

Casanova between Venice and Dux (1782-1785)

A biographical fragment based on documents.

by Marco Leeflang

For the second time Trieste became Casanova's jumping-off point. In 1774 he waited here for permission to return to the Serenissima. Now, in 1782, he is preparing for his final departure from Venice. He judged it was of no use waiting for the dust to settle from the storm he had raised with his publication, *Neither Loves Nor Ladies* (*Nè amori nè donne*). Undoubtedly his prior experience with the conservative government, which had cost him an 18-year exile, had made him cautious.

Venice in those days was more or less a police state. Secret trials were common. Crackdowns followed where modernization was proposed. Traveling was prohibited for the nobility unless specific permission was granted. Freemasons were a horror: their possessions were burned and their leaders banned. Freedom of press and speech were not a right but dangerous.

Casanova had friends among the nobility with more liberal views, like Andrea Memmo and Pietro Zaguri, but that was no safeguard. The fate of the unfortunate Lorenzo Da Ponte, a protégé of Memmo and Zaguri, was a recent example from Casanova's inner circle. In 1779 Da Ponte was banned for 15 years.

In a publication, Da Ponte had posed the question "whether man wouldn't be happier in nature than in society." This was considered blasphemy. And when his social conduct too surpassed the limits of acceptability¹ (the 30-year-old abbé had a child with young Angioletta Bellaudi and had brought it himself, in soutane, to the foundling home), he fled the country before the authorities could get hold of him. Casanova would meet him again later when Da Ponte had managed to become poet of the Austrian Theatre and was writing libretti for some successful operas of Salieri and Mozart.

Casanova's decision to leave Venice had been triggered by the written advice of the procurator of St. Mark's, Francesco Il Morosini, a friend from old times and now in high office in Venice. The procurator had sent a letter *poste restante* and a messenger advising Casanova to pick it up. In the meanwhile Morosini apparently had been able to calm the waters of the turmoil by stopping the circulation of *Neither Loves Nor Ladies*, which, by the way, had received the official approval of the censors. The whole edition was confiscated. On August 31, 1782, a Mr. Ballarini wrote to the Venetian ambassador in Paris the news that "the booklets were rigorously collected." The terms in which Morosini had written to Casanova sounded rather harmless—"It would please me not to encounter you in Venice for some time"—but he also advised him to leave the country as soon as possible. In reply² to this letter Casanova complains about the harshness of Morosini but says at the same time that he should have left the country two years earlier. Then he strikes the word "two" and replaces it with "three." "During

¹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 3-79.

² Casanova Archives: Marr 16 H 39.

the last three years I lived in Venice in a continuous state of violence, I should have decided earlier to go and live elsewhere.” Again his pen crosses out a word. To “live elsewhere” is not dramatic enough—to “die elsewhere” sounds better. And as his honor is hurt by being urged to leave immediately, he stresses he will present himself “next Thursday or Friday morning at the front door” of Morosini’s palace. Besides, before departing he will have to wait for answers on his letters to his family in Paris and Dresden, and he has to arrange something for his nephew Carlo, the son of Giovanni Casanova, who temporarily lives with him. He cannot possibly settle his affairs before October 22. The future looks gloomy. “I am 58 years old; I can’t travel on foot; winter is coming; and when I think of becoming an adventurer again, I start laughing when I look in a mirror.”

The *Memoirs* cannot help us for the next 16 years of Casanova’s life. On the one hand this is an enormous disadvantage, and we will miss many details, but on the other hand we now have some rather reliable data which have not been edited and reedited in order to adjust to his literary aspirations. The reports from others and the notes and drafts of letters which are preserved among Casanova’s papers, like the Morosini letter just cited, are more straightforward than the *Memoirs*. This legacy is plentiful. Some 800 items date from before Casanova’s final departure from Venice in early 1783, and some 1,250 can be dated from the subsequent 16 years.

From Trieste Casanova traveled to Vienna, another city from which he had been ousted 16 years earlier. But time heals all wounds, and even the memory of the police is not eternal. He stayed there from January till June 1783.

Joseph II had become emperor in 1780 and had started modernizing many things that had been taken for granted. Among the big issues he was working on were religious toleration, emancipation of the Jews, abolishment of serfdom, church reform, land tax reform, and social legislation. But there were also smaller adjustments. One of those was that Joseph II was easily accessible and welcomed meeting the people, including foreigners. And one of those was Casanova.

Prince Charles de Ligne relates in his *Fragment sur Casanova, frère du fameux peintre de ce nom*³ an encounter between Joseph II and Casanova:

“It seems to me that you have been friend of Mr. Zaguri.”

“Yes,” Casanova replied, “a Venitian nobleman.”

“I don’t like his type of nobility so much. I don’t esteem those who buy it.”

“And what do you think of those who sell it?”

Joseph changed the subject and retired, rather discontented with this remark.

Casanova renewed acquaintance with Da Ponte who, in 1782, after the death of Metastasio, poet of the Imperial Theatres, posed as a candidate for the vacancy. And when Salieri recommended Da Ponte to Count Rosenberg-Orsini, the director of Performances, he got the job, though not the title of “Imperial Poet,” because Joseph decided to discontinue that title.

³ Prince de Ligne, *Mémoires, lettres et pensées*, éd. François Bourin, Paris, 1989, p. 794.

Casanova probably met again with Prince Kaunitz-Rittberg, the longtime chancellor of Austria, whom he knew from his last visit to Vienna. There is no record of their meeting in this period, but the ease with which Giacomo's painter-brother Francesco Casanova obtained Kaunitz's protection later in 1783 points in that direction.

He also met the abbé Eusebio Della Lena (1747-1818), bibliophile, man of letters, who earlier had owned a bookstore in Venice but who was now rector of the Theresianum. It is to him that Casanova addressed a letter which sums up what happened between June, when he left Vienna for a short and last visit to Venice, and September 1783. This letter was first known in a shorter version, maybe taken from a draft by Casanova, but the original⁴ has been found among the treasures of Brockhaus, the German firm which still owns the manuscript of *l'Histoire de ma vie*. It is worth reading it in full, and we will interlard it with clippings from the letters of Francesca Buschini,⁵ the girlfriend Casanova left behind in the Barbaria delle Tolle near the statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni. Her comments too are most valuable in tracing Casanova's whereabouts, because in her letters she always echoes the news he wrote to her.

Here is Casanova's letter, punctuated with details from Francesca's:

Antwerp, September 6, 1783

Dear Abbate Della Lena

After three months of ever-changing course I finally have the peace at heart which I need in order to write a long letter and to converse with someone like you. During my brief stay in Vienna I have come to recognize in you all those qualities which I wish to see in a real human being, but which I only occasionally find in some. Filled with this feeling you can imagine how sorry I am that I write only now, fearing that my long silence could give rise to a bad opinion of me. If so, please forgive me, maybe I deserve it, but I feel happy to attempt a justification, hoping to restore to your fine spirit the full favor which I held with you.

You know already that I spent a week in Udine at the home of the lieutenant [of Friuli, Carlo Antonio Donà] where I had the honor of dining with Nicolò Foscari [former ambassador of Venice in Austria]. From there I went to Venice [about June 14, 1783], where I was pleased to go nowhere but to my home and then to Mestre with the whole family which I support in my house [Francesca Buschini, her mother, her sister Maria, and her brother Giovanni] and who are the only people I care for in my country, which is too indifferent toward me. Three days later I left Mestre, and I went to Basano to look up Father Boscowitz

. . . [Roger Joseph Boscowitz, Jesuit, mathematician, and astronomer, who stayed in Bassano for the supervision of the printing of his works].

Francesca Buschini wrote to Casanova on June 21:

I understood you left Mestre on Tuesday early in the morning [Was the excursion with the Buschini family to Mestre, which Casanova related to Della Lena, pure fiction and solely meant to give Della Lena a romantic impression of the family life he had left behind and supported in his (!) house?] and that you had lunch with the brother of Catrolli [Elisabetta Catrolli-Zanuzzi a Venetian actress] and that you have spent the night in their home. You asked me to look up Catrolli in order to tell her what you wrote about her brother I understood that on Wednesday morning you left Basano with the post and that you arrived at night in Borgo di Valsugana, that you have seen there [Felice] Boscorati [an

⁴ Published by H. Watzlawick in the *Casanova Gleanings*, Nice, 1979, p. 6. [Marr 40-39].

⁵ Cf. Casanova Archives, respectively Marr 8-194, 166, 169, 184, 173, 176 and 168.

artist who was accused of sending anonymous letters and satires to Mrs. Barbara Ferrari; when ordered to appear in court, he chose to stay out of reach of Venetian justice].

Casanova continues to Della Lena:

Next I made a stop in Trent and then in Innsbruck, where I had a long conversation with the Duchess of Parma [Maria Amalia of Austria, sister of Joseph II; she stayed in Innsbruck from May 22 through 30], and then on to Augsburg where I stayed a week but found all my friends dead [A bill⁶ by saddlemaster Schlegel, who checked his coach, pinpoints his presence there on July 2.]

Francesca Buschini, July 11:

I answer your letter of June 29 from Augsburg from which I understood you made a stop in Innsbruck in order to go to the theater, where you had the honor to talk to the Duchess of Parma, and that from there you departed immediately and traveled 48 hours continuously. Great traveler that you are. I am glad you are in perfect health

Casanova again to Della Lena:

Next to Frankfurt and Mainz, where I found Count Durazzo [the Austrian ambassador to Venice], with whom I continued my journey, leaving my own coach at the post [with Antonio Rossi & Co, who in vain tried to sell it for 10, then nine, louis and finally had an offer for five, perhaps six, louis d'or or 55 florins], quite happy to travel in his company to Cologne as it saved me six zecchini. He went on to Holland and I to Aachen, where I lost a week with the sovereign magistrate who didn't understand the value of the very useful proposal which I made to him and which would have been of great advantage to me [Casanova probably proposed once again a lottery.]

Francesca Buschini, July 16:

I was very pleased to hear about your excellent state of health. I was atonished at the long journey you have made, traveling 18 posts without stopping except to change horses and on two occasions to eat, and that you arrived in Frankfurt after 42 hours fresh as a rose and that in the meanwhile you slept at least 18 hours, and better than in a bed. I was surprised at the great journey you have made and are still intending to make

Francesca Buschini, August 15, to Brussels [Casanova hasn't arrived there yet]:

With great pleasure I respond to your three lovely letters. From the first one, written on July 16 from Aachen, I heard you have met Catterina, the wife of Pocchini [Casanova often mentions the adventurer Antonio Pocchini of Padua, whom he encountered in 1743 as a deported person on the isle of Cerigo, in 1760 in Stuttgart, then in London toward the end of 1763, and again in 1767 in Vienna. Pocchini was always in the company of women he exploited and whom he often posed as his daughters.], who told you in tears she was in distress and lived next door with Pocchini, who was ill all the time. The visit you paid him made me laugh a lot, especially when he asked you for a scudo as alms and when you answered him that you wouldn't even give him a penny and that you laughed at him and when you took leave with the words, "I wish you a pleasant death." You really treated him as courteously as he deserves.

So you have embarked on the Rhine together with the Marquis Durazzo whom you had met in Mainz, and you have arrived two days later in Cologne. Your assurance that you have an iron health, sleep well, and eat only once a day as a wolf has comforted me, only from the last two letters I gather that you are less well, that you have no appetite, and that you don't sleep well, but I believe it is due to the baths. I hope you are better now. In your second letter from Spa, July 23, you complain not to have received a letter from me

⁶ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 4-64.

. . . . For the third letter from Spa, July 30, which I received August 10, I thank you very much for the sweet thought of inserting a golden coin

Francesca Buschini, September 6, to Paris [but Casanova has just reached Antwerp]:

With great pleasure I respond to your three dear letters from Spa. In the first, dated August 6, I understand you had to stay a few more days because of someone who has arrived in Spa. I am sorry to hear you find your stay annoying. I take it you have received the letter I addressed to Brussels in which I thanked you for the money you sent me. [Apparently Casanova intended to travel from Spa to Brussels and had advised Francesca to send her next letter *poste restante* at Brussels rather than to Paris.] In your second letter, which you wrote me on August 16 from Spa, I am sorry to hear that things don't go as well as you hoped. Your third dear letter was from Spa, August 20, with a letter for his excellency Morosini in it which I should hand to him No sooner had I given the letter to him than he said before opening it, "From Casanova I hear only unpleasant things," and he had scarcely read one page before he said, "I wouldn't know what to do." Then I told him I was going to write to you on the 6th of September to Paris and that I would come back later and would be very pleased to include his reply in my letter. Guess what his answer was? I was very surprised that he thanked me for my good intentions but he wouldn't write you any more. Those were his only words; I kissed his hand and left. He didn't even give me a penny. That is all he said to me.

Casanova to Della Lena:

From there on I went to Spa, to which spot, I don't know by what convention, once a year, every summer, all nations of Europe assemble to do all sorts of foolish things. I did mine and stayed there for almost a month. There was Nicolò Venier [one of those Venetians who traveled abroad and would be ordered to return immediately or else], the Marquis Manzi, la Bonafini [Emilia Bonafini, a famous singer, who returned to Venice in the company of Venier], Baron Thugut for two days only [Johann Amadeus Franz de Paula Thugut, Austrian ambassador in Constantinople and Naples and finally minister of foreign affairs], the Venetian ambassador with his son [Daniele Dolfin, Venetian ambassador in Paris, and his son Giovanni], who stayed for four days only, and the musician Pacchierotti, who gave a public concert. An English lady who had the folly to speak Latin invited me to accompany her to Amsterdam and wanted me to travel with her for four years. Monday the first of September at dinner in Zaandam, *tête à tête*, she addressed me with proposals which froze me with fear. I remained half an hour plunged in deep thought without her interfering with me. Recovering myself I said to her: "Permit me, Madam, as soon as you have returned to the hotel, that I leave you never to see you again and that I go where it pleases me. That strange lady merely answered me in Latin with these three words, "*sequere voluntatem tuam*," and immediately handed me a bill addressed to one of her bankers in which she ordered payment to me of 25 guineas. Whereupon she left me alone. So I returned home by myself, and one hour later I departed, traveled all night, spent one day in the Hague, another day in Rotterdam, and arrived here in Antwerp the next day. Tomorrow morning I depart for Brussels, where I will stay a few days

Francesca Buschini, September 20, to Paris:

I want to answer your letter of September 9th from Brussels immediately

Francesca Buschini, September 27:

Last Monday I received your sweet letter, written from Brussels on September 2. I am very grateful for the check I found in it and the other letter which I was to bring to the banker Corrado in person He read the letter, I gave him the check, and he paid me immediately 150 lire which is a fortune for me 96 for the rent Monday we will eat macaroni and drink moscato to your health, because you sent me this money. Without that most certainly I would not have eaten macaroni.

Casanova continues to Della Lena:

If you would like to honor me with an answer, please address it to my name "at Mr. Casanova's, royal painter at the Louvre, Paris." Please tell me in your reply, which will be most welcome to me, about your health, about your state of mind and above all about the health of his excellency the ambassador [Sebastiano Foscarini, whom Casanova will serve later as writer of his dispatches] and give him my

best regards. I beg you also to bring my best greetings to your highly esteemed pupil [Giacomo, the son of Sebastiano Foscarini, who studied at the Theresianum under Della Lena] Please give also my best regards to Abbé Venanzio and Abbé Trento, who will forward my greetings to Count Ayala [Sebastiano Ayala, ex-Jesuit, friend and biographer of Metastasio, and chargé d'affaires of the Republic of Ragusa in Vienna]. Please tell me also about the factual circumstances of Abbé Da Ponte, with whom I will be content if you tell me that you are content with him. All of Europe says war will be imminent and that Caesar [Joseph II] will be the third. [The Russians had occupied several Turkish provinces. War seemed inevitable, and Joseph II seemed ready to help Catherine II.] Do with the fur coat whatever you want and forgive me when I don't send the money I owe you. From Paris I'll write you my destiny. If I don't go to Madagascar by the end of March, I'll return to Italy once more, and perhaps we will meet somewhere, but in Italy I will not stay. *Fata viam inveniunt*. I will tell nobody what the English lady proposed to me, but a great event might, in time, enable you to find out.

Casanova's stay in Spa poses several questions. What did he do there? What were his plans? Who is the mysterious English lady? Where does the plan to go to Madagascar come from? He probably had no specific plan himself. He probably hoped the large number of international guests would inspire him. He had always been able to mix easily with all sorts of people. New acquaintances could mean new ideas, new prospects, a job. His wallet must have been thin. The fur coat left at Della Lena's as security for a loan was written off. His coach was for sale but, old and heavy as it was, it found no buyer. His hotel bill in Frankfurt was unpaid. Spa was expensive.

There is a note⁷, written by Casanova in Spa, which illustrates his uncertainty and the diversity of his thoughts. It lists:

- Project for a lottery in Brussels with Count Belgioso.
- Confidential information [by whom?] of the suitcase [whose?] left in Frankfurt for 20 louis.
- Need a suit and have to go to Paris.
- Recommendations for Paris.
- Confidential information of the project of Madagascar.
- Advice about the stock shares of Volf [?].
- Project for a canal in order to avoid the Strait of Gibraltar.
- Coach left behind in Mainz at Rossi's.
- Canal which crosses France from Narbonne near Carcassonne, via Pau to Bayonne.

The last proposal is worked out in greater detail and reminds us of the plans of Baron Bilistein whom Casanova had met several times and who specialized in plans connecting rivers and seas by canals. But Casanova seems unaware that a canal north of the Pyrenees had been opened already in 1681. It would function well until the arrival of the railroad.

One of the outstanding Casanovists, Helmut Watzlawick,⁸ has solved at least one of these mysteries: that of the Madagascar plan which seems to come out of the blue, but doesn't.

While studying the *List*⁹ of people who have come to the mineral waters of Spa, where

⁷ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 31-49.

⁸ Cf. H. Watzlawick: 'Casanova, Madagascar and Spa' in *l'Intermédiaire des Casanovistes*, Roma, 1987, p. 1.

⁹ The *Listes des Seigneurs et Dames venus aux Eaux Minerales de Spa*, appearing since the middle of the century for the sake of convenience of guests and commerce. During the season the *Lists* appeared

on July 26, 1783, the presence of “Monsieur Casanova, Gentilhomme Vénitien à l’Hotel du Louvre, rue d’entre les ponts” is stated, he found the name of Count Maurice Augustus Benyowsky, whose arrival in Spa was announced on July 19th.

This count, born in 1741 in Hungary, led a life full of adventure in Poland, Russia, Alaska, Japan, Formosa, and other places. Arriving in France in 1772 he presented a plan to establish a French colony in Madagascar. He succeeded in mounting an expedition, which was realized but which encountered all sorts of trouble, and he returned to France in 1777. In 1782 Benyowsky submitted new plans to the French minister of Foreign Affairs; when he received no immediate reply he traveled to Vienna where he solicited and was granted the sponsorship of Joseph II for a colony in Madagascar under the imperial flag, but without financial backing. In November 1783 Benyowsky’s presence was signaled in London, where he tried to get British support for his plans. But in vain. Finally he succeeded in Baltimore, and in October 1784 the expedition left but encountered many mishaps.

No doubt Casanova met Benyowsky in Spa on his way from Paris to Vienna and considered joining the expedition. That solves one mystery.

The English lady remains a problem. The same *List* of visitors might help, and indeed there is a “Madame Thomson, dame anglaise” and a “Madame la comtesse Dalton, avec mille Plunkett.” However, although they are the only women without a man’s company, there is, as yet, no concrete evidence that either was Casanova’s famous “dame anglaise.”

A last look at Spa’s *List* sheds light on the background of a poem Casanova published on August 19, 1783: his *Vers publiés a Spa*,¹⁰ signed by “a poet drifting from shore to shore, sad toy of the waves, and driftwood of a wreck,” and honoring a “great warrior who invited the whole nobility [including Casanova!] for a grand déjeûner in Spa’s Vauxhall.”

The *List* identifies the warrior as Charles Henri Nicholas, prince of Nassau-Siegen (1745-1808), known as the inventor of floating batteries during the Spanish-English war. Named Spanish major-general, he joined, after the peace in 1783 (and after some leisure and party time in Spa), the Russian service as vice-admiral, defeated a Turkish fleet in 1788, and also had successes in the sea war against Sweden. François Casanova made several portraits of the prince, but it is not certain whether it was François or Giacomo who first became acquainted with him.

But let us continue with Casanova on his journey from Brussels to Paris. He had planned to visit in Brussels Count Lodovico Antonio Belgiojoso-Este, the Austrian major-general who was vice governor of “Belgium” and nicknamed Belgiodioso because he was so hated. This visit either never took place or led to no result. After all, lotteries were not as novel in the 1780s as they had been in the 1750s and sixties. Casanova

frequently and kept count of the number of visitors. Thus Casanova was mentioned in the 25th issue as the 627th guest of the year. The *Lists* contained advertisements as well. They can be consulted in the Bibliothèque communale of Spa.

¹⁰ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 34-4.

cashed the check of 25 guineas, and to Francesca he sent 150 lire—which then paid for eight months rent—continuing to write her once a week.

