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## FROM ROYAL *HÔTEL* TO STREET BRAWLS: THE LOCATION, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC PROBLEMS OF THE VENETIAN EMBASSY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PARIS\*

### Abstract

Where histories of Venetian diplomatic success in France have long drawn on the ambassadors' *dispacci* and *relazioni*, these are only just beginning to be used to explore the personalities of the ambassadors themselves. In contrast, this article will use French notarial and legal records to investigate the daily lives of the ambassador and his staff in seventeenth century Paris. In particular, it will examine documents attesting to the turbulent life of the Hôtel de Venise, and its boisterous staff and servants. Apart from their official presence at Versailles, little has been done to establish where the ambassadors lived in Paris, and with whom they had contact. This article first shows the mobility of the official *hôtel*, but also points to simultaneous lodgings being held by the ambassadors, suggesting an official and a private life. This also illustrates the ambassadors in contact with the Parisian elite, beyond the court. It then outlines how the French archival record points to which were the most visible household officers, and traces their appearance in legal and business transactions. It demonstrates a distinct corps of Italian officers, and French *domestiques*, all of whom represented Venice in Paris, and had contact with Parisians. While these servants eased the ambassadors' existence in France, they also created problems for them. Indeed, some servants were more likely to make trouble than others. In situations where the ambassadors' servants breached the peace, or were themselves menaced by the French, who was ultimately responsible for the good behaviour of the embassy?

**Keywords:** Venice, Foscarini, France, Pisani, secretary, valets, coachmen

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The Venetian Council of Ten was infamous for the swiftness and the severity of its justice against foreigners and Venetians alike: this even extended to regulating the activities of diplomats' households, for in December 1607 it ruled:

That Baldo Pochier, Frenchman, servant to the last Ambassador of France [...] should, before the end of eight days, and on pain of his life, be gone from our state, never to return unless licenced by this Council.<sup>1</sup>

This was not a case of the Council exceeding its prerogative, or even ignoring developing contemporary notions of diplomatic immunity and extraterritoriality.<sup>2</sup> Instead, it followed the new French ambassador's request, made by his secretary, to protect against the '[...] lack of honour, and respect that the said Baldo Pochier [...] has held for the reputation of the said *Eccellentissimo Signore* and all his house [...]'.<sup>3</sup> Pochier had committed an act of 'shameful carnality', defiling a 'demoiselle of Madame the Ambadress under a pretext', and had promised to flee the city with her. The previous French ambassador, Philippe de Fresne, sieur de Canaye, had returned to France, and now in the period of instability before a new ambassador was properly settled, Venice had to

<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Council of Ten, 5 December 1607: Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Consiglio di Dieci, Deliberazioni, Segrete, Filza (fz.) 29: 'Che sia intimata a Baldi Picher [sic.] Francesi che servira per camerier il *Signor* Ambasciatore di Franza ch'è partito dalla sua Ambasciata [...] che in termini di giorni otto della in piena della vita esser' uscito del stato nostre, ne per in esso ritornar senza licenza del sudetto consiglio.'

<sup>2</sup> For immunity and extraterritoriality see the chapters by: Géraud Pouma-rière, 'Ambassade' et 'Ambassadeur' dans les Dictionnaires Français et Italiens (XVIe–XIXe Siècle), 7–16; Lucien Bély, 'L'ambassade et ses immunités chez les juristes de la langue française (XVII–XVIIIe siècle)', 17–29 (especially p. 24 for Venetian intervention); Daniela Frigo, 'Ambasciatori, Ambasciata e Immunità Diplomatiche nella Letteratura Politica Italiana (Secc. XVII–XVIII)', 31–50; all in: *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, 119, no. 1 (2007); see also: Linda S. Frey and Marsha L. Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from the Council of Ten, 5 December 1607: ASV, Consiglio di Dieci, Deliberazioni, Segrete, fz. 29: '[...] il poco honore, et rispetto di un tal Baldo Pochier suo Cameriere haver havuto alla riputationne di detto *Eccellentissimo signore* et di tutta la casa sua, havendo con carnalita vergognata una delle damizelle de Madama *lambasciatrice* sotto uno pretesto, volessero l'una et l'altro scacciare da questa citta [...]'.  
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regulate French problems beyond her embassy's walls. In an age when an ambassador's 'house and household had to embody his own and his prince's virtues', these events had left France in an awkward situation.<sup>4</sup>

Given the severity of the Council's judgement, one might expect that Venice could rely upon better behaviour from their foreign embassies. The Republic had long established permanent or 'ordinary' ambassadors in European courts, including France. Its ambassadors' remits were strictly controlled by statute, and in the *commissione*, issued to each new appointee.<sup>5</sup> This extended as far as defining their appearance on formal occasions, down to the umpteenth diamond button.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in their own formal rhetoric and that of foreign powers, Venice was celebrated for her steadiness and endurance. For example, in an account of a fireworks display thrown in Paris in 1649 by the Venetian ambassador, the French author lauded the Republic as '[...] this Virgin Queen of the sea in its august Senate [...] this constant spouse of the seas [...]'.<sup>7</sup> With this framework, there was simply no excuse for anything going wrong in Venetian diplomacy.

Rather than misdemeanours and upheaval among French servants in Venice, this article will explore the notions of permanence, orderly households, and ambassadorial authority in the residences of the Venetian ambassadors in seventeenth century Paris. It is important to know where they lived, for as Géraud Poumarède summarises, the 'theme of the palaces of ambassadors offers a rich and varied field of investigation'.<sup>8</sup> Poumarède himself discusses the legal position of this space, its changing etymology from house, *hôtel*, or palace to embassy, and the perception

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> For legislation, see: Donald E. Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors* (Geneva: Droz, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> Luigi Firpo, *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, Francia (1600–1656)*, series II, 14 vols (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1965–1996), VI (1975), pp. 12–13.

<sup>7</sup> *Description des Magnifique et Feux de Joye Faits à Paris le 28 Juillet 1649 par l'Illustrissime et Excellentissime Monsieur l'Ambassadeur de Venise* (Paris: Antoine Estienne, 1649), p. 1: '[...] cette Vierge Reyne de la mer en son auguste Senat [...] cette constante Espouse des Eaux [...]'].

<sup>8</sup> Poumarède, 17–29 (p. 5): 'Le thème des palais d'ambassadeurs offre un champ d'investigation riche et varié.' See also: *ibid.*, 17–29 (pp. 14–15).

of ambassadors as strangers who nonetheless had a permanent presence in their host country. In terms of its position, ideas of permanence and mobility could exist side by side in the ambassadors' lives. On the one hand, Catherine Fletcher shows how an ambassador's sociability – his ability to entertain magnificently in his 'permanent' home – was an index of his value as a diplomat.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, Mark Netzloff's study of the English embassy in early seventeenth century Venice suggests that the ambassador's mobility around and beyond the city was key to building networks and to gaining access to knowledge. This article will use local property records to explore the location of the 'embassy', – or rather in an age before this term was formally established, the Hôtel de Venise – in Paris' political geography. This focus on the home space is also central to the exercise of diplomacy 'in an age that did not separate domicile from workplace', where the embassy was 'a space of residence, domestic business, and social and pedagogical contact.'<sup>10</sup>

With such varied activities, the ambassador was obviously not alone in Paris, but who aided him, where did they come from and how did they operate in the city? Such focus on the ambassadorial household reflects trends in the 'new diplomacy', which is interested, among other things, in social structures rather than great events.<sup>11</sup> This space also allowed observers to gauge political effectiveness, for in domestic as well as diplomatic discourse, the household was a microcosm of the state. The ambassador was *pater familias* to a *famiglia* of servants and kin, as well as representative of the Venetian Republic. He paid all his servants except for his secretaries, who as *secrétaires de la république de Venise* were on the state's payroll, receiving a stipend of 60 ducats per

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<sup>9</sup> Catherine Fletcher, 'Furnished with Gentlemen: The Ambassador's House in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2010), 518–35 (pp. 519–20); Fletcher, *Diplomacy*, pp. 105–21.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin J. Kaplan, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Devotion: Embassy Chapels and the Toleration of Religious Dissent in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6 (2002), 341–61 (p. 342); Mark Netzloff, 'The Ambassador's Household: Sir Henry Wotton, Domesticity, and Diplomatic Writing', in *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 155–71 (p. 156).

<sup>11</sup> Fletcher, *Diplomacy*, p. 6.

month, and they were also a focus for diplomatic gifts.<sup>12</sup> In an age which identified the ambassador and his staff as potential spies, there was great contemporary concern that the right sort of servants should be chosen, for as Ermolao Barbaro urged, ‘an ambassador, of all men ought to employ none but faithful and close-mouthed servants.’<sup>13</sup>

As in any noble household, there was a difference between upper staff and the lower domestic servants, of whom less has been written but whose role was none-the-less pivotal. Just as with higher status employees, this article shows that such servants could also bring ‘practical assets such as social networks and linguistic abilities’.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, suggestions are made as to why some of these servants were more visible than others in the legal records. Whereas Fletcher has suggested that female servants were well-nigh invisible, John M. Hunt and Alessandro Tessier have shown how ambassadors’ coachmen were all too present on Roman and Parisian roads, with a spate of incidents in the 1660s.<sup>15</sup> Was the same distinction visible amongst the servants of Venice and what impact did this have on the embassy?

