

PÁL ÁCS

## ANDREAS DUDITH'S TURKISH BROTHER-IN-LAW

Recently there has been an increasing interest in the Ottoman interpreters of the Sultan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century both in German and Hungarian historiography.<sup>1</sup> All of these dragomans were renegades and were employed by the Serai. People of Polish, Hungarian, Greek, Jewish and German origin can be found among them.<sup>2</sup> They functioned more as ambassadors or diplomats of the Ottoman court throughout Europe than as ordinary interpreters; while at home, in Istanbul their job implied the reception of foreign ambassadors, the translation of their speeches in the council of the Sultan, that is, of the divan, and literally the selling and buying of political information.

The reason why Ibrahim dragoman—coming from a Polish noble family baptised as Joachim Strass<sup>3</sup>—an especially interesting person for us: because he was one of the close relatives, probably the uncle of Regina Straszówna who was Andreas Dudith's first wife. This relationship is mentioned in Turkological studies by Franz Babinger and József Matuz and also in one of Lech Szczucki's studies,<sup>4</sup> but there was no special interest dedicated to it, whereas in Hungary the above-mentioned relationship is almost unknown.

<sup>1</sup> Franz BABINGER, *Pfortendolmetsch Murad und seine Schriften*, in: *Literaturdenkmäler aus Ungarns Türkenzeit*, Hrsg. Franz BABINGER, Robert GRAGGER, Eugen MITTWOCH, J. H. MORDTMANN, Berlin–Leipzig, 1927, 33–54; József MATUZ, *Die Pfortendolmetscher zur Herrschaftszeit Süleymans des Prächtigen*, Südost-Forschungen, 1975, 26–60; SZAKÁLY Ferenc, TARDY Lajos, *Nyomozás egy magyar származású szultáni tolmács után* (Research on a Hungarian born sultan's interpreter), *Keletkutatás*, 1989 autumn, 60–67; Ferenc SZAKÁLY, *A Hungarian Spahi in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: The Mysterious "Andreya Litteratus" of Esztergom*, *Acta Orientalia Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 47(1994), fasc. 1–2, 181–196; SZAKÁLY Ferenc, *Mezőváros és reformáció: Tanulmányok a korai magyar polgárosodás kérdéséhez* (Hungarian market towns in the age of Reformation: Studies on the early rise of Hungarian middle classes), Budapest, 1995 (*Humanizmus és Reformáció*, 23); Pál ÁCS, *Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad: Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan's Interpreters*, in: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, Hrsg. Wilhelm KÜHLMANN, Bodo GUTHMÜLLER, Tübingen, 2000 (*Frühe Neuzeit*, 54), 307–316; ÁGOSTON Gábor, *Birodalom és információ: Konstantinápoly mint a korai európai információs központja* (Empire and information: Constantinople as the information centre of early modern age Europe), in: *Az értelem bátorsága: Tanulmányok Perjés Géza emlékére* (The courage of intellect: Essays offered in memory of Géza Perjés), ed. HAUSNER Gábor, Budapest, 2005, 31–60.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pál FODOR, *An Anti-Semite Grand Vizier? The Crisis in the Ottoman–Jewish Relations in 1589–1591 and Its Consequences*, in: ID., *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, Istanbul, 2000 (*Analecta Isisiana*, 45), 191–206.

<sup>3</sup> See the item *Strasz (Strotsch, Stracius), Ibrahim of the Bibliografia Polska*, ed. Karol ESTREICHER, Warszawa, 1977–1978.

<sup>4</sup> BABINGER (as in n. 1), 38; MATUZ (as in n. 1), 46–48; Lech SZCZUCKI, *Ars dissimulandi (Andrzej Dudycza rozstanie z Kosciolem)*, in: *Kultura polska a kultura europejska: Prace ofiarowane Januszowi Tazbirowi w szeszedziesiata rocznice urodzin*, Warszawa, 1987, 189–204.