He then headed to Paris, where he arrived on Thursday night, September 11 or 18.¹¹ He spent the night in a bad hotel and went to see his brother Francesco, *Peintre du Roi au Louvre*, who lived in the city with his second wife, Jeanne Catherine Delachaux (1748-1818), whom he had married in July 1775. If he hadn't known already, Giacomo soon found out that life in Paris wasn't rosy. The title of "King's Painter" was beautiful, and Francesco was a good artist who sold well, but he lacked the art of keeping income and spending in balance. Both Casanovas agreed the situation was so serious that a quick departure was the only solution. Mrs. Casanova didn't want to leave and hoped to remain in the Louvre. Zaguri, in a letter from Venice¹² dated October 11, wrote to Giacomo: "It is a consolation to me that you get along well with your sister-in-law, but why doesn't she want to have anything to do anymore with her husband?"

Giacomo makes an inventory of the situation. Debts in abundance. A survey is made:¹³ Mr. du Frenois has promised to diminish the personal debt of Francesco by one third. It was 31,716 livres, so 21,144 livres remain. Therefore Francesco must lower the price for two large framed paintings by 7,000 livres. [. . .] After the death of Mr. Poulain, his mother found loans to Francesco in the amount of 17,000 livres. In lieu of payment of this sum, she demands that Mr. Casanova make four large paintings, two to be delivered in 1784 and the other two in 1785. [. . .] Plus 6,000 to Mr. Bourgeois de Cretienville, 5,600 to the handworkers of Franconville, 1,200 to the watchmaker, 2,300 for the paint merchant, 1,200 for the hatmaker Furthermore, if Francesco would like to retrieve his pawned possessions, another 4,000 is needed. And there are undoubtedly other creditors.

On the income side, the job is to sell paintings and obtain new orders. Giacomo serves as sales manager. Together with Francesco he looks over the situation and makes another list¹⁴:

I have six letters to write:

To the Duke of Crillon who lives in St.Clou, and for his address in Paris, I'll ask the Duke of Aranda, rue neuve des Petits Champs. I will report to Crillon the conversation with the Viscount Hereira about paintings for the Prince of Asturia; that two large and beautiful ones are finished, the need to hurry, the wish to serve him by painting the two things in question about which the duke has spoken.

To the Viscount Hereira, Spanish ambassador to Sicily (have to ask where he lives) try to get commission of four paintings for the Prince of Asturia, inform him a bit of the present situation.

To Intendant Berthier. He lives next to the intendance, rue Vendome in the Marais near the rue Saint Louis; tell him everything and ask him to take care of the administration, and even offer a security in some way or another, that without that Francesco is left to the discretion of cruel creditors and a hostile wife. Offer him available paintings, either battles or landscapes.

¹¹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 16 K 47.

¹² Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 3-64.

¹³ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 16 i 1.

¹⁴ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 16 i 14.

To Girardeau de Marigni, banker in the rue Vivienne. No word about the present distress. Tell him only that if he wants to have the two battles, he must hurry because time presses. His wish to add paintings by Francesco to his collection. That Francesco hopes he will come to have a look.

To Mr. de Beaujon at Hôtel d'Evreux, rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré. Tell him everything in order to make him buy the paintings. Flatter him a lot. That in Vienna I have heard talk about his gallery.

To Mr. de Tot, rue de Varenne at Hôtel de Tessé at the queens stables. A letter of recommendation etc.

It seems this activity was of no avail. But the Prince de Conty is willing to help out. [In a receipt] dated November 12, he takes 14 paintings as security and advances 3,000 livres. Furthermore he orders five paintings to be delivered in April 1784 and sends three copper plates for the ones he desires to have painted on metal.¹⁵

The 3,000 livres no doubt were, at least in part, used to finance the trip to Vienna and not to satisfy Francesco's creditors.

One of the few, perhaps, who managed to control the damage was the butcher Fiquet, who had a brother living in Vienna as a dance master.¹⁶ This brother made a deal with Francesco: "If you let me have one of your paintings, my brother will forget about his unpaid bill for meat."

In a letter dated November 11, Casanova writes to Francesca advising her to hold her letters because he does not know what the future brings.

On November 13, the Venetian ambassador to Paris, Dolfin, issued a passport to the two brothers¹⁷ and said he was sorry Casanova left Paris so soon. He also mentions a legendary inheritance of 200 million francs left behind by Giovanni Thierry d'Hagenau at his death in 1676. He assures Casanova that this treasure "doesn't exist and never has existed." Would this perhaps have to do with the above-mentioned "shares of Volf"?

At the same time the other painter-brother, Giovanni Casanova in Dresden, had comparable troubles. He was a widower since 1772, was no great bookkeeper either, and borrowed money wherever he could. One of his creditors was the stepmother of the painter Raphael Mengs. Mrs. Katherine Mengs-Nitscher, second wife and widow of Ismaël Mengs, insisted on marrying Giovanni in order to have some security for her loans. Giovanni had to defend himself in court to keep her at a distance.¹⁸

Of course Giacomo did not spend all his time on the affairs of Francesco. He also tried to find a means of living for himself and intended to start a periodical, as he had done in Venice. Francesca echoes from Venice: "You tell me you do nothing but write and that you have the intention to publish a journal; so I wish that this newspaper finds response

¹⁵ Cf. for the business with Conty: Casanova Archives: Marr 12-57, 4-28, and 16 F 4.

¹⁶ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 9-50.

¹⁷ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 12-40.

¹⁸ Cf. the summary of a legal writ in catalogue no.433 of the antiquariat Henning Oppermann, Bâle, 1932, lot 205a.

and that it will yield you some money.”¹⁹ It probably was *Il Telescopio di Cecco Curione*, but this project seems not to have reached a status more advanced than a prospectus.²⁰

Many old acquaintances had died, and maybe that had its advantages too because, as in Vienna, his last departure from Paris had not been voluntary. The fact that he was not arrested in 1783 will even be used later by Casanova as proof that the arrest of Parliament and the *lettre de cachet* of 1769 had no power anymore.²¹

Anyway he felt free to attend a meeting of the “Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres,” in November 1783, where he was seated:

by the side of the learned Benjamin Franklin. I was somewhat surprised to hear Condorcet ask Franklin if he thought it would be possible to give other directions to the aeronautic balloon. This was his reply: “This thing is still in its infancy, therefore we must wait.” Is it not possible that the great doctor ignored that it was impossible to give to the machine a direction other than that depending directly on the wind which was blowing; but those people *nil tem verentur, quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videantur*. But Franklin would not have answered that way to a French questioner in a group of English.²²

The very first un-manned balloon, made by the Montgolfiers, took to the air in Annonay; the first manned balloon lifted off in Paris on November 22 with Pilâtre de Rozier in it together with the Marquis d’Arlandes, who related his experiences to the Academy.

We next hear of the two Casanova brothers when they arrive in Frankfurt at the Hotel *L’Empereur*, where the host of another hotel, *Au Raisin d’or* in Augsburg, Johann Maijr, quickly sends a note, dated November 26, to remind Giacomo of his unpaid hotel bill of five months earlier.²³

A letter sent the 26th to Mainz asking information about the sale of the coach he left

¹⁹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 8-163, d.d. october 18, 1783.

²⁰ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 18-23.

²¹ In his *Lettres à Faulkircher* [Marr 39-1] he writes. “*In 1783 I stayed in Paris for three months and in Fontainebleau for a week, and I departed with a passport of mr de Vergennes accompanied by my brother. Go and ask in Vienna. You’ll find him every day at the table of prince Kaunitz.*”

²² Cf. Casanova: *A Leonard Snetlage*, 1797, where he treats the word *Aërostate*. The casanovist Charles Samaran found records of a session on november 22nd 1783 of the Academy of Sciences, where Condorcet was present. He suggests that Casanova might refer to this session. But given the fact, proven by a letter (see below), that the brothers arrived in Frankfurt at the latest on november 26, this is hardly possible. It is more likely that they left Paris soon after receiving their passport and that Giacomo was present at a different meeting of the Academy, held prior to the first ascent. This is in accordance with his remark that the meeting took place “a few days after the death of the famous d’Alembert.” This death occurred on october 29. So most probably Casanova has not witnessed the ascent himself. If he had, he would have mentioned it in his correspondence, but Francesca nor Zaguri reflect the subject in their letters, nor does Giacomo in his next message to Della Lena. The fact that Casanova states in 1797 that his encounter with Franklin took place in the *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* may have been a slip of the pen, as in his letter to Della Lena (november 28, 1783) he calls it the *Accademia delle Scienze*.

²³ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 13 Y 3. “*Augusta de 26 9bre 1783*”

there in August is answered in the negative. Even for six louis d'or there is no buyer, and it is agreed the coach be sent to Frankfurt by a carrier who charges three florins and 12 creitzers. "We are sure you will have received it safely, and in Frankfurt you will more quickly find an interested foreign buyer, because many strangers are traveling through there and could be seeking a similar chaise."²⁴

The trip from Paris had not been without complications, as echoed by Francesca:²⁵ "I received a brief letter from you, which you wrote to me on the 29th November from Frankfurt, and from which I learned to my great sorrow and regret that the drunken postilion had overturned you and that the fall had dislocated your left shoulder, but a good physician was able to put it back in place again"

On December 1st he assures Francesca that his arm is in order again, that he has taken medicine, and that he has been bled. In addition, he lets her know that in one month he will send her eight zecchini, with which she can pay the rent and use the rest for any necessities.

As promised, Casanova sends his next letter to Della Lena, looking back at his last days in Paris and stating his plans for the near future:

Frankfurt, November 28, 1783

Signor Abbate, my very dear sir and revered friend,

Two weeks ago your friend in Paris sent one of his dear friends to my house; I ran immediately to him as I had a great desire to know him because of what Bartoli [perhaps Giuseppe Bartoli born in Padua in 1717, archeologist of the king of Sardinia, member of the Academy in Paris, professor at the University of Padua and later in Turin] had said about him, but I could only stay a few minutes because it was precisely the day of the return of the Academy of Science, at which assembly the celebrated American Franklin had engaged me to attend. Then I had to go to Fontainebleau and on my return to finish a thousand trifling things before leaving Paris that took up my time, so that I could not return to enjoy the sound doctrines as much in mathematics as in Christian morals of your dear Signor Cagnoli, who did not break off his study of the stars except to compose the dispatches of two ambassadors.

The letter with which you honored me gave me much pleasure, particularly to know that his Excellency the ambassador had improved his precious health at those baths in Baden [near Vienna]. I shall come to enjoy some small influence from it, if his Excellency will permit me on the 8th or 9th of next month, and now through you the current month of December. You will forgive me if, trusting to your goodness, I venture now to entreat your kindness over a difficulty, which is not small, but which is infinitely within your powers.

I shall arrive within 10 or 12 days in Vienna with a dear companion [Francesco] to pass the winter and spring there, where I desire, not so much for reasons of economy as to avoid being cheated, to know where to lodge when we get out of our coach. I should like you to find me a decent lodging, either in the city or in some suburb, comprising two good-sized adjoining rooms and, if it is possible, that can be suitably heated by a single stove, because wood is expensive there. I should like these rooms to be light, both furnished with a good bed, a chest of drawers, two small tables and four or six chairs, and in addition, I should like to be able to put our closed coach, either in the house, or somewhere nearby, so that it does not remain exposed to the ravages of the weather, and to those of thieves. For the rent, you can make an agreement, and we will immediately pay a month in advance: I will agree up to the sum of six zecchini a month, and you can be sure we shall be happy with the agreement you make and shall be much obliged to you for it. Besides this, it would be wonderful if you could find us a servant,

²⁴ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 13 B 3, 13 B 4, and 13 B 6.

²⁵ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 8-185.

who as well as German also speaks Italian or French! If this servant knows how to dress hair, it would be better still, and if he could agree to a very small salary. I believe that in Vienna, it is easy to have our meals delivered, either from somewhere nearby or in the house, when we wish to dine at home. Now you will clearly realize that time is short and you will have to be kind enough to start searching immediately; and after you have reserved the apartment, you would have the goodness to write me a note in which I shall find the address written down, and I will order the postilion to take us there. This note should be sent direct to me at Burckendorff [today Purckersdorff], which is the last post-station for those arriving in Vienna by the road from Ratisbona and Lintz. I should be pleased if the lodging is not very far from Vienna. I will say also on the advice of my companion, whom I know you will be pleased to meet, that if you should find a lodging that costs more, I authorize you to agree also to seven zecchini a month, and even a bit more, provided it appears to you that at least one of those rooms is fine and spacious.

When we see each other I will not speak about the English lady, but I will tell you why I refused to go to Madagascar, and you will approve. I desire to find peace, dear sir, and not to be buffeted anymore by fate, as I no longer have any of those ambitions that make a man chase after fame and fortune.

I beg you to convey my most humble respects to his Excellency the ambassador [Sebastiano Foscarini] and to his son Signor Giacomo, whom I hope to see at the riding school, trotting and galloping, having become very proficient at dressage, and furthermore I am sure I shall find him advanced in his studies.

We will chat about various things in Vienna after I have spent some days in the apartment there recovering from the fatigue of the journey, as I have done 400 miles [in reality 660 km] from Paris to here in five days, and now in another five or six I will do 480 [720 km], which separate Vienna from Frankfurt, where it is bitterly cold. Bartoli is a great friend of yours and asked me to greet you. I only stayed two months in Paris, and I left despite the opinion of powerful gentlemen who wished to stop me, but I had good reasons. I shall be able to return there in the summer. I shall finish wearying you, assuring you that I long to embrace you, and to give you, with deeds more than words, true marks of the high esteem with which I have the honor to be²⁶

Safely arrived in Vienna around the middle of December, Giacomo wrote to Francesca on the 15th, sending her the check for 8 zecchini.

He also announced plans to extend his trip toward Berlin, according to Francesca's letter of December 1783: "I hear you will go to Dresden and then to Berlin and that you will return to Vienna on January 10th." And a letter from Obizzi, dated December 27th,²⁷ indicates the same: "I hope my letter will find you happily returned from Berlin."

It is not clear if Della Lena was willing and able to carry out the lodging orders for the oncoming brothers. Anyway, upon arriving in Vienna, Giacomo continued his trip and first went to see brother Giovanni in Dresden, where he arrived before the end of the year after an uncomfortable journey.

Francesca Buschini, January 14, 1784, Poste Restante at Vienna:²⁸

I am answering quickly to your dear letter of December 29th from Dresden [. . .] I am sorry to hear your coach was turned over more than 10 times. You tell me you kept laughing about it because you like turning over in the snow and that I too should find it funny. It seems to me that it is not funny at all, because I think that falling in the snow in such a cold weather is not at all pleasant. Yet the way in

²⁶ Published by Bruno Brunelli in *G. Casanova e l'Abate Della Lena*, Venezia, 1931. The english translation (by Gillian Rees) is taken from Pablo Günter, *the Casanova tour*, Heidelberg, 1996, p. 103.

²⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 12-45.

²⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-189.

which you described it did make me laugh

The visit with the family in Dresden was not very satisfactory. Francesca reports in her letter of February 28th: “. . . I had to laugh about the description of how you sent your dear brother Zanetto [Giovanni], the father of Carlo, to the devil. He indeed is a great liar.”²⁹

The Casanova brothers, Giacomo, Francesco, and Giovanni were quick-tempered and rather outspoken in their feelings against each other. There is no record they ever lived together in exemplary peace. Their sister Maria Maddalena, married to Peter August, clavecinist at the Dresden court, may have been the only one who formed a counterweight to the centripetal forces in the family. The fourth brother, Gaetano, a priest of whom Giacomo talks only in disdain, had died in 1783 in Rome, but it may well be the family hadn't heard the news yet.

Giovanni had become one of the directors of the Academy of Art in Dresden and was well-esteemed. Unlike brother Francesco, who despised allegories and references to the Ancients (“I insist that painters should suppress all those gods who do not make a painting understandable for the people of today and for posterity”³⁰), Giovanni loved them. He even wrote a book for his students, praising and explaining the old world of gods, myths, and allegory.³¹ He may have started to assemble and produce his collection of cameos during his apprenticeship in Rome, where he cooperated with (and cheated on) the famous archeologist Winckelmann. This collection was so important that in 1792, Catherine II of Russia, who was addicted to cameos, bought all 274 of them together with his handwritten catalogue.³²

What happened when the family met again in December 1783 remains misty, but there must have been a severe clash, for in a letter to Giovanni, written January 9th from Dessau, a few days after their meeting in Dresden, Giacomo proposed a reconciliation:

Giacomo Casanova, who was always your beloved brother, will drop by again the 13th of this month and leave again on the 14th. He invites you through this honest and sincere letter to a meeting, with the desired effect to reach a complete reconciliation between him and you who thought him [Giacomo] to be [your?][his] enemy. Your brother Giacomo loves and esteems you, but not to the extent that he can endure your contempt nor that the world around you might suppose you have grounds to complain about him. Friendliness, sweetness, and moderation could make you, my dearest brother, just as

²⁹ Lying seems to have been a favorite pass time for Giovanni. Without blushing he wrote in 1761 from Rome to Giacomo in Paris: “J’ai été chez l’Abbé de Moncada que j’ai vu pour la première fois de ma vie et lui tout de même ainsi ne me connoissant pas il m’a pris pour un Cavallero il n’est pas nécessaire de te dire toutes les menteries que j’ai étalées car je ne m’en souviens pas, je me souviens seulement que je n’ai pas dit un mot de vérité . . .” (Marr 13V5).

³⁰ Casanova Archives: Marr 13 V 8.

³¹ Giovanni Casanova *Discorso sopra gl’Antichi e varj monumenti loro per uso degl’alumni dell’Elettoral Accademia delle Bell’Arti di Dresda*, Leipzig, 1770.

³² Giovanni Casanova: *Collection de Camées, Pierres gravées en creux, Pâtes antiques en relief et en creux, formée par M. Casanova Directeur de l’Academie Electorale des Beaux Arts à Dresde, et acquise par Sa Majesté Catharinae II, Imperatrice de toutes les Russies*” (Hermitage, inv.n° 47090).

distinguished as your talent and maybe even more so in the view of those who are of your blood³³

The meeting, judging from Francesca's letter cited above, did not have the desired effect. It would take a long time for peace to be restored. "I am glad you have made peace with Mr. Zanetti (Giovanni); you will be amused" wrote Francesco on May 5, 1786, "and I am charmed also, from the family point of view, that his daughter is nice."³⁴

Giacomo's later letter to Giovanni's son Carlo shows new clouds in the relationship: "Never again in my life will I speak to your father"³⁵ As this letter, fully signed, remained in Dux, it may be that Giacomo, on second thought, found this remark too harsh and never mailed it.

On January 9, Giacomo was in Dessau. He probably visited the *Buchhandlung der Gelehrten* to check out the possibility of publishing his novel, *Icosameron*, which he had started composing in Venice³⁶ in 1782. This is the firm his friend Max Lamberg had used to print his books.

On January 18th he was in Prague.

Francesca Buschini, February 7, 1784, poste restante at Vienna:³⁷

[I received] your letter of January 18th from Prague [where you wrote] that it is damned cold but that one can eat perfect pheasants there for little money.

On his way to Vienna Casanova paid a visit to Lamberg and stayed, according to the Casanovist Gugitz, for a fortnight. Then finally he returned to Vienna.

Francesca Buschini, February 28, 1784, poste restante at Vienna:³⁸

I was very glad to receive your letter of February 18th from Vienna I understood your journey lasted 62 days and that you achieved great things because the cold did no harm to you. You wrote you turned over in the snow several times but that nothing serious happened to you. I had to laugh about your remark that you were not injured because the snow was softer than my heart; be persuaded though, dear friend, that my heart is very soft! I am very glad you were able to make great acquaintances again

. . . . I am glad you are together with your brother [Francesco] and I only hope you will have enough money by May to come to Venice.

Francesca Buschini, March 10, 1784:³⁹

³³ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-23.

³⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-50.

³⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-36.

³⁶ Casanova's letter to Lamberg, dd April 15, 1785, of which Lamberg sent a summary to Opiz [cf. Opiz copy of Lamberg's "92th letter" in Opiz' manuscript *Correspondence*, vol. V, pp.107-112. [Marr 40-49]

³⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-162.

³⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-182.

I respond to your letter of February 28 from which I gather the weather in Vienna is very bad and cold. I hope the inundations of the Danube river did not harm you. You say you don't fear the floods. I am sure this is the case as even death would not alarm you.

. . . So you had a lot of fun during Carnival and you assisted at four masked balls where 200 ladies were present, and you danced minuets and contradances to the astonishment of Ambassador Foscarini, who told everyone that you were 70 years old while in reality you are not even 60; you had better laugh about it and tell him he must be blind if he doesn't see so himself. Together with your brother you attended a great banquet given by the same ambassador. You began to sum up what you had to eat and then you stopped for fear that at such a story my mouth would water. That is a very true thing. You are quite right in saying you and I have two peculiarities in common: you, that you always talk about eating, and I that I am always in need of money. You say you read my letters to your brother and that he sends me his greetings. Please give him also my regards and thank him. Tell him that I would write to him that, in case he comes with you to Venice, he can live with you in your house. You can honestly say so because the chickens remain always in the attic [together with Casanova's books!], therefore there is no chickenshit; and we will take care that the dogs [Patagnan and Aïda] won't cause any damage. The furniture is still almost complete. Only one cupboard, the small bed you bought for your nephew, and the mirror have gone; the rest is still as you left it

The first months of the year are party time in Vienna. In many a palace, balls and soirées were given. Charles Clary, of whom we will hear more later, wrote that in two months' time he attended 20 such balls. The Venetian ambassador, Sebastian Foscarini, provided one of those occasions, and the banquet Francesca referred to was of great importance for the Casanova brothers.

