

THE COBENZL FAMILY AND THE EAST IN THE 18TH CENTURY

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The history of relations between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires has profoundly shifted in recent years. The allegedly ‘clash of civilizations’ that would have opposed Vienna and Istanbul has been perceived through the anxious eyes of the twenty-first century. It gradually gave way to the study of a diversity of commercial, religious and scientific networks that crossed the two empires and, throughout the eighteenth century, linked together Central Europe and the Mediterranean. The peace and trade treaties concluded at Carlowitz in 1699, at Passarowitz in 1718, at Belgrade in 1739 and then at Sistova in 1791 attested to the common will of the emperor and the sultan to guarantee that «merchants on both sides shall follow their commerce freely, securely and peacefully», as Article XIII of the Peace treaty of Passarowitz stated. This trade was essentially carried by Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Muslim trading companies based within the Ottoman Empire. These ‘trading diasporas’ supported the continental and Mediterranean economic development of the territories administered by the House of Austria. In particular, they were key-players in the development of Vienna, Pest, Temesvár and Trieste. These merchants received the support of diplomatic networks that developed during the years 1680-1718 and of mixed clienteles composed of subjects of the emperor and subjects of the sultan, all interested in the commercial integration of the two empires. These clienteles were able to influence, if not take control of, the chancelleries in Vienna and of the Divan in Istanbul¹.

1 Karl A. ROIDER, *Austria's Eastern Question, 1700-1790*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982; Andreas TIETZE (ed.), *Habsburgisch-osmanische Beziehungen*, Vienna, Verlag des Verbandes der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1985; Michael BUCHMANN, *Österreich und das Osmanische Reich: eine bilaterale Geschichte*, Vienna, WUV-Universitätsverlag, 1999; Marlene KURZ, Martin SCHEUTZ, Karl VOCELKA, Thomas WINKELBAUER (eds.), *Das osmanische Reich und die Habsburgmönarchie. Akten des internationalen Kongresses zum 150-*

Studying the Cobenzl family allows us to deepen our knowledge of these informal networks and to take a fresh look at the diplomacy of the Habsburg court and at the opening up of Habsburg society to the Ottoman Empire and beyond. In the eighteenth century, no clear distinction could yet be made between the ‘internal affairs’ and the ‘external affairs’ of a ruling house. There were many organs of specialization for political agents, but their recruitment and careers depended largely on the influence of their protectors and the clienteles and parties to which they belonged². Like other families, the Cobenzls, «liberi baroni di Prosecco, Mossa e San Daniele», were associated with the government of the Habsburg court. In 1618, on the death of Matthias I, the Styrian branch of the Habsburgs took over all the family’s hereditary estates in Central Europe. Ferdinand II and his successors ruled by closely associating their direct clients who were based in Inner Austria. This was notably the case of the Barons Cobenzl who in 1674 were elevated to the rank of counts of the hereditary states (*Erblande*) then in 1722 to the prestigious rank of counts of the Holy Roman Empire. In addition, through their networks, the Cobenzls participated in, and took advantage from the rapprochement between the Archdukes of Austria and the Dukes of Lorraine³. Under the reign of Maria Theresa, this proximity was rewarded by the appointment of Charles Cobenzl as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Low Countries, and the arrival of his nephew Philipp, then of his son Louis in the offices of the *Hofkammer*, then of the Chancellery of State, in charge of external affairs of the House of Austria⁴.

For the Cobenzls, as for other families, to govern meant putting its private economic and social resources at the service of public affairs. It was therefore a matter of taking advantage of the service one offered and sharing the fruits of the profit with one’s clients, one’s family, and the reigning

jährigen Bestehen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Wien, 22.–25. September 2004, Vienna, Böhlau, 2005; Paula F. SUTTER, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526–1850*, Chicago, Reaktion Book, 2008; David DO PAÇO, *L’Orient à Vienne au dix-huitième siècle*, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2015.

2 Hillard VON THIESSEN, Christian WINDLER (eds.), *Nähe in der Ferne: personale Verflechtung in den Aussenbeziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2005; Hillard VON THIESSEN Christian WINDLER (eds.), *Akteure der Aussenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel*, Vienna, Böhlau, 2010; Claudia GARNIER, Christine VOGEL (eds.), *Interkulturelle Ritualpraxis in der Vormoderne. Diplomatische Interaktion an den östlichen Grenzen der Fürstengesellschaft*, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2016; Jan HENNINGS, Tracy SOWERBY (eds.), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, 1410–1800*, New York, Palgrave, 2017.

3 ASGo, ASCC, AeD, b. 229, f. 587 and b. 232, f. 592.

4 Alfred von ARNETH, *Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren*, in «Archiv für österreichische Geschichte», 67 (1886), pp. 1–181.

household⁵. While the official historian of the reign of Maria Theresa, Alfred von Arneth, published Philipp Cobenzl's *Souvenirs de différentes époques de ma vie* to promote the image of a dedicated and selfless statesman, Philipp's private archives provide us with a picture that was both more complex and more realistic⁶. From 1779 to 1792, his private correspondence with his protégé the *internuncio* – representative of the Emperor in Istanbul – Peter Herbert von Rathkeal, reveals to us that the influence of the Cobenzl household also extended into the Ottoman Empire. Directly or through their protégés, the Cobenzls participated in the Ottoman trade and invested in the development of the free port of Trieste to the point of giving their name to the first ship flying the emperor's flag to reach Guangzhou in Imperial China. This private correspondence allows us to reinterpret the documents produced by the Chancellery of State and by the *Hofkammer* in Vienna, as well as those of the *Intendenza commerciale* and the *Cesareo Regio Governo* in Trieste⁷.

Also, I will summarize here the conclusions of various works that I have carried out directly or indirectly on the house of the Counts Cobenzl and their involvement in Ottoman affairs⁸. First, I will come back to the

- 5 Jeroen DUINDAM, *Myths of Power. Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1995; Christine LEBEAU, *Aristocrates et grands commis à la cour de Vienne, 1748-1791. Le modèle français*, Paris, CNRS éditions, 1996; Franz A. J. SZABO, *Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism, 1753-1780*, Cambridge, CUP, 2009; Eric HASSLER, *La Cour de Vienne, 1680-1740. Service de l'empereur et stratégies spatiales des élites nobiliaires dans la monarchie des Habsbourg*, Strasbourg, Presses Universitaire de Strasbourg, 2013; Michael HOCHEDLINGER, Petr MATA, Thomas WINKELBAUER (eds.), *Verwaltungsgeschichte der Habsburgermonarchie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 1: *Hof und Dynastie, Kaiser und Reich, Zentralverwaltungen, Kriegswesen und landesfürstliches Finanzwesen*, Wien, Böhlau, 2019.
- 6 «Selbst dann wird dies zu geschehen haben, wenn die Persönlichkeit, von der wir handschriftliche Aufzeichnungen über ihre eigenen Erlebnisse auffinden, nicht gerade in der vordersten Reihe ihrer Zeitgenossen stand, und ihr Memoiren, wenn sie auch über wichtige Punkte interessante Aufschlüsse gewähren, doch nicht etwa völlig neues Licht auf bisher ganz unerklärte Umstände werfen. Zu dieser Kategorie von Menschen sowohl als von Schriften gehören Graf Johann Philipp Cobenzl und die eingenändig von ihm niedergeschriebenen Lebenserinnerungen, welche das kaiserliche und königliche Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv verwahrt»: *Cobenzl und seine Memoiren* cit., pp. 3-4.
- 7 ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei IV, 18-19.
- 8 David DO PAÇO, *The Political Agents of Muslim Rulers in Central Europe in the 18th Century*, in David THOMAS, John CHESWORTH (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, vol. 14: Central and Eastern Europe, 1700-1800*, Leyden, Brill, 2020, pp. 39-55; ID., *A trans-imperial social history of diplomacy in a crisis context: Herbert von Rathkeal's circles of social belonging in Pera (1779-1802)*, in «International History Review», 41/5 (2019), pp. 981-1002; ID., *Patronage and Expertise, the Making of a Trans-Imperial Knowledge, 1719-1848*, in Lothar SCHILLING, Jakob VOGEL (eds.), *A Trans-National Culture of Expertise. Circulating State Related Knowledge in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Augsburg, De Gruyter, 2019, pp. 45-58; ID.,



Fig. 26.1. Philipp Cobenzl at the side of Joseph II receiving the Ambassador of Morocco: Hieronymus Löschenkohl, *Audienz des Botschafters von Marocco bey Seiner Kaiserl. Königl. Apostol. Majestät &c. &c. Joseph II. in Wien den 28. Febr. Anno 1783. Seidi Muhamed ein Sohn Seidi Abdullahs ein Enkel Seidi Ismail Sultan von Marocco, Taffilet und Nord-Africa &c.* gewidmet von Hieronymus Löschenkohl (1783). Vienna, Sammlung Wien Museum, inv. 212815.

reorganization of Habsburg diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean under the mandate of Philipp Cobenzl as the Vice-Chancellor of State (**fig. 26.1**). Then I will illustrate Philipp Cobenzl's personal interest in the development of trade with the Ottoman Empire. Finally, I will present the unpublished case study of the ship *Le comte de Cobenzl*, which left Trieste for China in 1783 as an example of the trans-imperial dimension of the family.