The final section will outline the role played by the ambassador and his household at several moments of trouble. Whilst Frey and Frey, Poumarède, Bély and Frigo have traced developing attitudes by jurists towards an ambassadorial household’s immunity, precise rules for regulating the behaviour of diplomats and their staff were still ‘really blurred’.<sup>16</sup> Although the Venetians once violated a French

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<sup>12</sup> Firpo, VI, p. 15; Andrea Zannini, ‘Economic and Social Aspects of the Crisis of Venetian Diplomacy’, in *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800*, ed. by Daniela Frigo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 109–46 (p. 125).

<sup>13</sup> Fletcher, *Diplomacy*, p. 95.

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Fletcher and Jennifer Mara DeSilva, ‘Italian Ambassadorial Networks in Early Modern Europe – An Introduction’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14 (2010), 505–12 (p. 509).

<sup>15</sup> Fletcher, *Diplomacy*, p. 98; John M. Hunt, ‘Carriages, Violence and Masculinity in Early Modern Rome’, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 17 (2014), 176–96; Alessandro Tessier, ‘Des Carrosses Qui en Cachent d’Autres: Lord Denzil Holles à Paris, 1663–1666’, in *L’Incident Diplomatique XVIe–XVIIe Siècles*, ed. by Lucien Bély and Géraud Poumarède (Paris: Pedone, 2010), pp. 197–240 (p. 228).

<sup>16</sup> Bély, 17–29 (p. 19): ‘bien floue’.

embassy, contemporaries such as Hotman and de Priézac were sure that an ambassador was ‘*saincte, sacrée, et inviolable*’, while Pierre Ayrault felt it was problematic to punish an ambassador, for ‘punishing him means punishing the ruler who has sent him’.<sup>17</sup> In practice, as Benjamin Kaplan argues in relation to the freedom of worship in embassy chapels, suspicious activity within the embassy was often tolerated in the interest of peaceful relationships.<sup>18</sup>

However, such privileges did not apply to the ambassador’s staff beyond the ‘extra-territorial’ embassy, hence Pochier’s banishment: his example shows that it was not always possible to control one’s servants beyond the household.<sup>19</sup> Thus, this article will explore what happened when there were problems beyond the ‘embassy’ space. While a good ambassador should be in control of his household, authority over an embassy’s servants on the streets of Paris might be a different matter. Which authorities might step in to control an embassy’s behaviour during routine troubles or at moments of serious transgression, and what implications did this have for diplomatic relations?

### SOURCES AND CHARACTERS

Summarising the debate on the supposed decline in Venetian diplomacy, Zannini suggests that rather than exploring ‘decadence’, historians have recently begun to emphasise the importance of reconstructing the lives of the Venetian ambassadors and their networks.<sup>20</sup> This process has been delayed by previous historians’ dependence on the formal *relazioni*, given to the Senate at the end of each embassy, in contrast to the ‘new diplomacy’ and its trend towards material and literary analysis. Indeed, Armand Baschet warned in the late nineteenth century ‘do not seek to find details of the ambassadors’ daily lives in their

<sup>17</sup> Bély, 17–29 (pp. 19, 22, 24–25); Dante Fedele, ‘The Renewal of Early-Modern Scholarship on the Ambassador Pierre Ayrault on Diplomatic Immunity’, *Journal of the History of International Law*, 18 (2016), 449–68 (pp. 456–57), pre-peer reviewed version.

<sup>18</sup> Kaplan, 341–61 (pp. 341–43).

<sup>19</sup> See: Bély, 17–29 (pp. 21–22) for further examples.

<sup>20</sup> Zannini, pp. 109–46 (pp. 109–10).

*relazioni*'.<sup>21</sup> Although the backbone for 'high diplomatic history', and especially key to Ranke, who Gino Benzoni argues 'felt the need to know the person who was pronouncing the words of the past', this curiosity only went so far.<sup>22</sup> As Filippo de Vivo posits, existing readings allow us to 'learn oddly little about the peculiarities of different ambassadors or the evolving context in which they wrote.'<sup>23</sup> Instead, as de Vivo argues, re-evaluation of these sources as records of oral performance and secretarial practice must take place. This article will turn instead to non-Venetian sources. Parisian notarial records allow us to trace the movement of the *hôtel de l'ambassadeur* around the city, and through the century. The *Insinuations du Châtelet* hint at legal activity involving the Venetian household, whilst the 'model' documents kept by the *Maison du roi* leave us, for Venice (as for other powers), with records of difficulties involving the ambassador and his staff which were brought to the attention of the king. Indeed, these sometimes correlate with mentions in the *dispacci*.

If nothing else, these Parisian records allow us to overturn Carlo Morandi's impression that 'the Venetian ambassador is a type, a model, and his reports are the classic expression of diplomatic activity.'<sup>24</sup> Of course, it is true that the requirements to become an ambassador narrowed the field of candidates, both in terms of education, as identified by Marika Keblusek, and social class.<sup>25</sup> The Venetians, unlike other states, appointed ambassadors who were predominantly noble, which in itself pre-supposed a certain education and training in state service.<sup>26</sup> Equally,

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<sup>21</sup> Armand Baschet, *Les Archives de Venise: Histoire de la Chancellerie Secrète: Le Sénat, le Cabinet des Ministres, le Conseil des Dix et les Inquisiteurs d'État dans Leurs Rapports avec la France* (Paris: Plon, 1870), p. 346: 'Ne cherchez pas dans les Relations des Vénitiens les faits journaliers de leur ambassade à la cour.'

<sup>22</sup> Gino Benzoni, 'Ranke's Favorite Source: The Relazioni of the Venetian Ambassadors', *The Courier*, 22 (1987), 11–26 (p. 22).

<sup>23</sup> Filippo de Vivo, 'How to Read Venetian Relazioni', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 34 (2011), 25–59 (p. 29).

<sup>24</sup> Carlo Morandi, cited by: *ibid.*, 25–59 (p. 29).

<sup>25</sup> See: Marika Keblusek, 'Introduction: Profiling the Modern Agent', in *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Noldus (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), pp. 9–16 (p. 11).

<sup>26</sup> See: Zannini, pp. 109–46 (pp. 113–18).

the office required an individual with skill, gravity, perfect loyalty, great personal wealth, as well as the ability to tell compelling stories.<sup>27</sup> Reactions to the Venetian ambassadors can also appear formulaic. For example, Louis XIV and his court wrote similar laudatory comments of successive late seventeenth century ambassadors at the end of their tenure, giving the Doge and Senate – or at least the Venetian documented record – an impression of ordered calm. In 1683 Louis XIV praised Ambassador Sebastian Foscari (1679–1683) for ‘[...] his conduct in the office of your ambassador to us, which was so agreeable as to leave no trace of doubt of your good intentions towards all which concerns us.’<sup>28</sup> Eleven years later in 1699, the king lauded ‘the wise conduct that Signore Erizzo, your ordinary ambassador has displayed throughout his embassy.’<sup>29</sup>

However, the individuals who held the office were far from types. The embassy of Antonio Foscari (1570–1622) features prominently in this article. As a young noble, he gained foreign experience when he visited France in 1600 for Henri IV’s second marriage.<sup>30</sup> Ambassador in Paris from 1607 to 1611, then London, he was a Sarpian and facilitated Venice’s flirtation with a Protestant alliance during Henry Wotton’s embassy. His individualism earned him a reputation for ‘oddness’ and muted complaints were made by some members of the French court, as well as by Venice’s enemies.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, back in Venice after 1616, Foscari was suspected of sedition, and in 1622 he was framed

<sup>27</sup> Daniele Santarelli, ‘Itinerari di Ambasciatori Veneziani alla Corte di Carlo V’, *Medioevo Adriatico*, (2008), 121–52 (p. 122): ‘[...] grande capacità di affabulare [...]’.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Louis XIV to the Senate, 15 October 1683: ASV, Lettere Principi, 30, [n. piece]: ‘[...] la conduite qu’il a tenue dans les fonctionne de vostre ambassadeur aupres de nous, Nous a este d’autant plus agreable qu’il ne Nous laisse aucun lieu de doute de vos bonnes sentimens pour tous ce qui Nous regarde.’

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Louis XIV to the Senate, 6 December 1699: ASV, Lettere Principi, 30, [n. piece]: ‘La sage conduit que le Sr Erizzo vostre ambassadeur ordinaire a tenue pendant tout le cours de son ambassade.’

<sup>30</sup> For the foreign education of young diplomats, see: Zannini, pp. 109–46 (pp. 116–19).

