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**BETWEEN THE SULTAN AND THE DOGE:
DIPLOMATS AND SPIES
IN THE TIME OF SULEIMAN THE MAGNIFICENT**

This project deals with the times of Suleiman the Magnificent (1522–1566) and the doge Andrea Gritti (1523–1538). However, the basic problem it focuses on is *information* – the information that Venice collected through its diplomatic envoys in the capital on the Bosphorus and which is preserved to this day in the Venetian archives. Of course, the gathering of information on the Turks, the appearance and development of the so-called genre “delle cose dei Turchi” certainly did not first arise at that time. Interest in the subject goes back to Byzantine times and naturally continued after the conquest of Constantinople. Venice was in a most advantageous situation in this respect, for it had knowledge about the territories and its population accumulated over centuries, as well as commercial and economic ties of centuries’ standing with various cities and ports. This knowledge and these skills were handed down over the years by its officials, merchants and diplomats and preserved through documents in its archives. Venice played a major role in collecting information and carrying it over from the East to the West. Merchants were the most active factors in this activity. Subsequently, especially in the 16th century, these processes achieved a completed form with the development of diplomatic practices and the functioning of the Venetian system of governance, developed into numerous offices and chancelleries of the Serenissima. Their most outstanding manifestations were the famous Venetian *relazioni* – the reports by diplomatic envoys of the Republic, ceremoniously presented to the Senate. The first preserved written texts of this kind date back to the late 15th century.

Although here the topic is focused on the time of Suleiman the Magnificent, it is necessary to trace some of the earlier manifestations and processes of mutual “communication” between Venice and the Porte. This is necessary because the diplomatic contacts and means of transmitting information about the Ottoman Empire to Venice began as early as the first decades of the 15th century. On the other hand, seen from the perspective of the Venetian participants in these relations, the people involved were in some cases members of one and the same Venetian patrician family, of which several generations pursued the same chosen profession (trade and politics!).

Many researchers, starting from Leopold von Ranke and the great 19th-century Italian historians, have devoted their efforts to the study of the rich history of Venice. It is well known that the sources and published chronicles preserved in the Venetian archives are plentiful enough to shed light on all sorts of historical aspects, including the diplomatic connections of the Serenissima with the Ottoman Empire. Of major importance are the archive documents, and especially the series of *Miscellanea Documenti turchi*, which are accessible now on the Internet. They will be used here in connection with the activity of some of the main figures of the present study. Apart from the remarkable series of archival documents, we will also refer to some rare early printed books, as well as a few half-forgotten manuscripts. The main emphasis of the study, however, will be on the sufficiently well-known Venetian “chronicles” published long ago. I have aimed at a reading of a rather voluminous work, the *Diaries* (I Diarii) of the Venetian historian and secretary of the Council of the Ten, Marino Sanudo (1466–1535). This outstanding author, over the course of nearly 40 years, created a collection of 58 volumes, which include transcripts of whole documents and letters, abridged versions of the same, as well as his own commentaries and observations on the activity of the Venetian Senate from 1496 to 1533.¹ Here it must be pointed out that Sanudo is not an unknown author; on the contrary, he is an important source for anyone studying the history of Venice. Fernand Braudel, for instance, in his book on Philip II and the Mediterranean world, has used the *Diaries* as a source in order to calculate the speed with which news and the letters that carried it traveled.² The *Diaries*, however, must be read very attentively – for, after all, these are not the official documents of the Republic but their copies, summaries, retold and abridged versions (at times exact, in other cases not). Moreover, these large volumes, which Sanudo wrote over the course of decades, have a prehistory related to another Venetian author, Domenico Malipiero (1445–1513) and his *Annals*.

The basic points on which this study will focus fall during the periods when diplomatic missions traveled between Venice and Constantinople. Since it would not be possible to discuss all the missions, only a few of these are selected here. The basic emphasis will be on the consecutive appearance of the first *relazioni* (i.e., reports), and then, within the limit of 30 years (two generations), of two series of documents connected with Venetian-Ottoman negotiations dating from 1503 and 1534. It is well known that initially the Venetian emissaries to the Ottoman capital reported orally on their missions before the Venetian Senate, which was, before the Collegio, the organ of Venetian administration dealing with external affairs, which included the Doge and his counselors and *Savi* (ministers). The first preserved *relazione* dates from 1503 and was written by Andrea Gritti, who was at that time envoy for the conclusion of a peace treaty in Constantinople. There are no such extant texts dating prior to this. But this assertion may

1 Sanudo (1878–1903), vol. I–LVIII. See Sanudo’s other recently published works by Caracciolo Aricò (1999–2004, 2011).

2 Бродел (1998), 358–359; more recently on the same subject Palazzo (2011), 39–43.

be modified, as I will try to demonstrate below. These documents appeared not only as a result of Venetian diplomatic protocol. Their creation and the information provided in them may be said to be due to “circles of friends”, to personal ties and contacts between Venetians and representatives of the Porte: Andrea Gritti, Hersegzade Ahmed Pasha and the dragoman Ali Bey in the early 16th century and, 30 years latter, between Gritti’s son, Alvise Gritti, the grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha, and the dragoman Yunus Bey. Here I propose to take a look behind the official facade of diplomatic negotiations presented in the famous *relazioni* and to consider the mission’s “dossier”. This will include the use of certain documents reflecting the preliminary negotiations, instructions, letters and “secret reports” by members of the mission, as well as other accompanying documents. In the course of the study, when the sources permit, we may attempt something in the nature of a “deconstruction” of the process of creating *relazioni*, doing this by comparing different versions (when extant), including printed, manuscript, abridged or complete ones, etc. This will make it possible to ascertain certain details that have so far remained outside the light of scholarly attention. While acknowledging that the official report crowns the mission and is its most perfect end product, it remains true that underlying it there may be contacts, information and certain “friendly” exchanges, as, for instance, Filippo de Vivo has shown recently in his innovative book on the paths of information towards Venice.³

