

PHILIPPE DE SANIS / PHILIPPE DE ZAGHLY IN VIENNA AND IN VIENNESE SOURCES

ՖԻԼԻՊ ԴԵ ՍԱՆԻՍ-ՖԻԼԻՊ ԴԵ ՉԱԴԼԻՆ ՎԻԵՆՆԱՅՈՒՄ ԵՎ ՎԻԵՆՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՂՔՅՈՒՐՆԵՐՈՒՄ

ФИЛИПП ДЕ САНИС-ФИЛИПП ДЕ ЗАГЛИ В ВЕНЕ И ВЕНСКИХ ИСТОЧНИКАХ

Jakob Breu
Յակոբ Բրոյ
Якоб Брой

Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO), Germany
Արևելյան Եվրոպայի պատմության և մշակույթի Լայբնից ինստիտուտ (ԳՎՀՕ), Գերմանիա
Лейбниц-Институт истории и культуры Восточной Европы (ГВЦО), Германия

jakob.breu.nfg@leibniz-gwzo.de

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Abstract – This article traces the infamous Armenian adventurer and "trickster-traveller" Philippe de Sanis as far as his life can be constructed when looking at the sources in the Austrian State Archive in Vienna. These previously neglected documents allow reconstructing especially the years de Sanis spent in the Holy Roman Empire, Poland and Vienna (1689–1694) before resettling to Sweden, but also shed light to his earlier years in France and Switzerland. Thereby de Sanis' relationship to his brother-in-law, the traveller and merchant Tavernier, and the former's claims to the latter's inheritance move into the focus. I show that de Sanis and his friends invested a lot of time to pursue a dubious claim that in the end produced nothing. Another focal point of the article is de Sanis' integration into a French espionage scheme and intriguing network. The Armenian authored plans favourable to France that centred on convincing the Polish King Jan Sobieski to conclude a separate peace with the Ottoman Empire and instead declare war on Prussia. De Sanis combined this goal with a conspiracy theory, instigating in his papers a fear of an all-European alliance of the Catholic Emperor, the Pope, and several Protestant princes who were allegedly secretly working at destroying Poland and the Catholics in England.

Ամփոփում – Հոդվածը քննության է առել հայ հայտնի արկածախնդիր և «խաբեբա-ճանապարհորդ» Ֆիլիպ դը Սանիսի (մոտ. 1652–1707) գործունեությունը՝ հիմնված Ավստրիայի պետական արխիվում (Վիեննա) պահվող աղբյուրների վրա: Ցայժմ անտեսված սույն

փաստաթղթերը հնարավորություն են տալիս նորովի ներկայացնելու հատկապես Սանիսի՝ Սրբազան Հռոմեական կայսրությունում, Լեհաստանում և Վիեննայում ապրած տարիները (1689–1694) նախքան նրա՝ Շվեդիայում հաստատվելը, ինչպես նաև լույս են սփռում նախորդ տարիներին Ֆրանսիայում և Շվեյցարիայում նրա ծավալած գործունեության վրա: Ուսումնասիրության նյութ են դարձել Սանիսի առնչություններն իր քենակալի՝ ճանապարհորդ և վաճառական Ժան-Բատիստ Տավեռնիեի (1605–1689) հետ և վերջինիս ժառանգության նկատմամբ ունեցած նրա հավակնությունները: Սանիսի և իր համախոհների գործադրած բոլոր ջանքերը մի կասկածելի պահանջ կատարելու առումով ոչ մի արդյունք չեն տվել: Հոդվածի մյուս առանցքային հայեցակետը Սանիսի ներգրավվածությունն է ֆրանսիական լրտեսական ցանցի և քաղաքական ինտրիգների սխեմայի մեջ: Նա հղացել է Ֆրանսիայի շահերին նպաստող ծրագրեր, որոնց գլխավոր նպատակը եղել է Լեհաստանի թագավոր Յան Սոբեսկիին Օսմանյան կայսրության հետ խաղաղություն կնքելու և դրա փոխարեն Պրուսիային պատերազմ հայտարարելու գաղափարներ ներշնչելը: Սանիսն այս նպատակը համադրել է դավադրության տեսության հետ՝ իր փաստաթղթերում տարածելով այն վախճ, թե իբր Սրբազան Հռոմեական կայսրության կայսեր, Հռոմի պապի և մի շարք բողոքական իշխանների համաեվրոպական դաշինքը ենթադրաբար գործում է Լեհաստանի և Անգլիայի կաթոլիկների կործանման ուղղությամբ:

Аннотация – В статье, на основе источников Австрийского государственного архива в Вене, прослеживается деятельность известного авантюриста и «обманщика-путешественника», армянина Филиппа де Саниса (ок. 1652–1707). Эти ранее не изученные документы позволяют реконструировать, в частности, годы, проведённые де Санисом в Священной Римской империи, Польше и Вене (1689–1694) до его переселения в Швецию, а также проливают свет на более ранние годы его деятельности во Франции и Швейцарии. В центре внимания оказывается его связь со своим свояком – путешественником и купцом Жаном-Батистом Тавернье (1605–1689), а также претензии де Саниса на наследство последнего. В статье показано, что де Санис и его сторонники преследовали сомнительные цели, которые в итоге ни к чему не привели. Другой ключевой аспект статьи – вовлечённость де Саниса во французскую шпионскую сеть и интригующую политическую схему. Он разработал планы, выгодные Франции, которые были направлены на то, чтобы убедить польского короля Яна Собеского заключить мир с Османской империей и объявить войну Пруссии. Де Санис сочетал эту цель с теорией заговора, утверждая в своих документах, что, якобы, император Священной Римской империи, Папа Римский и несколько протестантских князей предположительно работают над уничтожением Польши и истреблением католиков в Англии.

Keywords – Philippe de Sanis, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Austria, France, espionage.