<sup>31</sup> Roberto Zago, ‘Foscari, Antonio’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 85 vols (Rome: Treccani, 1960–2016), XLIX [n.d.] <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-foscari\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-foscari_(Dizionario-Biografico))> [accessed 16 October 2016]: ‘bizzaria’.



for conspiring against the Republic. Like the French servant Baldo Pochier, he fell afoul of the Council of Ten, was strangled in prison and hung between the columns of the piazzetta. This accusation was later proved false.

Later seventeenth century ambassadors also experienced occasional troubled passages in their careers, from violent attack to illegal gambling, and incessant financial demands.<sup>32</sup> Although 'wealthy' patricians, they received an allowance for their embassy which was always exceeded.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps grimacing, Alvise Sagredo (1663–1665) told one contact that '[...] the embassy had cost him the enormous sum of 35,863 Venetian ducats.'<sup>34</sup> The Republic carefully vetted gifts from foreign powers, and although originally intended to recompense ambassadors for their costs, they were only occasionally granted to the ambassadors for their personal use.<sup>35</sup> To Antonio Foscarini, Louis XIII granted '[...] that from now on, he can bear the fleur-de-lys at both corners of his coat of arms [...]', as well as receiving '[...] six candlesticks, two salt-cellars, two glasses, three pitchers and two basins with his arms.'<sup>36</sup> Alvise Pisani received '[...] a portrait worth 3000 *livres tournois*, two gold chains each worth 3000 *livres tournois* and another [chain] worth 2500 *livres tournois* for his secretary [...]'.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Pisani, the last ambassador of the seventeenth

<sup>32</sup> For their careers, see: Firpo, VI and Luigi Firpo, *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato, Francia (1659–1792)*, series II, 14 vols (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1965–1996), VII (1975); Giovanni Comisso, *Les Ambassadeurs Vénitiens* (Paris: Le Promeneur, 1989).

<sup>33</sup> For the financial problems of the ambassadors, see: Paul M. Dover, 'The Economic Predicament of Italian Renaissance Ambassadors', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008), 137–67; Zannini, pp. 109–46 (pp. 124–27).

<sup>34</sup> Firpo, VII, p. 120: '[...] che l'ambasceria gli costo l'ingente somma di ducati veneti 35863.'

<sup>35</sup> For literature on gifts, see: Guy Walton, 'Ambassadorial Gifts: An Overview of Published Material', *The Court Historian*, 14, no. 2 (2009), 189–98; Zannini, pp. 109–46 (p. 124).

<sup>36</sup> Firpo, VI, pp. 397–98: '[...] qu'il puisse doresnevant porter aux deux coings de l'escusson de ses armes de fleur de lis [...]; [...] sei candellieri, due saliere, due bicchieri, tre brocche, due bacili con sue ramini.'

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Maison du roi, 22 January 1699; Archives Nationales de France (AN), Série O: Maison du roi sous l'Ancien Régime/1/43, fol. 33: '[...] un portrait de 3000 lt, 2 chaines d'or de 3000lt aussy chacune et une de 2500 lt a son secrétaire [...]'.

century, was the eighth-choice candidate at his appointment to Paris, the other candidates having refused it because of the potential costs, and this was not an unusual case.<sup>38</sup>

### LOCATING THE HÔTEL DE VENISE

What then of the ambassadors' lives in Paris and where did they reside? Armand Baschet has again been instrumental in deterring investigation, stating that 'the history of Paris is somewhat lacking in descriptions and locations of the *hôtels* occupied by foreign ambassadors'.<sup>39</sup> His basic list of addresses can be augmented, and sometimes contradicted by references to the *hôtel de l'ambassadeur de Venise*, direct mentions of the ambassador at his *hôtel*, to resident servants or to those domiciled nearby, with the *hôtel de l'ambassadeur* used as a geographical reference point. (Table 1) Other documents show the ambassador as a party in transactions to rent property other than his *hôtel*. This information allows us to trace the embassy across the seventeenth century, as well as 'satellite' residences linked to the ambassador and to his servants.<sup>40</sup>

The first thing to note is that although there was a move towards 'permanence' in embassies, this still related more to the idea of an ongoing embassy, rather than one known address. Dennis Romano argues that renting property was 'common practice among Venetian patricians' at home: when transferred abroad, Kaplan states that 'ambassadors often rented their accommodations and did not necessarily take up the same quarters as their predecessors'.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, in Venice itself, Netzloff shows that the English ambassadors Wotton and Carleton rented new properties to express their rivalry.<sup>42</sup> Whilst it may have been understood that a new ambassador would seek to create his own space, the Parisian

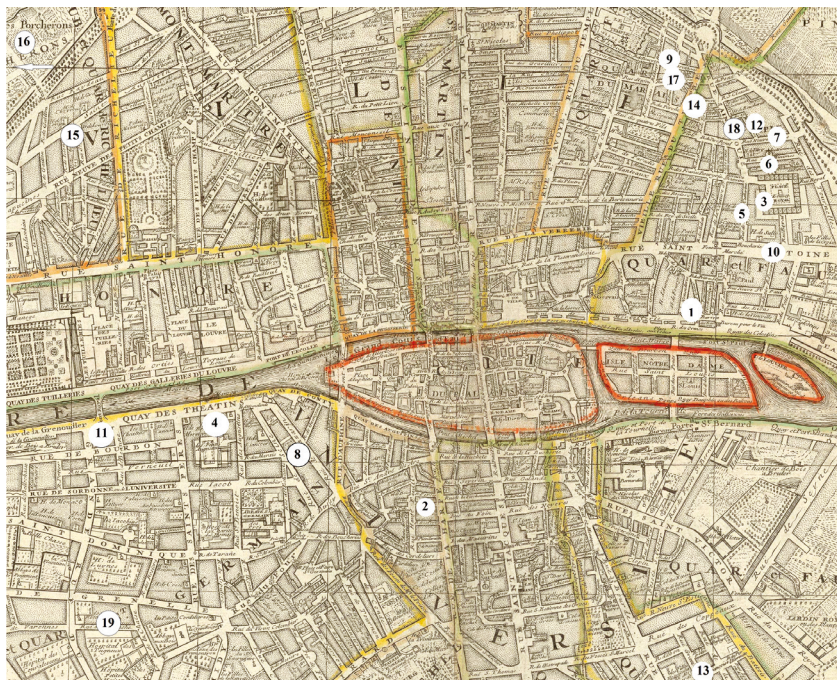
<sup>38</sup> Zannini, pp. 109–46 (p. 118).

<sup>39</sup> Baschet, p. 301, no. 1: 'L'histoire de l'ancien Paris est peu diserte sur l'indication et la description des hôtels occupés par les Ambassadeurs ou les Résidents des puissances étrangères.'

<sup>40</sup> This does not include *hôtels* loaned to Venetian extraordinary delegations.

<sup>41</sup> Dennis Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft: Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996), p. 87; Kaplan, 341–61 (p. 353).

<sup>42</sup> Netzloff, pp. 155–71 (pp. 165–66).



1. Plan of Paris showing the positions of the ambassadors' households mentioned in Table 1. Adapted from *Plan Routier de la Ville de Paris et de Ses Faubourgs Nouvellement Dressé pour la Commodité Publique par J.B. Bolin* (1699). © Bibliothèque Nationale de France

archival information indicates frequent changes in residence, due to a sense of opportunism, with the ambassadors taking advantage of the best chances to observe and to interact with the French political elite. The ambassadors were alert to new building developments, with addresses chosen with local knowledge, rather than diktat from the distant doge's palace. When fashionable Paris shifted westwards, so did the ambassador's *hôtel* upon occasion.

This opportunism is particularly evident in the early seventeenth century. From 1608 to 1612 four residences for the ordinary ambassador are identifiable: the Hôtel de Sens; rue Serpente; the Place Royale (Place des Vosges); and the Hôtel de la Reine Marguerite. The association with the sexually notorious Marguerite is remarkable. Her own short

period (1605–1606) at the Hôtel de Sens, a former bishop's residence, had caused much public amusement among Parisian wits, but still 'Maria de Medici, the corporations of Paris and all the Ministers came to visit the Queen of Navarre'.<sup>43</sup> In 1608 the *hôtel* was occupied by Ambassador Pietro Priuli (1605–1608), then Foscarini. Baschet claims that Foscarini subsequently followed Marguerite to her new *hôtel* on the left bank, although there is no explicit documented support to this. Perhaps Foscarini simply frequented Marguerite's new *hôtel*, or was honoured by her as a foreign envoy, such as occurred for the wife of the English ambassador in 1610, or the Spanish duc de Pastrana in August 1612.<sup>44</sup> Equally, he could observe Marguerite's royal guests and other foreign ambassadors.<sup>45</sup> It may have also seemed a safe-haven after Henri IV's assassination. Queen Marguerite was quick to listen to rumours of a conspiracy led by Maria de Medici's councillors in the Spanish interest (and thus against Venice).<sup>46</sup> Foscarini was equally alert to potential plots.<sup>47</sup> Given contemporary references to the ambassador having property on the developing Place Royale, this was probably a temporary arrangement, and the relationship with Venice came to an end with Marguerite's death in 1615.<sup>48</sup> However, the association provided opportunities for the ambassador's household, as on the 5 August 1610 Nicolas Alliot, *domestique de l'Ambassadeur* contracted to marry Antoinette de Rostel, *fille d'honneur* of Queen Marguerite, a marriage witnessed by many ladies of the court.<sup>49</sup> Thus, information gathering was possible through very intimate social networks. This may have been true for the other marriages made between the ambassadors' servants and *Parisiennes*, detailed elsewhere in the article.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Duplomb, *L'Hôtel de la Reine Marguerite Première Femme de Henri IV* (Paris: Léon Willem, 1881), p. 35: 'Marie de' Medicis, la ville de Paris en corps et tous les ministres vinrent visiter la reine de Navarre.'