A Trans-Imperial Sociability: Ottoman Embassies in 18th-Century Vienna, in Jan HENNINGS, Tracey SOWERBY (eds.), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c.1410-1800*, London, Routledge, 2017, pp. 166-184.

1. The Cobenzl Diplomatic Revolution, the Ottoman and Romanov Empires

Philippe Cobenzl explained the beginning of his diplomatic career as an accident. In 1779, it was his cousin Louis who was to be sent to Teschen to negotiate with the representatives of the King of Prussia the end of the War of Bavarian Succession (1778-1779). Sick, Louis was to remain in Vienna and it was Philippe, then in charge at the *Hofkammer*, who went to Silesia⁹. It was an opportunity for him to distinguish himself, and to reinforce a little more his proximity to the Emperor established in the 1760s by the *entre mise* of Count Windischgraetz and during Joseph II's trip to France in 1777. In the eyes of Joseph II, Philippe Cobenzl was a trustworthy man who was to eventually replace the Prince Kaunitz-Rittberg at the head of the Chancellery of State¹⁰.

9 « On convint qu'il y aurait un congrès à Teschen, auquel la France et la Russie interviendraient comme médiateurs, et mon cousin Louis revint de Gorice à Vienne à la fin de février 1779 prendre ses instructions pour se rendre au congrès. Mais dans les premiers jours de mars il eut un violent accès de goutte aux mains et aux pieds, avec une sorte de rhumatisme universel, avec toutes les apparences, qu'il n'en serait quitte qu'au bout de quelques semaines. Cet accident fatal mit au désespoir et embarrassa fort le prince de Kaunitz, qui ne savait où prendre d'abord un autre plénipotentiaire pour ce congrès, qui ne se laissait pas différer, et pour lequel Louis avait déjà annoncé, et même avait déjà fait partir ses gens et ses équipages pour Teschen. C'était le premier ou le second de mars, que me promenant le soir sur le Graben avec mon ami Herbert, qui raisonnait sur ce fatal accident, en déplorant le sort de Louis, qui perdait cette occasion de se faire honneur, et dont un de ses concurrents profiterait à sa place et à ses dépens, je lui dis tout d'un coup : 'Mais ! ne pourrais-je pas y aller à sa place ? Je n'ai jamais travaillé en diplomatie, mais j'ai travaillé en d'autres affaires. On n'a qu'à me bien instruire, et je ne m'en tirerais peut-être pas plus mal qu'un autre, puisqu'on dit, que les cours sont déjà d'accord sur les points principaux, et qu'il ne s'agit plus que de rédiger quelques accessoires et remplir les formalités d'usage. Tout autre devrait également commencer par s'instruire et devrait au surplus avoir du temps pour faire les dispositions nécessaires tant pour le voyage que pour le séjour de Teschen, au lieu que moi je n'ai besoin de rien préparer. Je puis me servir des gens de mon cousin, de ses effets, de ses équipages, on n'a pas même besoin de m'annoncer. Un Cobenzl a été annoncé, et un Cobenzl y ira, et Louis aura au moins l'avantage qu'aucun de ses concurrents dans la carrière diplomatique ne prendra le pas sur lui, en profitant de sa mésaventure.' L'idée plut à Herbert, qui alla sur le champ la communiquer au baron Binder, et celui-ci dès le lendemain matin alla en parler au prince Kaunitz et puis à l'Impératrice. Ma proposition fut acceptée partout »: *Cobenzl und seine Memoiren* cit., pp. 125-126.

10 « Pendant cette année [1775], ainsi que pendant la suivante je reçus de l'Empereur et de l'Impératrice plusieurs témoignages de bonté. J'étais de toutes les parties de la cour, de tous les séjours à la campagne, et l'Empereur me faisait appeler de temps à autre pour l'accompagner à courre le cerf. Mais la plus grande preuve d'affection que me donna Joseph II, ce fut à la fin de 1776, lorsque, ayant résolu de faire un voyage en France, il daigna me nommer de sa suite »: *ibidem*, pp. 118-119.

Thus, on his return from Teschen, Philipp was appointed Vice-Chancellor of State and, in fact, relieved Kaunitz of the management of the monarchy's external affairs. Philipp immediately asserted his authority on the occasion of the appointment of the new *internuncio*. Leaving Kaunitz out of the choice, Philipp spoke directly with Joseph II. He refuted the possibility of a return of Franz de Paula von Thugut – internuncio between 1770 and 1774 and *protégé* of Kaunitz – to Istanbul and promoted his own client, Peter Herbert. Kaunitz's protests were without effect¹¹.

A few weeks later, Philipp Cobenzl reinforced his authority over the Chancellery of State by making a second important appointment, that of his cousin Louis Cobenzl to the position of ambassador to Catherine II of Russia, in St. Petersburg. On his way to Istanbul when he learned the news, Peter Herbert was well aware of the new diplomatic era that was about to begin, and of the fact that Philipp Cobenzl held in his hands all the levers enabling him to control relations between Vienna and Istanbul. Indeed, St. Petersburg was an essential position for the Habsburg Court because of the hostility that remained between the Romanov and the Ottoman empires following the subjugation of the Crimea by the Czarina in 1774. It was important for Philipp Cobenzl to balance the ambitions of Prince Grigory Aleksandrovich Potëmkin-Tauricheski, and to have an influential man devoted to him with Catherine II. Moreover, the Cobenzls had already provided the emperor with an ambassador to Russia. The private archives of the family keep the memory of this mission¹². To a certain extent, Louis Cobenzl was even a continuation of his predecessor. From the Neva, Louis maintained a private correspondence with his uncle Guidobaldo Cobenzl based in Gorizia. For example, he sent him a ruble he had won at cards on the Czarina and asked Guido to deposit it in the family archives¹³. The link between the Cobenzl family and Russia was hard to describe, but it nevertheless came across as particularly strong and, no doubt, like the family's link with the East, based on private interests.

11 « [...] le propos étant tombé sur Constantinople, et S. M. m'ayant parlé de Thugut, j'ai cru devoir profiter du moment pour lui rappeler le désir qu'il a de ne plus retourner à Constantinople et marquer les souhaits de Herbert de le remplacer en cas que V.A. le jugera propre pour cette commission, ainsi que j'ai eu l'honneur d'en prévenir V.A. ce matin. Sur quoi L.M. m'ont témoigné vouloir se rapporter entièrement à ce que V.A. trouvera de leur proposer »: Cobenzl to Kaunitz (Vienna, May 28, 1779), in Hanns SCHLITTER (ed.), *Kaunitz, Philipp Cobenzl und Spielmann. Ihre Briefwechsel 1779-1792*, Wien, Adolf Holzhausen, 1899, pp. 3.

12 Silvano CAVAZZA, *La Relazione delle Cose di Moscova di Giovanni Cobenzl*, in «Quaderni Giuliani di Storia», 34 (2013), pp. 53-98.

13 ASGo, ASCC, AeD, b. 237, f. 608 and b. 258, f. 658.

From Pera, where he settled in early autumn 1779, Peter Herbert was aware of the growing influence of Philipp Cobenzl on the diplomacy of the continental empires. He even suggested to formalize this system:

« J'ai appris avec le plus grand plaisir la translation du Cte Louis à Petersbourg. Le hasard nous place par ce moyen dans des postes qui ont beaucoup d'analogies ensemble. Vous ferez en sorte que les dépêches surtout celles qui vous parviendront par cour[r]ier me soient communiquées, et vous lui ferez passer aussi mes lettres que vous croirez dignes [10r] de son attention. Je me propose aussi de lui écrire souvent, je vous mettrai mes lettres sous enveloppes, vous les ouvrirez et les ferez passer à Petersbourg par cour[r]ier, car les autres lettres je les lui adresserai par la poste. Je désire beaucoup que nous travaillons de concert dans les affaires importantes que nous aurons à traiter, et dont une partie auront des rapports intimes entre elles. Je vous prie de lui lire ce paragraphe, et de m'excuser de ce que je ne lui écris point une lettre particulière »¹⁴.