NEW THEMES IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

The topic of the present study touches upon many scientific fields and directions of historical research, in which there was recently been a great deal of activity. Among the most outstanding themes related to the study of Early Modern Times and the Mediterranean region are those concerning the paths and collection of information, espionage, the history of diplomacy, transcultural cooperation, inter-confessional relations, etc.⁴ Scholarly interest has focused on the details of diplomatic relations between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, including espionage, rituals and ceremonies, as well as the old tradition handed down from the time of Leopold von Ranke, the famous *relazioni*.⁵ Another special field in which significant contributions have been made is that of cultural interaction and the role of mediators (especially of the dragomans, i.e.translators), as well as certain other, hitherto less noticeable figures of secretaries, embassy staff, etc.⁶ We should add to these studies

3 De Vivo (2007), 58–60; See also: De Vivo (2011).

4 *La circulation des nouvelles* (1994); See also: Rothman (2009), Rothman (2012); Palazzo (2011); Ortega (2014); Pedani (2006); Pedani (2009); Pedani (2010), Popović (et al.ed.s.) (2012), etc.

5 Gürkan (2012), Gürkan (2013), with cit. lit.; Servantie (2000), De Vivo (2011); Valensi (2005); Pedani (2013); Krstić (2012).

6 Rothman (2012); Krstić-Gelder (2015), 9; Pedani (ed.) (2013).

publications aimed at a new reading of familiar sources or at a systematic study and publication of documents from the Venetian archives.⁷

**DOMENICO MALIPIERO, HIS ANNALS,
AND THE BEGINNING OF THE RELAZIONI**

The Venetian senator and provveditore dell'armada, Domenico Malipiero (1455–1513), in addition to being a remarkably active figure in politics and warfare, left to posterity the *Annals* of the period from 1457 to 1500, attributed to his name (his authorship has recently been seriously questioned).⁸ In the *Annals* we find considerable information on the beginning of diplomacy between Venice and the Ottoman Empire after the fall of Constantinople. Malipiero himself (or the author of the *Annals*) took part in decision making, was present at the debates, and thus was able to record, though in an abridged form, important information and documents. We may rightly consider his work a predecessor of Sanudo's *Diaries*, which cover the time from 1496 to 1533.

During the time of Mehmed II (1444–1446, 1451–1481), a war took place between the two countries, the so-called “long war” (1463–1479), consisting of a succession of at times very fierce campaigns following one after the other in different places, including Morea, the islands, and Dalmatia. The main event here was the great defeat sustained by Venice with the conquest of the island of Euboea (Negroponte) in 1470. As might have been expected, the first people from the Turkish camp to announce the news were merchants.⁹ First, in connection with the warfare situation, information was sought about the military forces of the Sultan. After that, attempts at establishing peace were frequently undertaken by both warring sides. Judging by what “Malipiero” wrote, this is when diplomatic protocols first began to be written, though in a yet indefinite, unclear form, and when first appeared the elements that would be contained in future *relazioni*.

It is important to point out that we see attempts being made in the 1470s by both sides to use as intermediaries persons belonging to the old Balkan aristocracy or connected with the Venetian domains in Dalmatia and on the islands. For instance, the leading actors in the negotiations were Mahmud Pasha Angelović (Grand Vizier 1456–66, 1472–74); the Albanian aristocrat Alessio

7 Calia (2012 a, b); Popović (2013); Pedani (1994); Pedani-Fabris (ed.) (1996).

8 DBI, <[9 There were such cases as far back as 1464: Malipiero, 24, 39, 44–7, 49. See also: Fleet \(2000\); Davis \(1974\); Dumerk \(1994\).](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/domenico-malipiero_(Dizionario_Biografico)/> Malipiero, Domenico.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Span (or Spano) (1442–1495); David Maurogonatos, a prominent merchant and duke of Crete and a friend of Jakub Pasha, the personal physician of the Sultan.¹⁰ Mara Branković (c.1416–1487), the Sultan’s stepmother and daughter of the Despot of Serbia George Branković, also took part in the negotiations. According to “Malipiero”, she personally offered her services as intermediary, but other documents indicate she acted at the instructions of Mehmed II himself.¹¹

In the concluding phase of the negotiations, the well-documented figure Giovanni Dario (1414–1494) appears; his letters and reports (*dispacci*) have been preserved.¹² He is notable for several consecutive missions and for their ultimate success – the signing of a peace treaty, announced in Venice on March 25, 1479, the feast day of Saint Mark. This peace had been long expected by both sides, since Mehmed was preparing for a new campaign against Italy.¹³ Giovanni Dario is a very good example of how the first Venetian diplomats appeared: he was a rich merchant from Crete, an official of Venice and a trusted secretary of the doge; his most remarkable quality was that he spoke Turkish. That is why he was well received at the Porte and had talks with the pashas. That was also the time when the first models of cyphered and coded letters appeared. We have no extant official report by him, but the letters he sent over the many years of his stay in Constantinople (until 1487) speak clearly enough of his closeness to the Sultan and the viziers.¹⁴ A particularly curious point is that the Sultan’s envoys, starting with Lutfi Bey, who brought the Sultan’s firman to Venice, and then others, resided in his house¹⁵. Venice worthily showed her gratitude to her secretary and assigned to him a yearly rent, allowing him, exceptionally, to keep the Sultan’s gifts for himself; proof of his affluence is his palace on the Canale Grande, which exists to this day.¹⁶ His name is also linked to the famous request by Sultan Mehmed for a painter to be sent to him and the voyage of Gentile Bellini to Constantinople¹⁷.