For Giacomo it was the beginning of two new perspectives. Two, because it was at this banquet that he met Count Joseph Waldstein, whose librarian he would eventually become, and at the same time Ambassador Foscarini offered him a position in the embassy.

For Francesco it was the introduction to a successful continuation of his artistic work. In Paris he was *peintre du roi*; in Vienna he would become more or less *peintre du prince* for the prince and prime minister Wenzel Kaunitz-Rittberg. Kaunitz became very fond of Francesco. Of Kaunitz it is told⁴⁰ that he had a parlor next to his office where he could sit in a glass enclosure for fear of drafts and diseases, while his visitors would sit at the other side of the window. At Kaunitz's side one could see paintings by the best artists and especially by Francesco, of whom the prince spoke with the greatest distinction, saying that he was the only painter who worked the way he, the prince, wanted to see it. And Count Zinzendorf wrote in his *Diary* (June 22, 1794) that Francesco was the only one allowed to come and see the dying prince. "He will not even see his children, only Casanova now and then."

Another of Francesco's high-ranking clients was the Prince von Nassau-Siegen, whom Giacomo had met in Spa. Zinzendorf wrote on March 31, 1792, in his *Diary* that he had seen at Kaunitz's a big painting by Casanova, covering a whole wall, depicting Joseph II, followed by his generals, routing the Turks. "Casanova made this painting for the

³⁹ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-183.

⁴⁰ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-76, letter from Lamberg to Casanova.

prince of Nassau, who pays 900 ducats for it.” And Lamberg tells about paintings which Francesco made for Catherine II of Russia:

They are finally sent off from Vienna. They cost 24,000 rubels and the other four for Prince Potemkin 12,000 rubels. They were shipped via the Moldau river. It wouldn't be the first time that paintings proved to have political intentions. All these paintings will be loaded on wagons custom-made in order to overcome the obstacles they will encounter while passing through cities and woods. The officer responsible for the transportation of the enormous *Storming of Otchakoff*, 15 feet in height and with the paint hardly dried, cut the knot saying, “Whatever is done for Catherine and whatever Potemkin undertakes ceases to be impossible.”⁴¹

The paintings arrived save and sound, and adorned

the room in which the Empress Catherine habitually dined, in the palace of the Hermitage. . . . One represented the siege of Otchakoff, the other the assault of Ismail. In both the carnage and the physical horrors of those scenes were represented with such hideous truth, that few, except Catherine herself, could look on them without shuddering. To her they were merely trophies of her conquests and grateful memorials of her power.⁴²

In those days Francesco, painting with two or three spectacles on his nose,⁴³ clearly was the most famous of the Casanova brothers.

For Giacomo the banquet was an opportunity to get to know Count Waldstein. The Prince de Ligne wrote about this meeting:⁴⁴

My nephew Waldstein got the taste of him at the Venetian ambassador's, where they had dinner together. As he seems to believe in magic and to practice it, he spoke of the Clavicles of Solomon, of Agrippa, etc.; everything of that kind seemed to come easily to him. “Ah, to whom do you speak of that?” exclaimed Casanova, “Oh! *che bella cosa, cospetto!* All that is familiar to me.” “So,” said Waldstein, “come to Bohemia with me, I am leaving tomorrow.”

On April 21, 1784,⁴⁵ Lamberg advises Casanova in reply to something we regrettably don't know:

So your Count Waldstein is quite a hardhead: one should drill a hole in his skull, don't quarrel with him. *De prodigis nil nisi bene* [always be nice to your benefactors]. Go to the level of his delirium, treat him as an equal or not at all. One should never refuse opportunities for higher rank Do tell me often if Vienna is to your taste; to mine it never was, too much pressure, too much falsehood, too much tinsel. Long live Paris, Selenopolis, and Utopia. Vienna can only please those who don't please us: alchemists, necromancers, magicians, your Count Waldstein.

Eventually the Waldstein project is put on the shelf until later.

The Foscarini track went better. “I placed myself at the service of Mr. Foscarini, ambas-

⁴¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-83.

⁴² Anna Jameson-Brownell (Dublin 1794-Ealing 1860): *Celebrated female sovereigns*, 1821, vol.II, p.328.

⁴³ Cf. Marie Louise Elisabeth Vigée-Le Brun, *Souvenirs de Mme Vigée-Lebrun* (Paris 1835.1837), vol. II, p. 205s.

⁴⁴ C.J. de Ligne, op. cit. p.794.

⁴⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-38.

sador of Venice, in order to write communications for him,” Casanova writes in his *Précis de ma vie*.⁴⁶ But this engagement wouldn’t last long. “Two years later (on April 23, 1785), he died in my arms, killed by the gout which extended to his breast.”

Casanova knew the Foscarini family from Venice. Two brothers were chosen ambassadors to Vienna, first the younger one, Niccolò (March 1777 to October 1781), then Sebastiano (October 1781 until his death). When Niccolò was appointed, someone from Vienna, maybe Prince Kaunitz, asked Casanova to send “a portrait” of the new ambassador. Casanova obliged, and his able pen drew in two pages, of which he kept a copy,⁴⁷ a sharp picture of the talents of the new ambassador: it will be his first embassy, great orator, does his homework, beloved and esteemed, pleasant and popular, of rich family, exact and dutiful. “If he does something, he does it 100%, but that doesn’t mean he neglects his pleasures. He frequents gatherings of old politicians, of young people of the world, and the most attractive girls of the city. He has a beautiful mistress, and they both love each other, but he is so charmed with the opportunity to prove his talents in this embassy that I think he will leave her behind without regrets.”

Max Lamberg made use of the Venetian ambassador in a peculiar way. Lamberg had proposed Casanova as a member of the Literary Society of Hesse-Hombourg and when the diploma of this society arrived, he did not send it directly to Casanova in Venice but to the embassy in Vienna, pretending not to know the whereabouts of Casanova and requesting the ambassador to forward it to wherever this citizen, now honored for his knowledge and literary learnedness, might live. At the same time he informed Casanova of what he had done. Clearly he hoped the honor bestowed on Casanova would be more widely known as a result of this diplomatic detour. In any case, the maneuver worked, and Casanova received his diploma and the congratulations of Foscarini.⁴⁸

When Casanova started his duties, the Venetian embassy in Vienna had just become the focus of a small international issue. The Netherlands had on January 9, 1784, more or less declared war on Venice, and both parties sought the intervention of Joseph II. The Dutch and the Venetian embassies had work to do.

The ambassador spoke very little French,⁴⁹ which in those days was the diplomatic language. Maybe Foscarini was only too glad to get some help from someone who did. For Giacomo it offered a new opportunity to write and publish. The Venetian embassy had been supplied with the underlying documents which Casanova could freely consult.

In a year’s time Casanova produced several booklets and articles⁵⁰ about the affair,

⁴⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 21-1.

⁴⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-28.

⁴⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-52 (Lamberg informs C. that he sent the diploma to Vienna), Marr 12-58 (Foscarini forwards the diploma, sends his congratulations and includes Lamberg’s request to Foscarini [Marr 2-51]).

⁴⁹ Casanova Archives: Marr 4-42.

⁵⁰ *Lettre historico-critique sur un fait connu, dépendant d’une cause peu connue*, [Dessau], 1784;

beginning with the *Historical-critical Letter About a Known Fact Depending on a Little-known Cause*, printed in Dessau in 1784. The affair appealed to Casanova because he knew both Holland and the Zanolich brothers, who caused the row, very well. According to the *memoirs*, Primislao Zanolich drew the 18-year-old Lord Lincoln, son of the Duke of Newcastle, into play and mulcted him of the enormous sum of 12,000 guineas. Fully 3,000 were paid in cash, and Lincoln signed three bills of exchange for 3,000 each, payable at intervals of several months. The Zanolich were ousted from Florence and Casanova with them. These bills of exchange would play a role in the *Historical-critical Letter*.

What had happened?

Late in November 1772 the brothers, Count Primislao Chiud Zanolich and the younger one, Stjepan Zanolich, arrived in Amsterdam. They made friends with two merchants from Berlin, Pierre Chomel and Carl Henri Jordan, who had set up a joint business in March 1770 for the duration of six years. Primislao presented recommendations signed by a firm in Lyon and confessed that the Zanolich brothers were temporarily in financial trouble, which caused delay of their plans to improve their estate in the Venetian part of Albany. In exchange for a bill of exchange for 3,500 zecchini, Chomel and Jordan helped the brothers with 27,000 guilders, of which a part, in diamonds, was temporarily deposited with a Genoese banker. The merchants were furthermore assured by the Zanolich brothers, who said a ship loaded with their wine would soon arrive in Holland. They paid the hotel bill for the brothers and supplied them with money for the return trip to Italy. In the meantime notice came from London that the bill of exchange was forged and that they should advertise this in the newspapers in order to prevent further trouble.

Jordan immediately left for The Hague in order to have the Zanolich brothers imprisoned for debt. Again Premislao managed to reassure the somewhat naïve merchants: "I would never have remained here quietly had the bill been forged. I know such a thing could lead to the scaffold." In 1772 the brothers left undisturbed for Italy, where they tried in vain to get hold of the diamonds. In December 1773 Primislao announced to Chomel and Jordan that a first-class merchant's firm in Budua hoped to do business with Amsterdam, and a little later this was confirmed by a letter from *Nicolo Peovich & Co.* A fake company, as it would turn out later. In the meanwhile Zanolich went to Naples where the Venetian ambassador, Simone Cavalli, was in financial trouble. The firm Peovich was mentioned again, and in exchange for whatever Zanolich did for Cavalli, the consul signed with his official title, *residente veneto*, two guarantees for the fictitious house of Peovich and its associate Zanolich.

Exposition raisonnée du différent, qui subsiste entre les deux republiques de Venise et d'Hollande, nov. 1784 and in a revised version jan. 1785; *Esposizione ragionata della contestazione, che susiste tre'le due republiche di Venezia, e di Olanda*, 1785; *Lettre a messieurs Jean et Etienne L[usac, of the Gazette de Leyde], contenat des observations sur le narré de l'affaire, qui a donné lieu au différent entre la République de Venise & celle d'Hollande publié dans les Nro. XXI & XXII de leur Gazette*, Gazette de Leyde, march 31, 1785 and Gazette de Cologne, april 19th 1785; *Supplément à l'Exposition raisonnée du différent qui subsiste entre la République de Vénise, & celle de Hollande*, [march] 1785; and several articles on the same subject in the *Osservatore Triestino*, jan 1st through february 26, 1785. Cf. H.Watzlawick: "The Zanolich Pamphlets, notes for a revision of the Casanova Bibliography" in *Casanova Gleanings* XX, Nice, 1977, pp.63-70.

These signatures persuaded Chomel and Jordan to make the diamonds in Genoa payable and to return the false bill of exchange after *Peovich & Co.* had agreed to assume the debt of Zanovich. The Amsterdammers even extended a new credit of 6,000 guilders when they heard that a certain Antonio Deglich (another fake) would send a ship, the *Minerva*, to Amsterdam loaded with olive oil and wine. “The *Minerva* of Peovich was born in the brain of Zanovich as the *Minerva* of Homer in that of Jupiter,” Casanova remarked. Peovich suggested the ship be insured in Holland and England for 130,000 guilders. From their contacts in Lyon, Chomel and Jordan heard that, though some years ago the Lyonese bankers had recommended Zanovich, they had changed their opinion. Now they warned the merchants in Amsterdam not to do business with Zanovich. They also said Mr. Peovich was none other than Stjepan Zanovich. Also Cavalli, now representative in Milan, became more prudent and advised not to extend any more credit before the ship had arrived. However, when Cavalli received alarmed letters from Amsterdam, he said he was now certain the cargo was ready to be shipped.

In 1772 *Peovich & Co.* wrote that, to their great regret, the *Minerva* had to be regarded as lost and suggested the merchants make a claim on the insurance. By now Chomel (Jordan had returned to Berlin after the expiration of his six-year association contract) finally fully realized he had been duped.

In June 1776 Jordan saw—small world—in Berlin a “Count Zanovich Babbindon Czernovich, author of the *Lettere Turche*, who called himself Bonenski,” and who was on very good terms with Frederic II and the crown prince. He was almost sure this was Stjepan and asked Chomel to quickly send the portrait which Stjepan had given them in 1772. Poor Chomel couldn’t find it, and besides, they had signatures of Primislao only, because Stjepan had always kept himself a bit in the background.

Until now the affair had been purely private, but Chomel tried to get help from the Dutch States General, making good use of the signatures of Cavalli, who officially represented the republic of Venice. This was not easy, because Chomel was not Dutch, and although he had lived in Amsterdam for almost 15 years he wasn’t even a *poorter* of this city. However, he found protection with the first *pensionaris* of Amsterdam, van Berckel, and the city of Amsterdam was powerful in the States General. The affair was small, but the principles of fair trade were jeopardized, so finally, in 1777, the Dutch consul in Venice was officially asked to intervene. To no avail. Then Chomel asked the Dutch ambassador in Vienna to intervene and to try to interest Joseph II.

Venice became uneasy and appointed a special court of justice consisting of 25 senators to deal with the matter, and in the meanwhile Cavalli was suspended. Procurator Morosini apologized to Cavalli, saying he had tried everything to prevent this move and hoped that Cavalli would manage to clear himself, as it was really Zanovich who was the culprit. Zanovich felt the heat and wrote also to Cavalli, assuring that he would go bury himself at the ends of the world (he chose Russia for this purpose). In a secret procedure the Venetian Council of Ten decided after no fewer than 50 sessions that Cavalli was innocent of criminal behavior, and he was appointed resident in London. In August 1778 the Venetian court of justice established that the *Minerva* and the Peovich firm were both fraudulent inventions. Primislao Zanovich was banned from Venice forever and Stjepan for 10 years. Their “fortune” was confiscated and could

“possibly” be used to indemnify the Amsterdam merchants. Of course the “fortune” had disappeared, and the official surveyor whom Venice had sent to Budua to measure the land of the Zanovich family had been harassed, which gave Venice reason to let the heads in Budua cool off.

Amsterdam didn’t understand the Venetian course of justice and was furious. It became a matter of democracy over against aristocratic tyranny. Several resolutions of the mighty city of Amsterdam were adopted by the States General, thus escalating the affair.

For Stjepan Zanovich the bluff poker hadn’t ended. In Berlin his playing habits had made him *non grata*, in Vienna he had had some unpleasant adventures, and now he was back in the Dutch republic. The Prince of Albany, as he now called himself, was imprisoned for debt for five months in Groningen, but he managed to talk himself out of it and into the protection of the magistrate Fockens, who paid all his bills. In the last days of 1781 he called on the surprised Chomel. He proposed to act as an intermediary in order to press Cavalli to pay reparations, and he even offered 10,000 zecchini—which he most probably didn’t have—if Chomel would let the affair rest. Anyway in February 1782 he emerged in London where he gave another try to the bills of exchange with the father of Lord Lincoln (the son had died). It didn’t work, and his plan to provide Lord Lincoln’s money to Cavalli, who could indemnify Chomel with it, failed.

In 1781 the States General had decided to send an “able person,” Frederik Tor, to Venice. Tor tried to initiate a civil procedure against Cavalli after the criminal process exonerated him, but Tor was eventually recalled, having reached no visible results.

Now Venice asked Joseph II to intervene, and when the States General sent Count Wassenaer to Vienna as plenipotentiary minister, Vienna had become the center stage of the affair. Wassenaer had a lucky hand when he recruited to his service the former secretary of Giorgio Pisani, a patrician who had been condemned for his attempts to reform the calcified institutions in Venice. He sent this secretary to Venice, who discovered Cavalli continued to advise the Venetian government. Wassenaer managed to get hold of a document—copied while Cavalli, back in Venice, slept—which would be the basis for an extensive diplomatic nota from Venice to the Austrian Prince Kaunitz. What Wassenaer didn’t know was that the Venetian inquisitors had in the meanwhile also engaged this same ex-secretary of Pisani as a double-agent into their service.

Then, in January 1784, the States General came to a long-expected resolution: There would be a test to see if Venice would react upon the arrest of as many Venetian ships in Dutch harbors as would be sufficient, if sold, to indemnify Chomel and Jordan, who claimed 68,000 guilders including interest. In particular the ship *Il Corriere Marittimo* should be impounded. The Prince of Orange was requested to inform the commanders of Dutch warships bound for or sailing in the Mediterranean to take under their protection all Dutch commercial vessels.

But the chickens were counted before they were hatched. No Venetian ships were to be found; even the *Corriere* had left two months earlier. And when Wassenaer

reported from Vienna that Venice seemed willing to cooperate, the execution of the resolution to wage war was postponed by one month but never came into effect.⁵¹

This was the situation when Casanova stepped in and took his share in influencing public opinion with his pamphlets.

In the end the affair died out. Holland had more important matters on its hands. No ships were taken, no money was paid, and Chomel in vain kept writing letters until 1791.

Now back to Casanova's own story.

He wrote the *Historical-critical Letter* not in French but in Italian, as mentioned in Lamberg's letter of April 21:⁵²

Be careful with the printers of Dessau; I have no reason to be content with them; they have cheated me. So you write your work in Italian; I agree, one must write the language which provides us the most essential ideas, and only the so-called mother tongue is capable of that. I have no doubt it will be worth presenting to the public; everything you make bears the imprint of the master. But do remember the adage of Erasmus: Whoever writes is submitted to many judges, and whatever one does, the work has no other advocates but itself. Let your child go once you have exposed it and beware to make a preface with excuses for what you did. That is asking pardon for a mistake one is about to make unless some absolute authority forces you to defend and clarify your writings.

Perhaps Casanova wrote in Italian not so much because he didn't feel at ease with the French language but in order to give Foscarini the chance to check the contents in his mother tongue.

In the end the *Historical-critical Letter* was published in French and not in Italian.

Thanks to the Casanovist Gustav Gugitz, who copied in the Dessau library the manuscript memoirs of Heinrich Wolfgang Behrisch,⁵³ we know it was he who translated Casanova's *Letter*, which was published in the *Buchhandlung der Gelehrten* in Dessau. "My sojourn in Dessau lasted a year and a day during which I translated and published . . . *La Lettre sur un sujet connu dépendant d'une cause peu connue* . . . from Italian."

The booklet was refused by the censor. *Non admittitur impressio*.⁵⁴ Casanova appealed to the president of the commission, van Swieten, and then to Prince Kaunitz,⁵⁵ proposing to use a fictitious imprint. Kaunitz probably took care not to involve Austria in the conflict. Approval by the censors could have been seen as approval of

⁵¹ Cf. Dr. E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier: "De affaire Zanolich. Amsterdams-Venetiaanse betrekkingen aan het einde van de achttiende eeuw" in *Amstelodamum*, Jaarboek 72, Amsterdam, 1980 of which the above mentioned Affair is extracted.

⁵² Casanova Archives: Marr 2-38.

⁵³ Cf. J.R.Childs: *Casanoviana*, Vienna, 1956, p. 71 and H. Watzlawick: "A touch of madness - le chevalier de Bérés" in *L'Intermédiaire des Casanovistes*, Rome, 1984, pp. 9-14.

⁵⁴ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 32-2.

⁵⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-21.

the Venetian side. Anyway, by April 24th Casanova was ready to do business in Dessau. He made a proposal to Le Roy de Lozembrune, a colleague of Della Lena and teacher of French in the Theresianum, to direct the printing. Casanova would send money to cover all expenses. But Le Roy himself couldn't do the job: He said he didn't feel capable of it, and besides he had other things to do.⁵⁶ It was probably Berisch who in the end took care of the whole enterprise, and when the booklet was printed, the *Letter* was dated "à Hambourg, ce 12 Mai 1784."

Francesca Buschini, March 20, 1784:⁵⁷

I am very sad you informed me that you probably will not be able to come to Venice in May due to lack of money for the trip. May is still far away, so I still hope you will be able to find the money to come; you cannot imagine my joy to meet you again. . . . I laughed a lot about your account of the incident in the church with the old pious lady you wrote me about in your letter [of March 10]. After Mass you wanted to hear the sermon, but you fell so soundly asleep that your hat and muff fell to the floor and almost yourself as well. That would still have been the worst as you could have hurt yourself and the people would have laughed even more. . . . At the moment you are busy printing a book. You tell me you sent me 200 copies which I should sell for 30 soldi apiece; you told me you will inform Zaguri about it, who will direct interested people to me. When you really do so please make sure I don't have to pay for the parcel, as you know I have no money. I hope the books will arrive soon and to be able to sell them quickly in order to be able to pay the rent on April 1st

Francesca Buschini, April 3, 1784.⁵⁸

I gathered from your dear letter of March 20 that you were very pleased to have traveled five posts in the company of two ladies in order to see the emperor. . . . I hope you will get permission to print your book and that you will send me the 200 copies and that I will be able find the opportunity to sell them

Perhaps the meeting with Joseph II, who was returning from Italy and back in Vienna on March 30, had to do with the Zanovich affair. Was Casanova acting as a courier with an urgent message from the Venetian ambassador?

