldocci, P. 'L'Impero ottomano nelle relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti', *Nuova Antologia*, 145 (2256), 2010, 333–342.
- Barbieri, E. La tipografia araba a Venezia nel XVI secolo: una testimonianza d'archivio dimenticata, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, 9, 1991, 127–131.
- Bombaci, A. *Storia della letteratura turca*, Milano: Nuova accademia, 1956.
- Cicogna, E. Cicogna, A. *Delle iscrizioni Veneziane*, Venezia: Presso Giuseppe Picotti Stampatore, 1853.
- Cortelazzo, M. Il Veneziano: lingua ufficiale della repubblica, *Guida dei dialetti veneti*, 15, 1982, 59–73.
- De Carbognano, C. *Principi della Grammatica Turca*, Roma: Nella stamperia della Sac. Congr. di prop. Pide, 1794.
- Del Lungo, I. Cerruti, V. e gli altri (a cura di), *Le opere di Galileo Galilei*, Firenze: Tipografia Barbera, 1894.
- Della Valle, P. *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino*, Vol. 1, Torino: Stabilimento Tip. di A. Fontana, 1843.
- De Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Diedo, G. *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, Tomo primo, Venezia: Poletti, 1751.

- Donado, G. Battista. *Della Letteratura de' Turchi*, Venetia: Poletti, 1683.
- Dursteler, E. The Bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice's Early Modern Diplomatic Corps, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 16 (2), 2001, 1–30.
- Fornaciari, R. *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana*, Parte Prima, Roma, Torino, Firenze: Ermano Loescher, 1872.
- Giacomelli, G. 'Dialettologia toscana', *Archivio glottologico italiano*, 60, 1975, 179–191.
- Hitzel, F. L'École des Jeunes de langue d'Istanbul. Un modèle d'apprentissage des langues orientales, in: G. Buti, M. Janin-Thivos, O. Raveux, (éds.), *Les langues du commerce en Méditerranée (XVIe-XIXe siècle)*, Aix-en-Provence: Presses de l'Université de Provence, 2013, 23–31.
- Martines, L. *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.
- Mitić, M. *Izveštaji mletačkih izaslanika u Carigradu od 15. do 18. veka (istorijski, kulturološki i književni aspekti)*, Doktorska disertacija, Beograd: Univerzitet u Beogradu, Filološki fakultet, 2020.
- Morandi, L. *Origine della lingua italiana*, Terza edizione, Città di Castello: Lapi tipografia editore, 1887.
- Pasdera, M. 'Ottaviano Bon', in: M. Caravale (ed.), *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 11, Roma: Treccani, 1969, 421–424.
- Pedani, M. P. *Venezia tra Mori, Turchi e Persiani, Venezia e le culture Mediorientali: Bisanzio, Ebrei, Islam*, Vicenza: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2005.
- Predari, F. *Origine e progresso dello studio delle lingue orientali in Italia*, Milano: Tipografia di Paolo Lampato, 1842.
- Preto, P. 'Francesco Foscari', in *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani*, Vol. 49, Roma: Treccani, 1997.
- Quadri, A. *Otto giorni a Venezia*, Parte seconda, Venezia: Premiata Tipografia Cecchini, 1822.
- Rocchi, L. *Ricerche sulla lingua osmanli del XVI secolo: il corpus lessicale del manoscritto fiorentino di Filippo Argenti (1533)*, Weisbaden: Harrasowitz, Verlag, 2007.
- Rossi, E. 'Dall' Impero Ottomano alla Repubblica di Turchia', *Oriente Moderno*, 23 (9), 1943, 364–369.
- Rothman, E. N. 'Dragomans and 'Turkish Literature': The Making of a Field of Inquiry', *Oriente Moderno*, 93, 2013, 390–421.
- Soranzo, G. *Bibliografia veneziana*, Venezia: Tipografia di P. Naratovich, 1885.
- Teodosijević, M. 'Türkçe Alıntılar: Kültür Mirasımızın Dil Hazinesi', in: B. Gücüyeter and K. Aykut (eds.), *Miras: Sırbistan'da Yaşayan Türk Kültürü Unsurları*, Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016, 9–25.
- Toderini, G. *Letteratura Turchesca*, Tomo I, Venezia: Presso Giacomo Storti, 1737.
- _____. *Letteratura Turchesca*, Tomo II, Venezia: Presso Giacomo Storti, 1737.
- Tiraboschi, G. *Storia della letteratura italiana, dall'anno 1500 fino all'anno 1700*, Tomo 4, Milano: Presso la Società Tipografica, 1833.
- Stanford, S. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Šabanović, H. Bosanski divan, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, XVIII-XIX, 1973, 9–41.
- Škaljić, A. *Turcizmi u srpskohrvatskom jeziku*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1966.
- Viallon, M. 'Venezia ottomana nel Cinquecento', *Epirotica chronica Ioannina*, 42, 2008, 41–60.
- Zorzi, A. *La Repubblica del leone: storia di Venezia*, Milano: Bompiani, 2012.
- Nişanyan, S. *Sözlük Çağdaş Türkçe'nin Etimolojisi*, 2000–2022, available at: <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/mir>

КСЕНИЈА АЈКУТ
Универзитет у Београду
Филолошки факултет
Одсек за оријенталне студије

МАРИЈА МИТИЋ
Универзитет у Новом Саду
Филозофски факултет
Одсек за италијанске и иберо-америчке студије

**ПРЕПИСКА МЛЕТАЧКИХ ИЗЛАСНИКА
У ЦАРИГРАДУ И ТУРЦИЗМИ У ЊИХОВИМ ЕПИСТОЛАМА
УКЉУЧУЈУЋИ ЊИХОВЕ ЈЕЗИЧКЕ ОБЛИКЕ НА БАЛКАНУ**

Резиме

Политичке и трговинске везе између Османског царства и Млетачке републике од 16. до 18. века значајно су утицале на културну историју и језички развој. Венецијански драгомани, вешти у османском језику и вештини састављања званичних писама, утицали су на продирање многих османских речи у италијански језик, које се и данас користе. Ова језичка размена документована је у извештајима млетачких посланика у Цариграду, у којима су забележени бројни турцизми, посебно у војно-политичкој и економској терминологији, као и термини који означавају занимања у Османском царству. Поред тога, многи од ових турцизама остали су у употреби на Балкану. Сходно томе, ови извештаји су значајни културни артефакти и вредни истраживачки извори у области културе, књижевности и лингвистике у Турској, Италији и на Балкану.

Кључне речи: италијанистика, компаратистика, турцизми, епистоле, извештаји, културна историја, књижевна историја, историја језика, Османско царство, Млетачка република, Балкан.

© Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad, 2024
ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCHES 35, 98-112