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T Ü R K T A R İ H K U R U M U B A S I M E V İ — A N K A R A
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OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS IN THE VENETIAN STATE ARCHIVES¹

GIORGETTA BONFIGLIO-DOSIO

Since the Middle Ages Venice had several links with the Muslim countries of the Near East. The first European partner of the Ottoman Empire was Genoa but, just in the second half of the 14th century, Venice began to send its diplomatical envoys to Ottoman rulers: commercial and political relations were then created and they went on till the end of the Republic in 1797. During these five centuries many documents were produced, received and kept by councils and offices of the Venetian government. No revolution happened in Venice during this period and parchments and papers had to suffer only for some fires: on 10 January 1514 burnt the offices of Rialto; on 11 May 1574 and 20 December 1577 burnt the Ducal Palace where the most secret documents of the state were kept together with ambassadors' letters and notary records.

After the fall of the Republic the archives were kept by the following French, Austrian and Italian governments. Few documents were lost in this period; in Venice there were not the losses which took place in other Italian cities; moreover the original order of the papers was maintained and many indexes were created by the 19th c. archivists².

This is the reason why still today in the Venetian State Archives many documents testify the ancient links which existed between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire. Most of them are written in Italian and Latin but a great bulk are in Ottoman. They are imperial letters (name-i hümayun), receipts of the Ottoman treasury (tezkere), letters of great viziers, of great admirals of the fleet, of *beylerbeyis*, of *sancakbeyis*, *hüccets* of *kadis* and papers issued by other Ottoman subjects.

¹ For an overview on Venetian State Archives: Andrea da Mosto, *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Indice generale storico descrittivo e anilitico*, 2 voll., Roma, 1937-1940; Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali - Ufficio Centrale Beni Archivistici, *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato italiani*, IV, Roma, 1944, pp. 857-1148.

² The activity of Venetian archivists during 19th c. is illustrated by Francesca Cavazzana Romanelli, *Gli archivi veneziani tra conservazione: progetti e strategie nella tradizione ottocentesca*, in *Archivi e cittadino. Genesi e sviluppo degli attuali sistemi di gestione degli archivi. Atti della giornata di Studio (Chioggia, 8 febbraio 1997)*, a cura di Gianni Penzo Doria, Chioggia, 1999, pp. 73 - 109.

Today to consult Venetian documents is easy: The scholar is admitted to the reading room only presenting an identity card or a passport and filling a sheet; the documents he asks are given him within one hour; old and new guides and specific finding aids exist to help him; there is also a microfilm section to reproduce the papers one needs.

The importance of the Venetian documents in the field of Ottoman studies has been recognized since the beginning of the 19th century. The famous scholar Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall used them to write his history of the Ottoman Empire³: He saw part of them in Venice and part in Vienna, where he was an official interpreter of the Imperial court; in fact in 1805, and then also 1866, the Austrian government brought the most important ones to Vienna; they came back to Venice in 1868 and 1921. After two centuries these documents are still of great value: since they are scattered in different archives, scholars have not yet used them all; moreover, they may be studied from different points of view, according to the new perspectives of the historical research⁴.

Ottoman documents may be found in the following archives:

BAILO A COSTANTINOPOLI⁵

The papers here kept were produced by the Venetian official diplomatic representatives in Istanbul; they were consuls and ambassadors at the same time and among their functions there was also that of judging the Venetian subjects living in the Ottoman capital.

1540-1797 (with copies of documents from 1454 to 1816): books and boxes 588; in the end some boxes belonging to the archives of the consul of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) to the Ottoman court.

Most Ottoman documents are in the series: *Carte turche* (a series of registers with copies of documents about Venetian affairs; there are orders of the sultan to his officials, imperial letters to the doge, letters of central governmental officials; here and there some *fetvas* of the *Şeyhülislam*) and Cancellaria (original documents received by the balio concerning his activity in Istanbul).

³ Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, 10 voll, Pest, 1827-35.

⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History. An Introduction to the Sources*, Cambridge, (CUP) 1999, pp. 204-220.

⁵ Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, "Venedik Devlet Arşivi'nde Bulunan İstanbul Balyosu Arşivi Üzerinde Bir Araştırma", in *Studia turcologica memoriae Alexii Bombaci dicata*, Napoli, 1982, pp. 469-480; G. Migliardi O Colasanti, "La documentazione consolare e le funzioni del balio veneziano a Costantinopoli", in *Fonti diplomatiche in età moderna e contemporanea*, Roma, 1995 (Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato. Saggi, 33), pp. 602-605, Roma, 1995 *Guida generale*, pp. 1011-1012.

CONSOLE VENETO A CIPRO⁶

Papers produced and received by the Venetian consul in Cyprus during the Ottoman period. Box 20 comprehends Greek documents; boxes 21-28 Ottoman ones and some in Arabic.

1714-1797 (with documents until 1872): boxes 28.

SENATO. DISPACCI AMBASCIATORI, COSTANTINOPOLI⁷

1484-1540 (sporadic), 1552-1797: files 247

They are letters written by the Venetian diplomatic envoys in Istanbul addressed to the doge; they contain also some letters written by important Ottoman officials to the doge, and copies of *berats* or *fermans*. We may note the existence of some letters written by the *valide* sultanas Nur Banu, Safiye and by the *kapıağası* Gazanfer ağa (belonging to the Venetian family Michicel)⁸.

CINQUE SAVI ALLA MERCANZIA⁹

This office was created in 1507 with competence on trade, merchants, navigation, and crafts. A few Ottoman documents are among the papers received from Venetian diplomatic envoys in Ottoman countries, above all in the 18th century. A few also are in other series: for instance in a trial for medicines there is a depliant in Ottoman in praise of the Venetian theriaca produced by the chemist's shop "alla testa d'oro" near the Rialto bridge¹⁰.