And who were the two ladies? Was one of them perhaps the woman he wrote a poem for, entitled "Verses from Giacomo Casanova in love with C.M." ? And the other one perhaps the "little Kaspar"? To Caton M. Casanova refers in his *memoirs*:⁵⁹

I continued being duped by women till I was 60 years old. Twelve years ago, had my guardian angel not rescued me, I would have married in Vienna a young rash girl who had made me fall in love with her.

And elsewhere in the *memoirs*:

Old age weakens the heart and the spirit equally. Marriage is always a silly thing, but when an old man does it, it is deadly. The woman he marries can only have complacence for him, for which he has to pay with his own life, which will certainly be abbreviated; and if by chance this woman is in love with him, he finds himself in an even worse condition. He is bound to die in two or three years. Seven years ago I hardly escaped such foolishness in Vienna. Apollo saved me from it.

⁵⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 12-91.

⁵⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-200.

⁵⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-195.

⁵⁹ Casanova: *Histoire de ma vie*, éd. Brockhaus/Plon, Vol.1, p.36 and Vol.11, p.282.

Casanova might have written these words after he received in Dux Caton's letter⁶⁰ with a summary of her loves.

Little Kaspar, who will later become a favorite of Joseph II, is mentioned in another of Caton's letters.⁶¹

Young little Kaspar, whom you loved so much, came to ask me for the address of her dear Monsieur de Casanova to whom she planned to write a tender letter and full of niceties. I was too polite to refuse this to a pretty girl who once was the favorite of my friend, so I told her the address, but I sent the letter to a city quite far from where you are now. Won't you want to know this city in order to have her letter forwarded to you? But you can trust my word that you won't know it before you write me a nice long letter in which you humbly beg me to tell you the place where the divine reading-matter of the adorable object of your eyes is hiding. You could well make this sacrifice for a lady in which the emperor himself is interested, for you must know that since your departure from Vienna it is he who instructs her in French and in music. Apparently he takes the trouble to teach her himself, for she often sees him in order to thank him for his good deeds, but I don't know in which way she expresses herself

Francesca Buschini, April 14, 1784:⁶²

I am very sorry to hear that the chance of seeing you next Ascension Day is very slim, but I keep hoping. You say you hope to see me once again before you die; I from my side will trust firmly that I will see you many more times than only once. You know, I don't want to hear any more about death, but rather about life. You made me laugh with your story that they're working in Vienna on a balloon for six passengers and that you might be one of them. Be careful the balloon doesn't burst due to your heavy weight

Francesca Buschini, April 28, 1784:⁶³

From your letter of the 17th I heard to my great sorrow that you have to stay in bed with your usual trouble. But with even greater relief I understood you feel better already. You should take the baths, because I am sure those are good for you. Two things are necessary, dear friend: health and money I hope you will have received permission to print your book At this very moment I receive your dear letter with the enclosed check [for 80 lire] I thank you for your care and your good heart; I will make sure that in the future I will not bother you so often about money . . . and be assured that from now on I will commence my letters always with "Amatissimo Giacometto."

Francesca Buschini, May 5, 1784:⁶⁴

I hope everything is alright with you, but please don't talk about death anymore. I laughed a lot about your request that my mother should pray a *de profundis* for you when you die. You asked her to do so very softly because your soul would be in need of rest. I hope this *de profundis* will never be necessary because she would do it badly and cry a lot. I think you poke fun at me when you say you really mean to take to the air with the balloon and fly with good winds to Trieste and from there to Venice. I tell you that when you are crazy enough to embark, the wind will certainly not bring you to Venice but to pay a visit to Pluto, and then you are certainly in need of a *de profundis*. Please postpone this visit as long as possible. Twenty days ago I too saw a balloon which Spinola, Avanzeti, and others had built for lots of

⁶⁰ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-52.

⁶¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 4-20 and Marr 12-64, d.d. July 16th, 1786.

⁶² Casanova Archives: Marr 8-174.

⁶³ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-167.

⁶⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-181.

money. I saw it in the air, and it looked like an apple. The thought that you would travel in such a thing made me laugh. . . .

Francesca Buschini, May 19, 1784:⁶⁵

From your letter of the 8th I heard with great regret that you are in bad health and that your wallet is even worse. So I wish you health and money. I am still convinced you would recover if you would go and take a bath cure. But you say they charge 20 zecchini and that you have only 20 pennies. Remain cheerful and trust my word: the pennies will change into zecchini

Francesca Buschini, May 29, 1784:⁶⁶

I received your letter of May 19th and was pleased to hear that you are taking the baths; but it bothers me that this makes you weak and melancholical. However I am consoled that your appetite doesn't fail you and that you sleep well, which are good signs

In the meantime Zaguri had informed Casanova that he had seen⁶⁷ Francesca in the *Casino de' Mongolfisti*, a club where apparently balloon enthusiasts gathered. The fact that Francesca herself hadn't written about this night on the town put Casanova in a bad humor. She had always stressed the fact that she never went out except to go to church with her mother and to do Casanova's errands. On June 2 he wrote her an angry letter⁶⁸ stating he wouldn't take care of her anymore and accusing her of being false, cunning, guileful, and hypocritical. Francesca confessed she went to the meeting only once, together with a girlfriend and the girl's friend, who was cashier of the *Accademia del Mongolfisti*; that she had feared Casanova would take it ill; and that it would never happen again that Casanova would hear from others where she went. And making a clean sweep of another thing she had not dared write before, she also confessed that four months earlier her mother had sold Casanova's books, which had been shelved in the attic (with the chickens!) for 50 lire when the Buschini family was in great need of money.

The books may have been dearer to Giacomo than the girl. Anyway, though Francesca continued writing for some time, Casanova kept silent for a year and a half and sent a few last letters only in 1786 and 1787.

So from this point on we have to do without Francesca's echoes. But for this period Lorenzo Da Ponte gives us some information. In 1784 he had just finished his first opera libretto, *Le Riche d'un jour*, on music by Salieri, and he would soon begin collaborating with Mozart. Da Ponte published his own *Memoirs* in New York City in 1829-1830. He must have had access to the first edition of Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie*, because he comments on the truthfulness of memoirs in general and adds about those of Casanova: "I don't say this to reduce by one iota the merits of Giacomo Casanova or those of his Memoirs which have been written gracefully and which I read with pleasure, but knowing this extraordinary man better than anybody else, I can

⁶⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-175.

⁶⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-170.

⁶⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 3-62, letter dated may 11th, 1784.

⁶⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-171, quoted by F. Buschini.

assure my readers that love of truth is not the essential value of his work.”

On the other hand, Da Ponte himself wasn't always trustworthy in his own *Memoirs*. One of his editors commences his preface with the words: “The *Memoirs* of Da Ponte are dominated by the omnipresence of lies. Our man lies like he breathes, apparently in an instinctive way, by pure pleasure and without any clear goal. Certain histories he tells, certain conversations he reports are so thinly related to reality that one doubts if they were ever meant to be believed”⁶⁹

Nevertheless they are too interesting to be omitted.

Da Ponte writes that one day, while strolling with Salieri on the Graben in Vienna, he saw: an old man who looked at me in a very peculiar way. While I tried to place him in my memory he stood up and came quickly towards me. It was he! It was Casanova who called my name. “Dear Da Ponte, what a joy to see you again.” He lived in Vienna for a couple of years during which neither I nor anybody else could say what he did and what he did for a living. I saw him often; my house and my wallet were open to him Some time later, walking with him on the same street, I suddenly saw him frown; he left me standing there and quickly went in pursuit of a man whom he grabbed by the collar, and he cried out loud, “Now I have got you, murderer!” An ever-growing crowd assembled, attracted by this strange aggression. Baffled, I stood there awhile inactive, but after two minutes of reflection I ran toward him, grabbed him by the arm and led him away from the row. Then he confided to me that this man, Gioachino [Gaetano] Costa, was the servant who had run off with his trunk and his treasure [taken from Madame d’Urfé in 1760 in Paris]. Valet of a grand seigneur of Vienna [Count Hardegg], and having added to his low function the profession of poet, [Costa] was one of those who had honored me with their diatribes during the time I was in the favor of Joseph II. We continued our walk, and we saw Costa enter a café, out of which soon appeared a waiter who gave a piece of paper to Casanova. It read in a few lines: “Casanova, you have stolen, I have cheated/You the master, I the student/In your art I too am prudent/You gave me bread, I gave you cake/Hold your tongue for heaven’s sake.” These few words had a great effect. Casanova reflected; then, bursting out laughing, he bent over to my ear saying: “The scoundrel is right.” Then going toward the café, he signaled to Costa to come out and join him and both, side by side, strolled away talking as quietly as if nothing had happened. A few minutes later they shook hands several times like two intimate friends and parted. When Casanova came toward me he wore on his finger a cameo I hadn’t seen him wearing before and that—bizarre coincidence—represented Mercury, god of thieves. I suppose this cameo was the only piece of wreckage he had been able to recover of that deceit.⁷⁰

In another episode, after having suggested that Casanova’s main income came from his card games and that Della Lena and Giacometto Foscarini, the son of the ambassador, were his main prey, Da Ponte says that Casanova:

in need of funds, was planning to submit to Joseph II the plan for a Chinese festivity which should be a

⁶⁹ J-F. Labie in *Mémoires et livrets / Lorenzo da Ponte*, Le Livre de Poche, Paris, 1980, p.11.

⁷⁰ Da Ponte: *Mémoires*, op.cit. vol.3, p.148.

great feast for the city, with a nice remuneration for him who organized it. He wrote a memorandum of a length which discouraged the emperor. *Cur, quia, quomodo, quando* was the epigraph above it. He came to see me, put a pen in my hand, and spoke: "Da Ponte, we are friends aren't we?" "Without doubt." "I know your honesty, you know mine." I didn't answer. "I did many things, but I never cheated on a friend." I smiled. Abbé Della Lena and young Foscarini were also his great friends, and yet "In order to execute my project, I need 1,000 piasters. Put your signature on a bill of exchange for this sum, and I will surely pay you back in two months' time." I laid down the pen, excused myself, and rose. He became furious and left frowning. I didn't see him for several days, but I knew Foscarini had obliged him.

One morning, while at the emperor's for affairs of theater, our Giacomo asked for an audience. He enters, bows his head and presents his memorandum. The emperor unfolds it, but perceiving its length, he folds it again and asks what he wants. He explains his projects and develops the epigraph *Cur, quia, quomodo, quando*; but Joseph II wants to know his name. "Giacomo Casanova," he says, "is the humble person who solicits Your Majesty's favor." Joseph II remains silent for a few moments, then says with his usual friendliness that Vienna doesn't like such spectacles; he turns around and resumes his writing. The solicitor added no word and retired humbly. I wanted to join him, but the emperor called me back, and after having repeated three times, "Giacomo Casanova," he started talking theater with me again.⁷¹

The humility of Casanova toward the emperor may be reflected also in a letter⁷² to Eccellenza [Kaunitz?]: "Yesterday His Majesty was so kind as to talk with me alone for half an hour. At the first word he spoke I trembled under the aspect of His Highness." Casanova likens the encounter to that of God speaking to Moses, who could only bear His light by turning away.

This attitude, of course, is quite in contrast to his impudent conversation with Joseph II regarding the sale of titles of nobility.

We meet another acquaintance of Giacomo in a letter dated April 26, 1784.⁷³ It is signed by "Teramene," the Arcadian name of Alphons Heinrich Traunpaur,⁷⁴ Chevalier d'Ophanie, introduced to Casanova by Lamberg. Traunpaur was a temporarily retired professional soldier with literary ambitions who had moved to Vienna in November 1783. The letter deals with a rather prosaic matter: the pawning of some winter clothes of Giacomo. Casanova had gone to take the bath in Meidling⁷⁵. As spring had arrived he did not need his winter clothes, and he expected that his red fur coat, a muff, a suit, and a black velvet overcoat would be worth 50 guilders. Apparently Traunpaur was kind enough to do the job, paid six guilders fee to the pawnhouse, charged one for the taxi fare, and held the clothes and the remaining 43 guilders available at his home.

Traunpaur, also signing his poems with "Partunau," took the title "Chevalier de Seingalt" for a family affair when he had printed, in May 1784, his welcome salute to Francesco:

⁷¹ Da Ponte, op. cit. vol.4, p.258.

⁷² Casanova Archives: Marr 9-27.

⁷³ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-22.

⁷⁴ Cf. H. Watzlawick: "Et ille in Arcadia / Traunpaur, chevalier d'ophanie" in *Casanova Gleanings* XXIII, 1980.

⁷⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 16 F 12, a hotel bill for a stay from may 29th till june 3rd 1784.

*Letter to Monsieur François de Casanova de Saint-Gal, revered painter of the King of France, on the occasion of his stay in Vienna.*⁷⁶

However, the friendship would not endure. Casanova accused him of plagiarism,⁷⁷ and in 1788 Lamberg writes to Casanova:⁷⁸ “You did well to break with the rhymester Traunpaur, the stupidest thief of other people’s ideas. I am sorry to have sent him to you; leave him alone and break off all contact with him. If he keeps writing to you, answer him dryly that Tragedy never responds to Comedy or even better: to Farce.”

In 1784 Casanova planned to write a sequel to his *History of the Polish Troubles*. He had a prospectus printed, *Notice to Lovers of History [Avis aux amateurs de l’Histoire]*⁷⁹ in which he says:

I am determined to publish the *History of the Permanent Council* established in Warsaw by the Diet of 1775 after the last revolution. I will have this work printed in three bound volumes in octavo in French. I promise to have the first volume ready in April next year 1785; the second will appear in July, and the last volume in October. Upon receipt, three guilders will have to be paid for each volume Each volume will number about 500 pages

The number of subscribers was probably insufficient, because no trace of the projected 1,500 pages of text has been found.

Or is there? Had he planned perhaps to use the material of the unpublished part of his *History of the Polish Troubles*,⁸⁰ reviewed and updated with more recent events?

Anyway, at this time he was reminded of the history of his own troubles by the printer of the *Polish Troubles*, Valerio de’ Valeri. The printer claimed Casanova had failed to deliver the continuation of the *History*; he successfully sued for 3,000 florins Count Torres, who had been willing to act as a guarantee. A furious Casanova wrote (dated Vienna, July 23, 1784) a *Declaration of Giacomo Casanova, written by himself eleven years after a contract was signed by him and Valerio de’ Valeri, printer in Gorizia*.⁸¹ In this declaration, Casanova states it was not he, but Valerio, who had violated the contract by failing to pay the author’s fee. Giacomo tried to start an appeal in court to free Torres of the burden. It is not known whether he succeeded.

Then Casanova picked up another idea which had come to him during his last annoying

⁷⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 36-24, 25, 26 and 30.

⁷⁷ In his *Echantillons envoyés par un observateur barbaresque à sa belle au bout d’une année de séjour dans une Capitale policée* etc, 1784, Traunpaur had used a few of Casanova’s favorite lines like ‘de rivage en rivage’.

⁷⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-53.

⁷⁹ Casanova Archives: Marr 36-18, 19 and 20.

⁸⁰ Casanova: *Istoria delle turbolenze della Polonia*, Tom. II, Parte II, [Marr 26-9]. The existence of the manuscript was signaled already by A. Mahler in 1905, but it was published only in 1974 by G. Bozzolato in *Casanova: uno storico alla ventura*.

⁸¹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 17 A 27.

years in Venice, when he was discontent with everything. When the world is against you, why not shape your own world? It would be the *Icosameron*, and on April 15, 1785, he confided to Lamberg that he had already finished two parts. "It will consist of two volumes of 500 pages each, and at the end I will be able to say, like Ovid said about his *Metamorphoses*, 'this is a work which will bring me immortality.'⁸² Casanova kept his word and finished the novel in 1787, but it didn't bring him the expected fame.

In between all these projects there was time for social contact. We get a glimpse of this when the lieutenant Cusani invites him, in verse, for a luncheon at Schönbrunn while giving him the choice between two dates. Casanova answers in a long ballad,⁸³ excusing himself for both dates. On the first day he has a prior engagement: an invitation to Antonio Collato's, "where there will be aristocratic people and a concert; there is a pretence of culture but it is just a cover-up for love-plays and jokes about and against women." On the second day he is expected at the ambassador's:

At Foscarini's house everyone is not treated in the same way, because he soon divides the mediocre from the intelligent. There is no love-play, no songs or music, but there is plenty of conversation and some gambling, and there is always fresh gossip. He listens attentively and doesn't interrupt the speaker. Everyone trembles when he gets angry with his servants, but he doesn't sulk; once he's blown his top he forgets it. He isn't even worried by the Jewish street-sellers. His voice is louder than a trumpet, and he sleeps so soundly that not even passing carriages wake him. He has sturdy lungs and a good brain. Everything is strong in his body; only its spirit is fragile. His tender heart makes his soul compassionate, and his appetite makes him appreciate doctors less than cooks, from whom he orders delicious meals even if he is following a strict diet devised by a doctor from Friuli. He is a cultured man and an excellent writer, especially about politics. Foscarini says he will accept everything in the severe diet and that he will eat locust and acorns as long as his guests can still eat well, and he can order his cook to prepare the delicate meat sauce for which the cook is famous. He hopes his beloved son will learn to understand that the gourmet is to be praised and the glutton criticized. And the doctor has no business finding fault with this opinion but can see for himself if he comes to eat at Foscarini's table.

These are the invitations I have received and that I must accept, so please understand when I tell you I cannot come to you.

But fate interrupts this pleasant picture. The ambassador's health deteriorates, and Foscarini suddenly dies on April 23, 1785. And though the post at the embassy may not have brought in a lot of money, apparently Casanova couldn't do without it, and he immediately started looking for a new position.

Three letters to Domenico Tomiotto de Fabris, an old friend whom he had gotten to know a long time ago in Padua, whom he had met several times later in life, and who was now governor of Transylvania, led to no result. In one of them Giacomo had dusted off his old idea of becoming a monk. Fabris finally answered on June 10th⁸⁴ to Casanova's last address in Vienna, *Im Heidenschusse wo der Türk*: "It pleases me to hear that you begin to contemplate seriously the misery of humanity. It needs more than the dress of an abbé, as you plan, to make a monk. At our age we shouldn't think much of writing, but of contemplation and death."

⁸² Cf. Opiz correspondence with Lamberg: march 24, 1786 in which Lamberg quotes Casanova's letter of april 15th, 1785.

⁸³ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 17 C 3 and 5.

⁸⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 12-98.

The main reason for Casanova to write to Fabris was to offer his services as a secretary, but Fabris has no vacancy: “Thanks very much for your friendly proposition, but I have in my office 18 secretaries who kill me by forcing me to read and sign.”

Soon after this letter Casanova leaves expensive Vienna in a hurry and seeks refuge with Lamberg in Brno. From there he leaves for Carlsbad hoping that Princess Lubomirska can help him get a position at the Academy in Berlin.

Lamberg suggests that on the way he pay a visit to his friend Opiz, ex-Jesuit and now inspector of finances in Bohemia. In an accompanying note, Lamberg advises Opiz:⁸⁵ “A famous and revered man, Mr. Casanova de St. Gall, carries, dear friend, my visiting card which he will hand to you and Mrs. Opiz. Getting to know this amiable and rare man will be a great event. Be nice to him and friendly . . . Write me about him, and if you can, give him a recommendation for Calsbad.”

On August 5th Lamberg writes to Opiz:

By now my dearest friend will have handed over my visiting card. Have you sounded out this extraordinary man? With the exception of the alchemist Saint-Germain I know few persons who can equal him in the range of his knowledge and, in general, of his intelligence and imagination. To know this cosmopolitan is something special, and when he has given you a day, you will certainly have enjoyed it.

On August 15th Opiz confirms that Casanova was there on August 1st:

He was in a great hurry in order to catch Princess Lubomirska in Carlsbad. While something on his coach had broken, he was forced to stay for two hours in Tschaslau, which time he spent with us. He left Tschaslau with the promise to give us a whole day upon his return. I am looking forward to it. Even in the short time of his visit I found him worthy of our esteem and love. He is a benevolent philosopher, a cosmopolitan for whom the world (not only the Venetian state) is his home. Even in kings he sees only men. I know no one in Carlsbad. I am very sorry I couldn't comply with your wish to recommend him to somebody. Neither would he be able to stop in Prague this time, due to his haste.

But in Töplitz, Casanova wrote in his *Précis de ma vie*, “Count Waldstein stopped me and brought me here to Dux, where I still am and where, in all likelihood, I will die.”

It must have been around August 10 that this meeting took place, where Waldstein and Casanova came to an agreement. At that time Giacomo wrote a note⁸⁶ to Della Lena, excusing himself for not having had time to go to the Theresianum to say goodbye and to thank him for all his help. Casanova planned to do that in January. He begged Della Lena to pick up his poste restante letters and send them to—the first time he writes his new and final address—“*Mr. Casanova chez M. le comte de Waldstein*

Teplitz pour DUX.”

⁸⁵ Opiz manuscript copy of his correspondence with Lamberg d.d. July 30, 1785.

⁸⁶ Lettre to Della Lena, August 1785; Casanova Archives: Marr 40-48. See also Marr 18-9!

Casanova between Venice and Dux (1782-1785)

A biographical fragment based on documents.

by Marco Leeflang

For the second time Trieste became Casanova's jumping-off point. In 1774 he waited here for permission to return to the Serenissima. Now, in 1782, he is preparing for his final departure from Venice. He judged it was of no use waiting for the dust to settle from the storm he had raised with his publication, *Neither Loves Nor Ladies* (*Nè amori nè donne*). Undoubtedly his prior experience with the conservative government, which had cost him an 18-year exile, had made him cautious.