<sup>44</sup> Eliane Viennot, *Marguerite de Valois 'La Reine Margot'* (Paris: Perrin, 2005), pp. 294, 299.

<sup>45</sup> Duplomb, p. 56.

<sup>46</sup> Viennot, pp. 297–98.

<sup>47</sup> Jean-Christian Petitfils, *L'Assassinat d'Henri IV* (Paris: Perrin, 2009), pp. 202–03.

<sup>48</sup> Duplomb, pp. 21, 63.

<sup>49</sup> Marriage contract, 5 August 1610: AN, MC/ET: Notaires de Paris/CXXII/1571, fol. 12.

For a great length of time the *hôtel* was either on or near the Place Royale, built among the new aristocratic *lotissements* of the Marais. (Figure 2) It quickly became one of the chief ceremonial spaces of the city. Indeed, every foreign ambassador made a tour of the square during their official entries.<sup>50</sup> Almost finished in 1610, the Venetian ambassador was clearly planning a permanent lodging here for himself and his successors when he contracted for gardens in 1611. Thus, by early 1611 we learn that '[...] Monsieur the ambassador being at present in Paris [is] lodged on the Place Royale [...]', and by 1626 there was a 'house of the ambassador of Venice' on the square.<sup>51</sup> Further references place it along the west side, defined by these houses giving onto the 'sewer of Sainte-Catherine', the lower reaches of today's rue Turenne.<sup>52</sup> Equally, the *hôtels* at rue Saint-Gilles, rue de Thorigny (Hôtel Salé), and rue de Bretagne kept the ambassador in the Marais, and in magnificent style. The Hôtel Salé was, and remains one of the biggest private residences in the Marais.<sup>53</sup> Thus, there was a long-term, if not permanent, Venetian presence in the most fashionable of quarters, and at the most splendid of addresses.

The ambassadors also left their mark on the toponymy of the city, although Paris' two *rue de Venise* are connected to former inns, and not the ambassador. However, from 1634 Baschet places the ambassador's *hôtel* 'behind the Minimes', a convent which once covered the northern border of the Place Royale, but whose site is today bisected by the rue de Béarn. In 1637 reference was made to the '*rue de l'ambassadeur de Venise, près les minimes de la place Royale*'.<sup>54</sup> This places it in the area of the rue Saint-Gilles, opened in 1640. Indeed, in 1652 the ambassador

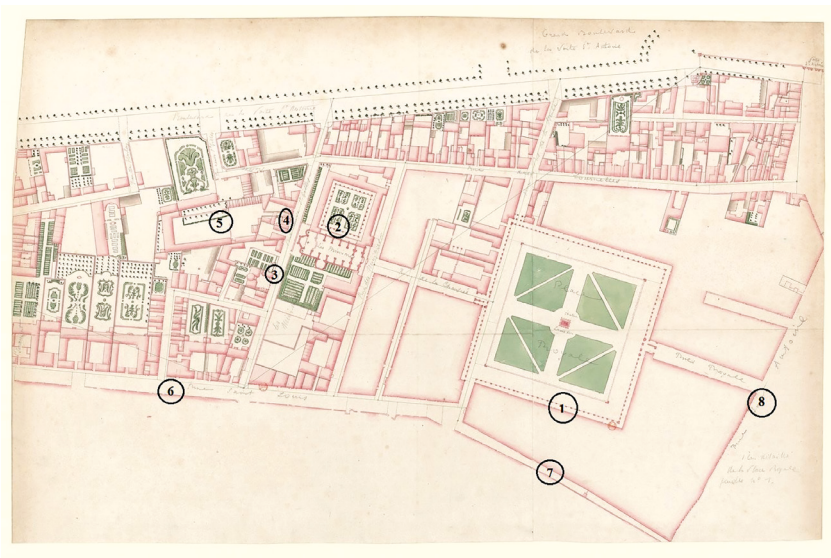
<sup>50</sup> Maurice Picquet, *Paris sous Louis XIV* (Paris: Mansi & Co, [n.d.]), p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> Contract for wood, 22 February 1611: AN, MC/ET/LXII, 47: '[...] Monsieur l'ambassadeur estant du present a Paris loge en la place Royall [...]'; Marriage contract, 23 February 1626: AN, Série Y: Châtelet de Paris Insinuations/166, fol. 33: '[...] maison de l'ambassadeur de Venise [...]'].

<sup>52</sup> Danielle Chadych, *Le Marais: Évolution d'un Paysage Urbain* (Paris: Parigramme, 2014), pp. 490–93. This suggests a lodging somewhere 9–15 Place Royale. In 1648 number 11 was sold to Jean Dyel des Hameaux, a former ambassador to Venice meaning later mentions must be treated with care.

<sup>53</sup> Jean-Pierre Babelon, 'La Maison du Bourgeois Gentilhomme: L'Hôtel Salé, 5, Rue de Thorigny, à Paris', *Revue de l'Art*, 68, no. 1 (1985), 7–34.

<sup>54</sup> Marriage contract, 6 May 1637: AN, Y/1173–77, fol. 330, no. 6066.



2. Detailed plan of the place Royale and Minimes. Adapted from *Plan Détaillé de la place Royale*. Feuille n° 1

1. Possible position of Foscarini's house, place Royale
2. The convent and church of the Minimes
3. Rue Saint-Gilles
4. 8–16 rue Saint-Gilles
5. The Cour de Venise
6. Rue Saint-Louis
7. The sewer of Sainte-Catherine
8. Rue Saint-Antoine

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was noted as living on rue Saint-Gilles – thus, one and the same as *derrière les Minimes*, his hôtel occupying today's numbers 8–16.<sup>55</sup> This property was sold in 1662, leading to the ambassador's departure for the Hôtel Salé, and it was demolished in 1903.<sup>56</sup> *The cour de Venise* at no. 12, once the entry to the ambassador's *hôtel*, is now a gated residence.

<sup>55</sup> Chadych, p. 528; Jacques Hillairet, *Évocation du Vieux Paris*, 3 vols (Paris: Editions du Minuit, 1951–1954), I (1952), p. 89; Alex Grady, *Le Marais* (Paris: Le Passage, 2002), p. 139.

<sup>56</sup> Chadych, p. 528.

The ambassador was also connected to less permanent addresses, the social status and nature of which could vary greatly. In November 1637 Ambassador Alvise Contarini (1633–1637/38) was ‘staying’ and could lodge guests at a *hôtel* at the sign of the Three Mortars on the rue de Seine, which sounds very much like the frontage was an inn or commercial property.<sup>57</sup> In contrast, in 1649 Ambassador Michele Morosini (1648–1652) threw a firework display at his ‘palace’, ‘At the head of the Pont des Tuileries [Pont Royal] on the side of the Faubourg Saint-Germain where his Excellency resides [...]’.<sup>58</sup> This location is not widely mentioned, suggesting it was a short-term occupancy.

In addition to their *hôtel*, *maison* or *palais*, the ambassadors also contracted for other houses in Paris, tying them further into aristocratic and commercial networks. These documents are valuable evidence of financial and notarial contact between the ambassador and elite Parisian inhabitants. In 1666/67, Ambassador Marc’Antonio Giustiniani was renting a house near the Sorbonne in the rue du Pot de Fer, from Marie Gilberte de Roquefeuil, widow of Claude, marquis d’Allègre.<sup>59</sup> Ambassador Erizzo rented a house from the Lully family in 1696 at 16 rue de la Magdelaine, Faubourg Saint-Honoré.<sup>60</sup> The court musician Lully was also a noted property speculator, with an eye to the value of his portfolio, and this contract takes pains to underline that the ambassador, should he feel so inclined, was not allowed to ‘[...]undertake any repairs in the said house without the explicit consent of the Lully family’.<sup>61</sup> Finally, on 3 May 1699 Ambassador Pisani appears in the record as ‘[...] residing [in the] rue de Poitou [in the] marais du Temple[...]’, while his official *hôtel* was noted at rue de la Planche in the same

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<sup>57</sup> Marriage contract, 19 November 1637: AN, Y//178/180, [n. fol.], no. 189: ‘[...] rue de Seine en l’hôtel ou demeure ledit ambassadeur à l’enseigne du Trois Mortiers [...]’.