The peace treaty concluded at the end of Mehmed the Conqueror’s reign, after so many efforts and missions, merits a detailed examination. For the Venetians, it was important not to allow any more violations of the trade agenda and to have their commercial privileges, which had been granted them back in 1454 by Mehmed, re-

10 Calia (2012), 46–7; Preto (2010), 247.

11 Malipiero, 67, 81 for 1472; Popović (2013).

12 Wright (forthcoming).

13 Calia (2012 – b); Wright-MacKay (2007); Gullino (1996), 72 sqq.

14 Calò (1992). See Dario’s documents in the archives of Venice: <http://nauplion.net/zd.html>; as well as a model of a coded letter from November 2, 1484 from Adrianople <http://arielcaliban.org/VEDispacci.pdf>.

On encrypted correspondence: Couto (2007); Del Borgo (2003).

15 Wright-MacKay (2007), 263.

16 Malipiero, 136: 1484 “To Giovanni Dario, secretary, a native of Crete, was given a property in Noventa, a village 3 miles from Padua, at the value of 1500 ducats, 600 ducats counted in the officio del sal, for the wedding of his daughter, because the city was indebted to him for concluding peace with the Turks”.

17 Cevizli (2014), 748.

stored as soon as possible.¹⁸ But this time, their right to trade on the territory of the Empire was granted in exchange for 10 000 ducats and another 100 000 to be paid over two years; also stipulated was the condition that the institution of bailo in Constantinople was to be restored.¹⁹ It should be pointed out that Battista Gritti, brother of Andrea Gritti's grandfather, was sent as bailo; in addition to being a large-scale merchant, he had experience in military and diplomatic matters.²⁰

There were many pitfalls set in the treaty, connected with problems of boundaries and especially issues that directly affected the interests of Venetian merchants with respect to Skutari, Kotor, Kruja and the islands. For example, according to the 1479 peace treaty, a large part of the lands of the Crnojević family in Montenegro was given to the Sultan. The ruler of these lands, Ivan Crnojević, died in 1490 and they were inherited by his son John (Zuane Cernovichio, as the Venetians called him), who married Izabeta Erizo and was accepted as an aristocrat in Venice. This is how the conflict over the salt mines in Kotor arose, which Zuane took over in 1495; this issue was the cause of the next Venetian-Turkish war, 1499–1503.

When Bayezid II, Mehmed's heir, came to power, the privileges of the Venetians had to be confirmed again. This was done through the new capitulations of 1482, but the situation at the borders was not calm at all.²¹ As Malipiero reported in September 1481, Skenderbeg, not without the support of Venice, crossed from the Apennines into Albania and tried to restore his paternal domain in joint actions with the above-mentioned heir of the Crnojević family, Zuane Cernovichio²². The Turks also committed violations of the peace, which is why Bayezid heard out the protests of the bailo Battista Gritti. It is worth pointing out a new aspect of the situation: for the first time, a personal audience of the Venetian envoy with the Sultan himself is documented: Antonio Vituri "è stà bascià la man in pubblico a quell Signor, e ha mangiato con lui".²³ Until this point, no Venetian emissary had been received personally by the Sultan – the negotiations had been conducted by the pashas.²⁴

At the end of 1492, a sharp turnabout took place in the seemingly good relations between the Serenissima and the Sultan. Malipiero writes: "On November 19, 1492, the Sultan sent to our people his orders from Adrianopolis that he dismissed Geronimo Marcello, bailo, and all the other consuls of the other nations, and so it was. The merchants were told that everything else remained as before. The cause was that in the month of July some cyphered letters ("lettere in zifra"), signed also "in zifra," were intercepted and sent to the Porte; and they suspected the bailo, and

18 See Pedani (2013), 19.

19 Hanß (2013), Wright - MacKay (2007).

20 DBI, <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/battista-gritti_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/battista-gritti_(Dizionario_Biografico)/>).

21 Teunissen (1998); Pedani (2002), № 63 Antonio Vituri 1481; Wright (forthcoming): Proposals to Bayezid to renew the peace included the condition of reducing by half the sum that had been paid to his father, and his relinquishing the islands of Zante and Cephalonia.

22 Malipiero, 132.

23 Ibid., 133.

24 Ibid., 119, for 1478 when the secretary Alvise Manenti was sent to Mehmed's camp at Skutari.

the cypher was obtained from him and the contents of the letters was found out; and they did not like that their secrets had been written down, that is why they did this. And for that reason Domenico Trevisan was sent as ambassador to Constantinople and was well received and dressed in guilt clothes but was not heard out – the Sultan saying that he had decided there would no longer be a bailo.”²⁵

That moment marked the rising of the star of the next secretary of the Serenissima, Alvise Sagondino (c. 1450–after 1500), who, as we will see, was the author of the first *relazione*. He was the son of the great humanist Nicolò Sagondino, who was born in Euboea (died 1464) and served as secretary of the Venetian Senate and later in service to the Pope in Rome, who had a long life full of tragic events. The son Alvise inherited his father’s function as secretary of the Senate and, like Dario, also had the great advantage of speaking Turkish. This brought him great benefits and determined his selection as envoy in 1493, as well as on another important mission in 1496.