Հիմնաբառեր – Ֆիլիպ դը Սանիս, Ժան-Բատիստ Տավեռնիե, Ավստրիա, Ֆրանսիա, լրտեսություն: **Ключевые слова** – Филипп де Санис, Жан-Батист Тавернье, Австрия, Франция, шпионаж.

Introduction

The Armenian adventurer and "trickster traveller" Khojah P'ilip'os (approx. 1652–1707), also known as Philippe de Sanis, Philippe de Zaghly or by other names, has found considerable attention, owing to his presence in many European courts

during the latter half of the 17th century. These studies have often concentrated on his activities in specific regions, cities or courts and thus could only reconstruct parts of his life, whereas some of his doings and his whereabouts during some years remained obscure. Most importantly, many of these studies have focused extensively on de Sanis' time in Sweden in the years 1695–97 and his subsequent turn to the Duchy of Courland, some of them only briefly summarizing his life up to that point and in the years following (Gulbenkian 1970; Curtin 1984; Troebst 1998; Matthee 1999, 200–201; Aslanian 2015; Bakhchinyan 2021). In contrast, the years he spent in the Holy Roman Empire and especially the two years he was imprisoned in Vienna and suspected for espionage on behalf of the French and the Ottomans have barely been studied so far. Small remarks by Stefan Troebst (1998) on the subject do not suffice, whereas Karl Teply who had written shortly also about de Sanis was not able to connect to the existing literature (Teply 1980, 150–51), and subsequently the remnant research on de Sanis also neglected Teply's remarks. It needs to be acknowledged that Michael Hundt (1997) has studied some of de Sanis's contacts with Brandenburg, however, the years in which the Armenian stayed in Magdeburg remained out of his focus. Thus it is clear that de Sanis merits another study in which the years of his stay in the Holy Roman Empire form the main focus, without ignoring the remainder of his biography. This is all the more important, because the Viennese sources allow shedding light also on parts of his earlier life and because studying his biography at least up to his arrival in Vienna in 1689 is important for understanding the reasons he came to this city.

Origins of de Sanis

Khojah P'ilip'os (Philippe de Sanis) was born approximately in 1652 in the Armenian colony of New Julfa near Isfahan. The date of his birth can be traced from the interrogation protocol of his process in Vienna where he said to be "approximately 37 years old" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133). As far as Gulbenkian reconstructed, de Sanis' father Elias was a goldsmith who considered it opportune to convert to Islam after having "done his business badly" and probably with the impetus of improving his business once again (Gulbenkian 1970, 362). Elias seems to have passed on this very pragmatic attitude towards his own religion to his son. Similar to other Armenians active in Europe, de Sanis changed his name several times according to the circumstances (Teply 1980). At the same time he tried to improve his background and status by asserting to possess a number of aristocratic titles and claiming a relationship with noble and ancient Persian families. His self-portrayal is most prominent in his autobiography "Histoire de Schick Alli Beg Sanis Prince du Sang de Perse. Contenant sa Genealogie, sa naissance, Ses Voyages, sa Conversion, & son Mariage en France avec la Belle-Sœur de Monsieur Tavernier, Baron d'Aubonne. Et Deux Lettres qu'il a écrites de Moscou au Roi de Perse", printed in Geneva in 1685, in which he claimed de-

scent from the princes of Nineveh, whose genealogy he could trace back to the Middle Ages and the time of Tamerlane. At other occasions, he spoke of himself as illegitimate son of Shah Abbas II and an Armenian concubine, thus purportedly being related to the Safavid family (Posselt 1866, 351f; Bakhchinyan 2021, 36). In Vienna he claimed to be a descendant from the "well-known Manbulican noble family" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133). During his life de Sanis appeared as "Comte de Simony", "Comte de Siry", "Marquis de Garbian", "Hussein Bey Talis" or, in his letters to the French king, "Philipp Sick Alli bey Sanis". When the interrogators during his Viennese process in 1689 commented on his adoption of diverse and dubious names, he snapped back that he was free to write "as he wished" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37, fol. 5r.).

As an Armenian from New Julfa, de Sanis was embedded in a merchant community from an early age and later served also as an agent of the trading families, most importantly, for the Šahremāniāns (Hundt 1997, 12f.; Bakhchinyan 2021, 36). His first documented visit to Europe dates back to 1669, when he joined a group of traders at the age of around 17 and came to Paris (Gulbenkian 1970, 362). However, this appears to have been only a short trip, as de Sanis returned to the Safavid Empire, which he said he only left for good in around 1676 and travelled to Europe via Constantinople (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133 and November No. 37). His own testimony is bolstered by French envoy Pierre-Victor Michel who likewise said that de Sanis arrived in France in 1675 (Gulbenkian 1970, 362, who merged both travels).

Prior to this final decision to resettle, de Sanis had made acquaintance with a Jesuit priest in Isfahan, who then probably took him with him and recommended him to others. In 1678 or 1679, he converted from Islam to Catholicism by influence of the Jesuit (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133, and November No. 37, fol. 3v), although it is not clear whether he was baptized in Portugal or in Paris. A report of the Brandenburgian envoy Johann Dietrich von Hoverbeck names Portugal as the place of conversion (Hundt 1997, 12; Troebst 1998, 177), but de Sanis' above-mentioned, in many aspects unreliable autobiography points to the latter place (Zagly 1686, 48; as well as Gulbenkian 1970, 363). According to his own narrative, the sponsor of his baptism was Philippe duc d'Orléans, brother of King Louis XIV, who also lent his first name to the newly-Catholicised. Afterwards he stated to have become a member of the French musketeer corps, allegedly through the intercession of Louis XIV's brother. He spent three-and-a-half years as a musketeer. When leaving the musketeers, he was entitled to a yearly French pension (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133; Zagly 1686, 49).