<sup>58</sup> *Description des Magnifique*, pp. 5–6: ‘A la teste du Pont des Tuileries du costé du Faubourg Saint Germain où demeure son Excellence [...]’.

<sup>59</sup> Quittance, 31 March 1666/67: AN, MC/ET/CVI, [n. fol.].

<sup>60</sup> Contract, 7 April 1696: AN, MC/ET/XXI/280, [n. fol.].

<sup>61</sup> René Pillorget, *Les Premiers Bourbons 1594–1661* (Paris: Hachette, 1988), p. 316; Contract, 7 April 1696: AN, MC/ET/XXI/280, [n. fol.]: ‘[...] faire aucune réparations dans ladite maison que du consentement des dites sieurs.’

year.<sup>62</sup> It is unclear whether these were more private lodgings than the official *hôtel*, or even temporary, overflow accommodation for visitors and staff. However, as Bély notes, such addresses would definitely have been exempt from extraterritorial protection.<sup>63</sup>

### THE HOUSEHOLD

On formal occasions, such as official entries, displays of liveried staff and guards communicated the impression of magnificent ambassadors' households.<sup>64</sup> The archives allow us to name a smaller core team of servants and confidants interacting between the ambassador and Paris on a daily basis. As in Mara DeSilva's, Fletcher's and Poumarède's analyses, this reveals two social worlds in the Hôtel de Venise, with a largely Italian *famiglia* of kinsmen, staff and advisors who met dignitaries and legal officers, and the mini-state of French domestics who both served him and represented the Venetian Republic on the Paris streets.<sup>65</sup> Equally, there are more visible servants in the records, with the 'great offices' of secretary and *maître d'hôtel* seen by the world, as much as the coachmen, and postilions who travelled with the ambassador. However, interior domestic servants also feature in the archival record, showing that the entire staff's behaviour was key to ideas about Venetian propriety.

First amongst the household, and present for the ambassador's emotional, physical and intellectual comfort were his kin and gentlemen. Antonio Foscarini, an unmarried ambassador, lodged his nephew Gianni Priuli in his household, whilst Gianni's father, Lorenzo, was in Brussels. His relations with them, as perhaps for his servants, prove that 'friendship and family provided the affective registers in which social relations among state agents could be imagined.'<sup>66</sup> When both Priulis

<sup>62</sup> Contract, 3 May 1699: AN, MC/ET/VIII/847, [n. fol.]: '[...] demeurant rue de Poitou marais du Temple, paroisse St Nicolas des Champs [...]'; Baschet, p. 301, no. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Bély, 17–29 (p. 26).

<sup>64</sup> For example: *Ordre de l'Entrée Publique à Paris de Son Excellence Monseigneur le Chevalier Mocenigo Ambassadeur Ordinaire de la République de Venise Qui se Fera Dimanche Vingt-Neuf Septembre 1754* (Paris: Bellyer, 1754), pp. 1–2.

<sup>65</sup> Fletcher and DeSilva, 505–12 (p. 508); Poumarède, 17–29 (p. 15).

<sup>66</sup> Netzloff, pp. 155–71 (p. 162).



died in 1611, just before Foscarini was due to depart for England, he delayed, '[...] feeling sorry for himself and complaining about boredom, [...]the costs, and the terrible loss of his brother in law and nephew [...]'.<sup>67</sup> Just as any noble household, the ambassador's private residence lodged nobly born young gentlemen, who '[...]came to be presented at court and to be initiated into the business of diplomacy [...]'.<sup>68</sup> It acted as a '*fondaco*' or temporary lodging for passing Italian dignitaries and staff, like embassies in Italy which 'became hostels for other diplomats in the same service'.<sup>69</sup> For example, on 23 February 1626 'Laurent Colombe, officer of the princess of Piedmont and Savoy' was recorded as 'currently staying in Paris, Place Royale [...] in the house of the Venetian ambassador [...]'.<sup>70</sup> In 1664, two young Conte Martinenghi were lodged with Ambassador Sagredo.<sup>71</sup>

Whilst in general the ambassador's home was what Netzloff terms 'a homo-social' household, or in Fletcher's words 'Furnished with gentlemen', there were women present.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, contemporaries urged ambassadors to travel with their wives, so that she could control the household in his absence.<sup>73</sup> Fletcher notes 'the ambassador's wife is certainly a figure worthy of further research', and even though they still elude much of the record, we can catch a tiny glimpse of them in Paris.<sup>74</sup> In contrast to the bachelor Foscarini, Pisani brought his family to Paris where his wife, Elena Badoer, gave birth to their last son, Louis. Louis XIV even stood as his godfather at the baptism on 6 September 1701 in a carefully managed ceremony intended to ally

<sup>67</sup> Zago, [n. page]: '[...] se ne lamentò, invocando la stanchezza, l'assenza da casa, le spese sostenute, nonché la perdita dolorosa del cognate Lorenzo Priuli e di suo figlio [...]'].

<sup>68</sup> Firpo, VI, p. 15: '[...] veniano presentati alla corte ed iniziati negli affari [...]'].

<sup>69</sup> Fletcher and DeSilva, 505–12 (p. 510).

<sup>70</sup> Marriage contract, 23 February 1626: AN, Y//166, fol. 33<sup>v</sup>: 'Laurent Colombe officier de la princesse de Piémont et du duc de Savoie; actuellement logé à Paris Place Royale, paroisse Saint Paul, en la maison de l'ambassadeur de Venise [...]'].

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Sagredo to Venice, 18 April 1664: Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BN), Manuscrits Italiens (MS IT), 1857, fol. 174<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> Netzloff, pp. 155–71 (p. 163); Fletcher, 'Furnished', 518–35 (p. 534).

<sup>73</sup> Bély, 17–29 (p. 21).

<sup>74</sup> Fletcher, *Diplomacy*, p. 100.



3. Ambadress Nani Erizzo, *Recueil de Modes*, 7 vols (Paris, 1750), IV, fol. 208, engraving by Nicolas Arnoult. © Bibliothèque Nationale de France

child in service to God, and the Republic with France.<sup>75</sup> Rather than the embassy chapel signifying any potential discord with the host state, this ceremony in Versailles' Chapelle Royale symbolised royal favour. Furthermore, the ambadresses' courtly and cultural role is shown in Madame Nani-Erizzo's portrait among the fashion plates of the aristocratic women of Versailles.

The Republic's embassy secretaries were also all Venetian. The ambassador had personal choice from among the ducal secretaries, pending

<sup>75</sup> Alexandre Maral, *La Chapelle Royale de Versailles sous Louis XIV: Cérémonial, Liturgie et Musique* (Mardagae: Wavre, 2002), pp. 206–08, 385.

approval by Venice.<sup>76</sup> He had to be able to trust his secretary for this was a very powerful office, for:

The Secretary of the Ambassador of Venice is also the Secretary of the Embassy; and in this quality all Embassy secretaries can act and negotiate with the Minister of State in the Ambassador's absence.<sup>77</sup>

In 1610–11 we find Antonio Antelmi, a minor noble, acting as the embassy's secretary in Foscarini's house. He did not travel to England with Foscarini but returned to Venice to become a ducal secretary.<sup>78</sup> Instead, Foscarini's secretary in London was Giulio Muscornò, '[...] a man of great ability, but of depraved nature [...]'.<sup>79</sup> Proof of the importance of making a good choice, Foscarini's failed relationship with Muscornò led to the latter's involvement in Foscarini's downfall.<sup>80</sup> A later secretary in Paris was Laurent Pollus, '[...]gentleman of Venice, councillor and secretary of the embassy [...]', who appears in notarial records for 3 August 1651 when he contracted to marry the widowed Antoinette Le Roy.<sup>81</sup>

Further proof of appointing Italians to high offices exists through the century. Serving Foscarini were Leonardo Michellini, '[...] gentleman', and Vittorio Nicollini, his *maitre d'hôtel* and *argentier*.<sup>82</sup> Another group of Italians are identifiable at the signing on 26 April 1646 of

<sup>76</sup> Zannini, pp. 109–46 (pp. 132–46).

<sup>77</sup> *Le Ceremonial Diplomatique des Cours de l'Europe*, ed. by Jean Dumont and Jean Rousset de Missy, 2 vols (Janssons: Amsterdam, 1739), I, p. 52: 'Le Secrétaire de l'Ambassadeur de Venise est aussi Secrétaire de l'Ambassade; et en cette qualité tout Secrétaire d'Ambassade peut agir et négotier avec le Ministre d'État en l'absence de l'Ambassadeur.'

<sup>78</sup> For letters from Antelmi, see: ASV, Ambasciata in Francia, 4, fols 582, 648, 714–16.