In 1495, Venice was able to be the first to learn about the death of Prince Cem, brother of Bayezid, who had been for many years a prisoner of the Pope (the well-known “Cem case”). The news of his death arrived through Kotor on March 4, and on March 6, the Council “decided to send Alvise Sagondino to announce the death to Bayezid. And to explain that the revolt organized by the Archbishop of Durazzo, who rallied 30 000 Albanians, was not incited by Venice, but that she was opposed.” This entry is followed by a detailed retelling of Sagondino’s letter from Constantinople, received on June 26, 1495, which describes Bayezid’s great joy at learning the news.²⁶ Under the date November 9, 1495,²⁷ there is a note on Sagondino’s report through Collegio, which in itself may be considered the first verbally presented *relazione*:

Alvise Sagondino, secretary from Constantinople, arrived, he reported (“rif-erisce”) that Sultan Bayezid has 2 200 000 ducats of revenue, and that he expends all on his six sons and six sons-in-law, each of whom has a separate court. He said he had a countless treasure, which he had inherited from his father. [He said] he was a calm (“quieto”) man but was pushed to war by his pashas. And that when they informed him of the victory over the French at the battle at Taro, he said that the Signoria had probably spent all its bags of gold on this expedition, and he answered him that it had spent quite a lot, but it had other resources, which were intact... and that [the Sultan] ordered that Constantinople be looked over and that artillery be placed on the walls and along the seacoast, especially at Gallipoli; that he had 200 galleys old and new, 8 navi, numerous fustas and palanders, and as many horses as he desired. That he was not a well conditioned man (“male condizionato della persona”), that his first-born son takes to pleasure, his second amasses money, his third

25 Ibid, 141–142; Gürkan (2012).

26 Malipiero, 146–147; about the transmission of important news, see Palazzo (2011), 111 sq.

27 In Sanudo, in vol. I of his Diaries, is included the *relazione* of Alvise Sagondino, but from December 1496. The placement of this note was probably mistaken. See below.

is devoted to books and weapons, and is his favourite, and it is thought that he will mount the throne, and that the Signoria is respected by the Turks, but they nowise want that there be a bailo.²⁸

What “Malipiero” wrote down based on the envoy’s report would essentially be a model for future *relazioni*. Moreover, this is the first time that we get information about the Sultan’s revenue. This would become an obligatory element in future reports. In “Malipiero” there is also a fourth note, in which he relates Sagondino’s audience with Bayezid, a note dated July 2, 1496 (this was probably a retelling of a letter by from Sagondino): the envoy “found him seated on a mastabe, and as soon as he saw him... wanted to kiss his hand and he did not permit him to. And they had a lovely dinner and [the Sultan] questioned him about all the states in Italy...”²⁹ Obviously, Sagondino’s conversations with Bayezid were held in a markedly amicable atmosphere, and the exchange of information went in both directions; we may assume that the Sultan himself was the one to inform him of the number of ships and – why not? – of his revenues!

To summarize: In “Malipiero”, we find the first indications of “proto-relazioni”, as well as information about the first Venetian missions to Mehmed and Bayezid. We can trace the developing quota of diplomats, which includes proveditors of the armada, merchants and secretaries. We must give the author his due: it was not his aim to present the daily work of the Senate, the Council of Ten or the Collegio. Evidently his aim was to preserve the memory of important events.

MARINO SANUDO AND VENETIAN DIPLOMACY TO THE SULTAN

FIRST RELAZIONI: ALVISE SAGONDINO

In the first volume of Sanudo’s *Diaries*, under the date December 2, 1496³⁰, is included Sagundino’s *relazione*, which was examined through Malipiero’s note. But we are confronted with another problem: the *relazione* is set down twice: the first time as a summary, *Sumario* (col. 397–398), and immediately after, with nearly the same contents, but now under the rubric “Segue etiam relazione” (col. 398–400). Although with approximately the same content, it is presented in a different way, with different amounts indicated for the Sultan’s revenue and the categories of armed forces, and even with a different age given for the Sultan (56 and 51 years,

28 Malipiero, 147–8.

29 Ibid., 146–148, 152. Pedani (2002) indicates three missions of Sagondino according to the archives – № 72 – commissione from 4 September 1493; № 73 1496 – 30 May 1496, № 74, 3 January 1497.

30 Sanudo (1878), I: 397–400.

respectively), with a different spelling of the names, etc. This leads us to the conclusion that Sanudo probably had two different sources; on one hand, it is also possible he had a *Sumario* of the report and, on the other, that he was writing down his own notes about what he had heard. But for now we cannot say why the two texts were not made identical. Among other things, there is a notable difference in the amounts indicated for revenues and the details reported by Malipiero. Here we propose a schematic presentation of the information in the two texts:

1. *The summary: structure of the text*

- brief verbal portrait of the Sultan – aged 56, outward appearance (colour of the face), character and preferences (taking to revelry but peace-loving).
- three pashas mentioned by name: Daut Pasha, who is an Albanian, Ibrahim Pasha and Ali Pasha
- number of children: 7 sons and 8 daughters, the third son having the greatest chance of inheriting the throne, and he expects one other child (his wife is pregnant)...
- REVENUE: (CF MALIPIERO – 2 200 000!) – 2 400 000 ducats per year, in the following way:

From kharaj [tribute] – 900 000

From a third of the kharaj – 300 000

From all his ports [scalosie] – 500 000

From tax on the rams [castroni] – 400 000

From certain donations – 300 000

He spends all this revenue and has so far withdrawn 3 million from his father's deposit, which had been 6 million, according to hearsay.³¹

Number of sanjakbeys (here referred to as captains): “in Greece he has 28 captains, and 34 in Anatolia – in all 62, who have under them an army of 32 000, have no other salary but the dime on the land, and are obliged to serve the master with no other remuneration”.

