



History

Marino Falier was appointed Doge at 4.00 pm on 11 September 1354, against competition from three other candidates whose names are not known. He succeeded at the first ballot, with 35 votes. Nominated by twenty-seven electors, he was chosen by destiny to be first in the ballot. As he was Ambassador of Avignon, a notary was sent to inform him of his election, followed by twelve ambassadors, who met him in Verona. He was, at the time, unquestionably the most eminent among Venetian personalities, and was aged about seventy. The King of Bohemia had made him a knight, his counsel and confidant; he had become Count and Squire of Valmareno, which was ceded by the da Camin in 1349, and given to him as a fief by the Bishop of Ceneda. The da Camin family had also entrusted to him the Castle of Fregone In Venice, he had the family palace at S.S. Apostoli, which exists today as a period residence (Hotel Antico Doge), and still bears the ancient owners coat of arms. This Doge was, for a quarter of a century, perhaps the most important and representative of Venetian political figures. Time and again he was a member of the Council of Ten, who would later condemn him to death. In this capacity, curiously, he had the task, together with Andrea Michiel, to ensure the death, at all costs, of the rebels Bejamonte Tiepolo and Nicolò Querini, who attacked the Doges' Palace in order to overthrow the Republican Government and establish in its place an absolute Seignory. Falier was captain and bailo (ambassador of the Venetian Republic) of Negroponte and podestà of Lesina and Brazza, of Serravalle and of Treviso He went as ambassador to the Pontiff Emperor, the King of Hungary, the Duke of Austria, the papal legate and to Ferrara. As plenipotentiary of Venice, he established the alliance between Venice and the Scaligeris, the Estensis and Faenza against Genoa and against the Viscontis He also had a lot of military tasks. He was a man of war and a commandeer on land and at sea against the Scaligeris, during the rebellions of Zara and Capodistria, in Slavonia and against the Genovese, also taking care of war preparations- He was a Sage on numerous occasions, with various administrative responsibilities and he even attended to building work in Venice. Privately, he still found the time to involve himself in trade and commerce. Consequently, he very often had to borrow money from private individuals and from the Procurators of Saint Mark. He did business with his brother, Ordelafo, with his cousin, Nicolò Falier, and others. Cargos of spices, wheat, wood, alum and cloth, were transported in his name on cocche and taride (medieval merchant vessels) and on merchant galleys, running the risks of the sea and pirates. In his capacity as a humanist, he preserved a small collection of diverse objects, given to him by no less than the celebrated explorer, Marco Polo, and kept for a few years in a room of his palace at S. S. Apostoli. All told, he was an attractive and well-rounded medieval figure, especially considering the political orientations of the era; nonetheless, he showed himself to be tirelessly active in both public life and in private, as a merchant, resulting from

The aims of the plot were to restore the government of the Republic to the main families, faced with the ascendancy of the lesser nobility The conspiracy would certainly have an effect for the following ten years- The conspirators were discovered thanks to the revelations of one of them, who wanted to save a patrician friend All of them were Common people and sailors, with the exception of Bertuccio Falier, a distant relative of the Doge. Eleven of them were hanged, three condemned to prison for life and one for a year, one expatriated to Candia, five banished by default and thirty-one pardoned for special admonitions. The sentence, which condemned him to capital punishment, appears to have constituted part of a special trial dossier of the Council of Ten, but it was not reproduced in book I V of (de) Misti, in which, at the point where it should have been reported, there reads "non scribatur". Along with the death penalty, the Doge had all his assets confiscated and lost his fiefs He was only permitted, as an act of clemency, to keep 2,000 lire for assisting the poor and for charitable offerings, which he did as his last wish on 17 April 1355. The death penalty was carried out, around sunset on the same day, on the landing of the stone stairs, where he had sworn to observe the ducal oath. Before his execution, his cap was removed from his head and he was stripped of all other ducal insignia. His decapitated head was afterwards shown to the public, gathered outside the Doges' Palace, the doors of which were closed, by the chief of justice, who held the bloodied broadsword and said: " Vardè tutti l'è stà fatta giustizia del traditor" (Look, everyone: the traitor has been brought to justice.) The body was displayed with its head at its feet, all day and the following night, upon a mat, in the Piovego Room. It was then placed in a coffin and buried without honours. At the moment of his condemnation a bell rang in the Doges' Palace which, by order of the Council of Ten, was not rung again. Later, this bell, having been hidden for some time, was placed, without clapper, rope and rod, in the bell-tower of Saint Mark's where, at the end of the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth, it appears to have still been there and it was said to be destined to ring whenever Falier's actions were repeated Another of his mementoes was a walnut stall, of which he would have made use when he was podestà of Chioggia, preserved until a few years ago by the Bonivento family. At one stage, a fine row of filigree buttons belonging to his cloak, was on display among the collection of silver at the Church of S.S. Apostoli. In the Correr Museum there is a bronze seal which belonged to him. Also worthy of note is an altar cloth, damascene white and bloodstained, which used to be placed, on Good Friday, upon the high altar of Saint Mark's Church, in his memory It was the same one that had been placed under the block when his head



the extremely varied tasks entrusted to him.