However, Philipp Cobenzl remained cautious and opted for a centralization of correspondence in Vienna in order to avoid undesirable initiatives taken from Pera or St. Petersburg. It was important for him to retain control over all decisions taken. Nevertheless, it was in a personal way that he took the external affairs of the House of Austria into his own hands through the development of a double system of correspondence, which he outlined in his *Souvenirs de différentes époques de ma vie*:

« Les deux seuls ministres, auxquels j'écrivais en mon nom particulier par chaque courrier, étaient mon cousin Louis et mon ami Herbert, notamment pour leur indiquer tout ce qui était nécessaire de savoir pour se faire honneur dans leurs postes, et pour gagner les bonnes grâces de l'Empereur. Dans cette intention je ne les ménageais pas, je leur reprochais sans ménagement tout ce qu'à mon avis ils avaient mal fait, sachant bien qu'ils considéraient tout ce qui venait de ma part comme un effet de mon amitié. »¹⁵

Peter Herbert was regularly mentioned in Philipp Cobenzl's *Souvenirs*, and it is anything but a coincidence that he was sent to Pera in 1779. Philipp wrote: «There never was anyone like Herbert whose way of thinking would have been so similar to mine, whose interests I would have espoused more keenly, whose interests I would have felt on every occasion the most perfect

14 Peter Herbert to Philipp Cobenzl (Belgrade, August 12, 1779), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei IV, 18, foll. 8v-10r.

15 Cobenzl und seine Memoiren cit., p. 139.

reciprocity»¹⁶. Peter Herbert was the son of a Jacobite supporter who followed James II Stuart in exile in France before taking refuge in Istanbul. His father, John, married Francesca Skanderbeg from an Albanian Catholic family based in Pera. The couple has several children. After John's death, Francesca and her children came under the protection of the *internuncio* Heinrich von Penckler. The latter allowed the eldest, Thomas, to join the first class of students of the Oriental Academy of Vienna in 1754. As for Peter, he entered the Society of Jesus under the protection of Father Joseph Franz. He taught in Vienna, Graz and Trieste. Philipp Cobenzl explained that in 1760, Peter was «disgusted with this kind of life»¹⁷. The year 1760 actually corresponded to the death of Thomas, and it was much more likely that Peter was pushed to replace him at the head of the family. Peter Herbert was simply exfiltrated from the Jesuits by Guidobaldo Cobenzl. Encouraged by Father Meack¹⁸, a refractory and reformist Jesuit, he was introduced to Guido who took him under his protection and found him a job as a librarian in Brussels with his brother, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Low Countries, Charles Cobenzl. Guidobaldo took Peter to Salzburg where Philipp was a student at the time. It was there that Philipp and Peter got to know each other and set off for Brussels together. Philipp wrote: «During this journey we developed a close and intimate friendship, which remained unalterable and manifested itself in all occasions of our lives up to the time of his death»¹⁹. This bond remains very difficult to characterize. Peter arrived in Vienna in the 1760s; a few months before Philipp. The two men worked together at the Chancellery of State and then at the *Hofkammer*. Peter was occasionally charged with the family's busyness in the Holy Roman Empire. In 1779 he accompanied Philipp to Teschen and also won the protection of Joseph II, whose most radical reform projects he

16 « Il ne s'est jamais trouvé personne comme Herbert, dont la façon de penser eût été aussi analogue à la mienne, personne dont j'eusse épousé les intérêts plus vivement, de la part duquel j'eusse éprouvé dans toutes les occasions la plus parfaite réciprocité», *Cobenzl und seine Memoiren* cit., p. 175.

17 « [...] se dégoûta de ce genre de vie »: *ibidem*, p. 72.

18 « Il y avait alors dans la société un religieux nommé père Meack, homme de beaucoup d'esprit, beaucoup d'instruction, et très-original. Fameux par la liberté, avec laquelle il parlait contre certains principes de sa société, ce qui lui fit beaucoup d'ennemis dans la compagnie, il fut néanmoins quelquefois nommé régent de collège, entre autres du séminaire de Gorice, où il s'était lié avec mon père [...]. Le père Meack, loin de l'[Herbert] en dissuader, l'assura que, s'il n'était déjà profès, il prendrait bien le même parti »: *ibidem*, pp. 72-73.

19 « Pendant ce voyage nous liâmes le plus intime et étroite amitié, qui resta inébranlable et se manifesta dans toutes les occasions de notre vie jusqu'à l'heure de sa mort »: *ibidem*, p. 73.

unreservedly supported. On his return to Istanbul in 1779, Peter was able to rely on his mother's still-active networks to surround himself with clients and servants who were well acquainted with Ottoman society²⁰.

Very quickly, the two men exchanged plans for the reform of the Oriental Academy of Vienna founded by Kaunitz in 1753²¹. Peter Herbert's assessment of the level of the students who graduated from the Academy was definitive.

On m'objectera que je détruis l'Académie de Vienne, c'est qu'elle me paraît inutile, les élèves perdent un temps précieux, et ils en sortent sans être forts ni dans les études ni dans les langues, au lieu que dans mon plan on choisit parmi les meilleurs étudiants, et l'on fait un simple essai de leur aptitude pour les langues orientales, qu'ils apprendront ensuite ici dans un cours réglé auquel on les assujettira. C'est le moyen, je crois de ne point dépenser de l'argent pour des gens incapables de faire une bonne réussite²².

Again, Philipp was more reticent, and he used the Oriental Academy to promote the clients his father recommended to him. This was the case of the young Carlo Morelli who, after a brief tour through the Austrian consular offices in Italy and France to gather «tutte le notizie appartenenti al commercio

20 « Quant à mes affaires, je ne pourrai vous en entretenir qu'après mon arrivée à Constantinople, où je verrai un peu plus clair à quoi j'en suis. En attendant je vous dirai que les nouvelles que je viens de recevoir de Tassara, rabattent de l'idée que nous nous en étions formée à Vienne, quoiqu'encore le sort qui m'attend soit assez beau. Mais dans tous les cas, mes arrangement[s] domestiques seront composées d'après la plus exacte économie : car c'est par elle seule que je devrai chercher un établissement honnête à ma famille. Je suis à la veille d'en avoir une toute à moi. Ma femme très sensible à votre souvenir avance heureusement dans sa grossesse malgré les fatigues du voyage. Tout semble annoncer des couches heureuses qui suivront de tout près mon arrivée à Constantinople. Cette réunion de circonstance rendra surtout heureuse ma bonne vieille mère. Elle revoit deux fils perdus pour elle, l'un Ministre Impérial, l'autre avancé dans le service militaire, elle fera la connaissance de sa bellefille et assistera presqu'aussitôt à la naissance d'un petit-fils. Je me fais une vraie fête du plaisir que je vais lui causer, et de me voir même de lui rendre dans sa vieillesse les soins qu'elle donna à mon enfance. Adieu mon cher Comte, aimez toujours un peu celui qui vous est attaché pour la vie »: Herbert to Cobenzl (September 20, 1779), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 1, foll. 18v-20r.

21 Ernst Dieter PETRITSCH, *Interkulturelle Diplomatie zwischen Habsburgern und Osmanen. Frage und Probleme*, in Brigit TREMML-WERNER, Eberhard CRAILSHEIM (eds.), *Audienzen und Allianzen. Interkulturelle Diplomatie in Asien und Europa vom 8. bis 18. Jahrhundert*, Wien, Mandelbaum, 2015, pp. 184-200; Do Paço, *Patronage and expertise* cit.

22 Herbert to Cobenzl (Büyükdere, July 23, 1785), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 19a, foll. 688v-691r.

e ciò che può contribuire al maggior aumento del medesimo e della navigazione»²³, wrote in 1770 ca.-1792 his *Istoria della Contea di Gorizia*. It was also the better-known case of Joseph von Hammer Purgstall, who in his memoirs went very clear about the private networks to which he owed his career. Hammer was the son of a devoted administrator in Graz who distinguished himself by his uncompromising support for the Emperor's reforms²⁴. For this reason, he earned the sympathy of Guidobaldo Cobenzl, to whom he introduced his son. Joseph von Hammer noted:

In der Hälfte desselben Jahres hatte mein Vater, durch seinen Gönner, den Grafen Bethgen, ermuntert und von demselben beim damaligen Vizestaatskanzler Grafen Philipp Cobenzl bestens empfohlen, bei der Staatskanzlei eine Bitschrift um meine Aufnahme als Zögling in die orientalische Akademie eingereicht (15. Juli 1787).²⁵

Then he added:

Mein Vater stellte mich zu Wien dem Vizestaatskanzler, dem Grafen Philipp Cobenzl, dann Freiherrn van Swieten, in dessen Händen die oberste Leitung des Studienressorts, dem Hofrate von Jenisch als dem Referenten der orientalischen Akademie, dem Abbé Hoeck als dem Direktor und Lehrer der Präparandenschule an derselben vor. Von allen diesen Herren, von deren Gunst oder Ungunst mein künftiges Schicksal abhing, wurde ich auf das gütigste und geneigteste aufgenommen²⁶.