And these people are called ... [missing]

Description of the army: 8 000 janissaries; 15 000 coradori [akingi], regular and irregular army, so the total number may reach 100 000.

The fleet – 10 galleys, 50 fustas, and 50 other. Now being built – 2 barzi.

31 İnalçik-Quataert (1996), 55, 78.

2. *The relazione:*

It contains more information about the Sultan's family, the probable heir to the throne and the unrest in Constantinople. A verbal portrait of the Sultan is included. The name of the Sultan is transcribed in an unusual way - Payseta.

The three pashas, Daud, Ibrahim and Ali, are only mentioned; no additional information is given about them.

The place of residence of the Sultan's 7 sons is given:

"Item, that he has 7 sons, of whom the third in age hopes to inherit and has the support of all who live in Foja, at a distance of a day and a half from Constantinople, the first son is in Karaman, the second in Anatolia and the third in Trapezund, the fifth in Kafa, the sixth in Nicomedia, the seventh in Greece. And that the Sultan is 51 years old."

"The Sultan's revenues – are said to be about 3 million ducats, now available are about 2,5 million. The expenditure equals this amount."

Naval forces – 250 vessels, land forces 45–50 000 riders, commanded by 60 captains.

The army – sea and land forces. That a son has been born to him these days, but he does not want this to be known".

In conclusion, it is said: "Also that he is a great friend of the Signoria but does not want a bailo that there might not be a spy who would report what is happening here".

FIRST RELAZIONI: ANDREA GRITTI AND THE WAR OF 1499–1503

The beginning of the conflict between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, as mentioned above, dates from 1492, when the bailo was expelled for espionage. The actual war began in 1499 with the seizure of Lepanto and the Turkish attack on Friuli. At that time Andrea Gritti (1455–1538, Doge 1523–1538) was among the most famous merchants in the Ottoman capital. He was the son of Francesco Gritti (who had died early) but was raised by his grandfather Triadano Gritti (1391–1474).³² A number of letters sent from Pera by Andrea Gritti are preserved in Sanudo. They enable us to retrace some important acts he undertook, which were highly esteemed by the Senate. He supplied wheat from Constantinople to Venice in the

32 DBI, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/triadano-gritti_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/triadano-gritti_(Dizionario-Biografico)/); there is a particularly large number of publications on Gritti, especially as Doge of Venice - [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-gritti_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-gritti_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) with literature.

time of the latter's famine in 1498. He also advocated for the liberation of the Venetian merchants imprisoned in Istanbul, and to this end visited the pashas at least 20 times, as he himself wrote. In the end of 1498, the first ciphered and encrypted letters appear: October 3, 1498, sub enigma, concerning the Turkish armada; October 31, 1498, a letter to the Doge, in which he tells about his audience with Ahmad Pasha and the Porte and how he had succeeded in paying the debt for Zante; from the same day, a ciphered letter about trade matters and the armada, decoded and transmitted by Sanudo; another letter of November 9 from Pera, scritta in parabola; and more letters of December, received as late as March 1499, etc.³³

Gritti proves to be the chief informer for Venice as concerns Bayezid's military preparations and the shuttle diplomacy of envoys in the Ottoman capital. Of course, there are many other sources of information besides him. Paolo Preto, in combining Sanudo's data with those of the Venetian chancellery, discovers a vast network of informers that Venice had positioned at all points of the Adriatic and the Peloponnese.³⁴ Some of the reports, as mentioned, were cyphered or were written in an enigmatic language using commercial terminology.³⁵ The names of some of Andrea Gritti's collaborators are indicated, with praise, at the conclusion of his relation. Especially important was the role of Zacharia di Freschi, secretary of the Venetian Senate, who held the cypher of correspondence and also took part in several missions to the Porte.³⁶ Gritti himself was accused of espionage after Turks intercepted his letters, and was under threat of death but suffered only imprisonment thanks to the intercession of Ahmed Pasha. Here a few words should be said about Gritti's "friendship" with Herzegzade Ahmed Pasha (1459–1517), documented by the large correspondence between this Turkish chief, the doge Leonardo Loredan, and Gritti himself.³⁷ Some of the letters show just what this friendship was "worth" and the gifts made by the Signoria for the purpose of preserving it.³⁸ The great vizier Ahmed Pasha was actually the brother of Vladislav Herzegović (1427–1489), and the two were sons of Stepan Vukčić Kosača (1435–1466), the last ruler of Herzegovina. It was in the ties between Venice and the Balkan aristocracy, preserved from the time before the Ottoman invasion, that Gritti's friendship with the Turkish pasha was rooted – a pasha who was so lauded in the reports to the Doge and the Senate.