<sup>79</sup> Firpo, VI, p. 404: '[...] uomo di qualche ingegno ma di prava natura [...]'].

<sup>80</sup> Zannini, pp. 109–46 (p. 136).

<sup>81</sup> Marriage contract, 3 August 1651: AN, Y//188, fol. 366<sup>v</sup>, no. 647: '[...] gentilhomme de Venise, conseiller et secrétaire de Venise et secrétaire de l'ambassade [...]'].

<sup>82</sup> Procuration, 1611: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1573, fol. 68: '[...] gentilhomme estant a la service dudit sieur ambassadeur [...]']; Contract, 23 April 1611: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1575, [n. fol.]; Procuration, 5 April 1611: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1575, fols 4, 20, 79.

the marriage contract between Thomas Suciber *officier et domestique de monsieur l'ambassadeur*, to Genevieve de la Marre. Witnesses included Angelo Conti 'native of Padua' *maître d'hôtel*, Federico la Noye, and Gian Battista Ganbini, both *valets de chambre* of the ambassador.<sup>83</sup>

Given the size of the *hôtels*, there must have been many domestic servants, and we can only identify a few of these, largely all French, and not just from Paris. Suciber came from Chartres, Nicolas Aliot from Châteauneuf, while one Jacques Roulleau dit Poitevin, postilion, probably came from the Poitou.<sup>84</sup> Apart from Roulleau, legal documents record them as living in the 'embassy'.<sup>85</sup> Thus on 19 November 1637 we find '*Marguerin le Roy, officier en la maison de l'ambassadeur de Venise,*' giving his legal address as being '[...] currently staying in Paris, Saint-Germain-des-Près, rue de Seine, in the *hôtel* where the said ambassador resides at the sign of the Three Mortars [...]'.<sup>86</sup> On 17 September 1641 the footman Christophe Pestel was 'resident in Paris, rue de Bretagne'.<sup>87</sup> This does not link him directly to '*l'hôtel de l'ambassadeur*', but a valet would presumably reside with his master.

Their presence in the ambassador's life varied depending on their position. Of course, the title of domestic did not indicate lowly status, as it is hard to imagine Nicolas Alliot, *domestique de l'ambassadeur* marrying a maid of honour in a royal household – even if Queen Marguerite's – without some interesting prospects. Surviving documents partially allow us to place the servants within the ambassador's office, kitchen and his bedchamber. Thanks to Madame de Sevigné's famous *Lettre de l'Incendie* we even have a glimpse of her neighbour on rue de

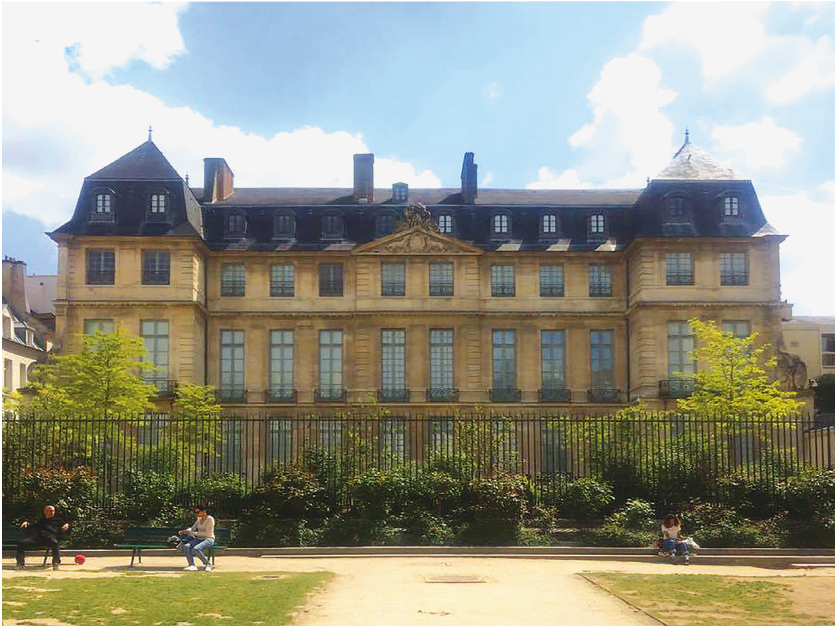
<sup>83</sup> Marriage contract, 26 April 1646: AN, MC/ET/XXXV/256 [n. fol.]: 'Ainsi de la part de Charebber Angelo Conti, natif du Padoue, maistre d'hôtel dudit sieur Ambassadeur et Federico la Noye et Jehan Baptiste Gondini valets de chambre dudit sieur Ambassadeur.'

<sup>84</sup> Inventory, 2 May 1702: AN, MC/ET/I/220, [n. fol.]: '[...] Jacques Roulleau dit Poitevin, postillon de monsieur l'ambassadeur de Venise, rue de la Planche, paroisse Saint Sulpice.'

<sup>85</sup> Inventory, 2 May 1702, 5 May 1702: AN, MC/ET/I/220, [n. fol.].

<sup>86</sup> Marriage contract, 19 November 1637: AN, Y//178/180, [n. fol.], no. 189: '[...] actuellement logé à Paris à Saint Germain des Prés, rue de Seine en l'hôtel ou demeure ledit ambassadeur à l'enseigne du Trois Mortiers [...]']

<sup>87</sup> Donation, 17 September 1641: AN, Y//181–83, fol. 355.



4. Hôtel Salé, garden façade; author's own photo

Thorigny, Marc' Antonio Giustiniani, the ambassador of Venice, and his servants at night. On 20 February 1671 fire broke out at no. 4. Madame de Sevigné reports that Giustiniani '[...] and all his people' came out onto the road to watch the blaze.<sup>88</sup> 'All the valets, [and] all the neighbours were in night caps.' Fortunately, 'The ambassador was in his banyan and wig, and maintained the dignity of the Serenissima.'<sup>89</sup> The survivors of the fire were invited to sleep in the Hôtel Salé.

Some employment was contracted directly with the ambassador, while other jobs were mediated through his officers. For example, in

<sup>88</sup> Madame de Sevigné, *La Lettre de l'Incendie*, 20 February 1671: '[...] l'ambassadeur de Venise, tous ses gens, la petite de Vauvineux qu'on portait tout endormie chez l'Ambassadeur [...] Tous les valets, tous les voisins, en bonnets de nuit. L'Ambassadeur était en robe de chambre et en perruque, et conserva fort bien la gravité de la Sérénissime.' <<http://eprimaire.free.fr/contes/sevigne/l61.html>> [accessed 10 October 2016].

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* The banyan was a highly-decorated male dressing gown.

spring 1611, Foscarini was involved in negotiations with Guillaume le Blanc for the repair of carriages, while Leonardo Michellini and Antonio Antelmi used a notary to arrange with Pierre Haton, *maitre des relais ordinaire de la maison du Roi*, to transport the ambassador, a retinue of '[...] eight and a page [...] ten pounds of baggage per person' and '[...] two extra carts for the ambassador's goods' all the way to Calais, and from thence to England.<sup>90</sup> Communicating with other embassies also required private help, as the primitive French postal system had 'lagged behind for several decades.'<sup>91</sup> Thus, Nicolas Alliot contracted with Fiacre le Noble, '[...] stocking repair man [...]', who was travelling to Brussels in 1610 to carry official post from the ambassador to Lorenzo Priuli.<sup>92</sup> Below stairs, as in any household, senior officers handled service and training agreements. For example, a contract of 3 May 1699 was between Thomas Chanu, kitchen boy and Marin Thievelin, *Chef de Cuisine*, for the ambassador's residence at rue de Poitou in the Marais.<sup>93</sup>

A final point – a notable absence from these records are any female staff. Romano suggests that noble Venetian households may have employed less female than male servants.<sup>94</sup> However, it is inconceivable that Madame Erizzo did not have a female maid to dress her, while Ambassadors Elena Badoer-Pisani must have required specifically female staff after she gave birth in Paris in 1701. These are only mentioned beyond the *hôtel* in Desgranges' *Ceremonial*, where the midwife, nurse, and a few waiting women were sufficiently esteemed to play a ceremonial part in Louis Pisani's baptism at Versailles.<sup>95</sup> Perhaps the other invisible female servants were very well-behaved and did not draw the attention of Parisian legal officers.

<sup>90</sup> Contract, 23 April 1611: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1575, fols 47–48: '[...] 8 personnes et un page [...] 10 livres de bagages chacune; [...] 2 charrettes attelées pour transporter les hardes de l'ambassadeur.'

<sup>91</sup> Heiko Droste, 'Sending a Letter between Amsterdam and Stockholm: A Matter of Trust and Precautions', in *Your Humble Servant*, pp. 135–48 (p. 135).

<sup>92</sup> Contract, 14 September 1610: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1572, fol. 14: '[...] raccommodeur de bas d'etames [...]']