Marriage and first travels through Europe

In 1682, de Sanis married a daughter of the Parisian jeweller Goisse in Paris. Through this marriage, he was related by marriage to the traveller and merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier and his wife Madeleine Goisse, the second daughter of the jeweller. The marriage was probably mediated by Tavernier, as de Sanis attributes the matchmaking to him: "He [Tavernier] suggested to him to enter his alliance and marry his sister-in-law" (Zagly 1686, 49). Tavernier came from a Huguenot family and through his travels to Armenia, Persia, and as far as India, his trading activities and the sale of precious gemstones to Louis XIV, he became so wealthy that he was awarded a title and could buy the castle and city of Aubonne near Lake Geneva (Tavernier 1889, xi-xxxvii; Joret 1886).

In the following years, de Sanis repeatedly spent time in Aubonne at his brother-in-law's castle. However, the relationship cannot have been entirely free of friction, as Tavernier referred to the Armenian unflatteringly as a "travestied Frenchman" (Troebst 1998, 178). Also, de Sanis complained later that Tavernier had made promises to him in course of the wedding, but broke them all and sold his property, which is by all likelihood far away from the real course of events, given that de Sanis fabricated tall tales more than once (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 5r). However, it is an indication of the strenuous relationship with his brother-in-law. Following de Sanis' testimony, he also could not practice his new Catholic religion in Aubonne because his wife and sister-in-law were Protestant. Another problematic aspect was that in 1682 his properties in France were confiscated because of the Protestant faith of his new wife. Since then, de Sanis purportedly had never been in France again and he also did not receive French pensions anymore (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133, and November No. 37, fol. 2r, 3r-v, and December No. 59, fol. 48v-49r). However, his testimony in the interrogation in Vienna is by all chances flawed. The confiscation of his goods, which he claimed to the Aulic War Council in Vienna, is implausible because it did not prevent him from subsequently representing French interests and making plans favourable to France. By insisting to the Aulic War Council that his property had been confiscated and that he had left France, he downplayed his still existing connections to the country. It is also important to note that de Sanis claimed the confiscation to have taken place already in 1682 and therefore a few years earlier than Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The largest question mark must be put behind his religion and his impossibility to observe the Catholic rite after leaving France. The Aulic War Council took from a document he carried along that de Sanis was not a Catholic but a Protestant (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Outgoing letters November No. 24-1, fol. 55r, and Incoming letters November No. 37). A decade later, when he resettled to Sweden, de Sanis definitely converted to Protestantism, so his adherence to the Catholic faith was never a strong commitment.

Although at the beginning of the 1680s Philippe de Sanis was thus based in France and Aubonne, he went on at least two journeys throughout Europe. These journeys were driven by commercial impulse, to open new ways for Armenian travel on behalf of the New Julfan merchant families, as well as probably by espionage and secret missions on behalf of the French. In 1681, he travelled to Poland for the first time, from where he contacted the Elector of Brandenburg and offered to trade Persian silk for amber. The members of the Brandenburgian court at first hoped that the Armenian adventurer was an official legate of the Persian Shah and were initially disappointed when they found out that he was an envoy of the Šahremāniāns (Hundt 1997, 12f).

De Sanis travelled again eastwards in 1683, leaving Amsterdam in secrecy and reaching Moscow at the end of the year after he had been delayed in Arkhangel'sk because of a still missing passport. He stated that he wanted to go to Isfahan, but the people in Moscow believed that he was on a secret French mission to exert influence on the Persian Shah and prevent war between the Safavid and the Ottoman Empire or, alternatively, to fuel the French cause in the Moscow court (Posselt 1866, 351). During his stay in Moscow de Sanis claimed to be an illegitimate son of the Persian Shah and moved through high societal circles. Living in the Moscow *sloboda* he adopted a pretentious and boisterous lifestyle, surrounded himself with servants, equipage and horses, lived in luxury and had high expenses, so that even the high boyars treated him with reverence. He also met the ambassadors of Denmark and Poland while being a guest in the house of the German general Franz Lefort and allowed nobody to sit down until he had taken a seat (Posselt 1866, 351–353). This very characterising attitude – which was conceived unbearable by contemporaries but did not lead to him being let down – we will see again when focusing on his time in Vienna. Ultimately de Sanis left Moscow in haste and returned to Aubonne, according to his autobiography because the Persians had been informed of his Christianisation and marriage, so that he now feared for his life. He had made huge debts, so the Muscovites needed to confiscate and sell all his possessions (e.g. horses and carriages) that he had left behind (Zagly 1686, 55; Posselt 1866, 353).

In Magdeburg

Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg appointed Tavernier to Berlin in 1684 to advise him on trade and colonisation issues in Asia. Tavernier sold Aubonne the following year. His brother-in-law de Sanis also moved and, like Tavernier, enjoyed the Elector's patronage (Tavernier 1889, xxxiv–xxxv; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 3v). He spent several years in Magdeburg, where he had travelled to establish himself, assess the money of his sister-in-law and to buy some estates. Although the documents of his stay in Magdeburg which he had in his luggage when travelling to Vienna and which were confiscated there were returned to him and thus did not survive in the archives, the War

Council's notes allow for some reconstructions. From that source stems that de Sanis bought a garden in or near Magdeburg, some estates which had previously belonged to the bishopric of Magdeburg, and took fiefdom of a water mill that belonged to the monastery of St Agatha in Magdeburg-Neustadt. He was also to some degree involved in the transfer of ownership of another water mill that had belonged to the late General Börstel, since he had purchase contracts of all these in his luggage. He also tried to buy the office of the canon Seldt in the Magdeburg monastery, but to no avail (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37, fol. 7v, and December No. 59, fol. 51r, and Outgoing letters November No. 24-1, fol. 77v; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 1v, 2v-3v, 29v, 30v, 31v, 32).