Venice in those days was more or less a police state. Secret trials were common. Crackdowns followed where modernization was proposed. Traveling was prohibited for the nobility unless specific permission was granted. Freemasons were a horror: their possessions were burned and their leaders banned. Freedom of press and speech were not a right but dangerous.

Casanova had friends among the nobility with more liberal views, like Andrea Memmo and Pietro Zaguri, but that was no safeguard. The fate of the unfortunate Lorenzo Da Ponte, a protégé of Memmo and Zaguri, was a recent example from Casanova's inner circle. In 1779 Da Ponte was banned for 15 years.

In a publication, Da Ponte had posed the question "whether man wouldn't be happier in nature than in society." This was considered blasphemy. And when his social conduct too surpassed the limits of acceptability⁸⁷ (the 30-year-old abbé had a child with young Angioletta Bellaudi and had brought it himself, in soutane, to the foundling home), he fled the country before the authorities could get hold of him. Casanova would meet him again later when Da Ponte had managed to become poet of the Austrian Theatre and was writing libretti for some successful operas of Salieri and Mozart.

Casanova's decision to leave Venice had been triggered by the written advice of the procurator of St. Mark's, Francesco Il Morosini, a friend from old times and now in high office in Venice. The procurator had sent a letter *poste restante* and a messenger advising Casanova to pick it up. In the meanwhile Morosini apparently had been able to calm the waters of the turmoil by stopping the circulation of *Neither Loves Nor Ladies*, which, by the way, had received the official approval of the censors. The whole edition was confiscated. On August 31, 1782, a Mr. Ballarini wrote to the Venetian ambassador in Paris the news that "the booklets were rigorously collected." The terms in which Morosini had written to Casanova sounded rather harmless—"It would please me not to encounter you in Venice for some time"—but he also advised him to leave the country as soon as possible. In reply⁸⁸ to this letter Casanova complains about the harshness of Morosini but says at the same time that he should have left the country two years earlier. Then he strikes the word "two" and replaces it with "three." "During the last three years I lived in Venice in a continuous state of violence, I should have

⁸⁷ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 3-79.

⁸⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 16 H 39.

decided earlier to go and live elsewhere.” Again his pen crosses out a word. To “live elsewhere” is not dramatic enough—to “die elsewhere” sounds better. And as his honor is hurt by being urged to leave immediately, he stresses he will present himself “next Thursday or Friday morning at the front door” of Morosini’s palace. Besides, before departing he will have to wait for answers on his letters to his family in Paris and Dresden, and he has to arrange something for his nephew Carlo, the son of Giovanni Casanova, who temporarily lives with him. He cannot possibly settle his affairs before October 22. The future looks gloomy. “I am 58 years old; I can’t travel on foot; winter is coming; and when I think of becoming an adventurer again, I start laughing when I look in a mirror.”

The *Memoirs* cannot help us for the next 16 years of Casanova’s life. On the one hand this is an enormous disadvantage, and we will miss many details, but on the other hand we now have some rather reliable data which have not been edited and reedited in order to adjust to his literary aspirations. The reports from others and the notes and drafts of letters which are preserved among Casanova’s papers, like the Morosini letter just cited, are more straightforward than the *Memoirs*. This legacy is plentiful. Some 800 items date from before Casanova’s final departure from Venice in early 1783, and some 1,250 can be dated from the subsequent 16 years.

From Trieste Casanova traveled to Vienna, another city from which he had been ousted 16 years earlier. But time heals all wounds, and even the memory of the police is not eternal. He stayed there from January till June 1783.

Joseph II had become emperor in 1780 and had started modernizing many things that had been taken for granted. Among the big issues he was working on were religious toleration, emancipation of the Jews, abolishment of serfdom, church reform, land tax reform, and social legislation. But there were also smaller adjustments. One of those was that Joseph II was easily accessible and welcomed meeting the people, including foreigners. And one of those was Casanova.

Prince Charles de Ligne relates in his *Fragment sur Casanova, frère du fameux peintre de ce nom*⁸⁹ an encounter between Joseph II and Casanova:

“It seems to me that you have been friend of Mr. Zaguri.”

“Yes,” Casanova replied, “a Venitian nobleman.”

“I don’t like his type of nobility so much. I don’t esteem those who buy it.”

“And what do you think of those who sell it?”

Joseph changed the subject and retired, rather discontented with this remark.

Casanova renewed acquaintance with Da Ponte who, in 1782, after the death of Metastasio, poet of the Imperial Theatres, posed as a candidate for the vacancy. And when Salieri recommended Da Ponte to Count Rosenberg-Orsini, the director of Performances, he got the job, though not the title of “Imperial Poet,” because Joseph decided to discontinue that title.

Casanova probably met again with Prince Kaunitz-Rittberg, the longtime chancellor of

⁸⁹ Prince de Ligne, *Mémoires, lettres et pensées*, éd. François Bourin, Paris, 1989, p. 794.

Austria, whom he knew from his last visit to Vienna. There is no record of their meeting in this period, but the ease with which Giacomo's painter-brother Francesco Casanova obtained Kaunitz's protection later in 1783 points in that direction.

He also met the abbé Eusebio Della Lena (1747-1818), bibliophile, man of letters, who earlier had owned a bookstore in Venice but who was now rector of the Theresianum. It is to him that Casanova addressed a letter which sums up what happened between June, when he left Vienna for a short and last visit to Venice, and September 1783. This letter was first known in a shorter version, maybe taken from a draft by Casanova, but the original⁹⁰ has been found among the treasures of Brockhaus, the German firm which still owns the manuscript of *l'Histoire de ma vie*. It is worth reading it in full, and we will interlard it with clippings from the letters of Francesca Buschini,⁹¹ the girlfriend Casanova left behind in the Barbaria delle Tolle near the statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni. Her comments too are most valuable in tracing Casanova's whereabouts, because in her letters she always echoes the news he wrote to her.

Here is Casanova's letter, punctuated with details from Francesca's:

Antwerp, September 6, 1783

Dear Abbate Della Lena

After three months of ever-changing course I finally have the peace at heart which I need in order to write a long letter and to converse with someone like you. During my brief stay in Vienna I have come to recognize in you all those qualities which I wish to see in a real human being, but which I only occasionally find in some. Filled with this feeling you can imagine how sorry I am that I write only now, fearing that my long silence could give rise to a bad opinion of me. If so, please forgive me, maybe I deserve it, but I feel happy to attempt a justification, hoping to restore to your fine spirit the full favor which I held with you.

You know already that I spent a week in Udine at the home of the lieutenant [of Friuli, Carlo Antonio Donà] where I had the honor of dining with Nicolò Foscarini [former ambassador of Venice in Austria]. From there I went to Venice [about June 14, 1783], where I was pleased to go nowhere but to my home and then to Mestre with the whole family which I support in my house [Francesca Buschini, her mother, her sister Maria, and her brother Giovanni] and who are the only people I care for in my country, which is too indifferent toward me. Three days later I left Mestre, and I went to Basano to look up Father Boscowitz

. . . [Roger Joseph Boscowitz, Jesuit, mathematician, and astronomer, who stayed in Bassano for the supervision of the printing of his works].

Francesca Buschini wrote to Casanova on June 21:

I understood you left Mestre on Tuesday early in the morning [Was the excursion with the Buschini family to Mestre, which Casanova related to Della Lena, pure fiction and solely meant to give Della Lena a romantic impression of the family life he had left behind and supported in his (!) house?] and that you had lunch with the brother of Catrolli [Elisabetta Catrolli-Zanuzzi a Venetian actress] and that you have spent the night in their home. You asked me to look up Catrolli in order to tell her what you wrote about her brother I understood that on Wednesday morning you left Basano with the post and that you arrived at night in Borgo di Valsugana, that you have seen there [Felice] Boscorati [an artist who was accused of sending anonymous letters and satires to Mrs. Barbara Ferrari; when

⁹⁰ Published by H.Watzlawick in the *Casanova Gleanings*, Nice, 1979, p. 6. [Marr 40-39].

⁹¹ Cf. Casanova Archives, respectively Marr 8-194, 166, 169, 184, 173, 176 and 168.

ordered to appear in court, he chose to stay out of reach of Venetian justice].

Casanova continues to Della Lena:

Next I made a stop in Trent and then in Innsbruck, where I had a long conversation with the Duchess of Parma [Maria Amalia of Austria, sister of Joseph II; she stayed in Innsbruck from May 22 through 30], and then on to Augsburg where I stayed a week but found all my friends dead [A bill⁹² by saddlemaster Schlegel, who checked his coach, pinpoints his presence there on July 2.]

Francesca Buschini, July 11:

I answer your letter of June 29 from Augsburg from which I understood you made a stop in Innsbruck in order to go to the theater, where you had the honor to talk to the Duchess of Parma, and that from there you departed immediately and traveled 48 hours continuously. Great traveler that you are. I am glad you are in perfect health

Casanova again to Della Lena:

Next to Frankfurt and Mainz, where I found Count Durazzo [the Austrian ambassador to Venice], with whom I continued my journey, leaving my own coach at the post [with Antonio Rossi & Co, who in vain tried to sell it for 10, then nine, louis and finally had an offer for five, perhaps six, louis d'or or 55 florins], quite happy to travel in his company to Cologne as it saved me six zecchini. He went on to Holland and I to Aachen, where I lost a week with the sovereign magistrate who didn't understand the value of the very useful proposal which I made to him and which would have been of great advantage to me [Casanova probably proposed once again a lottery.]

Francesca Buschini, July 16:

I was very pleased to hear about your excellent state of health. I was atonished at the long journey you have made, traveling 18 posts without stopping except to change horses and on two occasions to eat, and that you arrived in Frankfurt after 42 hours fresh as a rose and that in the meanwhile you slept at least 18 hours, and better than in a bed. I was surprised at the great journey you have made and are still intending to make

Francesca Buschini, August 15, to Brussels [Casanova hasn't arrived there yet]:

With great pleasure I respond to your three lovely letters. From the first one, written on July 16 from Aachen, I heard you have met Catterina, the wife of Pocchini [Casanova often mentions the adventurer Antonio Pocchini of Padua, whom he encountered in 1743 as a deported person on the isle of Cerigo, in 1760 in Stuttgart, then in London toward the end of 1763, and again in 1767 in Vienna. Pocchini was always in the company of women he exploited and whom he often posed as his daughters.], who told you in tears she was in distress and lived next door with Pocchini, who was ill all the time. The visit you paid him made me laugh a lot, especially when he asked you for a scudo as alms and when you answered him that you wouldn't even give him a penny and that you laughed at him and when you took leave with the words, "I wish you a pleasant death." You really treated him as courteously as he deserves.

So you have embarked on the Rhine together with the Marquis Durazzo whom you had met in Mainz, and you have arrived two days later in Cologne. Your assurance that you have an iron health, sleep well, and eat only once a day as a wolf has comforted me, only from the last two letters I gather that you are less well, that you have no appetite, and that you don't sleep well, but I believe it is due to the baths. I hope you are better now. In your second letter from Spa, July 23, you complain not to have received a letter from me

. . . . For the third letter from Spa, July 30, which I received August 10, I thank you very much for the

⁹² Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 4-64.

sweet thought of inserting a golden coin

Francesca Buschini, September 6, to Paris [but Casanova has just reached Antwerp]:

With great pleasure I respond to your three dear letters from Spa. In the first, dated August 6, I understand you had to stay a few more days because of someone who has arrived in Spa. I am sorry to hear you find your stay annoying. I take it you have received the letter I addressed to Brussels in which I thanked you for the money you sent me. [Apparently Casanova intended to travel from Spa to Brussels and had advised Francesca to send her next letter *poste restante* at Brussels rather than to Paris.] In your second letter, which you wrote me on August 16 from Spa, I am sorry to hear that things don't go as well as you hoped. Your third dear letter was from Spa, August 20, with a letter for his excellency Morosini in it which I should hand to him No sooner had I given the letter to him than he said before opening it, "From Casanova I hear only unpleasant things," and he had scarcely read one page before he said, "I wouldn't know what to do." Then I told him I was going to write to you on the 6th of September to Paris and that I would come back later and would be very pleased to include his reply in my letter. Guess what his answer was? I was very surprised that he thanked me for my good intentions but he wouldn't write you any more. Those were his only words; I kissed his hand and left. He didn't even give me a penny. That is all he said to me.

Casanova to Della Lena:

From there on I went to Spa, to which spot, I don't know by what convention, once a year, every summer, all nations of Europe assemble to do all sorts of foolish things. I did mine and stayed there for almost a month. There was Nicolò Venier [one of those Venetians who traveled abroad and would be ordered to return immediately or else], the Marquis Manzi, la Bonafini [Emilia Bonafini, a famous singer, who returned to Venice in the company of Venier], Baron Thugut for two days only [Johann Amadeus Franz de Paula Thugut, Austrian ambassador in Constantinople and Naples and finally minister of foreign affairs], the Venetian ambassador with his son [Daniele Dolfin, Venetian ambassador in Paris, and his son Giovanni], who stayed for four days only, and the musician Pacchierotti, who gave a public concert. An English lady who had the folly to speak Latin invited me to accompany her to Amsterdam and wanted me to travel with her for four years. Monday the first of September at dinner in Zaandam, tête à tête, she addressed me with proposals which froze me with fear. I remained half an hour plunged in deep thought without her interfering with me. Recovering myself I said to her: "Permit me, Madam, as soon as you have returned to the hotel, that I leave you never to see you again and that I go where it pleases me. That strange lady merely answered me in Latin with these three words, "*sequere voluntatem tuam*," and immediately handed me a bill addressed to one of her bankers in which she ordered payment to me of 25 guineas. Whereupon she left me alone. So I returned home by myself, and one hour later I departed, traveled all night, spent one day in the Hague, another day in Rotterdam, and arrived here in Antwerp the next day. Tomorrow morning I depart for Brussels, where I will stay a few days

Francesca Buschini, September 20, to Paris:

I want to answer your letter of September 9th from Brussels immediately

Francesca Buschini, September 27:

Last Monday I received your sweet letter, written from Brussels on September 2. I am very grateful for the check I found in it and the other letter which I was to bring to the banker Corrado in person He read the letter, I gave him the check, and he paid me immediately 150 lire which is a fortune for me . . . 96 for the rent Monday we will eat macaroni and drink moscato to your health, because you sent me this money. Without that most certainly I would not have eaten macaroni.

Casanova continues to Della Lena:

If you would like to honor me with an answer, please address it to my name "at Mr. Casanova's, royal painter at the Louvre, Paris." Please tell me in your reply, which will be most welcome to me, about your health, about your state of mind and above all about the health of his excellency the ambassador [Sebastiano Foscarini, whom Casanova will serve later as writer of his dispatches] and give him my best regards. I beg you also to bring my best greetings to your highly esteemed pupil [Giacomo, the

son of Sebastiano Foscarini, who studied at the Theresianum under Della Lena] Please give also my best regards to Abbé Venanzio and Abbé Trento, who will forward my greetings to Count Ayala [Sebastiano Ayala, ex-Jesuit, friend and biographer of Metastasio, and chargé d'affaires of the Republic of Ragusa in Vienna]. Please tell me also about the factual circumstances of Abbé Da Ponte, with whom I will be content if you tell me that you are content with him. All of Europe says war will be imminent and that Caesar [Joseph II] will be the third. [The Russians had occupied several Turkish provinces. War seemed inevitable, and Joseph II seemed ready to help Catherine II.] Do with the fur coat whatever you want and forgive me when I don't send the money I owe you. From Paris I'll write you my destiny. If I don't go to Madagascar by the end of March, I'll return to Italy once more, and perhaps we will meet somewhere, but in Italy I will not stay. *Fata viam inveniunt*. I will tell nobody what the English lady proposed to me, but a great event might, in time, enable you to find out.

Casanova's stay in Spa poses several questions. What did he do there? What were his plans? Who is the mysterious English lady? Where does the plan to go to Madagascar come from? He probably had no specific plan himself. He probably hoped the large number of international guests would inspire him. He had always been able to mix easily with all sorts of people. New acquaintances could mean new ideas, new prospects, a job. His wallet must have been thin. The fur coat left at Della Lena's as security for a loan was written off. His coach was for sale but, old and heavy as it was, it found no buyer. His hotel bill in Frankfurt was unpaid. Spa was expensive.

There is a note⁹³, written by Casanova in Spa, which illustrates his uncertainty and the diversity of his thoughts. It lists:

- Project for a lottery in Brussels with Count Belgioso.
- Confidential information [by whom?] of the suitcase [whose?] left in Frankfurt for 20 louis.
- Need a suit and have to go to Paris.
- Recommendations for Paris.
- Confidential information of the project of Madagascar.
- Advice about the stock shares of Volf [?].
- Project for a canal in order to avoid the Strait of Gibraltar.
- Coach left behind in Mainz at Rossi's.
- Canal which crosses France from Narbonne near Carcassonne, via Pau to Bayonne.

The last proposal is worked out in greater detail and reminds us of the plans of Baron Bilistein whom Casanova had met several times and who specialized in plans connecting rivers and seas by canals. But Casanova seems unaware that a canal north of the Pyrenees had been opened already in 1681. It would function well until the arrival of the railroad.

One of the outstanding Casanovists, Helmut Watzlawick,⁹⁴ has solved at least one of these mysteries: that of the Madagascar plan which seems to come out of the blue, but doesn't.

While studying the *List*⁹⁵ of people who have come to the mineral waters of Spa, where

⁹³ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 31-49.

⁹⁴ Cf. H.Watzlawick: 'Casanova, Madagascar and Spa' in *l'Intermédiaire des Casanovistes*, Roma, 1987, p. 1.

⁹⁵ The *Listes des Seigneurs et Dames venus aux Eaux Minerales de Spa*, appearing since the middle of the century for the sake of convenience of guests and commerce. During the season the *Lists* appeared frequently and kept count of the number of visitors. Thus Casanova was mentioned in the 25th

on July 26, 1783, the presence of “Monsieur Casanova, Gentilhomme Vénitien à l’Hotel du Louvre, rue d’entre les ponts” is stated, he found the name of Count Maurice Augustus Benyowsky, whose arrival in Spa was announced on July 19th.

This count, born in 1741 in Hungary, led a life full of adventure in Poland, Russia, Alaska, Japan, Formosa, and other places. Arriving in France in 1772 he presented a plan to establish a French colony in Madagascar. He succeeded in mounting an expedition, which was realized but which encountered all sorts of trouble, and he returned to France in 1777. In 1782 Benyowsky submitted new plans to the French minister of Foreign Affairs; when he received no immediate reply he traveled to Vienna where he solicited and was granted the sponsorship of Joseph II for a colony in Madagascar under the imperial flag, but without financial backing. In November 1783 Benyowsky’s presence was signaled in London, where he tried to get British support for his plans. But in vain. Finally he succeeded in Baltimore, and in October 1784 the expedition left but encountered many mishaps.

No doubt Casanova met Benyowsky in Spa on his way from Paris to Vienna and considered joining the expedition. That solves one mystery.

The English lady remains a problem. The same *List* of visitors might help, and indeed there is a “Madame Thomson, dame anglaise” and a “Madame la comtesse Dalton, avec mille Plunkett.” However, although they are the only women without a man’s company, there is, as yet, no concrete evidence that either was Casanova’s famous “dame anglaise.”

A last look at Spa’s *List* sheds light on the background of a poem Casanova published on August 19, 1783: his *Vers publiés a Spa*,⁹⁶ signed by “a poet drifting from shore to shore, sad toy of the waves, and driftwood of a wreck,” and honoring a “great warrior who invited the whole nobility [including Casanova!] for a grand déjeûner in Spa’s Vauxhall.”

The *List* identifies the warrior as Charles Henri Nicholas, prince of Nassau-Siegen (1745-1808), known as the inventor of floating batteries during the Spanish-English war. Named Spanish major-general, he joined, after the peace in 1783 (and after some leisure and party time in Spa), the Russian service as vice-admiral, defeated a Turkish fleet in 1788, and also had successes in the sea war against Sweden. François Casanova made several portraits of the prince, but it is not certain whether it was François or Giacomo who first became acquainted with him.

But let us continue with Casanova on his journey from Brussels to Paris. He had planned to visit in Brussels Count Lodovico Antonio Belgiojoso-Este, the Austrian major-general who was vice governor of “Belgium” and nicknamed Belgiodioso because he was so hated. This visit either never took place or led to no result. After all, lotteries were not as novel in the 1780s as they had been in the 1750s and sixties. Casanova cashed the check of 25 guineas, and to Francesca he sent 150 lire—which then paid

issue as the 627th guest of the year. The *Lists* contained advertisements as well. They can be consulted in the Bibliothèque communale of Spa.

⁹⁶ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 34-4.

for eight months rent—continuing to write her once a week.

He then headed to Paris, where he arrived on Thursday night, September 11 or 18.⁹⁷ He spent the night in a bad hotel and went to see his brother Francesco, *Peintre du Roi au Louvre*, who lived in the city with his second wife, Jeanne Catherine Delachaux (1748-1818), whom he had married in July 1775. If he hadn't known already, Giacomo soon found out that life in Paris wasn't rosy. The title of "King's Painter" was beautiful, and Francesco was a good artist who sold well, but he lacked the art of keeping income and spending in balance. Both Casanovas agreed the situation was so serious that a quick departure was the only solution. Mrs. Casanova didn't want to leave and hoped to remain in the Louvre. Zaguri, in a letter from Venice⁹⁸ dated October 11, wrote to Giacomo: "It is a consolation to me that you get along well with your sister-in-law, but why doesn't she want to have anything to do anymore with her husband?"