At the beginning of his dogate, he revealed himself to be so cautious in exercising his prerogatives that he even refused to give his opinion during a murder trial, although he could have done so, because his exclusion from the oath regarded only civil cases born in 1285. to Giacomo and Beriola Loredan, who had two other sons, Marco and Ordelafo. He was much loved and cared for by his family, and his contemporaries, including

Petrarch, were united in considering him a man of great wisdom, valorous and liberal. Nothing is known of him before he was thirty years old, when he appears as Head of the Council of Ten. He does not appear to have been so ambitious and irascible as has been suggested, even if, in a fit of anger, he is said to have slapped the Bishop of Treviso, arrived late for the ceremony of Corpus Christi . and killed a shopkeeper at Rialto. His first marriage was to Tommasina Contarini, with whom he had one daughter, named Lucia. His second was to the celebrated young , bela moier (beautiful wife) Aluica, daughter of Nicoletto Gradenigo, son of the Doge Pietro, whom he married prior to 1355 and who gave him 4,000 lire as a dowry. She is believed to have been born in the first decade of that century, meaning that she must have been born forty-five years old when she became 1 Dogressa. It is not certain whether- or not she really was a woman of frivolous and lewd conduct- It is certain that the Doge held her in esteem until his death and wanted her to be the sole executor of his wishes. It is true that husbands are the last to become aware of and to believe their wives' guilt. Indeed, some historians have recorded populace' s thoughts. which perfectly evoke the dialect of the fourteenth century.

Marin Falier da la bela moier, Altri la galde e lui la mantien
Marin Falier, with his beautiful wife, Others give her pleasure and he keeps her.

Or Beco Marin Falier da la bela moier La mogier del doxe Falier se fa foter per so piaser
The cuckold Marin Falier, with his beautiful wife, The wife of the Doge gets laid for pleasure.
The insults aimed at his adulterous wife were not the main cause of the famous conspiracy, but they were certainly a notable influence. It was a time when, in Italy, seignories and princedoms began to be formed in the communes, and the ambitious Falier, not satisfied with having become Doge, conspired to become signore a bacchetta (a man who rules with a rod of iron), as was said at the time in his homeland, and to ensure the ruling power of his family, which did not end with him, but could have continued with his nephew, Fantino, son of his brother, Marco. The conspiracy appears to have been brought about by the financial difficulties of the period, and as a reaction of the faction, lead by the impulsive Falier, who favored a war to the bitter end against the Genovese. Through this faction, Falier tried to fulfil his covetous ambitions, and he ultimately found himself alone, to atone for others' guilt.

was cut off It is certain that Marino Falier, returning from his legation in Avignon to assume the dogate, got off the Bucintoro (the Ducal vessel) after mooring (by mistake due to the dense fog) at the waterfront of the piazzetta at Saint Mark's, and passed between the two columns, where criminals were brought to justice. This incident was considered a bad omen. The Council of Ten, out of gratitude to God and to Saint Mark for saving the State, decreed on 7 May 1355 that every year, on 16 April, a solemn procession would take place, with the participation of the Doge, and that on the same morning a solemn mass would be celebrated at Saint Mark's. A number of his signatures are in existence, in the State Archives of Venice (near the Frari Church) and, in the Museum of Padua, some leaden bulls and coins. On 16 December 1366, by decree of the Council of Ten, the position upon the wall of the Hall of the Maggior Consiglio at the Doges' Palace, where his image should have been displayed, was painted blue, and in white letters there was written: "Hic fuit locus ser Marini Faletri decapitati pro crimine prodicionis" and his coat of arms was removed. It had been proposed to put the portrait in such a way as to show he had been decapitated, but this was not accepted. After the fire at the Doges' Palace in 1577, a black veil was placed and there was written: "Hic est locus Marini Faletri decapitati pro criminibus". Consequently, all that is remembered of his extremely brief dogate, apart from the conspiracy, is the continuation of the war against the Genovese and the Viscontis, of which he was a great supporter and instigator, in alliance with the King of Aragon. The war ended after his death on 1 June 1355. He was laid to rest in a very large coffin of Istrian stone, placed on the floor and positioned in a corner of the atrium of the chapel of the Madonna della Pace, in the Church of S.S. Giovanni e Paolo. Near the coffin, a stone seal could be seen, which was decorated with the Faliers' coat of arms. The coffin was opened in 1812, and among the many skeletons, which were taken out to be buried elsewhere, one could be seen that had been decapitated, with its head between its legs, and it is believed to have been that of the unhappy Doge. Once the coffin had been emptied, it was removed from its original position, due to the closure of the chapel of the Madonna della Pace. After serving as a tank for the water of the general hospital, it can now be found in the external loggia of the ancient site of the Correr Museum, at the Fondaco dei Turchi. The Doge's tragic end has been portrayed in paintings by Fleury and by Delacroix, and his adventurous life has inspired various literary figures. Tragedies in which he appears have been written by Lord Byron and Casimiro de la Vigne, a French academic, Giulio Pullè, A G Spinelli, Antonio Dall' Acqua, Enrico Martelli, A. Lindner and Tommaso Zauli-Sajani. There exists, in the Correr Museum, an unpublished tragedy portraying him, by Roberto Gavagnin. Historical accounts concerning him appeared in 1829, through the work of E. Ronteix, H. Paris and F. Venosta. In 1873 C De Breuil included him in a novel, as did Hoffmann in one of his fantastic tales. The great musical figures, Gioacchino Rossini and Gaetano Donizetti, immortalized him in two operas.