However, Hammer's diplomatic career was aborted in 1792 with the departure of Philipp Cobenzl from the government in Vienna and the resumption of diplomatic affairs by Thugut and the former *protégés* of Kaunitz. Nevertheless, he remained under the protection of the Cobenzl family and it was Louis Cobenzl, who became Chancellor of State in 1799, who allowed him to join Peter Herbert von Rathkeal in Pera²⁷.

23 Donatella PORCEDDA, *Una vita per lo Stato e per l'Istoria della Contea di Gorizia*, in Carlo MORELLI, *Istoria della Contea di Gorizia*, Gorizia, Paternelli, 1855-1856 (rist. an. con indici), vol. V. Silvano CAVAZZA, Paolo IANCIS, Donatella PORCEDDA (eds.), *Studi e documenti su Carlo Morelli e l'Istoria della Contea di Gorizia*, Mariano del Friuli, Edizioni della Laguna, 2003, pp. 19-47: 26.

24 Constantin von WURZBACH, *BLKO*, vol. 7, Wien, Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1861, pp. 266-289.

25 Joseph Freiherr von HAMMER-PURGSTALL, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben, 1774-1852*, Vienna - Leipzig, Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1940, p. 18.

26 *Ibidem*, p. 19.

27 *Ibidem*, pp. 34-48.

Gorizia, where the Cobenzls have been resettled since 1747, was an important place for their politics within the Ottoman Empire. They recruited men there: Herbert, Hammer, Morelli. Thanks to Guidobaldo, they organized in Gorizia the family archives and they built their memory. They could even participate directly in the political action of the Viennese Habsburg court as in 1792, on the occasion of the visit of the Ottoman ambassador Ebubekr Rattib Efendi. Ebubekr Rattib Efendi was introduced by Peter Herbert to Philipp Cobenzl as his friend and client²⁸. In Vienna, the Ottoman ambassador fully understood the clash of power between Cobenzl's clan and that of Thugut. Therefore, he enjoyed publicly humiliating Thugut's *protégés* and making Philipp Cobenzl's own *protégés* shine like the young Joseph Hammer during his visit to the Oriental Academy. Hammer wrote:

Eines der glänzendsten Ereignisse, welches die orientalische Akademie während der Anwesenheit der türkischen Gesandtschaft erlebte, war der mit einer großen Anzahl physikalischer Versuche gefeierte Besuch derselben. Die Vorbereitung und Erklärung der Experimente traf mich. Das Haupt- und Glanzexperiment war die gleichzeitige Explosion von 24 an der Wand aufgestellten elektrischen Pistolen, welche untereinander und mit der aus 24 Flaschen bestehenden Batterie durch Messingdrähte verbunden waren. Der Gesandte belobte mich am Schlusse auf das schmeichelhafteste und schloß mit den Worten: „Du wirst ein großer Mann werden“ – eine leider nicht in Erfüllung gegangene Vorhersagung. Ebu Bekr Kahib war ein Mann von großem politischen Talent und großem Ehregeiz; er erwartete, bei seiner Rückkehr zum Reis-Efendi befördert zu werden²⁹.

In return, *Accademia letteraria degli Arcadi Romano-Sonziaci* of Gorizia founded by Guidobaldo Cobenzl and Rodolfo Coronini Cronberg engaged in a literary production to honor the Sultan's ambassador. The most striking example was the *Acclamation* printed in Gorizia which was presented to the ambassador and circulated in Vienna in 1792 celebrating Ebubekr Rattib Efendi and the Sultan.

28 « Je ne reviens pas de ma surprise que depuis douze jours que le Courrier de Rattib Efendi est arrivé, on ne me fait pas un seul remerciement, on ne me dit pas un seul mot d'honnêteté à son sujet. Est-ce qu'on aurait oublié de lui dire, ou évité de lui traduire que c'est à mes rapports, à mes démarches, à mes recommandations qu'il doit l'accueil distingué qu'il éprouve à Vienne ? Il semble pourtant que l'unique fruit utile au service qu'on puisse retirer de cette mission ottomane c'est de lui donner une idée avantageuse de mon Crédit à la Cour, et de mon attachement à la Porte. » : Herbert to Cobenzl (Pera, May 10, 1792), ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 19b, fol. 13r.

29 Joseph von HAMMER-PURGSTALL, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben, 1774-1852*, Wien - Leipzig, Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1940, pp. 25-26.

The poem reminded of the need to maintain a very active trade between Vienna and Istanbul. This trade was of particular benefit to the Cobenzl family:

Vous venez cimenter une heureuse harmonie
Entre deux souverains récemment établie,
Qui, lassés du succès de leurs tristes débats,
Font renaitre le calme au sein de leurs Etats [...].
De l'EUXIN au DANUBE on apprend à regret,
De ces scènes d'horreur le déplorable effet :
Et pour en preserver de fideles Provinces,
L'Europe voit le soin qui dirige les Princes.
LEOPOLD & SELIM deviennent des amis,
Qu'un intérêt commun doit conserver unis :
Le Commerce et les Arts, au gré de l'abondance,
Immortaliseront leur auguste existence :
L'olivier de la Paix ne desséchera plus,
Leurs jours seront datés par autant de vertus³⁰.

Indeed, the interest Philipp Cobenzl showed to the Ottoman empire was not only political, but economic.

2. A Family Business

The private correspondence that Philipp Cobenzl has established with Peter Herbert since the latter left Vienna for Istanbul excluded political matters in favor of a philosophical and private exchange³¹. For his part, Peter Herbert positioned himself as an agent and adviser to the Cobenzl household. His mission as an *internuncio* had to be of benefit to his protectors. For the Cobenzls, the Ottoman world was an ocean of resources that had to be taken advantage of. In the summer of 1779, on his way to Istanbul and while still only in Hungary, Herbert continued an exchange that seemed to have started orally between the two about a hypothetical marriage of Philipp Cobenzl. After having refused a series of names, which had submitted Herbert to him, Philipp made explicit what he wished:

30 *Acclamation à EBU BEKR RATIB EFENDI Envoié de la Porte Ottomanne à la Cour de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale*, in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei IV, 12.

31 « Cela va sans dire que de tout ce qui concerne de près ou de loin les intérêts de l'Etat il ne sera question que dans les dépêches ministerielles. L'objet de notre correspondance particulière seront nos intérêts de famille et de fortune, des objets d'art, de Sciences, de littérature ou d'amusemens, et quelques vérités à se dire reciprocement à l'occasion »: Cobenzl to Herbert (Vienna, August 4, 1779), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei IV, 18, fol. 2r.

Je me croirais trop heureux, si je pouvais attraper une caille, ou une perdrix un peu grasselette, et encor[e] ne serait-ce que pour m'assurer un rôti en cas de disette. Trouvez-moi une fille de quelque riche marchand, que nous ferons descendre en droite ligne d'Alcibiade, ou d'Aristide. Ces noms ne sont à la vérité pas trop estimés dans les chapitres d'Allemagne, mais avec une bourse bien garnie leurs descendants seraient bien vus par tout le pays³².

Such marriages evoked economic alliances as seen in the great merchant cities of the monarchy, such as Vienna, Temesvár or Trieste, and in which Greek merchant families were involved. Some naturalized members may claim real or imagined noble ancestry and be associated with the government of commerce³³.

Philipp Cobenzl was working at that time to extend and strengthen the place of the Cobenzl household and this was done through a series of unions. First of all, he married Peter Herbert to Maria Anna von Collenbach, the daughter of one of his close collaborators in the Chancellery of State, Heinrich von Collenbach. Maria Anna played a crucial role in Istanbul, informing her father about the couple's financial affairs, but also informing her husband about news from Viennese society at the time of Joseph II's reforms. The couple also gave birth in Istanbul very quickly to two young girls: Fanny and Constance. These births were already an opportunity to consider some possible and fruitful alliances. Peter Herbert placed his daughters under the protection of Philipp Cobenzl, writing to him that «they belong to you as much as to me»³⁴. In addition, when Constance was born, concrete wedding plans were drawn up. Fanny was proposed to Phillip Cobenzl or, if this was not possible, to one of the family's *protégés*. In fact, in 1800, she married a Count Attems from Gorizia. As for Constance, she was destined for Philipp's personal secretary, *Hofrat* Cigala, who came from a Latin Ottoman family from Santorini. However, in 1798 she finally married the British *chargé d'affaires* in Pera. For Herbert, it was a matter of transforming bonds of friendship and common interests into family ties³⁵.

32 *Ibidem*, fol. 7r.

33 David DO PAÇO, *Una storia adriatica globale nel Settecento: Antonio Rossetti de Scander e il rosolio di Trieste tra Fiume, Venezia e New York*, in Antonio TRAMPUS (ed.), *Venezia dopo Venezia. Città-porto, reti commerciali e circolazione delle notizie nel bacino portuale veneziano tra Settecento e Novecento (Trieste, Fiume, Pola e l'area istriano-dalmata)*, Trieste, IRCI, 2019, pp. 27-38.