Giacomo makes an inventory of the situation. Debts in abundance. A survey is made:⁹⁹ Mr. du Frenois has promised to diminish the personal debt of Francesco by one third. It was 31,716 livres, so 21,144 livres remain. Therefore Francesco must lower the price for two large framed paintings by 7,000 livres. [. . .] After the death of Mr. Poulain, his mother found loans to Francesco in the amount of 17,000 livres. In lieu of payment of this sum, she demands that Mr. Casanova make four large paintings, two to be delivered in 1784 and the other two in 1785. [. . .] Plus 6,000 to Mr. Bourgeois de Cretienville, 5,600 to the handworkers of Franconville, 1,200 to the watchmaker, 2,300 for the paint merchant, 1,200 for the hatmaker Furthermore, if Francesco would like to retrieve his pawned possessions, another 4,000 is needed. And there are undoubtedly other creditors.

On the income side, the job is to sell paintings and obtain new orders. Giacomo serves as sales manager. Together with Francesco he looks over the situation and makes another list¹⁰⁰:

I have six letters to write:

To the Duke of Crillon who lives in St.Clou, and for his address in Paris, I'll ask the Duke of Aranda, rue neuve des Petits Champs. I will report to Crillon the conversation with the Viscount Hereira about paintings for the Prince of Asturia; that two large and beautiful ones are finished, the need to hurry, the wish to serve him by painting the two things in question about which the duke has spoken.

To the Viscount Hereira, Spanish ambassador to Sicily (have to ask where he lives) try to get commission of four paintings for the Prince of Asturia, inform him a bit of the present situation.

To Intendant Berthier. He lives next to the intendance, rue Vendome in the Marais near the rue Saint Louis; tell him everything and ask him to take care of the administration, and even offer a security in some way or another, that without that Francesco is left to the discretion of cruel creditors and a hostile wife. Offer him available paintings, either battles or landscapes.

⁹⁷ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 16 K 47.

⁹⁸ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 3-64.

⁹⁹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 16 i 1.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 16 i 14.

To Girardeau de Marigni, banker in the rue Vivienne. No word about the present distress. Tell him only that if he wants to have the two battles, he must hurry because time presses. His wish to add paintings by Francesco to his collection. That Francesco hopes he will come to have a look.

To Mr. de Beaujon at Hôtel d'Evreux, rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré. Tell him everything in order to make him buy the paintings. Flatter him a lot. That in Vienna I have heard talk about his gallery.

To Mr. de Tot, rue de Varenne at Hôtel de Tessé at the queens stables. A letter of recommendation etc.

It seems this activity was of no avail. But the Prince de Conty is willing to help out. [In a receipt] dated November 12, he takes 14 paintings as security and advances 3,000 livres. Furthermore he orders five paintings to be delivered in April 1784 and sends three copper plates for the ones he desires to have painted on metal.¹⁰¹

The 3,000 livres no doubt were, at least in part, used to finance the trip to Vienna and not to satisfy Francesco's creditors.

One of the few, perhaps, who managed to control the damage was the butcher Fiquet, who had a brother living in Vienna as a dance master.¹⁰² This brother made a deal with Francesco: "If you let me have one of your paintings, my brother will forget about his unpaid bill for meat."

In a letter dated November 11, Casanova writes to Francesca advising her to hold her letters because he does not know what the future brings.

On November 13, the Venetian ambassador to Paris, Dolfin, issued a passport to the two brothers¹⁰³ and said he was sorry Casanova left Paris so soon. He also mentions a legendary inheritance of 200 million francs left behind by Giovanni Thierry d'Hagenau at his death in 1676. He assures Casanova that this treasure "doesn't exist and never has existed." Would this perhaps have to do with the above-mentioned "shares of Volf"?

At the same time the other painter-brother, Giovanni Casanova in Dresden, had comparable troubles. He was a widower since 1772, was no great bookkeeper either, and borrowed money wherever he could. One of his creditors was the stepmother of the painter Raphael Mengs. Mrs. Katherine Mengs-Nitscher, second wife and widow of Ismaël Mengs, insisted on marrying Giovanni in order to have some security for her loans. Giovanni had to defend himself in court to keep her at a distance.¹⁰⁴

Of course Giacomo did not spend all his time on the affairs of Francesco. He also tried to find a means of living for himself and intended to start a periodical, as he had done in Venice. Francesca echoes from Venice: "You tell me you do nothing but write and that you have the intention to publish a journal; so I wish that this newspaper finds response

¹⁰¹ Cf. for the business with Conty: Casanova Archives: Marr 12-57, 4-28, and 16 F 4.

¹⁰² Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 9-50.

¹⁰³ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 12-40.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. the summary of a legal writ in catalogue no.433 of the antiquariat Henning Oppermann, Bâle, 1932, lot 205a.

and that it will yield you some money.”¹⁰⁵ It probably was *Il Telescopio di Cecco Curione*, but this project seems not to have reached a status more advanced than a prospectus.¹⁰⁶

Many old acquaintances had died, and maybe that had its advantages too because, as in Vienna, his last departure from Paris had not been voluntary. The fact that he was not arrested in 1783 will even be used later by Casanova as proof that the arrest of Parliament and the *lettre de cachet* of 1769 had no power anymore.¹⁰⁷

Anyway he felt free to attend a meeting of the “Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres,” in November 1783, where he was seated:

by the side of the learned Benjamin Franklin. I was somewhat surprised to hear Condorcet ask Franklin if he thought it would be possible to give other directions to the aeronautic balloon. This was his reply: “This thing is still in its infancy, therefore we must wait.” Is it not possible that the great doctor ignored that it was impossible to give to the machine a direction other than that depending directly on the wind which was blowing; but those people *nil tem verentur, quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videantur*. But Franklin would not have answered that way to a French questioner in a group of English.¹⁰⁸

The very first un-manned balloon, made by the Montgolfiers, took to the air in Annonay; the first manned balloon lifted off in Paris on November 22 with Pilâtre de Rozier in it together with the Marquis d’Arlandes, who related his experiences to the Academy.

We next hear of the two Casanova brothers when they arrive in Frankfurt at the Hotel *L’Empereur*, where the host of another hotel, *Au Raisin d’or* in Augsburg, Johann Maijr, quickly sends a note, dated November 26, to remind Giacomo of his unpaid hotel bill of five months earlier.¹⁰⁹

A letter sent the 26th to Mainz asking information about the sale of the coach he left

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 8-163, d.d. october 18, 1783.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 18-23.

¹⁰⁷ In his *Lettres à Faulkircher* [Marr 39-1] he writes. “*In 1783 I stayed in Paris for three months and in Fontainebleau for a week, and I departed with a passport of mr de Vergennes accompanied by my brother. Go and ask in Vienna. You’ll find him every day at the table of prince Kaunitz.*”

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Casanova: *A Leonard Snetlage*, 1797, where he treats the word *Aërostate*. The casanovist Charles Samaran found records of a session on november 22nd 1783 of the Academy of Sciences, where Condorcet was present. He suggests that Casanova might refer to this session. But given the fact, proven by a letter (see below), that the brothers arrived in Frankfurt at the latest on november 26, this is hardly possible. It is more likely that they left Paris soon after receiving their passport and that Giacomo was present at a different meeting of the Academy, held prior to the first ascent. This is in accordance with his remark that the meeting took place “a few days after the death of the famous d’Alembert.” This death occurred on october 29. So most probably Casanova has not witnessed the ascent himself. If he had, he would have mentioned it in his correspondence, but Francesca nor Zaguri reflect the subject in their letters, nor does Giacomo in his next message to Della Lena. The fact that Casanova states in 1797 that his encounter with Franklin took place in the *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* may have been a slip of the pen, as in his letter to Della Lena (november 28, 1783) he calls it the *Accademia delle Scienze*.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 13 Y 3. “*Augusta de 26 9bre 1783*”

there in August is answered in the negative. Even for six louis d'or there is no buyer, and it is agreed the coach be sent to Frankfurt by a carrier who charges three florins and 12 creitzers. "We are sure you will have received it safely, and in Frankfurt you will more quickly find an interested foreign buyer, because many strangers are traveling through there and could be seeking a similar chaise."¹¹⁰

The trip from Paris had not been without complications, as echoed by Francesca:¹¹¹ "I received a brief letter from you, which you wrote to me on the 29th November from Frankfurt, and from which I learned to my great sorrow and regret that the drunken postilion had overturned you and that the fall had dislocated your left shoulder, but a good physician was able to put it back in place again"

On December 1st he assures Francesca that his arm is in order again, that he has taken medicine, and that he has been bled. In addition, he lets her know that in one month he will send her eight zecchini, with which she can pay the rent and use the rest for any necessities.

As promised, Casanova sends his next letter to Della Lena, looking back at his last days in Paris and stating his plans for the near future:

Frankfurt, November 28, 1783

Signor Abbate, my very dear sir and revered friend,

Two weeks ago your friend in Paris sent one of his dear friends to my house; I ran immediately to him as I had a great desire to know him because of what Bartoli [perhaps Giuseppe Bartoli born in Padua in 1717, archeologist of the king of Sardinia, member of the Academy in Paris, professor at the University of Padua and later in Turin] had said about him, but I could only stay a few minutes because it was precisely the day of the return of the Academy of Science, at which assembly the celebrated American Franklin had engaged me to attend. Then I had to go to Fontainebleau and on my return to finish a thousand trifling things before leaving Paris that took up my time, so that I could not return to enjoy the sound doctrines as much in mathematics as in Christian morals of your dear Signor Cagnoli, who did not break off his study of the stars except to compose the dispatches of two ambassadors.

The letter with which you honored me gave me much pleasure, particularly to know that his Excellency the ambassador had improved his precious health at those baths in Baden [near Vienna]. I shall come to enjoy some small influence from it, if his Excellency will permit me on the 8th or 9th of next month, and now through you the current month of December. You will forgive me if, trusting to your goodness, I venture now to entreat your kindness over a difficulty, which is not small, but which is infinitely within your powers.

I shall arrive within 10 or 12 days in Vienna with a dear companion [Francesco] to pass the winter and spring there, where I desire, not so much for reasons of economy as to avoid being cheated, to know where to lodge when we get out of our coach. I should like you to find me a decent lodging, either in the city or in some suburb, comprising two good-sized adjoining rooms and, if it is possible, that can be suitably heated by a single stove, because wood is expensive there. I should like these rooms to be light, both furnished with a good bed, a chest of drawers, two small tables and four or six chairs, and in addition, I should like to be able to put our closed coach, either in the house, or somewhere nearby, so that it does not remain exposed to the ravages of the weather, and to those of thieves. For the rent, you can make an agreement, and we will immediately pay a month in advance: I will agree up to the sum of six zecchini a month, and you can be sure we shall be happy with the agreement you make and shall be much obliged to you for it. Besides this, it would be wonderful if you could find us a servant,

¹¹⁰ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 13 B 3, 13 B 4, and 13 B 6.

¹¹¹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 8-185.

who as well as German also speaks Italian or French! If this servant knows how to dress hair, it would be better still, and if he could agree to a very small salary. I believe that in Vienna, it is easy to have our meals delivered, either from somewhere nearby or in the house, when we wish to dine at home. Now you will clearly realize that time is short and you will have to be kind enough to start searching immediately; and after you have reserved the apartment, you would have the goodness to write me a note in which I shall find the address written down, and I will order the postilion to take us there. This note should be sent direct to me at Burckendorff [today Purckersdorff], which is the last post-station for those arriving in Vienna by the road from Ratisbona and Lintz. I should be pleased if the lodging is not very far from Vienna. I will say also on the advice of my companion, whom I know you will be pleased to meet, that if you should find a lodging that costs more, I authorize you to agree also to seven zecchini a month, and even a bit more, provided it appears to you that at least one of those rooms is fine and spacious.

When we see each other I will not speak about the English lady, but I will tell you why I refused to go to Madagascar, and you will approve. I desire to find peace, dear sir, and not to be buffeted anymore by fate, as I no longer have any of those ambitions that make a man chase after fame and fortune.

I beg you to convey my most humble respects to his Excellency the ambassador [Sebastiano Foscarini] and to his son Signor Giacomo, whom I hope to see at the riding school, trotting and galloping, having become very proficient at dressage, and furthermore I am sure I shall find him advanced in his studies.

We will chat about various things in Vienna after I have spent some days in the apartment there recovering from the fatigue of the journey, as I have done 400 miles [in reality 660 km] from Paris to here in five days, and now in another five or six I will do 480 [720 km], which separate Vienna from Frankfurt, where it is bitterly cold. Bartoli is a great friend of yours and asked me to greet you. I only stayed two months in Paris, and I left despite the opinion of powerful gentlemen who wished to stop me, but I had good reasons. I shall be able to return there in the summer. I shall finish wearying you, assuring you that I long to embrace you, and to give you, with deeds more than words, true marks of the high esteem with which I have the honor to be¹¹²

Safely arrived in Vienna around the middle of December, Giacomo wrote to Francesca on the 15th, sending her the check for 8 zecchini.

He also announced plans to extend his trip toward Berlin, according to Francesca's letter of December 1783: "I hear you will go to Dresden and then to Berlin and that you will return to Vienna on January 10th." And a letter from Obizzi, dated December 27th,¹¹³ indicates the same: "I hope my letter will find you happily returned from Berlin."

It is not clear if Della Lena was willing and able to carry out the lodging orders for the oncoming brothers. Anyway, upon arriving in Vienna, Giacomo continued his trip and first went to see brother Giovanni in Dresden, where he arrived before the end of the year after an uncomfortable journey.

Francesca Buschini, January 14, 1784, Poste Restante at Vienna:¹¹⁴

I am answering quickly to your dear letter of December 29th from Dresden [. . .] I am sorry to hear your coach was turned over more than 10 times. You tell me you kept laughing about it because you like turning over in the snow and that I too should find it funny. It seems to me that it is not funny at all, because I think that falling in the snow in such a cold weather is not at all pleasant. Yet the way in

¹¹² Published by Bruno Brunelli in *G. Casanova e l'Abate Della Lena*, Venezia, 1931. The english translation (by Gillian Rees) is taken from Pablo Günter, *the Casanova tour*, Heidelberg, 1996, p. 103.

¹¹³ Casanova Archives: Marr 12-45.

¹¹⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-189.

which you described it did make me laugh

The visit with the family in Dresden was not very satisfactory. Francesca reports in her letter of February 28th: “. . . I had to laugh about the description of how you sent your dear brother Zanetto [Giovanni], the father of Carlo, to the devil. He indeed is a great liar.”¹¹⁵

The Casanova brothers, Giacomo, Francesco, and Giovanni were quick-tempered and rather outspoken in their feelings against each other. There is no record they ever lived together in exemplary peace. Their sister Maria Maddalena, married to Peter August, clavecinist at the Dresden court, may have been the only one who formed a counterweight to the centripetal forces in the family. The fourth brother, Gaetano, a priest of whom Giacomo talks only in disdain, had died in 1783 in Rome, but it may well be the family hadn't heard the news yet.

Giovanni had become one of the directors of the Academy of Art in Dresden and was well-esteemed. Unlike brother Francesco, who despised allegories and references to the Ancients (“I insist that painters should suppress all those gods who do not make a painting understandable for the people of today and for posterity”¹¹⁶), Giovanni loved them. He even wrote a book for his students, praising and explaining the old world of gods, myths, and allegory.¹¹⁷ He may have started to assemble and produce his collection of cameos during his apprenticeship in Rome, where he cooperated with (and cheated on) the famous archeologist Winckelmann. This collection was so important that in 1792, Catherine II of Russia, who was addicted to cameos, bought all 274 of them together with his handwritten catalogue.¹¹⁸

What happened when the family met again in December 1783 remains misty, but there must have been a severe clash, for in a letter to Giovanni, written January 9th from Dessau, a few days after their meeting in Dresden, Giacomo proposed a reconciliation:

Giacomo Casanova, who was always your beloved brother, will drop by again the 13th of this month and leave again on the 14th. He invites you through this honest and sincere letter to a meeting, with the desired effect to reach a complete reconciliation between him and you who thought him [Giacomo] to be [your?][his] enemy. Your brother Giacomo loves and esteems you, but not to the extent that he can endure your contempt nor that the world around you might suppose you have grounds to complain about him. Friendliness, sweetness, and moderation could make you, my dearest brother, just as

¹¹⁵ Lying seems to have been a favorite pass time for Giovanni. Without blushing he wrote in 1761 from Rome to Giacomo in Paris: “J’ai été chez l’Abbé de Moncada que j’ai vu pour la première fois de ma vie et lui tout de même ainsi ne me connoissant pas il m’a pris pour un Cavallero il n’est pas nécessaire de te dire toutes les menteries que j’ai étalées car je ne m’en souviens pas, je me souviens seulement que je n’ai pas dit un mot de vérité . . .” (Marr 13V5).

¹¹⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 13 V 8.

¹¹⁷ Giovanni Casanova *Discorso sopra gl’Antichi e varj monumenti loro per uso degl’alumni dell’Elettoral Accademia delle Bell’Arti di Dresda*, Leipzig, 1770.

¹¹⁸ Giovanni Casanova: *Collection de Camées, Pierres gravées en creux, Pâtes antiques en relief et en creux, formée par M. Casanova Directeur de l’Academie Electorale des Beaux Arts à Dresde, et acquise par Sa Majesté Catharinae II, Imperatrice de toutes les Russies*” (Hermitage, inv.n° 47090).

distinguished as your talent and maybe even more so in the view of those who are of your blood . . .

¹¹⁹

The meeting, judging from Francesca's letter cited above, did not have the desired effect. It would take a long time for peace to be restored. "I am glad you have made peace with Mr. Zanetti (Giovanni); you will be amused . . . ," wrote Francesco on May 5, 1786, "and I am charmed also, from the family point of view, that his daughter is nice."¹²⁰ Giacomo's later letter to Giovanni's son Carlo shows new clouds in the relationship: "Never again in my life will I speak to your father" ¹²¹ As this letter, fully signed, remained in Dux, it may be that Giacomo, on second thought, found this remark too harsh and never mailed it.

On January 9, Giacomo was in Dessau. He probably visited the *Buchhandlung der Gelehrten* to check out the possibility of publishing his novel, *Icosameron*, which he had started composing in Venice¹²² in 1782. This is the firm his friend Max Lamberg had used to print his books.

On January 18th he was in Prague.

Francesca Buschini, February 7, 1784, poste restante at Vienna:¹²³

[I received] your letter of January 18th from Prague [where you wrote] that it is damned cold but that one can eat perfect pheasants there for little money.

On his way to Vienna Casanova paid a visit to Lamberg and stayed, according to the Casanovist Gugitz, for a fortnight. Then finally he returned to Vienna.

Francesca Buschini, February 28, 1784, poste restante at Vienna:¹²⁴

I was very glad to receive your letter of February 18th from Vienna I understood your journey lasted 62 days and that you achieved great things because the cold did no harm to you. You wrote you turned over in the snow several times but that nothing serious happened to you. I had to laugh about your remark that you were not injured because the snow was softer than my heart; be persuaded though, dear friend, that my heart is very soft! I am very glad you were able to make great acquaintances again

. . . . I am glad you are together with your brother [Francesco] and I only hope you will have enough money by May to come to Venice.

Francesca Buschini, March 10, 1784:¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-23.

¹²⁰ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-50.

¹²¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-36.

¹²² Casanova's letter to Lamberg, dd april 15, 1785, of which Lamberg sent a summary to Opiz [cf. Opiz copy of Lamberg's "92th letter" in Opiz' manuscript *Correspondence*, vol. V, pp.107-112. [Marr 40-49]

¹²³ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-162.

¹²⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-182.

I respond to your letter of February 28 from which I gather the weather in Vienna is very bad and cold. I hope the inundations of the Danube river did not harm you. You say you don't fear the floods. I am sure this is the case as even death would not alarm you.

. . . So you had a lot of fun during Carnival and you assisted at four masked balls where 200 ladies were present, and you danced minuets and contradances to the astonishment of Ambassador Foscarini, who told everyone that you were 70 years old while in reality you are not even 60; you had better laugh about it and tell him he must be blind if he doesn't see so himself. Together with your brother you attended a great banquet given by the same ambassador. You began to sum up what you had to eat and then you stopped for fear that at such a story my mouth would water. That is a very true thing. You are quite right in saying you and I have two peculiarities in common: you, that you always talk about eating, and I that I am always in need of money. You say you read my letters to your brother and that he sends me his greetings. Please give him also my regards and thank him. Tell him that I would write to him that, in case he comes with you to Venice, he can live with you in your house. You can honestly say so because the chickens remain always in the attic [together with Casanova's books!], therefore there is no chickenshit; and we will take care that the dogs [Patagnan and Aïda] won't cause any damage. The furniture is still almost complete. Only one cupboard, the small bed you bought for your nephew, and the mirror have gone; the rest is still as you left it

The first months of the year are party time in Vienna. In many a palace, balls and soirées were given. Charles Clary, of whom we will hear more later, wrote that in two months' time he attended 20 such balls. The Venetian ambassador, Sebastian Foscarini, provided one of those occasions, and the banquet Francesca referred to was of great importance for the Casanova brothers.