During the years in Magdeburg, de Sanis had a Dutch housekeeper from Nijmegen, Stephan Renier de Herwarden, and had also a close relationship with his sister Cornelia van Herwarden. De Sanis even wrote love letters to her. The romantic overture to Cornelia is telling, bearing in mind that de Sanis was legally married at that time and Cornelia had also a husband. But later de Sanis disengaged from her and demanded to get all things back which he had deposited with her. The rupture with Cornelia was likely the trigger for the break with Stephan Renier de Herwarden, with whom de Sanis had subsequently a legal dispute. De Sanis accused his housekeeper of taking away some of his possessions he had entrusted to him previously. De Herwarden denied that he was to blame (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 1r-5v, 33-34). The next step in this litigation was that de Sanis was placed under house arrest and guarded by soldiers. Whereas some sources name an obscure charge brought in by "some people from Utrecht" as the reason for his arrest, a synopsis of the whole case by War Council President Count Starhemberg makes it clear that it was the proceedings against Herwarden that led to the arrest (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 54r). De Sanis stayed in arrest for at least more than four months. On May 23, 1689, he wrote to the Elector and asked to be released from prison, but in the meantime Frederick William had died and de Sanis had lost the mercy of the "Great Elector's" successor (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Outgoing letters November No. 24-1, fol. 75f). His escape from house detention and from the city of Magdeburg is adventurous; he "escaped in disguise from said place by using some women as an excuse" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 3v). When he departed from Magdeburg head over heels, he left all his possessions to his sister-in-law Madeleine de Tavernier. According to his own statement, he then spent time in Frankfurt and Hanover (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133, and November No. 37, fol. 3r, and December No. 59, fol. 49r).

De Sanis in French mission in the Holy Roman Empire and Poland

In summer 1689 de Sanis had expanded his contacts with France as much that he was from then on definitely working for the French cause and "engaged in royal French service", as he called it (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133). Even though he disputed it, he had probably worked in secret mission for France before. It is noteworthy that de Sanis had cultivated contacts with German princes and nobles already when he had lived in Paris and that he had met the Prince of Mecklenburg in the French capital. The Aulic War Council suspected that he had already back then endeavoured to forge alliances in the French interest (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37, fol. 7). Although de Sanis denied this and insisted that he had only attempted to engage with the prince in a commercial enterprise, letters he carried with him confirmed the attempts to form alliances. Furthermore, when staying in Moscow he had also been suspected of being on a French mission. Apart from that, he had maintained a network of correspondents and certainly exchanged letters with the courts of Brandenburg, Hanover and Poland (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 379, 1689, fol. 2r). The sources compiled by the Viennese Aulic War Council point to a lot more correspondences that de Sanis maintained, among those for instance with the nobleman Marquis de Rivarola, a member of a Genoese aristocrat family that had produced two bishops in the 17th century. Rivarola was a Calvinist, a canon in Magdeburg, and lastly a close friend of the Armenian (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 2r; the sources partly read "Rivavolla" or, heavily corrupted, "Novarola"). Also, de Sanis maintained a special correspondence with his wife who still stayed in Magdeburg. Since de Sanis wrote to her about his plans and scheming, the letters retained an interest for the Brandenburgian and Habsburg court (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1689, Incoming letters January No. 59, fol. 2v).

In the end of June 1689 de Sanis travelled to Hamburg and met there the French envoy Étienne Bidal. Étienne Bidal d'Asfeld, also known as Abbot Bidal, succeeded his father Pierre after his death as French resident in Hamburg, who was accredited to the Lower Saxon Circle and proved decisive in forming French foreign affairs vis-à-vis the Hanseatic cities of northern Germany and forging alliances (Félicité 2017). That de Sanis met Bidal was thus not a coincidence. His even tighter contacts with France are exemplified by letters he wrote on 27 June 1689 from Hamburg to Louis XIV and the Dauphin in which he pledged to sacrifice his life to the French cause if necessary (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 44–45, 48). He also mentioned a plan that he discussed with Bidal; a plan favourable to the French and Ottoman war efforts against the common enemy, the Habsburg emperor, and his allies. Especially they plotted

against Brandenburg. Later, when being interrogated in Vienna, de Sanis claimed that Bidal and the French envoy in Poland, François Gaston de Béthune, contrived the plan and dictated it to him, but the War Council remained sceptical (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37).

In any case, the plan consisted in detaching Poland from the anti-Ottoman alliance (the Holy League), which was in de Sanis' opinion serving only the particular interests of the Emperor and Venice and was disadvantageous for Poland. Subsequently, Poland should be instigated to conclude a peace with the Ottomans for 20 or 30 years (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37, and December No. 59, fol. 5v, 20v; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 378, 1689, fol. 646v–647r). That would have allowed Ottoman troops fighting in Podolia to be sent to the Balkan theatre, where the Ottomans had lost Belgrade in the previous year. To recapture it was of great importance, also for France, which was fighting against the Imperial troops near the Rhine. De Sanis even thought that a Polish separate peace would force the Emperor and Moscow to drop their weapons and ask for peace (which is rather unlikely). But de Sanis' plan further than that: Poland should not only cancel the alliance, it should also once and for all break with the Emperor, maybe even wage war against him, but at least announce war against the Elector of Brandenburg (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 36v, 42r). As de Sanis wrote, the Emperor's alliance with the Protestant imperial estates of Brandenburg and the Duchy of Palatinate-Neuburg was detrimental to the Catholic cause as a whole and to Poland in particular. According to him, this alliance was only aimed at magnifying the power of the houses of Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Palatinate-Neuburg and "to completely suppress the crown of Poland" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37). This suppression, he argued, found expression in the Emperor's wish to grant the rest of Prussia to the Elector of Brandenburg and to help the ascension of the Prince of Palatinate-Neuburg to the Polish throne. He even suggested, wildly overreaching, that the Emperor and the German princes had in fact armed themselves so well because they wanted to attack Poland (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 12r, 19v–20r).