From the very little data one cannot, what is more, should not make far-reaching conclusions, yet these data are worth some investigation, since they are in connection with the main turning point of Dudith's career, his marriage, and his break with the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup>

Andreas Dudith the bishop of Pécs (Quinque Ecclesiae) arrived at the Polish Court as the ambassador of the new Emperor, Maximilian II. His commission was to act as a go-between in the conflict of Sigismund August, King of Poland and his wife Catherine Habsburg.<sup>6</sup> As it is known the last Jagello king did not have any successor not even from his third marriage. Dudith was trying to keep the Queen from leaving for Austria in vain, meanwhile at the Court of her Majesty in Radom he got acquainted with one of her ladies-in-waiting, Regina Straszówna. Their first meeting was embellished to a romance by Dudith himself—love at first sight—and the early Dudith-biographies are full of sweetish exaggerations; for example the “legend” that says, that before their first meeting Regina saw Dudith as her would-be husband in her dream. To tell the truth, the bishop had enough time to get to know the not really beautiful and poor-in-health lady-in-waiting. There is not too much information about Regina's family; what is certain is that, she came from a noble but poor family. As it appears Regina and her mother lived on the annuity given by the Polish ruler to their relative, Ibrahim, who was serving at the Sultan's court as the chief interpreter.<sup>7</sup>

That was not unusual in those days. For example the Hungarian-origin interpreters Ferhad and Murad, got a similar salary from Stephen Báthory, the Prince of Transylvania,<sup>8</sup> while the interpreter Mahmud, and the above-mentioned Murad from the Habsburg Emperor.<sup>9</sup> For their services the interpreters were also paid by different Christian embassies in Istanbul.<sup>10</sup>

As Navagero, the Venetian ambassador, reported: “Ibrahim bei would do anything for money” and it might be true, because the Ottoman officials' main object was piling up money.<sup>11</sup>

The prestige of dragomans at the Serai is revealed by the fact that John Sigismund, the Prince of Transylvania commissioned interpreter Mahmud—originating from Vienna, Austria—as his ambassador to Paris to propose marriage to Margaret Valois.<sup>12</sup> Mahmud

<sup>5</sup> Pierre COSTIL, *André Dudith humaniste hongroise, 1533–1589: Sa vie, son oeuvre et ses manuscrits grecs*, Paris, 1935, 117–136.

<sup>6</sup> Andreas DUDITHIUS, *Epistulae*, I, 1554–1567, ed. Lech SZCZUCKI, Tibor SZEPESY, Budapest, 1992, no. 64.

<sup>7</sup> SZCZUCKI (as in n. 4), 192.

<sup>8</sup> SZALAY László, *Erdély és a Porta (1567–1578)* (Transylvania and the Turkish Court 1567–1578), Pest, 1862, 57–59.

<sup>9</sup> On the life and works of Murad see *Régi magyar költők tára: XVI. századbeli magyar költők művei*, XI, *Az 1580-as évek költészete (1579–1588)* (Repertory of Hungarian poets of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, XI, The poetry of the 1580ies), ed. ÁCS Pál, Budapest, 1999, 11, 141–153, 424–428.

<sup>10</sup> SZAKÁLY, *Mezőváros és reformáció* (as in n. 1), 256–257.

<sup>11</sup> MATUZ (as in n. 1), 48.

<sup>12</sup> On Mahmud's Jewish origin see Ernst Dieter PETRITSCH, *Der Habsburg–osmanische Friedensvertrag des Jahres 1547*, *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 38(1985), 60–66; BÁNFFY György, *Máso-*

was “only” the second interpreter, in rank he was preceded by one of Dudith’s relatives, the Polish-origin dragoman Ibrahim, who served between 1551 and 1570 and was the *summus interpres* and/or *maximus interpres* that is chief interpreter. He was also called *Muteferriqua* that is the name of guards who were attached to the person of the sultan, who had important public and political missions as well.<sup>13</sup> As an Ottoman diplomat responsible for the Polish affairs Ibrahim played an important role in restoration of Queen Isabella’s and her son John Sigismund’s Transylvania.<sup>14</sup> Ibrahim accompanied the Sultan to his 1566 campaign in Hungary;<sup>15</sup> he was present when the Sultan accepted John Sigismund’s paying homage, and he worked as the military interpreter at Szigetvár. At the Habsburg-court he became well-known for representing Suleiman the Magnificent as his *orator* in Frankfurt, where at the coronation of Maximilian, son of Ferdinand, he gave a speech in 1562.<sup>16</sup> According to Miklós Istvánffy’s report Ibrahim’s performing was some of the greatest attraction of the terrific ceremony series.<sup>17</sup> Those, who met him in Istanbul considered him as “the most dangerous, most cunning and most deceitful enemy of Christianity”, who moreover was very revengeful; he had a German ambassador sent into exile to Kaffa in Crimea, because he had called him a billygoat in one of his letters.<sup>18</sup>

