

“on a magnificent horse trapped with jewels, and he and his horse being excellently well together, and as he was very handsome in figure and looks, it was a beautiful sight to see. When the unfortunate son reached the pavilion of his father he dismounted, leaving his horse in the hands of his *mirakhur-bashi* . . . and then unbelted his sword, leaving it in the first tent, which he did because it is not lawful for anyone, when he goes to kiss the hands of the Signor, to go with arms belted on. From the first pavilion he passed into the second, in which he found no one, and then, having entered the third, met there the “Capigliar Cagagia”,<sup>1</sup> who said to him, ‘Wait, lord, just now you will enter’. He did not have to wait long before a sign was made that he should enter, and having entered the fourth pavilion he saw his father seated, having in his hand a bow drawn. When he had made obeisance the latter answered the greeting by saying: ‘Ah, dog! hast thou still the daring to greet me?’, and forthwith turned his back, which was the sign which he had given to those whom he wanted to slay him (Mustafa). Immediately the Capigliar seized the throat of Sultan Mustafa in his hands saying: ‘Do not move, for I shall do what I am doing by order of the Grand Signor’, and at the same time three mutes who were present threw themselves on him, putting a bowstring round his neck to strangle him. In their pulling it that cord broke: and in that wise the miserable man slipped out of the hands of those who had seized him, as he had thrown to the ground some of them; but having turned to flee he stumbled over the front part of the robe he wore, in which his foot got entangled and he was about to fall while at the same time the Capigliar Cagagia caught hold of one foot and caused him to fall altogether to the ground. The other men of the Sultan, who witnessed this, were pushed down on top of him, and having gone for him with another bowstring in their hands put it round his neck. But he put his arm between the bowstring and the front of his neck in such a way that by the tightening of the string he could not be strangled. The Sultan said: ‘Take off his skull-cap, because while that encircles his head, you will never be able to put him to death.’ This the Sultan said because these people wear on the skull-caps, which are small cotton caps, which they wear under the turban they have, certain characters in writing which in their superstition they consider to be of such virtue that so long as those written characters touch the skin of anyone he can never be put to death by violence.<sup>2</sup>

“The Capigliar Cagagia took it off his head and held it out to the Sultan, who hung it up on one side of the pavilion, and the other three men placed the third bowstring round his neck. This was the last they had, one for each mute, against which the poor young man struggled, tucking his beard into his chest, so that the cord came on to his chin. But those fellows by force pulled up his head, and caused the cord to fall round his neck and, pulling on it, they deprived of life him who was of such promise that in the judgment of everyone he would have surpassed in virtue and valour every other of the house of Uthman. . . .

“ . . . Immediately the Capigliar had performed his office he issued from the tent of the sovereign weeping, which was observed by many who guessed what had happened. Forthwith the Sultan sent to take off the royal seal from the hand of Rustam Pasha, grand vizir, and had it delivered to Muhammad Pasha, who had occupied the second place in rank, causing him to take the first seat. At the same time he sent another man to tell his master of the horse to take his dead son’s horse to his own stable, where are the other horses of the Sultan. When the master of the horse took it by the reins from the hands of the dead man’s *mirakhur-bashi*, and led it through the midst of the camp to the imperial stables, and as the soldiers saw the horse of the unhappy dead prince being led away, there arose a great outcry in the camp, so that all men ran out of their tents at the same time to see that action which was a sign of what had happened to the horse’s master.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. Kapujilar Kadhudasi an equivalent of “First Chamberlain” of the Sultan; in modern Turkish spelling, “Kapicilar Kehyasi”, literally ‘chief of the doorkeepers’.

<sup>2</sup> Talismans, which in Persia in modern times often consist of verses of the Quran worn in an armlet or silver locket bound round the upper arm, under the clothing.