At the end of the war, after enormous diplomatic efforts, Venice managed to form a coalition with the Pope and Hungary and even achieved a brief success in conquering the island of Lefkada (Santa Maura).³⁹ Along with this, the exchange of envoys

33 Respectively, Sanudo (1878), I: 508, 917; 2, 101, 136, 139–140, 208, 234–5, 292, 504, 544 etc.

34 Preto (2010), 248.

35 Preto (2010), 269 note 61 with literature and letters in Sanudo (1879), II.

36 DBI, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/zaccaria-de-freschi_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/zaccaria-de-freschi_(Dizionario_Biografico)/)

37 Pedani (1994) ad indicem; Calia (2012 – a), N 82, N 107.

38 See Gritti's commissione: Miscellanea Documenti turchi, N. 96a, f. 4–5, 16 May 1503. < <http://www.archiviodistatovenezia.it/divenire/document.htm?idUa=37648&idDoc=39680&first=0&last=7>>

39 Rakova (2013).

between the two camps began at that time. Taking part on the Venetian side was Zacharia di Freschi; on the Turkish, the translator Ali Bey, mentioned above. The Republic had lost Modon and Koron, two strategic ports at the tip of the Peloponnese, seized during the Sultan's campaign in August 1500. Freschi took part in a preliminary series of negotiations in 1502, which were unsuccessful, unlike the next ones headed by Gritti.

Gritti's main contribution to the future of Venice was precisely the success of his 1503 mission for concluding peace. The voyage and negotiations in Constantinople continued from May to December. In fact, Gritti departed from Venice with a draft peace treaty, together with the Turkish envoy Ali Bey, after the Venetian Senate and the Doge officially swore and confirmed the conditions of the treaty on May 16, 1503. On the next day, Gritti was given the *comissione* for his mission to Constantinople. On May 23, Gritti embarked from Venice with two galleys. Traveling on one of these was Gritti himself, together with his secretary Nicolo Aurelio and the cogitor Gian Giacomo Caroldo (who would later become a famous author of chronicles); on the other ship was Ali Bey and his translator Jacopo da Rimano, who is "30 years old, taken prisoner at Negroponte and knows many languages".⁴⁰

Gritti's concluding report was pronounced before the Doge and the senators on December 2, 1503.⁴¹ There is a preserved copy of the *relazione*, which represents an edited version of the text. This copy was circulated outside the secret archive of the Republic, as the only copy is kept in the Marciana library.⁴² Compared with the other examples of diplomatic reports considered above, Gritti's relation is indeed an exceptional work of oratory. In it, the future doge demonstrates his knowledge of politics, diplomacy and negotiation.

Special attention should be devoted to the series of materials related to this mission and included in volume V of Sanudo, where, for the month of December 1503, a rather large series of notes appears.⁴³ We find that Sanudo has given a wide summary of the relation, several letters, as well as an account of the course of the mission, written by the secretary (*cogitor*) of the delegation, Gian Giacomo Caroldo. Thus we have the unique opportunity of obtaining three viewpoints on the same event – that of the emissary (Alberi's *relazione*), that of his listener, Sanudo, and that of his collaborator, Caroldo. It should be said at once that the three texts are very different, both in content and in the information related. For instance: Sanu-

40 Sanudo (1881), V: 26; Text of the treaty – Ibid, 42–47.

41 Sanudo, V: 448: "Et compito di lezer tal lettere in Pregadi, il Collegio ussifuora, et sier Andrea Gritti, venuto orator di Costantinopoli, vestito di scarlato, andò in renga. Ed era hore zercha 24, et stete 4 hore et più in renga. Il sumario di la sua naratione è questo. Et venuto zò di renga, fo laudato dal principe, juista il consueto, e comandato credenza di tal relatione".

42 Alberi, III/3, 9–43 (Marc. It. VII 882); on the previous edition of Vincenzo Lazzari, Venezia 1844.

43 Sanudo V: 448–468, respectively: 448–453 – Sumario; 453–4 – brief anonymous presentation of the Sultan's army; 454–55 – copies of letters: letter of Bayezid to the Doge, of Oct 6, 1503, beginning in Latin and continuing in Italian, with a retelling of the contents of the peace treaty, sultan's letter to Mehmed Aga, sanjakey of Mostar, and Scander Pasha, sanjakey of Bosnia; 455–468 – Caroldo's "relazione" "Ex Costantinopoli die ultimo Septembris 1503".

do's summary contains many commentaries and details that are absent in the official *relazione* (for instance, about how Ali Bey stepped down in Gallipoli to receive gifts from the sanjakbeys); most importantly, the conversations with Ahmed Pasha Herzegzade are concretely given here, from which we see that the relationship was quite friendly and well-intentioned, and the exchange of information moved along wide-open channels. Just as Gritti informs the Turkish pasha about the policy of France and Spain, so does Ahmed tell him (in August 1503, 8 days after peace is concluded between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire!) about the conditions of the treaty. Andrea Gritti's and Ahmed Pasha's networks for gathering information become visible.⁴⁴ In the "official" *relazione*, these details are absent; they are left behind the curtain. Only the friendly attitude of Ahmed Pasha towards the Signoria in Venice is stressed. The *Sumario* in Sanudo probably not only represents a record of what was heard when the report was pronounced, but is also based on some notes, because it contains numbers and has gaps to be filled in later. The summary gives a description of the situation in Constantinople, the peace negotiations that were conducted simultaneously in Venice and Hungary (the arrival of the Hungarian envoy at the Porte is mentioned). Also, it gives the rather valuable information that Bayezid demanded enormous sums from the Venetian merchants: "vol di sier Marco Orio ducati 100 milia, di sier Vincenzo Pasqualigo ducati 50 milia, di uno fio di sier Zuan Zantani, Vincenzo, 30 milia, di Batista Polani e dil resto 60 000." Sanudo's summary constantly refers to money, and especially to the costs of the support of Gritti and his entourage. He had spent 1500 ducats of his own money in order to support 20 mouths and a guard of 40 people, while the sum allotted by Venice was only 3 ducats per day.⁴⁵