As Lech Szczucki suggests Dudith hardly gave a thought to marriage and not in the least to apostasy during his first legation.<sup>19</sup> He applied for the rank of the Hungarian vice-chancellor of the Court, but according to Giovanni Michiel, the Venetian ambassador to Vienna, he was the candidate for the archbishopric in Esztergom (Strigonium), who was as a rule the primate of Hungary.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, until 1565, in spite of his church-career, he might have been thinking of getting married because celibacy was the subject between

*dik János... török császárhoz menetele* (John Sigismund’s visit to the Turkish sultan), ed. BESSENYEI József, Budapest, 1993 (Régi Magyar Könyvtár: Források, 2), 150.

<sup>13</sup> MATUZ (as in n. 1), 47; MATUZ József, *Az Oszmán Birodalom története* (History of Ottoman Empire), Budapest, 1990, 74, 79; see the item *Muteferriqua* in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*; CD-ROM edition, Leiden; Michel LESURE, *Relations vénéto-ottomanes, 1570–1573*, *Turcica*, 8(1976), fasc. 1, 119.

<sup>14</sup> Endre Veress knows that as a young boy Ibrahim was captured by the Tartars marauding on Polish territory and after being educated among the Turks he converted to the faith of Islam: VERESS Endre, *Izabella királyné (1519–1559)* (Queen Isabella 1519–1559), Budapest, 1901, 376.

<sup>15</sup> FORGÁCH Ferenc, *Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról* (Memoirs of state of Hungary), transl. BORZSAK István, in: *Humanista történetírók* (Humanist historians), ed. KULCSÁR Péter, Budapest, 1977, 851–854; BÁNFFY (as in n. 12), 150.

<sup>16</sup> Károly KERTBENY, *Ungarn betreffende deutsche Erstling-Drucke*, Budapest, 1880, nos. 703, 704.

<sup>17</sup> ISTVÁNFY Miklós, *Magyarország története, 1490–1606* (History of Hungary 1490–1606), transl. VI-DOVICH György, I, Debrecen, 1867, 474–475. Márton Berzeviczy mentions the speech of Ibrahim in his oration given in Paris: VERESS Endre, *Berzeviczy Márton* (Márton Berzeviczy), Budapest, 1911, 36; Augerius BUSBECQ, *Turkish Letters*, in: C. T. FORSTER, F. H. DANIELL, *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, I, London, 1881, 396–399.

<sup>18</sup> MATUZ (as in n. 1), 48.

<sup>19</sup> SZCZUCKI (as in n. 4), 194.

<sup>20</sup> SZCZUCKI (as in n. 4), 201–202.

the pope and the Emperor at the Council of Trent, where Dudith was present as a delegate.<sup>21</sup>

It may be true that Dudith's church-career was broken in two by the election of Pius V.<sup>22</sup> The former inquisitor on the throne of the Holy See was not really promising to the Dudith-like liberal high-priests. Dudith's legation was not successful, neither did he get the desired Hungarian position, and it is sure that despite the large amount of money the Emperor gave him he had financial difficulties: he sold off some golden and silver devotional objects, what is more he pawned his bishop infula.<sup>23</sup> These circumstances made him think of moving to Poland forever, he resigned from his bishop title, ambassador rank and finally he got married.<sup>24</sup> In his decision Regina Straszówna's mother had an important role: "non dirò al matrimonio mio del quale non ho voluto far consapevole anima nata, eccetto mia moglie con la madre sua etc."<sup>25</sup>

The question is: what might have Anna Straszówna thought about founding the young couple's future? They could count only on moderate support from the Polish ruler. For long months they kept their marriage in secret from Maximilian, Dudith's main patron. Their worries about their uncertain future could not have been forgotten by the enthusiastic praise of Polish poets and intellectuals—among others Kochanowski.<sup>26</sup> However for a while they lived on what they got from the Turkish uncle.

Later on, as we know, Maximilian's anger with Dudith abated, and the former bishop's new scope of duties started to take shape, soon he became the Emperor's half-secret agent and informer. We do not know whether or not in this new job he used his relationship with his brother-in-law in Istanbul, and how intensively they kept in touch.