<sup>93</sup> Contract, 3 March 1699: AN, MC/ET/VIII/847, [n. fol.]. Thievelin is signed 'Thiefelin' at the end of the document.

<sup>94</sup> Romano, p. 89.

<sup>95</sup> Desgranges cited in: Maral, p. 207.

## AUTHORITY BEYOND THE EMBASSY

In general, the household seems an ordered, if peripatetic place, and was a good reflection of the state which it represented. Moments of trouble, when the household went awry, are infrequent, but not unheard of. In these instances, the ideal image of the ambassador – the king's equal in authority if only in representative form – was challenged by occasional royal reprimand. What did this mean for diplomatic relations and immunity? In general, it was not the ambassador himself, but his circle who created problems, and depending on this status, the ambassador had recourse to different solutions for their regulation.

Firstly, one imagines that the ambassador could attempt to regulate his own problems in the mini-state of the embassy 'territory', using the hierarchy of officers. But when problems involved French neighbours, he could also act like a private citizen and have recourse to the standard mechanisms of the law in Paris, employing notaries to draw up legal documents, and *avocats* to represent his suit in the highest court of law, the *parlement*. One such case related to Foscarini, or rather his gentlemanly household. In early 1611, Foscarini's nephew, Gianni, was in his charge and evidently become embroiled in a 'situation', resulting in a theft. A '*Procuration en blanc*' (a legal procuration where the name of the leading lawyer is left blank) was issued on 24 February 1611 by Gianni Priuli, 'esquire [...] at present living at rue Serpente, to pursue in criminal and civil law demoiselle Lilys Brainelle, wife of Valaire, master instrument player, residing in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, for the theft of a horse halter, worth 200 livres, and more'.<sup>96</sup> On 5 April 1611 the ambassador himself intervened with an act signed in his *hôtel*, in the presence of three of his domestic servants.<sup>97</sup> This gave procuration to maître Hieronimo de Bonfleur to represent Foscarini in the pursuit of the case and judgement against Lilia[sic.] Brainelle, up

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<sup>96</sup> Procuration, 24 February 1611: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1574, fol. 68: 'Procuration en blanc de Jean Priuli, écuyer, neveu d'Antoine Foscarini, ambassadeur de Venise, à présent logé rue Serpente, pour poursuivre criminellement et civilement damoiselle Lilys Brainelle, femme de Valaire, maître joueur d'instruments, demeurant à Saint-Germain-des-Prés, pour vol d'une housse de cheval, valent 200 livres et plus.'

<sup>97</sup> Procuration, 5 April 1611: AN, MC/ET/CXXII/1575, fol. 11.

to and including any hearing in *parlement*, and the pursuit of expenses. Thus, the ambassador himself could bring French lawyers into his *hôtel*, and insert his case into the French legal system in the defence of his personal, rather than Venetian state interests. What perhaps stopped further intervention was his imminent departure for the court of St. James, and the death of his nephew.

When an ambassador himself was the subject of a legal inquiry, matters became far more complicated. His person was immune from French law, and his house should be inviolate, but which jurisdiction could he use to pursue offenders? In April 1664, Ambassador Sagredo's carriage was impeded by traffic, and attacked in what seemed to be an incident typical of diplomatic rivalry, this time involving the Mantuan ambassador's groom, and Sagredo's staff: Mantua apologised for the assault on Venice, and punished the malefactor. However, the next day armed men, including the groom and three lackeys in royal livery, attacked the ambassador's house 'and that of the Republic'. The ambassador, his Swiss guard, his gentlemen and *famiglia* were forced to defend themselves in the courtyard with swords and pistols. The outraged ambassador wrote at length to Venice of the dangers he and his *famiglia* had faced, and his hope that the malefactors be executed. An attack on the ambassador's body, or that of his servant was akin to an attack on the state he represented and was '[...] worthy of the king's attention.'<sup>98</sup> However, as the malefactors were in royal livery, he could not easily take them through the public courts, for fear of complicating Franco-Venetian relationships. Officers of the royal household, the Comte d'Harcourt, *Grand Ecuyer* and Henri de Beringhen, *Premier Ecuyer* intervened as the men's employers, telling the ambassador he had no right to decide their fate. He could only represent his case through diplomatic channels, even if he were the diplomat.

In response, the king's council noted that on 7 June 1664 '[...] the ambassador of our most dear and great friends, allies, and confederates, the duke and seigneurie of Venice has complained to us of the insult and premeditated violence perpetrated towards his domestic, and committed

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<sup>98</sup> Letter from Sagredo to Venice, 18 April 1664: BN, MS IT, 1857, fol. 175v: '[...] degnà della Regia conoscenza.'



in his presence'.<sup>99</sup> Louis XIV then wrote to Venice via his own ambassador, the bishop of Beziers, regarding an attack on the '[...] servant of your ambassador and our intuition as to the punishment of the culprits', adding that 'We have taken great care to order that all the accomplices should be judged equally for such a terrible act, and according to the greatest severity of the law.'<sup>100</sup> In such a case, it seemed that the king would not tolerate this insult to his ally, and that Ambassador Sagredo's request for the death penalty to be applied would be upheld.

However, parallels remain to be drawn with the case of Baldo Pochier and the French embassy's appeal to the Council of Ten. Sagredo had to call on the supreme justice – the king – of another country to carry out capital punishment, and the result depended on his will and judgement. As Bély shows for other early modern polities, no one else had the right to punish such cases.<sup>101</sup> In his letter to Venice, Louis outlines that in this instance, sacrificing these few individual malefactors to the Franco-Venetian alliance did not appear appropriate. He promised the Doge and Senate that he would explain further in a secret letter, carried by Beziers. (This letter is yet to be located.) It seems that when violence was committed by representatives of a state, the regulation of the matter was taken out of the ambassador's hands, to be decided by *parlement*, king and Senate. Its punishment depended on executive prerogative and was indicative of a balance of power. If France harshly punished its servants for an ambassador's pleasure, what did that imply of their position vis-à-vis Venice? Sagredo's retaliation was expressed through his household when he dismissed four French servants and replaced them with Swiss personnel.<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, a later insult to

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<sup>99</sup> Letter from Louis XIV to Venice, 7 June 1664: AN, O/1/3, fol. 20: '[...] l'ambassadeur de notre très cher et grande amies, alliez et confederez, les duc et seigneurie de Venise nous ayant fait plainte à l'insulte et violence premedité fait en sa presence à son domestique.'

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Louis XIV to Venice, 17 June 1664: ASV, Collegio Lettere Principi, 30, [n. piece]: '[...] domestique de votre ambassadeur et quell'estoi notre intuition pour la chastiment des coupables; nous avions pris grand soin de donner nos ordres pour faire indistinctement juger tous les complices d'une si mauvaise action selon la plus grande severité des lois.'

<sup>101</sup> Bély, 17–29 (p. 21).

<sup>102</sup> Letter from Sagredo to Venice, 18 April 1664: BN, MS IT, 1857, fol. 176r.

the French ambassador in Rome, Créquy, led to Louis XIV dismissing servants sent by Rome.<sup>103</sup>

Where the ambassadors' staff were concerned – whether French or Italian – they were representative of the Republic, and ambassadors were held responsible for their actions. Yet Venetian writ did not go beyond the walls of his *hôtel*. When trouble spilled onto the streets, local legal officers in Paris might become involved in the resolution of problems, but cases inevitably came to the attention of the king's council. Where the Council of Ten could rule on a servant of the French embassy, the king and his ministers could regulate the Venetian ambassador and his servants – however serious or trivial the misdemeanour. Just as the French ambassador's secretary had outlined to the Venetian Council of Ten, trouble in the household was trouble for the ambassador and his embassy's dignity, and potentially for relations between the two states. Royal intervention was thus in the ambassador's interest.

As matters of interest to the highest councils, these events are recorded in the acts of the Maison du roi. Of course, Venice was not the only state to figure in the complaints. The ambassador of Savoy was even investigated for seeming to run a butcher's shop from his *hôtel*.<sup>104</sup> What is notable about all these acts is the involvement of the royal *ministre des affaires étrangères*, indicating the developing reach and influence of this office, well before its establishment at the Quai d'Orsay. The judgement of Jean-Baptiste de Colbert, marquis de Torcy, *secrétaire* (1696), and *ministre* (1700) was called upon to regulate Ambassador Pisani's problems, as an intermediary between diplomatic immunity and royal law. Again, they mostly concern the most visible members of the *hôtel*, as well as the ambassador. In these cases, the king's council generally gave the ambassador a gentle, if formal prod, to manage his people better. Indeed, for most of the period the lack of records suggests good household management and choice of staff. However, Pisani was dogged by problems, perhaps exacerbated by the instability of residing at three different addresses in 1699 alone. Two were in the Marais, at

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<sup>103</sup> Poumarède, 17–29 (p. 13).