As for the description of ceremonies (the reception of the envoy, the visits of the pashas and the audience given by the Sultan), it can be found mainly in the "official" *relazione*. There is a very brief passage, which, it seems to me, has not been paid sufficient attention. This refers to the concluding audience given to the envoys by the Sultan Bayezid on July 31, when Gritti sits before the Sultan and Bayezid says to him, "Speak!" At that moment, the pashas intervene and say that he does not have a sufficient mastery of Turkish, so the translator Ali Bey begins to translate.⁴⁶ From this detail, we learn that Gritti was, at least to some extent, familiar with the Turkish language. In general, the importance of translators (Ali Bey and Giacomo da Rimano) was stressed well enough and often in the letter written by the ambassador himself to the Serenissima. In addition, Gritti recommends that a translator be appointed to the bailo's service. In the concluding part of the *relazione* and the *Sumario*, certain translators are named and praised – the translator Ali Bey, who has greatly helped, as well as Pantaleo Coresi and Atanasio from Corfu (*relazione*, p. 43), the secretary, the *cogitor* and other local merchants, who helped him resolve certain problems, as well as the vice-bailo Lunardo Bembo (Summary, 453).

44 Gürkan (2012), 177–178.

45 Sanudo, V: 452.

46 Alberi, 38.

So what do we have ultimately? Andrea Gritti describes his mission as successful yet accompanied by incredible difficulties, which he presents in his official version by referring to his numerous disputes with the pashas. In the final account, however, as Giuseppe Gulino shows, this peace treaty is too severe for Venice. If, however, we go back to the beginning, and ask ourselves what the reasons were for this war that had run such a complicated course and had necessitated so many diplomatic efforts and expenses, we will see Gritti himself giving the answer – it was all about Zuane Chernovichio – who was first patronized by Venice but later went over to the Turkish camp.⁴⁷

After this, Sanudo inserts a very brief, anonymous text: an exposé concerning the army services, especially those at the Sultan's court. This text is indicative that, after 1503, Venice had a sufficiently clear idea about the kinds of Turkish armed forces, their salaries, the numbers of all military categories – muleteers, cart-drivers, camel-drivers, spahis, etc. This small detail is noteworthy, because not all the facts about Turkey were known in the early 16th century by Venice. The reports by envoys and bailos contain the titles and offices - in some cases noted precisely, at others imprecisely (for instance: bilar bey, sanjak, haznadar bashi, etc.) However, in this brief excerpt we see both the Turkish names and descriptions of the services. This may serve as a reference point for later developments, because 30 years later we will have at our disposal the full, precisely ranked list of officials in the Sultan's court and army, given with the respective Turkish terms. For now, here and there we see glimpses of designations that have become customary, at least in Sanudo's vocabulary: kapi bashi, aga of the janissaries, dragoman, etc.

The second level of the diplomatic corps, consisting of the secretaries, is presented in the "*relazione*" of Gian Giacomo Caroldo (1480–1539).⁴⁸ He was secretary to the Doge, had previously been envoy to Milano (1508), and is a familiar figure. He is best known as the author of a chronicle on Venice, covering the time since the foundation until 1382, written in the 1520s but dedicated to the Doge Gritti as late as 1532. His inclination to describe facts and events is very clearly evident in this *relazione*. I will not discuss the latter, though it merits special attention, but will note that the narrative is given from the viewpoint of a peripheral observer, and the aim is to describe the opulence of the ceremonies given for the reception of the mission and the audiences given at the Topkapi palace. The details and the skillful descriptions are particularly impressive. Sanudo didn't entitle this text (col. 455–468), probably in order to demonstrate that this cannot be considered a genuine *relazione* since it is written by the *cogitor* of the mission.

47 Gullino (1996), 90; Alberi, 21; Sanudo V: 42–47.

48 DBI, < [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-giacomo-caroldo_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-giacomo-caroldo_(Dizionario_Biografico)>)

THE 1503 PEACE WITH SULTAN BAYEZID AND THE HUNGARIAN CONNECTION: FELIX PETANČIĆ.

In the course of the war of 1499–1503, the Serenissima eagerly shared information with the Hungarian king Vladislav II.⁴⁹ At the end of May 1501, the triple alliance between Rome, Hungary and Venice was announced, which may be defined as one of the last crusade campaigns.⁵⁰ The Pope promised the Hungarians annual aid of 40 000 if they would take part in the war. Venice was to give another 100 000 and to wage war on sea. Military action did commence: the united forces attacked Santa Maura/Lefkada on August 30, 1501, one year after the fall of Modon. But Venice quickly chose to start peace negotiations with Bayezid. As described above, the preliminary version of the peace treaty was prepared at the end of 1502 in Constantinople, and was then ratified in 1503 in Venice. Hungary also concluded a 7-year armistice with the Turkish sultan.