In other parts of Europe, he sensed a conspiracy too: Spain would cede "underhandedly" its part of the Low Countries to the Duke of Lorraine, and the alliance would destroy King James II of England and the Catholics in this country by supplanting him with William of Orange (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 34v). In fact, the Glorious Revolution had already happened by the time when de Sanis wrote down the project and William had assumed the English throne, but to attribute the events to a conspiratorial alliance between the Catholic Emperor and the German Protestant princes is far away from that what happened. Interestingly, recent studies have shown that Emperor Leopold I had an impact on William's decision to invade England, but a completely

different one from that which de Sanis envisioned. In 1688 Louis XIV had secretly proposed a grand Catholic alliance to Leopold that greatly alarmed the Dutch. Subsequently, William and his diplomats referred to the possible alliance when arguing about the necessity to invade England (Kampmann 2012).

In a similar far-fetched manner, de Sanis then continued to contend that if Poland broke with the Holy League and attacked Brandenburg, the situation in England would drastically improve for the Catholics and the former King James, who had fled to France. Another suggestion in the plan is especially intriguing (and telling for the lack of a sense for reality and political possibilities shown in these documents), namely that de Sanis thought that Poland would allow 2,000 to 4,000 Ottoman troops to cross its country and fight against Brandenburg (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 37r).

In return for leaving the Holy League, de Sanis promised Sobieski an offensive and defensive alliance with France aimed for instance against Moscow. In this way Poland would allegedly have been able to acquire Podolia, Prussia, and Smolensk. He also promised him to secure the succession to the throne of Sobieski's son Jakub, that he would acquire with French help the large lands of the powerful Radziwiłł dynasty, and the handover of the fortress of Kamieniec to Poland, which was still Ottoman at the time. De Sanis assumed that the French influence on the Ottoman Empire was strong enough to persuade them to approve this plan (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 22v, 47v–48r). Interestingly, de Sanis emphasized in this plan the Catholic-Protestant alliances as a threat to the Catholic Church and cause as a whole and blamed even the Pope of paying large sums to Protestant rulers. Thereby he appealed to Sobieski's Catholicism and called up the latter's obligation "by indispensable debt" to protect the Church. He also allured Sobieski with pompous overstatements that the proposed action would be "one of the most glorious and important actions, and the most grateful which has ever been done for God", and would further grant Poland "eternal glory and immortalize its name" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 5r, 7r, 39v). But de Sanis disregarded completely the implicit alliance of Catholic France with the Ottomans who were then perceived by many as "hereditary enemy" to (Catholic) Christianity and which Sobieski was prone to fight against.

The plan centred on Poland, so the obvious next step was to travel to this country – where he had been already eight years earlier. In Poland de Sanis stayed two months and met the French envoy Béthune, who assisted with the plan, as well as the Venetian resident, the papal nuncio, the English ambassador, and other nobles. He was able to talk about his plan with some of them – e.g. the English envoy – and got approbations. He even encountered King Jan Sobieski but was not able to present to him the proposition (OeStA Vienna, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133, and November No. 37, fol. 4r, and December No. 59,

fol. 49v). Thus his plan did not achieve the desired result. Following this he applied with the help of a Jesuit for a passport to the Ottoman Empire "for [pursuing] my interests" and was about to depart when he received notice of Tavernier's death in Smolensk on 25 January 1690; the latter died while being on a travel to Persia. As a result, de Sanis felt that he was the legitimate heir to his brother-in-law's money and tried to claim it. He postponed his travel to the Ottoman Empire and entreated Jan Sobieski to confiscate what Tavernier had left behind in Smolensk, implying that it should be handed over to him (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Outgoing letters November No. 24–1, fol. 44–45). In the following years, de Sanis tried many more times to claim Tavernier's inheritance, not only in Smolensk but also in Persia and the Ottoman Empire. According to him, this was another reason why he planned to travel to the Ottoman Empire, as he wanted to settle Tavernier's legacy (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133, and November No. 37; Burger 2017).

The death of his brother-in-law had only retarded his departure to the Ottoman Empire, so to say. However, another reason completely altered his travel plans, since – according to his testimony – the nuncio dissuaded him from travelling there. Instead, and because of war troubles, de Sanis set off for Vienna so that he could travel on from there to Venice and ask for money from the French envoy in that city; afterwards he would have continued to Rome. Ultimately, he stated France to be his destination, where Béthune had ordered him to return to (OeStA Vienna, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133, and November No. 37, fol. 4v, 6r).

This episode showcases de Sanis' shortage of money – when he arrived in Vienna, he had virtually empty pockets – and that he needed to beg alms from nobles, French envoys or monasteries to allow him to continue his travels. It also shows that he desperately tried to scrape up some money, also when referring to Tavernier's inheritance that he wanted to appropriate. Thus he made his onward journey partly dependent on defending this very dubious claim to his brother-in-law's money. If his travel was bound to end in France, as he claimed, seems unlikely. The Aulic War Council doubted that vehemently and suspected that de Sanis had not relinquished his original plans and was still about to go to the Ottoman Empire. The Council also did not put too much weight on de Sanis' purported motives why he had wanted to go there in the first place, since they served also to obfuscate possible other reasons for such a journey.

Firstly, in his letters to the French King and the Dauphin de Sanis had promised to bring the plan "to a good effect" owing to his language knowledge and experience (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters November No. 37). He thus not only pledged to promote the plan in Poland but also in the Ottoman Empire. Second, when going to Vienna de Sanis brought along papers which prove that he had spied on information vital to the war effort: plans of the fortress of

Głogów in Silesia as well as of another fortress, the deployment of the Imperial troops in the 1686 campaign, information regarding Polish troops of hitherto unknown content, and a list of the military posts between Turin and Trieste (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Outgoing letters November No. 24–1, fol. 29, 70, 87, and Incoming letters November No. 37). He also had taken notes on various remarkable events in other countries. It seems likely that the Armenian had got these papers (or at least the information) from other people, probably Béthune and/or Bidal and had the assignment to bring these to the Ottoman authorities.