34 « Celles que j'ai cependant je les recommande à vos bontés ; entre charpineurs tout étant commun, elles vous appartiennent autant qu'à moi-même, et quand vous les verrez je vous prédis que vous serez amoureux au moins de la Fanny, on ne peut pas encore juger quelle tournure prendra Stancy »: Herbert to Cobenzl (March 11, 1782), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 225r.

35 « Si la petite Fanny, c'est son nom, ne peut devenir votre élève, elle pourra pourtant épouser un de ceux qui le seront, et avec cela vous serez toujours à portée de lui donner

The links between the Cobenzls and the Ottoman families were not new. The Cobenzls have been for example linked to the Cigala family of Santorini since the end of the Middle Ages. The Cigalas of Santorini were one of the branches of the famous Genoese family which in the 16th century was settled in the kingdom of Sicily. In 1560, the viscount of Cigala and his son Scipione were captured by Barbarossa and taken to Istanbul. If the Viscount paid his ransom, his son remained in Istanbul, converted to Islam and took the name Cīgalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha before starting a career in the service of the Sultan. In 1599 he became Kapudan Pasha. As such, he was in charge of the Ottoman navy, and established himself in the Archipelago – i.e. the Cyclades – where he particularly fought against the corsairs. In the 17th century, the trace of the family was lost but it seems that the Cigalas divided and that a part reconverted to Catholicism and took in particular the head of the Latin community of Santorini. In addition, since the 13th century, the Cigalas have held the title of Counts of the Holy Roman Empire, and this title was claimed again by the Cigalas of Santorini in the 18th century. In 1779, the heir of the Cigala family was the private secretary of Philipp Cobenzl. He bore the title of counsellor (*Hofrat*) and Philipp referred to him as his «cousin» (*Vetter*). This link was probably more symbolic than biologic³⁶. For his part, Peter Herbert evoked a close complicity between Philipp Cobenzl, Cigala and himself. The business of the Cigala family in Santorini even primarily concerned Philipp Cobenzl and the internuncio. In 1780, Peter Herbert was sent on a private trip to the Archipelago to guarantee the *Hofrat* Cigala the exclusive inheritance of the lands held by his father. He had to negotiate with Cigala's father the celibacy of his daughters so that his sons-in-law could not claim a share of the inheritance at his death. These lands were mainly composed of vineyards whose wine was traded, especially with Trieste. They participated in the commercial exchanges between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, in the prosperity of the Cobenzl household and of course in the maintenance of the

des preuves de votre [30r] amitié »: Herbert to Cobenzl (November 17, 1779), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, foll. 29v-30r, and « Vous y verrez entre autres qu'il y a une petite Fanny dans le monde qui vous aimera de tout son cœur, aussitôt qu'elle commencera à sentir ; ce qui ne vous sera pas indifférent puisqu'elle promet de devenir fort jolie »: Herbert to Cobenzl (November 17, 1779), ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 33r. Fanny was the dedicatee (as *Florence*) of several poems of Lord Byron, who fell in love with her in Malta in 1809.

36 « Vos réflexions sur ma situation sont très justes et c'est aussi ce qui m'a déterminer à m'assujettir au train de vie que je mène et même sans jouir comme vous le conseiller des joies de la table et d'une promenade au soir car je dine toujours seul ou tête à tête avec Cigala et vers les dix heures du soir au sortir du bureau je montre chez le Prince pour aller une demi-heure après me coucher chez moi, et cela exactement un jour comme l'autre »: Cobenzl to Herbert (March 21, 1780), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 59v.

influence of the Cigalas in the Archipelago. To further strengthen the prestige of the Cigala family, Herbert suggested to Cobenzl to bring to Vienna one of the sisters of his personal secretary and to make her publicly his mistress³⁷.

Nevertheless, it was the wine trade that first interested Philipp Cobenzl and Peter Herbert. From Istanbul, Peter Herbert has access to the main trading companies in the Eastern Mediterranean, whose activities he supported and in which he and Maria Anna personally invested. First of all, Peter Herbert shared with Philipp Cobenzl the wine he received as a gift in the early autumn of 1779. On March 3, 1780, Herbert emphasized the importance he attached to building up a cellar in Pera, not just for own pleasure, but also as a kind of savings³⁸. He already mentioned an excellent Santorini wine recommended by Cigala and promised Philipp Cobenzl that he would send him some. The bottles of wine were enclosed in packages that included, among other things, canned turbot and sturgeon³⁹. However, it was Herbert's visit to Santorini at the end of the summer of 1780 that was decisive in the development of the wine trade. In the form of a contest, Herbert claimed to be able to send better bottles to Vienna than what Cigala brought from his island⁴⁰. In early January 1781 Peter Herbert sent a selection of the best wines produced in the Ottoman Empire to Philipp Cobenzl:

37 « J'y ai remarqué une anecdote qui regarde la famille de votre ami Cigala, savoir les sœurs de l'évêque, qui sont ses cousines germaines. Je vous l'envoie ci-joint en copie et vous préviens que la cadette de ces sœurs, dont le portrait est fidèlement rendu par le burin, ainsi qu'il m'a été confirmé par d'autres gens qui l'ont connue, est l'une des plus belles personnes que j'ai vue de ma vie. Chargez votre ami à vous la faire venir à Vienne au lieu du vin de Santorin, et placez la sur votre montagne comme un monument précieux de la Grèce moderne. Quand vous en serez là, vous pourrez la renvoyer dans son pays, où elle trouvera encore un fort bon établissement, car sur le rapport de Cigala les Santoriniotes se croiront fort honorés des restes du modèle des hommes, et ce sera alors qu'il pourra avec raison vous nommer son *Vetter*, quoique du côté gauche »: Herbert to Cobenzl (Büyükdere, September 2, 1780), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 113v.

38 « N'allez pourtant pas croire que je vis en ladre, ma table au contraire est fort bonne, même délicate, j'ai des vins exquis, ce serait une duperie de se retrancher quelque chose sur les plaisirs physiques. Je vous conseille ; la même morale, la bonne chère et la joie à table le soir au sortir du bureau une promenade, voilà ce qu'il vous faut pour conserver la santé, qui est notre plus grand bien, au milieu des fatigues de votre état »: Herbert to Cobenzl (Pera, March 3, 1780), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 63r.

39 « Comme qui dit commerce dit échange, il est juste, Mon Cher Comte, ainsi que vous le remarquez de me donner vos superfluités pour mes esturgeons, mes turbots et mes vins. L'hiver prochain vous aurez abondamment de tout cela, mais en attendant je souhaite d'apprendre que mon turbot est arrivé à bon port »: Herbert to Cobenzl (Pera, July 1, 1780), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 91r.

40 « Je vous enverrai par les jeunes de langue d'excellent vin de Santorin tant rouge que blanc ? Il est infinitement meilleur que celui dont par pure méchanceté votre *Vetter* ne cesse de vous empoisonner »: *ibidem*, fol. 67r.

« je suis votre homme pour les vins du Levant. [146r] Ma cave me coute déjà au moins six mille piastres, et mes vins passent pour exquis. Il est vrai que plus des deux tiers de cette somme est employée en vins de France, du Rhin, de Hongrie, d'Espagne et d'Italie ; mais aussi je n'y mets pas en compte les présents considérables qui m'ont été faits de vins de Grèce et d'Asie. J'ai déjà du vin de Santorin, de Ténédos, de la Malouisie de Tino, du vin de Muscat de Samos et de Zéa ; j'attends du vin de Schiras, si fameux dans les romans orientaux, de Galilée, du Montliban, du vin d'or et de celui de Chypre, du cru appelé le la Commanderie qui est excellent. Je ferai de tous les vins double provision, savoir pour vous et pour moi, je revendrai ceux que j'aurai trouvés médiocres, et les remplacerai par d'excellens, et quand j'en aurai acquis d'aussi parfaits dans leur espèce que le Smyrne et le Santorin que je vous ai envoyé, je partagerais fraternellement avec vous et les vins et les fraix, en vous priant de m'imiter en ce que j'aurais accepté de gratis, pour remplir le mot de l'écriture gratis auipietis date. Comme au reste, je connais vos intentions, je ne manquerai pas de vous faire passer à Vienne des provisions à mesure que j'en acquerrai qui en vaillent la peine. Pour moi je compte d'apporter à mon retour de quoi nous abreuver l'un et l'autre le reste de nos jours. Je vous ai parlé du Santorin, parce que les lettres de Trieste m'ont fait renaître l'espoir que vous le boirez, et c'est de quoi je suis enchanté, puisque sa perte vu la qualité dont il est, serait peut-être irréparable. Puisse-t-il ne pas avoir été entamé et falcifié en route, comme celui que je vous avais cédé à mon départ, et que je sais avoir été bon ! »⁴¹.