<sup>104</sup> Letter from Maison du roi to d'Argenson, 10 April 1699: AN, O/1/43, fol. 94, no. 428.

rue de Poitou and rue Saint-Louis (that is, a rear entrance to the Place Royale, now rue Turenne), whilst the 'official residence' at this time has been identified by Baschet as rue de la Planche, on the left bank.

Ambassador Pisani himself was rebuked in May 1699 by the king's advisors on the advice of Colbert de Torcy, for 'the conduct of his *valets de pied*. They had attacked some neighbours of the rue Saint-Louis who had refused to drink *eau de vie* with them, leading to a sword fight. The king advised Colbert de Torcy to speak with Pisani, for the ambassador was to tell his men to act 'more wisely'.<sup>105</sup> Pisani was again drawn to the king's attention in June 1700 as his carriage ran over and killed a child in the Faubourg Saint-Laurent, near today's Gare de l'Est.<sup>106</sup> On this occasion the ambassador had to answer to the council, declaring that '[...] he had absolutely no knowledge of the event, and wasn't even near the Faubourg Saint-Laurent on that day'.<sup>107</sup> Clearly his coachman was though, and along with footmen and valets, they were one of the most visible servants for an ambassador, and seem to have a long history of creating trouble for foreign embassies.<sup>108</sup> Sagredo's example provides ample evidence that their behaviour had deadly results.<sup>109</sup> They are also prominent in legal documents among the ambassadors' domestics, suggesting that they were well-paid, and used their time on the capital's streets to gain awareness of commercial opportunities.

Meanwhile, back at home, Pisani was once again up for discussion by the king's council and Monsieur d'Argenson, the *lieutenant général de police*, in relation to an '[...] unlicensed lottery conducted by his

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<sup>105</sup> Letter from Maison du roi to Torcy, 31 May 1699: AN, O/1/43 fols 161<sup>v</sup>–62<sup>r</sup>, no. 694: '[...] le Roy m'ordonné de vous avertir d'en parler à l'ambassadeur, afin qu'il donne ordre à ce que ses gens seront plus sages.'

<sup>106</sup> Picquet, pp. 638–39.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from Maison du roi to d'Argenson, 16 June 1700: AN, O/1/44, fols 256<sup>v</sup>–57<sup>r</sup>: '[...] qu'il n'a aucune connoissance de ce fait et qu'il n'a point esté au fauxbourg St Laurens le jour quand est que l'accident est arrivé.'

<sup>108</sup> Christophe Muigg, personal communication, has indicated that these servants were also known as troublesome at negotiations for the Peace of Westphalia, 1648. Abraham de Wicquefort details problems for the French embassy's coachmen in the Dutch Republic, in: Abraham de Wicquefort, *L'Ambassadeur et Ses Fonctions*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Janssons a Waesberg, 1730), II, p. 87.

<sup>109</sup> Hunt, 176–96 (pp. 190–91).

*maître d'hôtel*.<sup>110</sup> Utterly fashionable, lotteries were nonetheless regulated by the state which intended to take its share of the profits. Whilst the state was clearly keen to prosecute similar cases, with notable Parisians charged with such malefactions, the *maître d'hôtel's* case resulted in a hearing before the *juge de police*.<sup>111</sup> Although a *maître d'hôtel* was a less visible post than a coachman or postilion, this was nonetheless a senior office, representing Venice. To worsen matters, the ambassador's chief household officer was running a game of mere chance for the Hôtel de Venise's silver. This might mean that gifts from France, or objects bearing Venetian symbolism were demeaned, and cheaply offered to any who cared to play. In this case, Monsieur d'Argenson decided that out of the 'consideration that he held for the ambassador' he would not punish this activity by a fine. Instead, the king ordered that the ambassador be told to give his servants 'what they deserved!'<sup>112</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The French sources for the lives of the Venetian ambassadors in Paris show that the office required more than deep pockets and a glowing service record. To maintain Venetian social dignity and presence in the capital, the ambassador had to understand Paris' political geography, and maintain a network of tradesmen and landlords who could facilitate his stay. Contracts for separate residences show the practical opportunities arising from the fostering of elite networks, in and away from the court. These were renting, rather than rooted ambassadors. Future work should explore the preparations and networking needed to obtain lodgings at court, when travelling to and from Venice, and when helping other Venetian diplomats travel through France. Just as

<sup>110</sup> Letter from Maison du roi to Torcy, 1700: AN, O/1/44, fol. 399: '[...] loterie faite sans permission par son maître d'hôtel.'

<sup>111</sup> Letter from Maison du roi, [n.d.]: AN, O/1/44, fol. 180 for charge to Louise de Kérouaille, the former mistress of Charles II, of running an illegal lottery in 1700.

<sup>112</sup> Letter from Maison du roi to Torcy, 1700: AN, O/1/44, fol. 399: 'M<sup>r</sup> Dargenson n'aurait manqué sur la considerasion qu'il a eu pour *Monseigneur* l'ambassadeur de reprimer cette license par une amende, le Roy m'ordonne de vous en parler au Ministre afin qu'il faire a ses domestiques la réprimande qu'ils méritent.'

the Venetian embassy marked the capital's geography, it may have left traces elsewhere in France.

The human dimension of this article illustrates the dual charge of the ambassador as representative of a state, but also the executive manager of a large, symbolically potent establishment. It seems to have been difficult for some incumbents to excel in both these roles, and the French establishment was required to intervene, whether by recourse to the Paris law courts or the reprimand of the royal ministers. Above all, if the household was representative of the Venetian state, just as the French embassy in Venice, it shows how very much more difficult it was to maintain an image of control and perfection when far from home. Finally, by moving away from high diplomatic history, we can go back to the spaces and interactions in the ambassadors' households. This exercise could be repeated for other foreign embassies, but in this case it has helped not only to understand somewhat more of each appointee's character, pitfalls and experience, but also those of his staff, whether drunken brawlers, risky gamblers, or love-struck grooms, who all risked the dignity of the embassy and highlighted that, thanks to its staff 'An embassy was enshrouded with risks.'<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Notarial records also link to properties for other foreign embassies, e.g. for Spain, see: Contract, 3 July 1608: AN, MC/ET/XVIII/147; Bély, 17–29 (p. 17): 'Une ambassade s'enveloppe de risques.'

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Residences of Venetian ‘ordinary ambassadors’ to France (bold), or residences linked to the ambassadors

	Source	Date	Location
1	Baschet	1608–1612	<b>Hôtel de Sens</b>
2	AN/MC/ET/CXXII/1569 fols 4, 20, 79 AN/MC/ET/CXXII/1573 fol. 68 AN/MC/ET/CXXII/1574 fol. 68 AN/MC/ET/CXXII/1575 fol. 11	1609–1611	<b>Rue Serpente</b>
3	AN/MC/ET/LXII fols 47–48	14, 22 February 1611	<b>Place Royale</b>
4	Baschet	1611–1612	<b>Hôtel de la Reine Marguerite, rue de Seine</b>
5 (3)	AN/MC/ET/CV fol. 523	26 January 1621	<b>The maison de l’ambassadeur de Venise bordered by rue et couture Sainte Catherine aboutissant sur l’égout (rear of Place Royale)</b>
(3)	AN/Y//166 fol. 33 <sup>v</sup>	23 February 1626	<b>Place Royale</b>
6	Baschet	1634	<b>‘Derrière les Minimes’ (current rue Saint Gilles)</b>
7	AN/Y//173–77, fol. 330, no. 6066	6 May 1637	rue de l’ambassadeur de Venise, pres de les minimes de la Place Royale
8	AN/Y//178/180, no. 189	19 November 1637	<b>Rue de Seine, at the sign of the Three Mortars</b>
9	AN/Y//181–83 fol. 355	17 September 1641	Christophe Pestel, valet de pied de l’ambassadeur de Venise, demeurant à Paris, rue de Bretagne (probably same as rue de Poitou)
10	AN/MC/ET/XIX/438	17 August 1648	Pierre Marinier cocher des ambassadeurs de Venise [demeurant] rue Saint Antoine paroisse Saint Paul (near Place Royale)
11	BHVP <i>Description des Magnifique</i>	1649	<b>Left bank, opposite the Tuileries</b>
12 (6, 7)	Baschet	1652–1662	<b>Rue Saint Gilles, 12–16</b>
13	AN/MC/ET/CVI/31	31 March 1666/67	Rent of house, rue du Por de Fer
14	Baschet Madame de Sevigné	1668–1684	<b>Hôtel Salé, rue de Thorigny</b>
15	Baschet	1694	Rue Sainte Anne
16	AN/MC/ET/XXI/280	7 April 1696	Rent of house, rue de la Magdelaine, Faubourg Saint Honoré
17	AN/MC/ET/VIII/847	3 May 1699	<b>Rue de Poitou (probably same as rue de Bretagne)</b>
18	AN 0/1/43 fols 161 <sup>v</sup> , 162	31 May 1699	<b>Rue St Louis</b>
19	Baschet	1699	<b>Rue de la Planche</b>