1540-1797 (with copies of documents from 23th c. to 1806): books and boxes 1.130.

⁶ *Archivio del consolato veneto a Cipro (fine sec. XVII- inizio XIX). Inventario e registri con uno studio introduttivo*, ed. by Giustina Migliardi O'Riordan, Venezia, 1993 (Strumenti per la ricerca archivistica. Sezione II- Inventari, indici, registri, 2); *Guida generale*, pp. 10-13.

⁷ Salvatore Carbone, *Note introduttive ai dispacci al Senato dei rappresentanti diplomatici veneti. Serie: Costantinopoli, Firenze, Inghilterra, Pietroburgo*, Roma, 1974 (Quaderni della "Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato", 43) (in particular cfr. pp.43-50 where the author indicates the boxes with Ottoman documents); *Dispacci degli ambasciatori al Senato. Indice*, Roma, 1959 (Ministero dell'Interno. Pubblicazioni degli archivi di Stato, XXXI).

⁸ Susan A. Skilliter, "The letters of the Venetian 'Sultana' Nur Banu and her Kira to Venice", in *Studia turcologica*, pp. 515- 536; Maria Pia Pedani, *Veneziani a Costantinopoli alla fine del XVI secolo*, "Quaderni di Studi Arabi" suppl. al n. 15 (1997), pp. 67-84.

⁹ *Guida generale*, pp. 980-982.

¹⁰ Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Mestieri e arti a Venezia (1173-1806). Mostra documentaria: 28 giugno- 28 settembre 1986*, Venezia, (1986), p. 106, no 191.

LETTERE E SCRITTURE TURCHESCHE¹¹

This is an ancient series of the Venetian chancellery; it appears in the 1669 inventory by Antonio de' Negri¹²; it was formed by eight files, but just at the beginning of the 1950s two of them (Nos. 6 and 8) were stolen¹³. Even if there are some Ottoman documents issued by the Sultan, most of them are of officials (*viziers, beylerbeyis, sancakbeyis, kadıs, nazırs*) and they refer to trade and merchants.

1523-1618

DOCUMENTI TURCHI¹⁴

This series was created to keep the peace agreements made with Ottomans and the imperial letters of the sultans. In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th c. other documents, written in languages incomprehensible to the archivist who then worked in Venice, were put in the series: for instance there is a letter of king of Georgia to the doge of the end of the 16th c. written in Ottoman (Doc. No. 1998). Some years ago, when they were reorganized, the documents in Armenian, Arabic, Hebrew and Persian were put in other boxes. A whole box (No. 16) concern the Dalmatian affairs after the peace of Passarowitz (1718). This series includes not only political correspondences but also more or less personal letters, as those written by some Ottoman prisoners in Verona to their families in 1647 (Docc. Nos. 1508-1525).

14541813: boxes 1-20; rotoli 30.

¹¹ The summaries of the 822 documents of the archives are on the point of being published by M. P. Pedani. The *Guida generale* (See p. 910) joins them by mistake to the *Documenti turchi* (see the following paragraph).

¹² Venetian State Archives, Secreta; Serie diverse; Statuti, capitoları, indici, titolari, *Indice di Antonio di Negri* (*Guida generale*, p.909).

¹³ One of these documents dt. first part of safer 988, 18-27 March 1580 and kept in file 8, c. 42, was found by Paul Wittek in 1952 in the illustrated catalogue issued by Istanbul antique dealer Nurettin Yatman ("Eski İstanbul", Meşrutiyet Cad. 185, Beyoğlu), cfr. P. Wittek, "A letter of Murad III to the Doge of Venice, of 1580", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 14(1952), pp. 381-383.

¹⁴ M.T. Gökbilgin, "Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Vesikalar Külliyyatında Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devri Belgeleri", *Belgeler*, I (1964), 2, pp. 119-220; M.T. Gökbilgin, "Venedik Devlet Arşivindeki Türkçe Belgeler Koleksiyonu ve Bizimle İlgili Diğer Belgeler", *Belgeler*, V-VII (1968-71), 9-12, pp. 1-151 (transcription of several Ottoman documents pertaining to the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent); *Guida generale*, p. 910; Mari a Pia Pedani, *I "Documenti turchi" dell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia*. Inventario della miscellanea, con l'edizione dei regesti di Alessio Bombaci, Roma, 1994 (Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato. Strumenti, CXXII).

DOCUMENTI ALGERI - DOCUMENTI TUSUNI - DOCUMENTI TRIPOLI ¹⁵

These few documents refer to the peace agreements made by Venetians with the rulers of these regions at the end of the 18th century. Some of them were once kept among the Documenti turchi; others formed a series by their own; now they have been reorganized¹⁶.

Algeri: 1763-1783; Tunisi: 1763-1792; Tripoli: 1763-1795.

Other Ottoman documents may be found scattered in other archives, in particular in private ones, as for instance ARCHIVIO CORRER DI SANTA FOSCA, where there is a box full of this kind, or in the NOTARILE ATTI, where notary records are kept.

Venetian documents give us several informations about the relations between Venice and the Ottoman empire; they refer not only to the great international politics but also to trade and everyday life.

¹⁵ Some of these documents were published, cfr. for instance, Abdeljelil Temimi, "Le traité de paix signé entre Venise et la Regence d'Alger le 23 Juin 1768", *Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine*, 63-66 (Juillet 1991), pp. 421-433; Abdeljelil Temimi, "Le traité de paix entre la Regence de Tunis et Venise du mois de Mai 1972", *Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine*, 77-78 (Mai 1995), pp. 223-246. *Guida generale*, p.910.

¹⁶ The inventory is on the point of being published by M.P.Pedani.