On February 6, Philipp Cobenzl confirmed that the Samos wine was delicious. Now that the trade was established, it had to be perfected. Indeed, Cobenzl was sorry to see a large number of bottles damaged during the trip and unwarranted taxes levied⁴². As the trade has improved, the wines were better and better selected, the bottles were better and better packaged, the intermediaries were better chosen and more and more careful. What the two correspondents presented as a game became in 1781 a genuine commercial enterprise that in the Ottoman Empire mobilized Herbert's protégés to find

41 Herbert to Cobenzl (undated), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilung, Türkei V, 18, fol. 146r.

42 « Ce sera très bien fait à vous que de pourvoir ma cave en même tems que la votre, car il est tems que nous songions à faire provision du Lac Senum. Le vin de Samos que vous m'avez envoyé en bouteille est délicieux, dommage que plusieurs bouteilles sont cassées en route de façon que de 25 il n'en est parvenu que 18. Je ne sçais pas aussi pourquoi le porteur les a déclaré pour un Eimer, tandis qu'il n'y en avait pas pour [142v] un demi Eimer, et il a fallu payer les droits d'après la déclaration. Il m'est aussi parvenu un nouveau tonnelet de poisson en saumure ainsi que des figues et des raisins. Grand merci pour tout cela. Quant au vin vous me direz ce qui vaut la peine que j'achète, et quand vous partagerez avec moi gratis celui dont on vous fera présent, comptez que je ne vous les renverrai pas »: Cobenzl to Herbert (February 6, 1781), in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilung, Türkei V, 18, fol.142r/v.

the best wines, the consuls of Joseph II wishing to be seen from the internuncio and sending him choice wines as gifts, and the merchants of the Porte in charge of supplying the internuncio and transporting the bottles to Trieste. This wine trade was not just a pleasure. It was the object of a game of gifts and counter-gifts that kept Philipp Cobenzl's clientele constantly on the move. It was also clearly an investment for the two men in building up a valuable cellar that would distinguish them and provide them with economic security.⁴³

Finally, the period during which Philipp Cobenzl directed the external affairs of the House of Austria was marked in the Ottoman Empire by a masterstroke orchestrated by Peter Herbert: the hijacking of the East India Company's trade. The private correspondence of the two men gave many details of it, which were confirmed and completed in 1784 by the reports of the imperial and royal consul in Aleppo, Raphael Picciotto and British sources throughout the 1780s. The departure of William Bolts at the command of a ship flying the emperor's flag for the Indian Ocean in 1776 opened up many prospects for the *internuncio* with the first trading posts established in East Africa and Bengal. William Bolts progressed notably thanks to the networks that he wove, reacted and developed within local monarchies and with the merchants of the East India Company. In the Mediterranean, Herbert first of all hastened to densify the consular networks of the Habsburgs. Then, in Pera, he quickly became friends with Peter Tooke, treasurer of the Levant Company and representative of the East India Company in Istanbul. Moreover, Herbert invested his income as much in Ottoman trade as in British trade in the East⁴⁴.

43 For example « Mes Commissions seront exactement remplies à l'avenir par les nouveaux arrangements que je viens de faire : en conséquence desquels les langues de bufles, envoyés en hiver, ont été déterrées, je ne sais si c'est pour les manger ou pour les jeter à la voierie. Quant au vin je compte hâter les envois que je vous ai promis, parce qu'il me paraît [169r] que votre prieuré de la montagne vous attirera bien des baillis à gosier altéré. Je vous promets donc un joli assortiment l'hiver prochain, les chaleurs n'étant pas favorable au transport de vins délicats. Vous aurez lieu d'être content du choix et de la qualité. Je continuerai ces envois tous les hivers, par la raison qu'on ne vit qu'aujourd'hui ; qui est ce qui a vu le demain ? demande une chanson grecque. Après cela, quand tout à votre aise, le demain de mon rappel sera devenu aujourd'hui ; nous partagerons en tout bien et honneur le reste du butin. Je me transporterai en idée sur cette montagne lorsque vous y assemblerez votre famille, on y vivra fort gaiement surtout si le Grand Prévot est de la partie ; et tant ce prélat que le reste de la compagnie, quand ils ne sauront absolument que faire, diront ; va-t-en battre le Grand Prévot, tu gagneras double amende, mais ce proverbe ne s'appliquera qu'à celui de votre montagne, savoir à Cigala, et on ira l'étriller de la bonne façon »: Herbert to Cobenzl (Belgrade, June 18, 1781), in ÖStA, IHStA, Staatenabteilung, Türkei V, 18, fo. 161v/169r.

44 «Baron Herbert is certainly a man of ability [...]. Baron Herbert has engaged his Court to establish Consuls in Egypt at a time when the French and Venetians have retired their's from Grand Cairo. This fact joined to his intimate connection [...] with a certain Mr

In 1780, all the actors were in place, it was not enough to simply connect them. So the East India Company's trade was captured by the British consul in Basra who sent by caravan to Aleppo a part of the goods. From Aleppo, British merchants took charge of the goods they brought to Cairo and Alexandria where the brothers Balthasar and Carlo Rossetti, two merchants from Trieste who had become consuls of the emperor in Egypt, laundered the goods. From Alexandria, these goods were brought to Trieste by Ottoman and British merchants. This system based on informal networks was completely covered in Vienna by Philipp Cobenzl with the approval of Joseph II. In order to guarantee the loyalty and protection of the British merchants involved in such commercial diversion, they received letters of naturalization from the emperor. The most astonishing was that the British ambassador in Istanbul, Robert Ainslie, discovered the system in 1781. He warned London, which was struggling to control the activities of the East India Company, and he also warned the British ambassador in Vienna. The latter replied half-worded to be informed of it and advised him to seek to take advantage of the system rather than denounce it⁴⁵.

Herbert displayed here a special agenda that shows his autonomy within Philipp Cobenzl's *clientèle*. In 1778, the Papist Act of George III allowed the Catholic subjects of the King of England to make a career in his service. Herbert then sought recognition for the title that had been taken away from his father, which he obtained while stationed in Istanbul in 1781. His closeness with Peter Tooke then leads him to work on a long rapprochement between the Habsburg and British empires in the Near East. This again involved strategies of marriage between various students Oriental Academy in Vienna and the daughters of the dragomans in the service of the King of England. The definitive break between France and Austria in 1792, allows Herbert to be more openly ambitious. He became friend with the British Minister Plenipotentiary John Spencer Smith as soon as he arrived in 1795. In 1798, the latter married Constance and the two embassies merged their private resources to prevent the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte's troops. As an example, during the fire of 1799, the Habsburg embassy, served as a refuge for the British delegation. John Spencer Smith placed his seals and the English number there. The same year the son of the internuncio embarked with

[George] Smith a free merchant in India (an intimate of the famous Bolts) [...], and with the principal Merchants, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, at Constantinople, who trade in India Commodities, whose friendship he assiduously courts: all this, my Lord, and many other facts, too long to enumerate, will I hope justify my suspicion that Baron Hebert joined France and Venice, in forwarding schemes of illicit trade with our settlements in India»: Ainslie to Hillsborough (Kew, April 12, 1782), in United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office, F[oreign] O[ffice Records], 78/3, foll. 81r-83v.

45 Do Paço, *A Social History of Trans-Imperial Diplomacy* cit., pp. 993-995.

Hammer Purgstall on the *Le Tigre*, the ship of the British naval commodore in the eastern Mediterranean, under the command of Sidney Spencer Smith, the elder brother of the British Minister Plenipotentiary. If the credit of this policy was undoubtedly to be given to Peter Herbert von Rahtkeal, its paroxysm corresponded to the progressive assumption of the emperor's external affairs by Louis Cobenzl from 1797 to 1801, which guaranteed the autonomy of the *internuncio*⁴⁶.

3. Beyond the Ottoman Empire

The commercial development of the port of Trieste and the growing influence of Habsburg diplomacy in Istanbul gradually made the emperor aware of the opportunities of developing trade in the Indian Ocean and towards China. This project was realized in 1783 with the departure of a ship, *Le Comte de Cobenzl*, in the direction of Guangzhou⁴⁷.

The initiative came from the Dutch merchant William Bolts who had served with the East India Company. On June 5, 1775, he was authorized to launch an expedition in the Indian Ocean to establish trading posts in favor of the Habsburgs. The enterprise was diplomatically delicate as it could cause tensions with the United Provinces, England, and France. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the American War of Independence allowed Vienna to consider the matter and the Prince Kaunitz to finally join the project. It is from Livorno that the ships *Le Joseph et Thérèse* left in order not to arouse the suspicions of the foreign consuls in Trieste, but also to allow Bolts to recruit an experienced crew⁴⁸. The ship followed the Portuguese route. After passing the Cape of Good Hope, they anchored in the Bay of Delagoa and set up a first *comptoir* that allowed the ships to be supplied. Then the ship took the direction of Goa where the first commercial agreements are made. Bolts then negotiates all along the coast of the Indian subcontinent, settled *comptoirs* on the Malabar coast before settling in the Ganges delta. Moreover, it reaches the Nicobar archipelago at the mouth of the Strait of Malacca, thus laying the groundwork

46 *Ibidem*, pp. 995-997.