On his travel to Vienna, de Sanis was accompanied by the Irish presbyter Don Luca Usseri and his servant Antoni Simonowsky. Usseri had met the Armenian while residing at the Venetian ambassador in Poland and when he needed to travel to Venice to sort out problems, de Sanis allowed him to travel with him as an act of charity (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133). Simonowsky is sometimes called a Pole in the acts of the Aulic War Council, but in reality he came from Albania. Being abducted to Constantinople in his youth, he served for various Ottoman lords; especially he was a servant of Great Dragoman Alexándros Mavrokordátos in Nicopolis for four years. Afterwards he served for the Polish ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Samuel Proski and moved to Poland. There, after not receiving an intended employment at the court, he was recruited by de Sanis because of his language skills (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1690, Incoming letters January No. 49, fol. 1r, and January No. 163, fol. 1r). The three of them travelled with horses until Olomouc and changed then to a carriage. In Olomouc, de Sanis also generously picked up a young woman whose travel destination was Vienna (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133). At the beginning of October 1689 de Sanis arrived in Vienna.

Philippe de Sanis in Vienna

De Sanis and his companions first took up residence in the inn "Zum goldenen Hirschen" on the street Rotenturmstraße, but then moved to the Klugerstraße, because the fare was too expensive and they increasingly had to rely on alms (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133). The papal nuncio in Poland had recommended de Sanis to Cardinal Francesco Buonvisi, legate of the Papal States to Austria and ardent supporter of the war against the Ottoman Empire, but he did not only meet him, but also – and more importantly – the interpreter Marcantonio Mamucca della Torre. The two men engaged in a discussion. According to de Sanis, they allegedly talked about the refinement and beauty of the Persian language. However, Marcantonio's description of the conversation is more plausible. Following the latter's account, de Sanis boasted to be in French service, to know Béthune and other French envoys and nobles, and to be on his way to Constantinople. He also claimed that the imperial troops would have already taken Con-

stantinople if the French had not prevented it. Afterwards Marcantonio reported the newly-arrived to the Aulic War Council (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 52r; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 378, 1689, fol. 599v; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 380, 1689, fol. 120r; Stoye 1964; Barker 1967; Teply 1980). A few months previously, the very same had already warned the Council of a spy who maintained the correspondence between France, England, the Hungarian rebel Imre Thököly and the Ottoman Empire, and since the Armenian seemed suspicious, he was arrested and brought to jail in the Peilertor, a part of the inner Viennese city fortification. All that happened within six days after their arrival (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 52r; Czeike 1995, 511f).

At first de Sanis behaved presumptuously and demanded to see the captain of the Vienna City Guard, Marchese degli Obizzi. When the marchese came, he insolently refused to take down his hat, insisting on his noble origins and emphasizing that he was a representative of the French king. Angered the marchese took his walking stick and knocked the hat off his head. The following short interlocution with Count Daun proceeded in a similar manner, because de Sanis boastfully declared himself an enemy of the Emperor. Furthermore, he refused to eat the normal prison fare which he deemed unfitting to his noble birth. As he went on hunger strike and the War Council feared that he might starve himself to death, he and his two companions were interrogated fairly quickly. After five days in prison, de Sanis started to eat again (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 82, and October No. 133). But successively, the War Council studied the letters the Armenian had in his luggage (which were written in French, Italian, Polish, Greek, and also Ottoman Turkish) and found out about his doings, also by exchanging letters with the princes of Anhalt-Dessau and Brandenburg. Thereby, de Sanis got even more suspicious, and the War Council got especially intrigued about the fact that at the same time Vienna housed an Ottoman delegation that wanted to negotiate peace. Important member of this delegation was Great Dragoman Alexándros Mavrokordátos, former lord of Antoni Simonowsky, so the War Council feared that de Sanis had approached the dragoman via his servant (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133; Teply 1980, 151). The Irish cleric Usseri, however, did not arouse much suspicion, as he had little to do with de Sanis and knew nothing of his plans. In the end, Usseri and Simonowsky were released in December 1689 and escorted out of the city (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters October No. 133; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 382, 1689, fol. 135v, 192v, 198r).

Regarding de Sanis, the treatment was far harsher. The Aulic War Council did not believe his vehement denial of the charges brought against him and thought of

him as "cunning, practiced in all areas, and at the same time a dangerous intriguer" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Outgoing letters November No. 24-1, fol. 106r). In addition to the clear-cut documents in his luggage, the facts that de Sanis had promised to Louis XIV to go to the Ottoman Empire too and that he had applied to Sobieski for a passport were seen as particularly serious. The Court War Council therefore found that there was "considerably large evidence" against him (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 69, 1689, Incoming letters December No. 59, fol. 50r; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1690, Incoming letters January No. 44-1, fol. 1v). As a French subject, he was arrested as a prisoner of war and, in the opinion of the Court War Council, should be treated as such. In January 1690, the court files were sent to Emperor Leopold I who gave his placet to a longer detention (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1690, Incoming letters January No. 44-1, fol. 2r, and January No. 45, fol. 8r, and January No. 49, fol. 1v). This decision was welcomed not only by the War Council, but also by Elector Frederic William of Brandenburg, who received information about this warmly, and Prince John George II of Anhalt-Dessau. The Elector even requested via John George that in course of future interrogations the War Council should ask de Sanis a bundle of new questions which were of keen interest to Brandenburg and to return the answers to Berlin. Among these questions was the demand to detail the way out of prison in Magdeburg and what he had contrived together with Bidal against the Elector and Brandenburg. The court in Berlin took the information for some of these charges from letters that de Sanis had sent to his wife. John George advised further that if the Armenian was not willing to answer or if his statements were not "clear and unambiguous", the Aulic War Council should resort to threats of torture (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1689, Incoming letters January No. 59). The answers of de Sanis to these questions have not been preserved in the Austrian archives and remain to be sought in Berlin.