Very likely, Dudith received the information from the Polish King via Ibrahim. This information could have been sent to the Emperor. In support of this we have found a relevant evidence in the correspondence of Dudith. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1569 he noticed

<sup>21</sup> It is a common fallacy that Dudith publicly spoke about the marriage of the priests in Trent. He only planned a speech *de connubio sacerdotum* but never delivered it. Andreas DUDITHIUS de Horehoviza, *Orationes in Concil. Trident. habitae*, ed. Quirinus REUTER, Offenbach, 1610; COSTIL (as in n. 5), 109.

<sup>22</sup> Pius IV died on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1565. His successor, the Dominican Michele Ghislieri (Pius V) was elected as the pope on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 1566. That was, of course, the end of a long process. At the Council of Trent Dudith learnt enough about the power relations in the Catholic Church. Due to the stop of his career he prepared himself to the marriage in the summer of 1566.

<sup>23</sup> The Holy Orders lodged a complaint against Dudith to the emperor Maximilian II. See TAKÁTS Sándor, *Abstemius Bornemissza Pál* (Pál Abstemius Bornemissza), in: *Id., Hangok a múltból* (Voices of the past), Budapest, 1930, 15–16; ÁCS Pál, *Katolikus irodalom és kultúra a reformáció századában* (Catholic literature and culture in the century of Reformation), *Vigilia*, 64(1999), fasc. 5, 373. This revenue was about 600 gold pieces, not a large amount as compared to his monthly salary of 700 gold pieces and to his "Gnadengeld" of 5000 gold pieces. However, he had a feeling of poverty for the legacy consumed a lot of money. The Spanish ambassador, De Chanton described him as a poor man as well.

<sup>24</sup> SZCZUCKI (as in n. 4), 199–200; ALMÁSI Gábor, *Két magyarországi humanista a császári udvar szolgálatában: Dudith András (1533–1589) és Zsámboky János (1531–1598)* (Two Hungarian humanists in the service of the imperial court: Andreas Dudith and Joannes Sambucus), *Századok*, 139(2005), 915–922.

<sup>25</sup> DUDITHIUS, *Epistulae*, I (as in n. 6), no. 198.

<sup>26</sup> COSTIL (as in n. 5), 129.

the military preparations of John Sigismund, the Prince of Transylvania: “Og et Magog contra maiestatem vestram sacratissimam movere dicuntur”—and this piece of news was reinforced by Ibrahim bey, himself the Ottoman ambassador on his arrival in May in Lublin.<sup>27</sup>

By no means Dudith boasted about his distinguished Turkish relative. The scandal of the bishop’s “heretic” wife was flagrant anyway, and his Turkish brother-in-law would have been the last straw.

After all it is provable that they knew each other and they did not keep their relationship in secret.

Johannes Praetorius the well-known professor of mathematics at the Altdorf University lived at Dudith’s house for a while as the private teacher of his child. Praetorius had an important role in constructing Dudith’s biography, in collecting his correspondence and in arranging the biography by Jacques de Thou.<sup>28</sup> In March 1607 he wrote a letter to Georg Michael Lingelsheim, councillor of the Elector of Palatinate,<sup>29</sup> who wrote the introduction to Thou’s biography. In his letter relying on his memories Johannes Praetorius claimed: “fuit illa quidem ex nobili familia, cuius matrem uidi in Polonia, frequenter filiam suam uisitantem; frater item saepius occurrit; familia Strass ducta fuit, non magnae famae; alter eius frater Bassa fuit in Turcia potentissimus, qui in iuuentute forte captus fuerat”.<sup>30</sup> So it is obvious that Dudith’s friends were well-informed about the Turkish relative except for his exact rank.

It was the same with Ibrahim bey, whose acquaintances knew about his well-known relative, what is more, they learnt about the apostasy not much later it became public.

In 1567 Marcantonio Pigafetta, the officer of engineer corps, the brave commander, the military consultant of Antal Verancsics, the bishop of Eger (Agria) arrived in Istanbul as member of the delegation. In his *Itinerario* published in 1585 in London,<sup>31</sup> Marcantonio Pigafetta reported on his experiences of his travels. The book is famous for describing Central European and Balkan cities, towns and castles. In his travelogue Pigafetta mentions he met Ibrahim in Istanbul and heard from him about Andreas Dudith. “Li dragomani, come s’è detto, sono gl’interpreti delle lingue. Di questi non vi è numero determinato, ma sono quattro, cinque, sei et più secondo che ve ne hanno copia. Costoro

<sup>27</sup> Andreas DUDITHIUS, *Epistulae*, II, 1568–1573, ed. Lech SZCZUCKI, Tibor SZEPESSY, Budapest, 1995, no. 234.