47 For the details of the expedition see ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, foll. 1130-1153.

48 Early suspicions can be found in the correspondence of the British consul in Trieste, Nath Green, «It is talked of here that some English Man is about establishing a House of trade in [309v] this port, but as the news comes from Vienna & I have no news about it by other means I suppose it to be only owing to what Mr Ryan may have said about settling, He & Mr Bolts are loading their great ship at Leghorn»: Green to Keith (Trieste, Sept. 2, 1776), The British Library, Hardwicke papers, Add Ms 35510, fol. 309r.

for a future expedition to China. *Le Joseph et Thérèse* returned to Livorno in 1781⁴⁹.

The initiative for a trade to China came from the Antwerp banker and businessman Charles de Proli. On 15 September 1780, he introduced to the Chancellerie of Bohemia and of Austria his project to send two ships from the French port of Lorient to «the East Indies and China» and to sell the merchandise in Trieste⁵⁰. In 1781, Proli chartered another ship, *Le Ville de Vienne*⁵¹. Proli had been a close advisor to the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Low Countries Charles Cobenzl. Moreover his nephew Pierre was clearly identified by Peter Herbert as a client of Philipp Cobenzl and was already involved in the diversion of the trade of the East India Company⁵². It was in this shady environment of Mediterranean trade that the expedition of *Le Ville de Vienne* was set up, which foreshadowed that of *Le Comte de Cobenzl*. Proli's initiative in fact aroused the interest of the Curtović brothers⁵³. Originally from

49 Fulvio BABUDIERI, *Trieste e gli interessi austriaci in Asia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, Padova, CEDAM, 1966, p. 65.

50 « [...] expédier des vaisseaux aux Indes orientales sous pavillon Impérial [...] Les deux Frères port de six cent tonneaux, Les deux Sœur du port de quatre cent tonneaux [...] du port de Lorient pour les Indes orientales et la Chine sous l'obligation formelle de ne toucher à aucun des établissements fondés par le lieutenant Colonel Bolts et de faire leurs retours et leurs ventes à Trieste »: ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 630r.

51 « [...] prend la très respectueuse liberté de la supplier de lui faire expédier des lettres de mer pour le vaisseau *La Ville de Vienne* destinée pour les Indes orientales, et faisant ses retours à Trieste, ainsi que des lettres de naturalité pour deux officiers de ce vaisseau »: ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903., fol. 597.

52 « Io infrascritto Giovanni Curtovich dichiaro con mio solenne Giuramento, quale intendo mi sia stato legalmente deferito et da me formalmente deposto; che Imo. Io sia li solo e vero Proprietario del mio Bastimento, che nominatamente è Nave intitolata *La Città di Vienna* della Portata di circa trecento novanta cinque Tonnellate equipaggiata con trenta sei Uomini, compresa la persona del Capitano Antonio Gherica, armata con sedeci cannoni [...] 4to Mi dichiaro, prometto, e mi oblico di non alberare, né di lasciar alberare in nessun tempo, ò luogo, et per nessuna causa, ò ragione sopra la sudesta Nave altra Bandiera, ò Indegna, se non il solo Glorioso Paviglione di S.M.I. et R. [...]: ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903., fol. 655r/v.

53 From Vienna in 1767 we learnt about Curtović's brothers: «Christoph Curtovitz wohnhaft im Steuerhof, alt 28 Jahr, gebürtig in Erzegovina in Trebina, graeci ritus non unitorum, und derzeit allda ansässig. Sagt: Er seye ein türkischer Unterthan, bezahle die gewöhnliche Contributionen, und Kopfsteuer, habe aber die diesfällige Zettl nicht bey handen. Seye das erstemal vor 11 und das leztemal vor 7 Jahren bey Triest in die Kaiser: König: Erblande herein gekommen, habe auch seine foede samt die Paßbrief allda gelassen, durch diese 7 Jahr wäre er beständig allhier gewesen, und gedenke nach Erfordernus seiner Handlungsgeschäfte hier zu verbeliben; Eben im Steuerhof habe er zwey Niederlagen, und zwey Keller, und seye mit senem zu Smirna befindlichen Bruder Maximo Kurtovicz in Compagnie, fuhre aus der Türke. Baumwoll, öel, roth-Garn, Wein, und allerhand sÿsse Waaren unter der Firma Maximo Kurtovicz be.laufig für 100000 fr

Trebinje in Herzegovina, during the reign of Maria Theresa they developed a particularly lucrative trade directly linking Vienna and Trieste to Istanbul and Smyrna. Giovanni Curtović was also identified by Peter Herbert von Rathkeal as a «friend» whom he protected in Istanbul⁵⁴. He also uses him as an agent since the Curtović firm already transports part of the diverted merchandises. In 1781, because Proli did not manage to find a suitable ship to reach China, Giovanni Curtović proposed to put one of his ships at disposal, under the command of Antonio Gheriza. *Le Ville de Vienne* was then ready to leave.

However, *Le Ville de Vienne* did not allow the investment of all the available capital and, a few weeks after his departure, Charles and Pierre Proli submitted a new complementary project. It was a question of obtaining a patent for a ship «intended for Africa and neutral America»⁵⁵ and that Charles Proli proposed to baptize *Comte Philipp de Cobenzl*, «this name dear to the monarchy»⁵⁶. Proli's Antwerp project was accepted on December 22, 1781, but it was in competition with that of the Governor of Trieste, Karl von Zinzendorf, who in the same year was preparing the establishment of a trade route with America. The ship finally chosen was *La Città di Trieste*, bought by Pierre Proli in Marseille and which had to leave the port of Nice with Aloigio Petrenello as captain⁵⁷. The adjustment of the Charles Proli's project foreshadowed an almost systematic association of Antwerp finance with the trade of the port of Trieste. This association was embodied in 1781 in the creation of the *Société impériale asiatique de Trieste et d'Anvers*, whose two principal

jährlich herauf, und verschike dafür theils Krammercëwaaren, theils Kaiser: König: Species Thaller hinab»: *Conscription Deren allhier in Wien sich befindenden Türkten und türkischen Unterthanen, welche zu Folgen Allerböchsten Resolution det° 18ten und praesentato 11ten Decembbris 1766 etc.*, in ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 27, pp. 174-175.

54 « Sans remonter fort haut je vous confierai pour preuve que passé trois jours, il vint me déclarer qu'il y avait 1000 piastres à gagner pour moi et 500 pour lui, qu'un nommé Curtovitz, négociant de Trieste établi à Smyrne offrait ces sommes si je pouvais lui passer un fermans de la Porte pour envoyer à Trieste un navire chargé d'huiles. Je répondais à Testa que ni moi ni lui nous ne devions rien gagner sur les sujets de S.M.té auxquels j'étais prêt d'accorder ma protection et mon entremise sans rien exiger d'eux, que par conséquent il devait faire savoir à Curtovitz ma résolution à cet égard, et l'assurer que je m'emploierai pour lui obtenir cette grâce tout comme si j'avais à en partager les profits. J'ai en même tem[p]s chargé un homme affidé de découvrir si Testa s'était acquitté de cette commission, et j'eu la satisfaction d'apprendre que sortant de chez moi il a été répéter mot pour mot ce que je lui avait dit à l'homme d'affaires Curtovich »: Herbert to Cobenzl, Pétra, 2 mai 1780, ÖStA, HHStA, Staatenabteilungen, Türkei V, 18, fol. 80v.

55 « [...] destiné pour l'Amérique neutre »: ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 701.

56 « [...] je prends la très respectueuse liberté de supplier votre Excellence de me faire expédier des lettres de mer pour le navire le Comte Philipp de Cobenzl, si elle daigne permettre qu'il port ce nom cher à la Monarchie »: Pierre Proli to Philipp Cobenzl (Marseille, August 1, 1781), in ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 704.

57 ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, foll. 725-735.

partners were Charles de Proli and William Bolts, to whom were added the knight Borrekens and Dominique Nagels. Except Bolts, all were former protégés of the Minister Plenipotentiary Charles Cobenzl, Philipp's uncle. The initial capital of the Society was 2,000,000 German guilders⁵⁸. The *Société impériale asiatique de Trieste et d'Anvers* successively sends seven vessels to China from London, Trieste, Livorno, Lorient and Bordeaux⁵⁹.