For Giacomo it was the beginning of two new perspectives. Two, because it was at this banquet that he met Count Joseph Waldstein, whose librarian he would eventually become, and at the same time Ambassador Foscarini offered him a position in the embassy.

For Francesco it was the introduction to a successful continuation of his artistic work. In Paris he was *peintre du roi*; in Vienna he would become more or less *peintre du prince* for the prince and prime minister Wenzel Kaunitz-Rittberg. Kaunitz became very fond of Francesco. Of Kaunitz it is told¹²⁶ that he had a parlor next to his office where he could sit in a glass enclosure for fear of drafts and diseases, while his visitors would sit at the other side of the window. At Kaunitz's side one could see paintings by the best artists and especially by Francesco, of whom the prince spoke with the greatest distinction, saying that he was the only painter who worked the way he, the prince, wanted to see it. And Count Zinzendorf wrote in his *Diary* (June 22, 1794) that Francesco was the only one allowed to come and see the dying prince. "He will not even see his children, only Casanova now and then."

Another of Francesco's high-ranking clients was the Prince von Nassau-Siegen, whom Giacomo had met in Spa. Zinzendorf wrote on March 31, 1792, in his *Diary* that he had seen at Kaunitz's a big painting by Casanova, covering a whole wall, depicting Joseph II, followed by his generals, routing the Turks. "Casanova made this painting for the

¹²⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-183.

¹²⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-76, letter from Lamberg to Casanova.

prince of Nassau, who pays 900 ducats for it.” And Lamberg tells about paintings which Francesco made for Catherine II of Russia:

They are finally sent off from Vienna. They cost 24,000 rubels and the other four for Prince Potemkin 12,000 rubels. They were shipped via the Moldau river. It wouldn't be the first time that paintings proved to have political intentions. All these paintings will be loaded on wagons custom-made in order to overcome the obstacles they will encounter while passing through cities and woods. The officer responsible for the transportation of the enormous *Storming of Otchakoff*, 15 feet in height and with the paint hardly dried, cut the knot saying, “Whatever is done for Catherine and whatever Potemkin undertakes ceases to be impossible.”¹²⁷

The paintings arrived save and sound, and adorned

the room in which the Empress Catherine habitually dined, in the palace of the Hermitage. . . . One represented the siege of Otchakoff, the other the assault of Ismail. In both the carnage and the physical horrors of those scenes were represented with such hideous truth, that few, except Catherine herself, could look on them without shuddering. To her they were merely trophies of her conquests and grateful memorials of her power.¹²⁸

In those days Francesco, painting with two or three spectacles on his nose,¹²⁹ clearly was the most famous of the Casanova brothers.

For Giacomo the banquet was an opportunity to get to know Count Waldstein. The Prince de Ligne wrote about this meeting:¹³⁰

My nephew Waldstein got the taste of him at the Venetian ambassador's, where they had dinner together. As he seems to believe in magic and to practice it, he spoke of the Clavicles of Solomon, of Agrippa, etc.; everything of that kind seemed to come easily to him. “Ah, to whom do you speak of that?” exclaimed Casanova, “Oh! *che bella cosa, cospetto!* All that is familiar to me.” “So,” said Waldstein, “come to Bohemia with me, I am leaving tomorrow.”

On April 21, 1784,¹³¹ Lamberg advises Casanova in reply to something we regrettably don't know:

So your Count Waldstein is quite a hardhead: one should drill a hole in his skull, don't quarrel with him. *De prodigis nil nisi bene* [always be nice to your benefactors]. Go to the level of his delirium, treat him as an equal or not at all. One should never refuse opportunities for higher rank Do tell me often if Vienna is to your taste; to mine it never was, too much pressure, too much falsehood, too much tinsel. Long live Paris, Selenopolis, and Utopia. Vienna can only please those who don't please us: alchemists, necromancers, magicians, your Count Waldstein.

Eventually the Waldstein project is put on the shelf until later.

The Foscarini track went better. “I placed myself at the service of Mr. Foscarini, ambas-

¹²⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-83.

¹²⁸ Anna Jameson-Brownell (Dublin 1794-Ealing 1860): *Celebrated female sovereigns*, 1821, vol.II, p.328.

¹²⁹ Cf. Marie Louise Elisabeth Vigée-Le Brun, *Souvenirs de Mme Vigée-Lebrun* (Paris 1835.1837), vol. II, p. 205s.

¹³⁰ C.J. de Ligne, op. cit. p.794.

¹³¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-38.

sador of Venice, in order to write communications for him,” Casanova writes in his *Précis de ma vie*.¹³² But this engagement wouldn't last long. “Two years later (on April 23, 1785), he died in my arms, killed by the gout which extended to his breast.”

Casanova knew the Foscarini family from Venice. Two brothers were chosen ambassadors to Vienna, first the younger one, Niccolò (March 1777 to October 1781), then Sebastiano (October 1781 until his death). When Niccolò was appointed, someone from Vienna, maybe Prince Kaunitz, asked Casanova to send “a portrait” of the new ambassador. Casanova obliged, and his able pen drew in two pages, of which he kept a copy,¹³³ a sharp picture of the talents of the new ambassador: it will be his first embassy, great orator, does his homework, beloved and esteemed, pleasant and popular, of rich family, exact and dutiful. “If he does something, he does it 100%, but that doesn't mean he neglects his pleasures. He frequents gatherings of old politicians, of young people of the world, and the most attractive girls of the city. He has a beautiful mistress, and they both love each other, but he is so charmed with the opportunity to prove his talents in this embassy that I think he will leave her behind without regrets.”

Max Lamberg made use of the Venetian ambassador in a peculiar way. Lamberg had proposed Casanova as a member of the Literary Society of Hesse-Hombourg and when the diploma of this society arrived, he did not send it directly to Casanova in Venice but to the embassy in Vienna, pretending not to know the whereabouts of Casanova and requesting the ambassador to forward it to wherever this citizen, now honored for his knowledge and literary learnedness, might live. At the same time he informed Casanova of what he had done. Clearly he hoped the honor bestowed on Casanova would be more widely known as a result of this diplomatic detour. In any case, the maneuver worked, and Casanova received his diploma and the congratulations of Foscarini.¹³⁴

When Casanova started his duties, the Venetian embassy in Vienna had just become the focus of a small international issue. The Netherlands had on January 9, 1784, more or less declared war on Venice, and both parties sought the intervention of Joseph II. The Dutch and the Venetian embassies had work to do.

The ambassador spoke very little French,¹³⁵ which in those days was the diplomatic language. Maybe Foscarini was only too glad to get some help from someone who did. For Giacomo it offered a new opportunity to write and publish. The Venetian embassy had been supplied with the underlying documents which Casanova could freely consult.

In a year's time Casanova produced several booklets and articles¹³⁶ about the affair,

¹³² Casanova Archives: Marr 21-1.

¹³³ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-28.

¹³⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-52 (Lamberg informs C. that he sent the diploma to Vienna), Marr 12-58 (Foscarini forwards the diploma, sends his congratulations and includes Lamberg's request to Foscarini [Marr 2-51]).

¹³⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 4-42.

¹³⁶ *Lettre historico-critique sur un fait connu, dépendant d'une cause peu connue*, [Dessau], 1784;

beginning with the *Historical-critical Letter About a Known Fact Depending on a Little-known Cause*, printed in Dessau in 1784. The affair appealed to Casanova because he knew both Holland and the Zanolich brothers, who caused the row, very well. According to the *memoirs*, Primislao Zanolich drew the 18-year-old Lord Lincoln, son of the Duke of Newcastle, into play and mulcted him of the enormous sum of 12,000 guineas. Fully 3,000 were paid in cash, and Lincoln signed three bills of exchange for 3,000 each, payable at intervals of several months. The Zanolich were ousted from Florence and Casanova with them. These bills of exchange would play a role in the *Historical-critical Letter*.

What had happened?

Late in November 1772 the brothers, Count Primislao Chiud Zanolich and the younger one, Stjepan Zanolich, arrived in Amsterdam. They made friends with two merchants from Berlin, Pierre Chomel and Carl Henri Jordan, who had set up a joint business in March 1770 for the duration of six years. Primislao presented recommendations signed by a firm in Lyon and confessed that the Zanolich brothers were temporarily in financial trouble, which caused delay of their plans to improve their estate in the Venetian part of Albany. In exchange for a bill of exchange for 3,500 zecchini, Chomel and Jordan helped the brothers with 27,000 guilders, of which a part, in diamonds, was temporarily deposited with a Genoese banker. The merchants were furthermore assured by the Zanolich brothers, who said a ship loaded with their wine would soon arrive in Holland. They paid the hotel bill for the brothers and supplied them with money for the return trip to Italy. In the meantime notice came from London that the bill of exchange was forged and that they should advertise this in the newspapers in order to prevent further trouble.

Jordan immediately left for The Hague in order to have the Zanolich brothers imprisoned for debt. Again Premislao managed to reassure the somewhat naïve merchants: "I would never have remained here quietly had the bill been forged. I know such a thing could lead to the scaffold." In 1772 the brothers left undisturbed for Italy, where they tried in vain to get hold of the diamonds. In December 1773 Primislao announced to Chomel and Jordan that a first-class merchant's firm in Budua hoped to do business with Amsterdam, and a little later this was confirmed by a letter from *Nicolo Peovich & Co.* A fake company, as it would turn out later. In the meanwhile Zanolich went to Naples where the Venetian ambassador, Simone Cavalli, was in financial trouble. The firm Peovich was mentioned again, and in exchange for whatever Zanolich did for Cavalli, the consul signed with his official title, *residente veneto*, two guarantees for the fictitious house of Peovich and its associate Zanolich.

Exposition raisonnée du différent, qui subsiste entre les deux republiques de Venise et d'Hollande, nov. 1784 and in a revised version jan. 1785; *Esposizione ragionata della contestazione, che susiste tre'le due republiche di Venezia, e di Olanda*, 1785; *Lettre a messieurs Jean et Etienne L[usac, of the Gazette de Leyde], contenat des observations sur le narré de l'affaire, qui a donné lieu au différent entre la République de Venise & celle d'Hollande publié dans les Nro. XXI & XXII de leur Gazette*, Gazette de Leyde, march 31, 1785 and Gazette de Cologne, april 19th 1785; *Supplément à l'Exposition raisonnée du différent qui subsiste entre la République de Vénise, & celle de Hollande*, [march] 1785; and several articles on the same subject in the *Osservatore Triestino*, jan 1st through february 26, 1785. Cf. H.Watzlawick: "The Zanolich Pamphlets, notes for a revision of the Casanova Bibliography" in *Casanova Gleanings XX*, Nice, 1977, pp.63-70.

These signatures persuaded Chomel and Jordan to make the diamonds in Genoa payable and to return the false bill of exchange after *Peovich & Co.* had agreed to assume the debt of Zanovich. The Amsterdammers even extended a new credit of 6,000 guilders when they heard that a certain Antonio Deglich (another fake) would send a ship, the *Minerva*, to Amsterdam loaded with olive oil and wine. “The *Minerva* of Peovich was born in the brain of Zanovich as the *Minerva* of Homer in that of Jupiter,” Casanova remarked. Peovich suggested the ship be insured in Holland and England for 130,000 guilders. From their contacts in Lyon, Chomel and Jordan heard that, though some years ago the Lyonese bankers had recommended Zanovich, they had changed their opinion. Now they warned the merchants in Amsterdam not to do business with Zanovich. They also said Mr. Peovich was none other than Stjepan Zanovich. Also Cavalli, now representative in Milan, became more prudent and advised not to extend any more credit before the ship had arrived. However, when Cavalli received alarmed letters from Amsterdam, he said he was now certain the cargo was ready to be shipped.

In 1772 *Peovich & Co.* wrote that, to their great regret, the *Minerva* had to be regarded as lost and suggested the merchants make a claim on the insurance. By now Chomel (Jordan had returned to Berlin after the expiration of his six-year association contract) finally fully realized he had been duped.

In June 1776 Jordan saw—small world—in Berlin a “Count Zanovich Babbindon Czernovich, author of the *Lettere Turche*, who called himself Bonenski,” and who was on very good terms with Frederic II and the crown prince. He was almost sure this was Stjepan and asked Chomel to quickly send the portrait which Stjepan had given them in 1772. Poor Chomel couldn’t find it, and besides, they had signatures of Primislao only, because Stjepan had always kept himself a bit in the background.

Until now the affair had been purely private, but Chomel tried to get help from the Dutch States General, making good use of the signatures of Cavalli, who officially represented the republic of Venice. This was not easy, because Chomel was not Dutch, and although he had lived in Amsterdam for almost 15 years he wasn’t even a *poorter* of this city. However, he found protection with the first *pensionaris* of Amsterdam, van Berckel, and the city of Amsterdam was powerful in the States General. The affair was small, but the principles of fair trade were jeopardized, so finally, in 1777, the Dutch consul in Venice was officially asked to intervene. To no avail. Then Chomel asked the Dutch ambassador in Vienna to intervene and to try to interest Joseph II.

Venice became uneasy and appointed a special court of justice consisting of 25 senators to deal with the matter, and in the meanwhile Cavalli was suspended. Procurator Morosini apologized to Cavalli, saying he had tried everything to prevent this move and hoped that Cavalli would manage to clear himself, as it was really Zanovich who was the culprit. Zanovich felt the heat and wrote also to Cavalli, assuring that he would go bury himself at the ends of the world (he chose Russia for this purpose). In a secret procedure the Venetian Council of Ten decided after no fewer than 50 sessions that Cavalli was innocent of criminal behavior, and he was appointed resident in London. In August 1778 the Venetian court of justice established that the *Minerva* and the Peovich firm were both fraudulent inventions. Primislao Zanovich was banned from Venice forever and Stjepan for 10 years. Their “fortune” was confiscated and could

“possibly” be used to indemnify the Amsterdam merchants. Of course the “fortune” had disappeared, and the official surveyor whom Venice had sent to Budua to measure the land of the Zanovich family had been harassed, which gave Venice reason to let the heads in Budua cool off.

Amsterdam didn’t understand the Venetian course of justice and was furious. It became a matter of democracy over against aristocratic tyranny. Several resolutions of the mighty city of Amsterdam were adopted by the States General, thus escalating the affair.

For Stjepan Zanovich the bluff poker hadn’t ended. In Berlin his playing habits had made him *non grata*, in Vienna he had had some unpleasant adventures, and now he was back in the Dutch republic. The Prince of Albany, as he now called himself, was imprisoned for debt for five months in Groningen, but he managed to talk himself out of it and into the protection of the magistrate Fockens, who paid all his bills. In the last days of 1781 he called on the surprised Chomel. He proposed to act as an intermediary in order to press Cavalli to pay reparations, and he even offered 10,000 zecchini—which he most probably didn’t have—if Chomel would let the affair rest. Anyway in February 1782 he emerged in London where he gave another try to the bills of exchange with the father of Lord Lincoln (the son had died). It didn’t work, and his plan to provide Lord Lincoln’s money to Cavalli, who could indemnify Chomel with it, failed.

In 1781 the States General had decided to send an “able person,” Frederik Tor, to Venice. Tor tried to initiate a civil procedure against Cavalli after the criminal process exonerated him, but Tor was eventually recalled, having reached no visible results.

Now Venice asked Joseph II to intervene, and when the States General sent Count Wassenaer to Vienna as plenipotentiary minister, Vienna had become the center stage of the affair. Wassenaer had a lucky hand when he recruited to his service the former secretary of Giorgio Pisani, a patrician who had been condemned for his attempts to reform the calcified institutions in Venice. He sent this secretary to Venice, who discovered Cavalli continued to advise the Venetian government. Wassenaer managed to get hold of a document—copied while Cavalli, back in Venice, slept—which would be the basis for an extensive diplomatic nota from Venice to the Austrian Prince Kaunitz. What Wassenaer didn’t know was that the Venetian inquisitors had in the meanwhile also engaged this same ex-secretary of Pisani as a double-agent into their service.

Then, in January 1784, the States General came to a long-expected resolution: There would be a test to see if Venice would react upon the arrest of as many Venetian ships in Dutch harbors as would be sufficient, if sold, to indemnify Chomel and Jordan, who claimed 68,000 guilders including interest. In particular the ship *Il Corriere Marittimo* should be impounded. The Prince of Orange was requested to inform the commanders of Dutch warships bound for or sailing in the Mediterranean to take under their protection all Dutch commercial vessels.

But the chickens were counted before they were hatched. No Venetian ships were to be found; even the *Corriere* had left two months earlier. And when Wassenaer

reported from Vienna that Venice seemed willing to cooperate, the execution of the resolution to wage war was postponed by one month but never came into effect.¹³⁷

This was the situation when Casanova stepped in and took his share in influencing public opinion with his pamphlets.

In the end the affair died out. Holland had more important matters on its hands. No ships were taken, no money was paid, and Chomel in vain kept writing letters until 1791.

Now back to Casanova's own story.

He wrote the *Historical-critical Letter* not in French but in Italian, as mentioned in Lamberg's letter of April 21:¹³⁸

Be careful with the printers of Dessau; I have no reason to be content with them; they have cheated me. So you write your work in Italian; I agree, one must write the language which provides us the most essential ideas, and only the so-called mother tongue is capable of that. I have no doubt it will be worth presenting to the public; everything you make bears the imprint of the master. But do remember the adage of Erasmus: Whoever writes is submitted to many judges, and whatever one does, the work has no other advocates but itself. Let your child go once you have exposed it and beware to make a preface with excuses for what you did. That is asking pardon for a mistake one is about to make unless some absolute authority forces you to defend and clarify your writings.

Perhaps Casanova wrote in Italian not so much because he didn't feel at ease with the French language but in order to give Foscarini the chance to check the contents in his mother tongue.

In the end the *Historical-critical Letter* was published in French and not in Italian.

Thanks to the Casanovist Gustav Gugitz, who copied in the Dessau library the manuscript memoirs of Heinrich Wolfgang Behrisch,¹³⁹ we know it was he who translated Casanova's *Letter*, which was published in the *Buchhandlung der Gelehrten* in Dessau. "My sojourn in Dessau lasted a year and a day during which I translated and published . . . *La Lettre sur un sujet connu dépendant d'une cause peu connue* . . . from Italian."

The booklet was refused by the censor. *Non admittitur impressio*.¹⁴⁰ Casanova appealed to the president of the commission, van Swieten, and then to Prince Kaunitz,¹⁴¹ proposing to use a fictitious imprint. Kaunitz probably took care not to involve Austria in the conflict. Approval by the censors could have been seen as

¹³⁷ Cf. Dr. E.O.G. Haitzma Mulier: "De affaire Zanolich. Amsterdams-Venetiaanse betrekkingen aan het einde van de achttiende eeuw" in *Amstelodamum*, Jaarboek 72, Amsterdam, 1980 of which the above mentioned Affair is extracted.

¹³⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-38.

¹³⁹ Cf. J.R.Childs: *Casanoviana*, Vienna, 1956, p. 71 and H. Watzlawick: "A touch of madness - le chevalier de Bérés" in *L'Intermédiaire des Casanovistes*, Rome, 1984, pp. 9-14.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 32-2.

¹⁴¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-21.

approval of the Venetian side. Anyway, by April 24th Casanova was ready to do business in Dessau. He made a proposal to Le Roy de Lozembrune, a colleague of Della Lena and teacher of French in the Theresianum, to direct the printing. Casanova would send money to cover all expenses. But Le Roy himself couldn't do the job: He said he didn't feel capable of it, and besides he had other things to do.¹⁴² It was probably Berisch who in the end took care of the whole enterprise, and when the booklet was printed, the *Letter* was dated "à Hambourg, ce 12 Mai 1784."

Francesca Buschini, March 20, 1784:¹⁴³

I am very sad you informed me that you probably will not be able to come to Venice in May due to lack of money for the trip. May is still far away, so I still hope you will be able to find the money to come; you cannot imagine my joy to meet you again. . . . I laughed a lot about your account of the incident in the church with the old pious lady you wrote me about in your letter [of March 10]. After Mass you wanted to hear the sermon, but you fell so soundly asleep that your hat and muff fell to the floor and almost yourself as well. That would still have been the worst as you could have hurt yourself and the people would have laughed even more. . . . At the moment you are busy printing a book. You tell me you sent me 200 copies which I should sell for 30 soldi apiece; you told me you will inform Zaguri about it, who will direct interested people to me. When you really do so please make sure I don't have to pay for the parcel, as you know I have no money. I hope the books will arrive soon and to be able to sell them quickly in order to be able to pay the rent on April 1st

Francesca Buschini, April 3, 1784:¹⁴⁴

I gathered from your dear letter of March 20 that you were very pleased to have traveled five posts in the company of two ladies in order to see the emperor. . . . I hope you will get permission to print your book and that you will send me the 200 copies and that I will be able find the opportunity to sell them

Perhaps the meeting with Joseph II, who was returning from Italy and back in Vienna on March 30, had to do with the Zanovich affair. Was Casanova acting as a courier with an urgent message from the Venetian ambassador?

And who were the two ladies? Was one of them perhaps the woman he wrote a poem for, entitled "Verses from Giacomo Casanova in love with C.M." ? And the other one perhaps the "little Kaspar"? To Caton M. Casanova refers in his *memoirs*:¹⁴⁵

I continued being duped by women till I was 60 years old. Twelve years ago, had my guardian angel not rescued me, I would have married in Vienna a young rash girl who had made me fall in love with her.