De Sanis remained under arrest in the Peilertor until 1692. On February 9, 1692, he was finally released from prison and placed under house arrest, whereas in the following year, on September 9, 1693, Emperor Leopold decided to ease the sentence even further and place the prisoner under "city arrest", i.e. to forbid him to leave Vienna. To enforce the arrest, de Sanis' possessions were confiscated and mortgaged. To get them back and achieve complete freedom, the Emperor decided to impose a bail on him. Furthermore, all city guards were ordered to police the Armenian and to protocol what he did and which suspicious correspondence or conversations he was still performing (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 19r-v, 43r-v; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 389, 1692, fol. 76r; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 392, 1693, fol. 402v). In due course, de Sanis not only wrote letters in which he asked for copies of this imperial edict and requested from the Imperial Chamber the – in his eyes – outstanding allowance for his time in prison, but also tried to find some patrons who were willing to disburse this bail. According to a remark in the War Council's protocol books, both Johann Am-

brosius of Wimbach and the Muscovite interpreter in Vienna, a certain Styła, offered to pay (OeStA, FHKA, AHK HFÖ Book 997, 1694, fol. 229r; OeStA, FHKA, AHK HFÖ Book 999, 1694, fol. 249r; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 393, 1694, fol. 174v, 192v, 232v; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 394, 1694, fol. 138r). This is yet another indication of the Armenian's abilities to find influential benefactors who were favourably disposed to him despite all his wrongdoings. In a letter to the Emperor in which he requested a complete release from arrest, he could refer to two more benefactors who were apparently convinced that he was completely innocent. By completely ignoring the evidence, he even went as far as to write that "in those accusations against me neither in writing nor verbally anything detrimental has been proven, and that I have not intended the slightest evil against Your Imperial Majesty's holy person, or the high interest of the state, during the time of my life" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 21r). All evidence that he had plotted against the Emperor he simply pushed aside as imputations of his enemies. In another letter, he spoke of his "good intention and desire to serve both Your Imperial Majesty and the entire House of Austria faithfully, righteously and steadily, as long as there is a living drop of blood in my body" (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 39r). Needless to say, after he was finally freed from arrest, he did not at all render service to the Emperor, but left Vienna.

The War Council and the Emperor had now to gauge whether to free the arrested Armenian, if he – once freed – would stop his machinations against the Habsburg monarchy, if he would after such a long arrest be better inclined towards the Emperor or if he, oppositely, would now seek revenge, and ultimately, if he could still harm the Habsburg cause (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 54v–55r). Finally, the War Council advised to accept Wimbach's money and not Styła's. However, in July 1694 de Sanis was still not freed and urgently requested his liberation. After this month, there is only one more mention of him in the Viennese sources, namely a remark from the Imperial Chamber in September 1694 concerning the expenses for board and lodge of the arrested (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 393, 1694, fol. 352r; OeStA, FHKA, AHK HFÖ Book 997, 1694, fol. 585v). It is questionable if de Sanis was still in Vienna in this month or if the "city arrest" had by that point already, lastly, been reversed.

Claiming Tavernier's inheritance

During his arrest de Sanis was not idle. He seems to have written a text called "*Méditation chrétienne sur divers sujets*" (Troebst 1998, 178), but most importantly, he set all levers in motion to gain Tavernier's inheritance, as already mentioned above. To adhere to it was also insofar of relevance, as he could show to the imperial court that he needed to be freed in order to better defend the claim (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 41r). The starting point for his claim was that in short succession first de Sanis' wife and af-

terwards her sister Madeleine de Tavernier died (the former's death happened on or shortly before 22 August 1689). Both had stayed in Hamburg in the house of a certain Bizot who did not only inform de Sanis of the two women's deaths, but also assessed that "apart from Comte de Sanis I know of no other heir (scilicet to the late Madame Tavernier) and the departed has always said: what belonged to her should belong to the one who is alone" (OeStA Vienna, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 7r-v). Given that de Sanis' wife had died before Madame Tavernier, he was now "alone" and thus he and his friend Bizot saw him as the legitimate heir not only to Madame Tavernier's heritage, but also to that of her husband. In Vienna, de Sanis summoned a notary to prove his claim and produced more than one document stressing his kinship with Tavernier, thereof inferring that he was the only legitimate heir (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Book 379, 1689, fol. 5r). De Sanis found especially infuriating that Tavernier's secretary Peter Pipenpalm had taken the belongings of his former master with him and allegedly refused to hand them over to the Armenian. In his testimony, he mixed this name up and instead put "Peter Marteray" on record. Regarding the surname Marteray, the Armenian probably thought of Isaac de Cambiaque, who was for about 20 years owner of the Chateau de Martheray in Begnins near Lake Geneva and had served as procurator and representative of the buyer during Tavernier's selling of Aubonne (Joret 1886, 367, 401; Martignier, de Crousaz 1867, 73). Furthermore, de Sanis also raised a claim to the belongings of his wife and sister-in-law which had been confiscated in Hamburg after their death, and to the goods he had possessed in France which he tried to regain. In his claims he was supported by various friends in the Empire and Switzerland, most importantly by the Imperial Councillor, Orientalist and Ethiopianist Hiob Ludolff in Frankfurt, an old friend of de Sanis, to whom the Armenian gave power of attorney to defend his claims on Tavernier's inheritance (OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 6r-9v; Burger. 2017). Being presented so many documents, the notary found all of this very convincing.