It was in July 1782 that *Le Comte Cobenzl*, that had originally been destined by Proli for the triangular trade, appeared in the activity of the Imperial Company. As stated in its passport, the ship had a capacity of 600 tons. It can carry 22 cannons and requires a crew of 72 to 80 people to be piloted under the command of Jean Joseph Bauer, described as «Hungarian». His expedition had to leave «from the port of Trieste to the North-West coast of America and return via Canton in China to Trieste, with his exploitation boat [...] of about 15 tons which was loaded in pieces on the said vessel to be erected and put together on the said North-West coast of America for the object of exploitation»⁶⁰. It was therefore a world enterprise that was envisaged and the establishment of new *comptoirs*. The acceptance of the project by Joseph II follows a series of naturalizations of subjects born in America, England and Ireland, which attests to Vienna's growing interest in Atlantic trade and its ability to involve experts in these commercial projects⁶¹. Further Bolts confirmed that *Le Comte de Cobenzl* was protected by the Ottoman Sultan on his journey from Asia to Trieste.

However, the contract of 17 December 1782 was more modest, and the circumvolution was abandoned. *Le Comte de Cobenzl* had to leave for the

58 ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, foll. 757-758, and foll. 821-824.

59 « L'émulation des Actionnaires, les effets avantageux de la Vente faite en cette ville le 4 de ce mois, les circonstances présentes, et l'espoir d'en tirer tout le parti possible, ont déterminé la Société à faire les plus grands efforts pour porter le Pavillon Imperial et Royal de Votre Majesté dans toutes les parties de l'Inde, ou les Nations Européennes font travailler leur Industrie. Il a donc été arrêté, vu la stérilité momentanée des moiëns propres à former nos armements de cette années au Port de Trieste, jointe aux grands frais, et risques, que courreraient des vaisseaux pour y aller armées par rapport aux croisières barbaresque, que nous les députés de la Société adresseraient cette supplique à Votre Majesté à l'effet d'obtenir cinq lettres de pavillon pour ajouter aux deux qu'il lui a déjà plu de nous accorder ; et dont S.E. Mr le Comte de Belgiojoso est dépositaire [...]. Les sept vaisseaux faisant ensemble 6200 tonneaux ». ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 878/v.

60 « [...] depuis le port de Trieste jusqu'à la côte Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique et de retour par Canton en Chine à Trieste, avec sa chaloupe [...] d'exploitation du port d'environ 15 tonneaux qui va chargé en pièces sur le dit vaisseau pour être érigées ensemble sur la dite côte de l'Amérique pour l'objet de l'exploitation » : ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 910r.

61 ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, foll. 906r. and 922r.

East Indies and China «per la via ordinaria del Capo di Buona Speranza»⁶². The expedition is preceded by the setting up of a shareholding company, the *Società Triestina*. Its capital amounted to 400,000 florins and was divided into 100 shares of 4,000 florins. Bolts was appointed director of the company together with Giacomo Gabbiati, Giovanni Adamo Wagner and Giovanni Rossetti. Edoardo Watts, recently naturalized, acted as procurator. The directors also obtained the granting of a passport and a patent for a ship that could be purchased in India to support the trade of *Le Comte de Cobenzl* and would be given the name *Le Comte de Belgiojoso*. They also obtain a series of gifts for the Nabab Heyder Ally Khan who is to place the two ships under the protection of the Malabar throughout their activity in India. Finally, new letters of naturalization were granted, notably to Peter Smith, an Irish merchant close to Bolts and the East India Company and designated as a *protégé* of Peter Herbert von Rathkeal by the British ambassador in Istanbul⁶³. Other experts such as John Doubleday and Jack Anderson in turn received letters of naturalization and embarked on *Le Comte Cobenzl* to ensure the smooth progress of the voyage⁶⁴. Also, in August 1783 Jack Campbel and «the Persian secretary Munry Seid Buddal ul Zemaun» left «through Aleppo and Bassora to the East Indies» to announce to Hyder-Ali the forthcoming arrival of the boat, its cargo and the gifts it contained⁶⁵.

The ship *Le Comte de Cobenzl* was not directly commissioned by the Cobenzl family, but it illustrated the important place it added to the development of the Habsburg trade by succeeding in particular in reconciling the interests of the Flemish finance and the merchants of Trieste. Moreover, the expedition mobilized a certain number of agents who benefited directly or indirectly from the protection of Philipp Cobenzl, often through the intermediary of Peter Herbert von Rathkeal. More generally, the ship still illustrated the central place of the Cobenzl family in the development and in the promotion of the Habsburg composite monarchy.

62 «Il sudetto Signor Bolts congiuntamente colli signori condirettori infrascritti, e per conto di questa Società Triestina sarà allestire e spedire per l'Indie Orientali e per la China, per la via ordinaria del Capo di Buona Speranza, la nave nuova Imperiale nominata il Cobenzel etc...»: *Convenzion circa la spedizione di farsi par la Società Triestina nel nave nominata Cobenzl, da Trieste per l'Indie orientali, e per la China; e di ritorno in Trieste*, in ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 1075r. See also Fulvio BABUDIERI, *L'espansione mercantile austriaca nei territori d'oltremare nel XVIII secolo e suoi riflessi politici ed economici*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1978, p. 161.

63 William Bolts to Phillip Cobenzl (Trieste, July 4, 1783), in ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 1058r.

64 Petition of Giovanni Rossetti for the Società Triestina to Philipp Cobenzl (July 30, 1783), in ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 1198r/v.

65 «il secretario Persiano' Munry Seid Buddal ul Zemaun per la via di Aleppo e Bassora all'Indie»: ÖStA, FHK, NHK, Lit., 903, fol. 1209.

Conclusions

The Cobenzl family appeared here as a trans-imperial family. This meant that its members operated in different empires – here the Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov empires – while maintaining strong family bonds and at the same time pursuing the family's interests. The Cobenzls had acquired this trans-imperial dimension primarily through the ability of its members to belong directly to different empires. As is the case with the family in the Habsburg Empire, where the heart of the family owned its lands in Inner Austria, or as Louis Cobenzl's long stay at St. Petersburg Imperial court also illustrated. The Cobenzls could also enjoy trans-imperial influence through their *protégés*, i.e. intermediaries such as Peter Herbert von Rathkeal, who strengthened the Cobenzls interests in the Ottoman Empire, or the Prolis, who gave a global dimension to the history of the household of the Cobenzl household at the end of the 18th century.

The history of the Cobenzl family also invites us to change our perspective on the history of empires. Empires were not opposing blocks, but spheres of solidarity and tension that did not stop at the border of a political territory or at the border of a religious community. Empires used their agents as much as agents used empires. Two historical realities must then be distinguished. The first was that of states that divided the world according to the territories they mutually controlled. The second was that of societies and the spaces they invested, appropriated, transformed, articulated without necessarily being constrained by states. Societies were and are under no obligation to correspond to the way empires – or any other form of state – perceived them.

It is therefore no longer possible to reduce the Counts Cobenzl to faithful servants of the Habsburg state and monarchy. The Cobenzl household was associated with the Habsburg household in a common pursuit of profit. Maria Theresa and later Joseph II were able to take advantage of the considerable influence of the Cobenzls in Europe and in the Ottoman and Romanov empires. The Cobenzls used their institutional positions to make the family's business flourish and to give it a new global dimension. From the Chancellery of State they were able to invest and diplomatic positions that were becoming increasingly important, if not crucial with the Eastern Question. Thanks to their anchorage in Inner Austria and in the County of Gorizia they also supported and benefited from the development of the free port of Trieste. They took part in a global trade from the Bay of Delaware to the Pearl River Delta.

Abstract

This contribution explores the economic, social, political and cultural connections of the Cobenzl family with the Ottoman Empire. It highlights the diplomatic revolution led by Philipp Cobenzl (1741-1810) from 1779 onwards. This diplomatic revolution relied on the family's private networks and the influence of Peter Herbert von Rathkeal (1735-1802) in Istanbul and within the Ottoman Empire. The rich and dense correspondence between Philipp Cobenzl and Peter Herbert von Rathkeal between Vienna and Istanbul from 1779 to 1792 is here a major contribution to the new diplomatic history and to the history of the Eastern question and the history of the Habsburg monarchy. Finally, the networks of the Cobenzl family offer an original perspective to the economic development of the port of Trieste and in particular to the development of its global dimension and the first exchanges between Trieste, the Indian Ocean and China. Habsburg diplomacy in Istanbul gradually made the emperor aware of the opportunities of developing trade with Asia: this project was realized in 1783 with the departure of a ship, *Le Comte de Cobenzl*, in the direction of Guangzhou. Although Maria Theresa and Joseph II were able to take advantage of the Cobenzls' considerable influence in Europe and in the Ottoman and Romanov empires, the family members used their institutional positions to make business flourish and to give it a new global dimension.

Keywords

Ottoman Empire; Habsburg Monarchy; China; diplomacy; cross-cultural exchange