And elsewhere in the *memoirs*:

Old age weakens the heart and the spirit equally. Marriage is always a silly thing, but when an old man does it, it is deadly. The woman he marries can only have complacence for him, for which he has to pay with his own life, which will certainly be abbreviated; and if by chance this woman is in love with him, he finds himself in an even worse condition. He is bound to die in two or three years. Seven years ago I hardly escaped such foolishness in Vienna. Apollo saved me from it.

¹⁴² Casanova Archives: Marr 12-91.

¹⁴³ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-200.

¹⁴⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-195.

¹⁴⁵ Casanova: *Histoire de ma vie*, éd. Brockhaus/Plon, Vol.1, p.36 and Vol.11, p.282.

Casanova might have written these words after he received in Dux Caton's letter¹⁴⁶ with a summary of her loves.

Little Kaspar, who will later become a favorite of Joseph II, is mentioned in another of Caton's letters:¹⁴⁷

Young little Kaspar, whom you loved so much, came to ask me for the address of her dear Monsieur de Casanova to whom she planned to write a tender letter and full of niceties. I was too polite to refuse this to a pretty girl who once was the favorite of my friend, so I told her the address, but I sent the letter to a city quite far from where you are now. Won't you want to know this city in order to have her letter forwarded to you? But you can trust my word that you won't know it before you write me a nice long letter in which you humbly beg me to tell you the place where the divine reading-matter of the adorable object of your eyes is hiding. You could well make this sacrifice for a lady in which the emperor himself is interested, for you must know that since your departure from Vienna it is he who instructs her in French and in music. Apparently he takes the trouble to teach her himself, for she often sees him in order to thank him for his good deeds, but I don't know in which way she expresses herself

Francesca Buschini, April 14, 1784:¹⁴⁸

I am very sorry to hear that the chance of seeing you next Ascension Day is very slim, but I keep hoping. You say you hope to see me once again before you die; I from my side will trust firmly that I will see you many more times than only once. You know, I don't want to hear any more about death, but rather about life. You made me laugh with your story that they're working in Vienna on a balloon for six passengers and that you might be one of them. Be careful the balloon doesn't burst due to your heavy weight

Francesca Buschini, April 28, 1784:¹⁴⁹

From your letter of the 17th I heard to my great sorrow that you have to stay in bed with your usual trouble. But with even greater relief I understood you feel better already. You should take the baths, because I am sure those are good for you. Two things are necessary, dear friend: health and money I hope you will have received permission to print your book At this very moment I receive your dear letter with the enclosed check [for 80 lire] I thank you for your care and your good heart; I will make sure that in the future I will not bother you so often about money . . . and be assured that from now on I will commence my letters always with "Amatissimo Giacometto."

Francesca Buschini, May 5, 1784:¹⁵⁰

I hope everything is alright with you, but please don't talk about death anymore. I laughed a lot about your request that my mother should pray a *de profundis* for you when you die. You asked her to do so very softly because your soul would be in need of rest. I hope this *de profundis* will never be necessary because she would do it badly and cry a lot. I think you poke fun at me when you say you really mean to take to the air with the balloon and fly with good winds to Trieste and from there to Venice. I tell you that when you are crazy enough to embark, the wind will certainly not bring you to Venice but to pay a visit to Pluto, and then you are certainly in need of a *de profundis*. Please postpone this visit as long as possible. Twenty days ago I too saw a balloon which Spinola, Avanzeti, and others had built for lots of

¹⁴⁶ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-52.

¹⁴⁷ Casanova Archives: Marr 4-20 and Marr 12-64, d.d. July 16th, 1786.

¹⁴⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-174.

¹⁴⁹ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-167.

¹⁵⁰ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-181.

money. I saw it in the air, and it looked like an apple. The thought that you would travel in such a thing made me laugh. . . .

Francesca Buschini, May 19, 1784:¹⁵¹

From your letter of the 8th I heard with great regret that you are in bad health and that your wallet is even worse. So I wish you health and money. I am still convinced you would recover if you would go and take a bath cure. But you say they charge 20 zecchini and that you have only 20 pennies. Remain cheerful and trust my word: the pennies will change into zecchini

Francesca Buschini, May 29, 1784:¹⁵²

I received your letter of May 19th and was pleased to hear that you are taking the baths; but it bothers me that this makes you weak and melancholical. However I am consoled that your appetite doesn't fail you and that you sleep well, which are good signs

In the meantime Zaguri had informed Casanova that he had seen¹⁵³ Francesca in the *Casino de' Mongolfisti*, a club where apparently balloon enthusiasts gathered. The fact that Francesca herself hadn't written about this night on the town put Casanova in a bad humor. She had always stressed the fact that she never went out except to go to church with her mother and to do Casanova's errands. On June 2 he wrote her an angry letter¹⁵⁴ stating he wouldn't take care of her anymore and accusing her of being false, cunning, guileful, and hypocritical. Francesca confessed she went to the meeting only once, together with a girlfriend and the girl's friend, who was cashier of the *Accademia del Mongolfisti*; that she had feared Casanova would take it ill; and that it would never happen again that Casanova would hear from others where she went. And making a clean sweep of another thing she had not dared write before, she also confessed that four months earlier her mother had sold Casanova's books, which had been shelved in the attic (with the chickens!) for 50 lire when the Buschini family was in great need of money.

The books may have been dearer to Giacomo than the girl. Anyway, though Francesca continued writing for some time, Casanova kept silent for a year and a half and sent a few last letters only in 1786 and 1787.

So from this point on we have to do without Francesca's echoes. But for this period Lorenzo Da Ponte gives us some information. In 1784 he had just finished his first opera libretto, *Le Riche d'un jour*, on music by Salieri, and he would soon begin collaborating with Mozart. Da Ponte published his own *Memoirs* in New York City in 1829-1830. He must have had access to the first edition of Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie*, because he comments on the truthfulness of memoirs in general and adds about those of Casanova: "I don't say this to reduce by one iota the merits of Giacomo Casanova or those of his Memoirs which have been written gracefully and which I read with pleasure, but knowing this extraordinary man better than anybody else, I can

¹⁵¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-175.

¹⁵² Casanova Archives: Marr 8-170.

¹⁵³ Casanova Archives: Marr 3-62, letter dated may 11th, 1784.

¹⁵⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 8-171, quoted by F. Buschini.

assure my readers that love of truth is not the essential value of his work.”

On the other hand, Da Ponte himself wasn't always trustworthy in his own *Memoirs*. One of his editors commences his preface with the words: “The *Memoirs* of Da Ponte are dominated by the omnipresence of lies. Our man lies like he breathes, apparently in an instinctive way, by pure pleasure and without any clear goal. Certain histories he tells, certain conversations he reports are so thinly related to reality that one doubts if they were ever meant to be believed”¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless they are too interesting to be omitted.

Da Ponte writes that one day, while strolling with Salieri on the Graben in Vienna, he saw: an old man who looked at me in a very peculiar way. While I tried to place him in my memory he stood up and came quickly towards me. It was he! It was Casanova who called my name. “Dear Da Ponte, what a joy to see you again.” He lived in Vienna for a couple of years during which neither I nor anybody else could say what he did and what he did for a living. I saw him often; my house and my wallet were open to him Some time later, walking with him on the same street, I suddenly saw him frown; he left me standing there and quickly went in pursuit of a man whom he grabbed by the collar, and he cried out loud, “Now I have got you, murderer!” An ever-growing crowd assembled, attracted by this strange aggression. Baffled, I stood there awhile inactive, but after two minutes of reflection I ran toward him, grabbed him by the arm and led him away from the row. Then he confided to me that this man, Gioachino [Gaetano] Costa, was the servant who had run off with his trunk and his treasure [taken from Madame d’Urfé in 1760 in Paris]. Valet of a grand seigneur of Vienna [Count Hardegg], and having added to his low function the profession of poet, [Costa] was one of those who had honored me with their diatribes during the time I was in the favor of Joseph II. We continued our walk, and we saw Costa enter a café, out of which soon appeared a waiter who gave a piece of paper to Casanova. It read in a few lines: “Casanova, you have stolen, I have cheated/You the master, I the student/In your art I too am prudent/You gave me bread, I gave you cake/Hold your tongue for heaven’s sake.” These few words had a great effect. Casanova reflected; then, bursting out laughing, he bent over to my ear saying: “The scoundrel is right.” Then going toward the café, he signaled to Costa to come out and join him and both, side by side, strolled away talking as quietly as if nothing had happened. A few minutes later they shook hands several times like two intimate friends and parted. When Casanova came toward me he wore on his finger a cameo I hadn’t seen him wearing before and that—bizarre coincidence—represented Mercury, god of thieves. I suppose this cameo was the only piece of wreckage he had been able to recover of that deceit.¹⁵⁶

In another episode, after having suggested that Casanova’s main income came from his card games and that Della Lena and Giacometto Foscarini, the son of the ambassador, were his main prey, Da Ponte says that Casanova:

in need of funds, was planning to submit to Joseph II the plan for a Chinese festivity which should be a

¹⁵⁵ J-F. Labie in *Mémoires et livrets / Lorenzo da Ponte*, Le Livre de Poche, Paris, 1980, p.11.

¹⁵⁶ Da Ponte: *Mémoires*, op.cit. vol.3, p.148.

great feast for the city, with a nice remuneration for him who organized it. He wrote a memorandum of a length which discouraged the emperor. *Cur, quia, quomodo, quando* was the epigraph above it. He came to see me, put a pen in my hand, and spoke: "Da Ponte, we are friends aren't we?" "Without doubt." "I know your honesty, you know mine." I didn't answer. "I did many things, but I never cheated on a friend." I smiled. Abbé Della Lena and young Foscarini were also his great friends, and yet "In order to execute my project, I need 1,000 piasters. Put your signature on a bill of exchange for this sum, and I will surely pay you back in two months' time." I laid down the pen, excused myself, and rose. He became furious and left frowning. I didn't see him for several days, but I knew Foscarini had obliged him.

One morning, while at the emperor's for affairs of theater, our Giacomo asked for an audience. He enters, bows his head and presents his memorandum. The emperor unfolds it, but perceiving its length, he folds it again and asks what he wants. He explains his projects and develops the epigraph *Cur, quia, quomodo, quando*; but Joseph II wants to know his name. "Giacomo Casanova," he says, "is the humble person who solicits Your Majesty's favor." Joseph II remains silent for a few moments, then says with his usual friendliness that Vienna doesn't like such spectacles; he turns around and resumes his writing. The solicitor added no word and retired humbly. I wanted to join him, but the emperor called me back, and after having repeated three times, "Giacomo Casanova," he started talking theater with me again.¹⁵⁷

The humility of Casanova toward the emperor may be reflected also in a letter¹⁵⁸ to Eccellenza [Kaunitz?]: "Yesterday His Majesty was so kind as to talk with me alone for half an hour. At the first word he spoke I trembled under the aspect of His Highness." Casanova likens the encounter to that of God speaking to Moses, who could only bear His light by turning away.

This attitude, of course, is quite in contrast to his impudent conversation with Joseph II regarding the sale of titles of nobility.

We meet another acquaintance of Giacomo in a letter dated April 26, 1784.¹⁵⁹ It is signed by "Teramene," the Arcadian name of Alphons Heinrich Traunpaur,¹⁶⁰ Chevalier d'Ophanie, introduced to Casanova by Lamberg. Traunpaur was a temporarily retired professional soldier with literary ambitions who had moved to Vienna in November 1783. The letter deals with a rather prosaic matter: the pawning of some winter clothes of Giacomo. Casanova had gone to take the bath in Meidling¹⁶¹. As spring had arrived he did not need his winter clothes, and he expected that his red fur coat, a muff, a suit, and a black velvet overcoat would be worth 50 guilders. Apparently Traunpaur was kind enough to do the job, paid six guilders fee to the pawnhouse, charged one for the taxi fare, and held the clothes and the remaining 43 guilders available at his home.

Traunpaur, also signing his poems with "Partunau," took the title "Chevalier de Seingalt" for a family affair when he had printed, in May 1784, his welcome salute to Francesco:

¹⁵⁷ Da Ponte, op. cit. vol.4, p.258.

¹⁵⁸ Casanova Archives: Marr 9-27.

¹⁵⁹ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-22.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. H. Watzlawick: "Et ille in Arcadia / Traunpaur, chevalier d'ophanie" in *Casanova Gleanings* XXIII, 1980.

¹⁶¹ Casanova Archives: Marr 16 F 12, a hotel bill for a stay from may 29th till june 3rd 1784.

*Letter to Monsieur François de Casanova de Saint-Gal, revered painter of the King of France, on the occasion of his stay in Vienna.*¹⁶²

However, the friendship would not endure. Casanova accused him of plagiarism,¹⁶³ and in 1788 Lamberg writes to Casanova:¹⁶⁴ “You did well to break with the rhymester Traunpaur, the stupidest thief of other people’s ideas. I am sorry to have sent him to you; leave him alone and break off all contact with him. If he keeps writing to you, answer him dryly that Tragedy never responds to Comedy or even better: to Farce.”

In 1784 Casanova planned to write a sequel to his *History of the Polish Troubles*. He had a prospectus printed, *Notice to Lovers of History [Avis aux amateurs de l’Histoire]*¹⁶⁵ in which he says:

I am determined to publish the *History of the Permanent Council* established in Warsaw by the Diet of 1775 after the last revolution. I will have this work printed in three bound volumes in octavo in French. I promise to have the first volume ready in April next year 1785; the second will appear in July, and the last volume in October. Upon receipt, three guilders will have to be paid for each volume Each volume will number about 500 pages

The number of subscribers was probably insufficient, because no trace of the projected 1,500 pages of text has been found.

Or is there? Had he planned perhaps to use the material of the unpublished part of his *History of the Polish Troubles*,¹⁶⁶ reviewed and updated with more recent events?

Anyway, at this time he was reminded of the history of his own troubles by the printer of the *Polish Troubles*, Valerio de’ Valeri. The printer claimed Casanova had failed to deliver the continuation of the *History*; he successfully sued for 3,000 florins Count Torres, who had been willing to act as a guarantee. A furious Casanova wrote (dated Vienna, July 23, 1784) a *Declaration of Giacomo Casanova, written by himself eleven years after a contract was signed by him and Valerio de’ Valeri, printer in Gorizia*.¹⁶⁷ In this declaration, Casanova states it was not he, but Valerio, who had violated the contract by failing to pay the author’s fee. Giacomo tried to start an appeal in court to free Torres of the burden. It is not known whether he succeeded.

Then Casanova picked up another idea which had come to him during his last annoying

¹⁶² Casanova Archives: Marr 36-24, 25, 26 and 30.

¹⁶³ In his *Echantillons envoyés par un observateur barbaresque à sa belle au bout d’une année de séjour dans une Capitale policée* etc, 1784, Traunpaur had used a few of Casanova’s favorite lines like ‘de rivage en rivage’.

¹⁶⁴ Casanova Archives: Marr 2-53.

¹⁶⁵ Casanova Archives: Marr 36-18, 19 and 20.

¹⁶⁶ Casanova: *Istoria delle turbolenze della Polonia*, Tom. II, Parte II, [Marr 26-9]. The existence of the manuscript was signaled already by A. Mahler in 1905, but it was published only in 1974 by G. Bozzolato in *Casanova: uno storico alla ventura*.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 17 A 27.

years in Venice, when he was discontent with everything. When the world is against you, why not shape your own world? It would be the *Icosameron*, and on April 15, 1785, he confided to Lamberg that he had already finished two parts. "It will consist of two volumes of 500 pages each, and at the end I will be able to say, like Ovid said about his *Metamorphoses*, 'this is a work which will bring me immortality.'"¹⁶⁸ Casanova kept his word and finished the novel in 1787, but it didn't bring him the expected fame.

In between all these projects there was time for social contact. We get a glimpse of this when the lieutenant Cusani invites him, in verse, for a luncheon at Schönbrunn while giving him the choice between two dates. Casanova answers in a long ballad,¹⁶⁹ excusing himself for both dates. On the first day he has a prior engagement: an invitation to Antonio Collato's, "where there will be aristocratic people and a concert; there is a pretence of culture but it is just a cover-up for love-plays and jokes about and against women." On the second day he is expected at the ambassador's:

At Foscarini's house everyone is not treated in the same way, because he soon divides the mediocre from the intelligent. There is no love-play, no songs or music, but there is plenty of conversation and some gambling, and there is always fresh gossip. He listens attentively and doesn't interrupt the speaker. Everyone trembles when he gets angry with his servants, but he doesn't sulk; once he's blown his top he forgets it. He isn't even worried by the Jewish street-sellers. His voice is louder than a trumpet, and he sleeps so soundly that not even passing carriages wake him. He has sturdy lungs and a good brain. Everything is strong in his body; only its spirit is fragile. His tender heart makes his soul compassionate, and his appetite makes him appreciate doctors less than cooks, from whom he orders delicious meals even if he is following a strict diet devised by a doctor from Friuli. He is a cultured man and an excellent writer, especially about politics. Foscarini says he will accept everything in the severe diet and that he will eat locust and acorns as long as his guests can still eat well, and he can order his cook to prepare the delicate meat sauce for which the cook is famous. He hopes his beloved son will learn to understand that the gourmet is to be praised and the glutton criticized. And the doctor has no business finding fault with this opinion but can see for himself if he comes to eat at Foscarini's table.

These are the invitations I have received and that I must accept, so please understand when I tell you I cannot come to you.

But fate interrupts this pleasant picture. The ambassador's health deteriorates, and Foscarini suddenly dies on April 23, 1785. And though the post at the embassy may not have brought in a lot of money, apparently Casanova couldn't do without it, and he immediately started looking for a new position.

Three letters to Domenico Tomiotto de Fabris, an old friend whom he had gotten to know a long time ago in Padua, whom he had met several times later in life, and who was now governor of Transylvania, led to no result. In one of them Giacomo had dusted off his old idea of becoming a monk. Fabris finally answered on June 10th¹⁷⁰ to Casanova's last address in Vienna, *Im Heidenschusse wo der Türk*: "It pleases me to hear that you begin to contemplate seriously the misery of humanity. It needs more than the dress of an abbé, as you plan, to make a monk. At our age we shouldn't think much of writing, but of contemplation and death."

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Opiz correspondence with Lamberg: march 24, 1786 in which Lamberg quotes Casanova's letter of april 15th, 1785.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Casanova Archives: Marr 17 C 3 and 5.

¹⁷⁰ Casanova Archives: Marr 12-98.

The main reason for Casanova to write to Fabris was to offer his services as a secretary, but Fabris has no vacancy: “Thanks very much for your friendly proposition, but I have in my office 18 secretaries who kill me by forcing me to read and sign.”

Soon after this letter Casanova leaves expensive Vienna in a hurry and seeks refuge with Lamberg in Brno. From there he leaves for Carlsbad hoping that Princess Lubomirska can help him get a position at the Academy in Berlin.

Lamberg suggests that on the way he pay a visit to his friend Opiz, ex-Jesuit and now inspector of finances in Bohemia. In an accompanying note, Lamberg advises Opiz:¹⁷¹ “A famous and revered man, Mr. Casanova de St. Gall, carries, dear friend, my visiting card which he will hand to you and Mrs. Opiz. Getting to know this amiable and rare man will be a great event. Be nice to him and friendly . . . Write me about him, and if you can, give him a recommendation for Calsbad.”

On August 5th Lamberg writes to Opiz:

By now my dearest friend will have handed over my visiting card. Have you sounded out this extraordinary man? With the exception of the alchemist Saint-Germain I know few persons who can equal him in the range of his knowledge and, in general, of his intelligence and imagination. To know this cosmopolitan is something special, and when he has given you a day, you will certainly have enjoyed it.

On August 15th Opiz confirms that Casanova was there on August 1st:

He was in a great hurry in order to catch Princess Lubomirska in Carlsbad. While something on his coach had broken, he was forced to stay for two hours in Tschaslau, which time he spent with us. He left Tschaslau with the promise to give us a whole day upon his return. I am looking forward to it. Even in the short time of his visit I found him worthy of our esteem and love. He is a benevolent philosopher, a cosmopolitan for whom the world (not only the Venetian state) is his home. Even in kings he sees only men. I know no one in Carlsbad. I am very sorry I couldn't comply with your wish to recommend him to somebody. Neither would he be able to stop in Prague this time, due to his haste.

But in Töplitz, Casanova wrote in his *Précis de ma vie*, “Count Waldstein stopped me and brought me here to Dux, where I still am and where, in all likelihood, I will die.”

It must have been around August 10 that this meeting took place, where Waldstein and Casanova came to an agreement. At that time Giacomo wrote a note¹⁷² to Della Lena, excusing himself for not having had time to go to the Theresianum to say goodbye and to thank him for all his help. Casanova planned to do that in January. He begged Della Lena to pick up his poste restante letters and send them to—the first time he writes his new and final address—“*Mr. Casanova chez M. le comte de Waldstein*

Teplitz pour DUX.”

¹⁷¹ Opiz manuscript copy of his correspondence with Lamberg d.d. July 30, 1785.

¹⁷² Lettre to Della Lena, August 1785; Casanova Archives: Marr 40-48. See also Marr 18-9!