However, de Sanis' claim completely disregarded the claim of Tavernier's other – and much closer – relatives to his inheritance, most importantly his nephew Pierre Tavernier, who had accompanied his uncle on his seventh voyage to Persia and afterwards served as one of his commercial representatives in Persia and the Levant. Some of Tavernier's biographers have accused Pierre of embezzlement of a valuable cargo belonging to Tavernier in Persia and de Sanis also believed it to be his task to collect the debt, but there is no proof that the cargo's loss was indeed Pierre's fault (Joret 1886, 282–290, 377–380). Even more so, possible problems with Pierre and his negligence concerning valuable goods belonging to his uncle do not lead at all to the conclusion that Tavernier wanted his heritage to pass to his brother-in-law de Sanis, with whom he had also a partly strenuous relationship, as indicated above.

In any case Ludolff investigated during 1692 and 1693 on behalf of de Sanis where Tavernier's legacy had remained and informed also Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz of the matter. Ludolff's letters to Leibniz show that Pipenpalm had taken Tavernier's correspondence in order to find an heir and not because he wanted to appropriate it, and that he left the documents and the responsibility for finding the heir with his brother Joachim (*Commercium epistolicum* 1755, 66–72; OeStA, KA, HKR HR Records 70, 1693, Outgoing letters September No. 140, fol. 35–36). When Ludolff paid the 200 Reichstaler imposed on him and finally got the casket with the letters, he found "among them nothing handwritten, not a single note, that contained an [outstanding] obligation" against Tavernier's nephew, and most certainly the casket also lacked a will naming the envisaged heir (*Commercium epistolicum* 1755, 75). Whereas this setback could have put a stop to de Sanis' far-fetched claim, it apparently did not; in 1695 he was still using it.

Outlook

The further course of Philippe Comte de Sanis' life has already been traced before and no further information on it can be found in the Viennese sources. Therefore the following years in his biography will only be briefly summed up.

After de Sanis' release from prison, for a few months he seems to have continued to reside within the Holy Roman Empire. He corresponded with L.M. Bidal in Regensburg, which underlines his good contacts with the Bidal family. In 1694 – maybe already in Stockholm – he married again. At the turn of the year 1694/95, he moved to Sweden and went to King Charles XII from whom he requested a passport to go to Persia to settle Tavernier's legacy (Troebst 1998, 178; Bakhchinyan 2021, 36). Again, his regress to an inherited, but very dubious claim was likely only pretence. Because even though he received what he had requested, de Sanis did not leave Sweden for Isfahan, but instead publicly celebrated his conversion to Protestantism in May 1695. Just to remember, the Aulic War Council had already in 1689 found one of his documents in which he spoke about Protestantism as "my religion". But with his public confession to a – as he stated – new religion, he endeared himself to Charles XII, received a pension from him and in future worked on behalf of the Swedish king to organize the New Julfan Armenian Persian trade via Moscow and Swedish Narva. Even though a good part of the trade was already moving this way, de Sanis hoped to be able to ensure that the trade multiplied again and expected to be appointed by the king as a special Persian trade commissioner (Troebst 1998, 178–181). In 1696, however, de Sanis changed sides after his reputation in Sweden had also come under threat, and from then on advocated a re-routing of the Persian trade, first via Courland ports and then to Gdańsk. In order to facilitate these commercial routes, the Armenian also went two times to Moscow (Hundt 1997, 16–19; Troebst 1998, 182–186; Bakhchinyan 2021, 36–39).

His proposal to the Duke of Courland in 1696 has been labelled "a model for maximum demands by Diaspora traders", since de Sanis demanded the Duke to furnish the Armenian merchants with houses and translators paid by the Duke, to be exempted from tolls, and other requirements (Curtin 1984, 202). The two reached an agreement which was probably facilitated by the Duke's wish to profit from the rewarding Persian trade, wherefore he conceded de Sanis' maximum demands. This episode again showcases the Armenian's self-confident, boastful demeanour and that he showed everything apart from restraint.

In 1698, he turned to the newly elected Polish King Augustus the Strong and once again asked for permission to travel to Persia. This time his travel plans were serious. At the turn of the century he turned up once again in his native city of Isfahan, after having been absent for over twenty years. In Persia he converted to Shiite Islam once more and took the name Imam-quli Beg (Gulbenkian 1970, 364; Troebst 1998, 191f). De Sanis was also successful under this name, as in 1706 he was a troop inspector in the Persian province of Erevan and also worked as a translator. In translating service, he was involved when the Persian Shah ordered an execution of two Armenians in French service. This seems to have aroused the ire of the French envoy to Persia, Pierre-Victor Michel. Michel revealed details of de Sanis' activities in Europe to the Shah, who then sentenced de Sanis to death. On August 2, 1707, he was beheaded in Isfahan at the age of approximately 55, which gave Michel a feeling of deep satisfaction (Gulbenkian 1970, 369–372). Michel reported what he had instigated back to the French Chancellor Louis Phélypeaux Count of Pontchartrain, expecting the king's content with his actions. Louis XIV reacted differently. Michel received as an answer: "The King is satisfied with the amends you received following the offense made to the nation after the death of *Sieur Fabre* and there would be nothing to say to your acting in this case, hadn't it cost the life of a man" (Gulbenkian 1970, 372).

Conclusion

The life of Philippe de Sanis remains nebulous in parts, but the Viennese sources have helped to shed light on important aspects of it. Especially the decade between his stay in Aubonne and his relocation to Sweden, of which until now information was very sparse, could be painted much clearer. The advantage of surviving judiciary acts and interrogation protocols, but also of the documents he took with him to Vienna, is a stroke of luck for the research on this adventurous Armenian, for it enables also to make statements about his earlier life (e. g. his year of birth) and to open up the fascinating French intrigues of which de Sanis was an important part. Some of the events and doings of de Sanis described here merit further attention and call for a more encompassing study of his life, a project, which is now undertaken by Guillaume Aral. I personally look forward to more insights once his thesis will be published.

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