<sup>28</sup> COSTIL (as in n. 5), 34–35; SZABÓ András, *Respublica litteraria*, Budapest, 1999 (Régi Magyar Könyvtár: Tanulmányok, 2), 65, 87, 94.

<sup>29</sup> On his life and Hungarian relations see József TURÓCZI-TROSTLER, *Szenci Molnár Albert Heidelbergben* (Albert Szenci Molnár in Heidelberg), in: ID., *Magyar irodalom – világirodalom: Tanulmányok* (Hungarian literature—world literature: Selected studies), Budapest, 1961, II, 118–139.

<sup>30</sup> COSTIL (as in n. 5), 127.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph von HAMMER-PURGSTALL, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Pest, 1827–1835, III, 517; X, 57, 336; Peter MATKOVIĆ, *Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI. vijeka: Putopis Marka Antuana Pigafette, ili drugo putovanje Antuna Vrančića u Carigrad 1567 godine*, Rad (Zagreb), 100(1890), 65–168; Florio BANFI, *Pigafetta Marcantonio, Veranzio Antal katonai szakértője* (Marcantonio Pigafetta, military expert of Antal Verancsics), *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 48(1936), 58–74.

secondo il loro valore, et secondo il favore, che hanno, ascendono in essistimatione et riputatione appresso gl'huomini. Hebraino, che tra questi tiene il primier loco, è di natione Polono, et natto nobile, et secondo che egli dice parente hora di Andrea Dudicio, huomo celebre, il quale in Polonia ha preso per moglie una stretta parente di costui. Intende la lingua italiana, latina et tedesca, ma niuna come si deve."<sup>32</sup>

Consequently, what was spread by Dudith only among his close friends, Ibrahim did not want to hide at all. The fact of having a Turkish relative—made Pigafetta's catholic compatriots the most angry, whom Ibrahim would have provoked with pleasure.

We do not know more data about Dudith's and Ibrahim's relationship. From the sources even by careful reading one can not find out more than the fact of their being relatives and that in some way both of them cultivated the relationship.

It is worth taking into the consideration that their jobs were similar in many ways. Christian ambassadors described Ibrahim as an extremely influential Ottoman politician who spoke approximately seven languages.

Both of them lived on—and not very badly—serving loyal to their patrons on the highest level, one of them served the Sultan, the other the Habsburg Emperor. It has its reasons why neither Ibrahim nor the rest of the dragomans ever incurred trouble by giving away some information to political rivals as well.<sup>33</sup> Pigafetta wrote about Ibrahim that “questi dragomani debbono essere huomini molto fidati, perchè in tutte l'attioni che passano con principi christiani, è necessario, che vi intervenga l'opera di costoro.”<sup>34</sup> There is no doubt of Andreas Dudith's loyalty to Maximilian II. Not only did he admire his ruler but he also loved him. It is expressed in how he named his children from Regina Straszówna:<sup>35</sup> the first was named after himself,<sup>36</sup> the second after his mother and the third one after the Emperor.

<sup>32</sup> Peter MATKOVIĆ, *Putopis Marka Antuana Pigafette u Carigrad od god 1567 – Itinerario di Marc'Antonio Pigafetta, gentil'huomo vicentino*, Starine na sviet izdaje jugoslavenska Akademija znanosti (Zagreb), 12(1890), 143.

<sup>33</sup> SZAKÁLY, *Mezőváros és reformáció* (as in n. 1), 257.

<sup>34</sup> PIGAFETTA–MATKOVIĆ (as in n. 32), 143.

<sup>35</sup> DUDITHIUS, *Epistulae*, II (as in n. 27), no. 352.

<sup>36</sup> Lech SZCZUCKI, *Magna indole puer*, in: *Művelődési törekvések a korai újkorban: Tanulmányok Keserű Bálint tiszteletére* (Kulturelle Bestrebungen in der frühen Neuzeit: Festschrift für Bálint Keserű), Hrsg. BALÁZS Mihály, Szeged, 1997 (Adattár 16–18. századi szellemi mozgalmaink történetéhez, 35), 555–560.