It is worth lingering in greater detail on Venice's desire for a tripartite peace, including with Hungary. As we saw from Andrea Gritti's mission, first there was a two-sided agreement between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, but eventually, despite Bayezid's resistance, the treaty was signed by Venice and Hungary on one side and the Turks on the other. A copy of the Hungarian treaty, signed by Vladislav II, is kept in the Vienna archive.⁵¹ Its content is quite interesting. We find that this is in fact an "open letter" to "all who see it and hear it". First, it proclaims that a treaty has been signed in the name of Hungary and all its subordinate princes and kings, and all the Christian forces, and that the treaty is signed also in the name of the Serenissima and of all Hungarian/Christian allies for a term of 7 years as of the 20th day of August, 1503; and that if one of the two rulers (Hungarian or Turkish) were to die, then the peace would be considered finished. Within a term of one year, all interested parties were to send "letters and their seals for ratification and recognition" by their envoys to the Turkish emperor himself.

A particularly important role in the diplomatic activity between the rulers of the Christian coalition was played by the Hungarian envoy of Vladislav II (1490–1516), the citizen of Dubrovnik Felix Petančić, also known as Felix Ragusinus (or Felix Petantius) (1455- circa 1517). The zenith of his career was in the late 15th and early 16th century, a time when he was an important confidant of Vladislaus II and the latter's envoy to Rhodes, Venice, the court of the Ottoman sultans in Constantinople, and even as far as France. Petančić's contribution was that, through works and treatises of various forms, he joined his voice to the chorus of humanists propagandizing anti-Ottoman initiatives. Apart from his other works, which became

49 Rakova (2013).

50 Sanudo (1880), IV: 41–42, 532–33.

51 Гюзелев (2000), № 12, 187–192.

popular only after his death, we will here present in particular two manuscripts by him that have until now remained unknown.

The first manuscript is an exceptionally well-made and illustrated parchment consisting of 4 folios and entitled “Genealogy of the Turkish Sultans”; it is now kept at the Hungarian National Library.⁵² Petančić presented it to his ruler in 1502. In addition to the beautifully painted portraits of sultans, viziers and pashas, the work contains information on Bayezid’s family (his sons, daughters, and sons-in-law), as well as on the Sultan’s army and his revenue. These last are given separately for Rumelia and Anatolia: 1 500 000 and 2 000 000 ducats, respectively. The author also gives the number of households in the two parts of the Empire: for Rumelia, the numbers are 80 000 Christian and 50 000 Turkish households, and for Anatolia, a total of 1 600 000 Christian and Turkish. The Sultan’s treasury revenue is said to come from taxes; inheritance; taxation on large and small cattle; trade with salt, copper and other metals; taxation on agricultural produce; customs taxes, etc. The expenditures of the Empire are chiefly for payment of daily rations and money for the army, but the author does not indicate the sums. In fact, we are able to identify the direct source of the information concerning the revenue of the Ottoman Empire: a report, dating from 1496, by Alvise Sagondino, the Venetian envoy to the Sultan’s court, which is noted in Sanudo’s *Diaries*. Thus we see the direct connection between the information Venice had and the data provided by the Hungarian envoy Petančić. He himself was an outstanding polyglot and knew Turkish, among many other languages. Of course, part of his information was probably gathered by him personally during his mission to the Porte (1502). However, we know that before that, in 1501–1502, and again later, in 1504, he was in Venice and spent long periods of time there. It was there that he was given the information that directly led to the reports of the Venetian envoy Alvise Sagondino.

The close collaboration in the field of diplomacy and the exchange of information between Felix Petančić and the Venetians becomes obvious in the second manuscript, probably written by himself, which is preserved in the Library of the Correr Museum in Venice.⁵³ To my knowledge, it has never been published. The sign on the folder in which it is kept reads: *Commentariolum de Rebus Turcharum ad Wladislaum regem*. The title of the text itself is: *Felix Petantius Ragusinus ad Serenissimum Wladislaum Hungarie et Bohemie regem*. Apart from the name of the author on the first page, there is no signature or date at the end. I will only give the main rubrics of its contents: a brief history of the Turkish sultans; a description of Bayezid and his family (9 sons and where they rule, 8 daughters and their husbands); a separate paragraph entitled “*On the government of the empire*” where pashas, beylerbeys of Greece (Romania) and Anatolia, sanjakbeys and sees of the sanjaks, officials in the Sultan’s court, are enumerated in detail, as well as kinds of

52 Budapest, National Library, Cod. lat. 378, <<http://www.corvina.oszk.hu/corvinas-html/hub1codlat378.htm>>; Necipoglu (2000), 60; Rakova (2013).

53 Correr, Ms. Cicogna, 894. Description of the manuscript: ff. 1–7, 27 lines on folio, f. 7v – blank, text in Latin.

armies, the timarati, numbering 50 000, etc.; a separate paragraph “*Thimarci vel alterius dignitatis nomen et gradum*”; and a final one “*On the armada of the Turks*”, which enumerates the kinds of ships in the Sultan’s command, 400 in all, as well as his land armies. The fact that the manuscript, which was probably written in Venice, was kept there proves several things. First, it points to the collaboration between Hungary and Venice during the anti-Turkish campaign. Moreover, this text shows that in Venice, at the beginning of the 16th century, there were already very precise and detailed data on the structure and governance of the Turkish state. What he writes is a more detailed supplement to what was already contained in Sanudo, in the above-mentioned anonymous text of 1503.

I will not linger here in detail on the subsequent missions that Venice sent to the court of Selim or to his heir, Suleiman the Magnificent, at the start of his rule. All of them are described in the *Diaries* of Marino Sanudo, as well as in the collection of *relazioni* by Eugenio Alberi.⁵⁴ In 1533, Sanudo ceased writing his *Diaries*. In view of the lack of a similarly valuable compendium of transcripts of official documentation of the Venetian chancellery, we should turn to other sources in order to continue our study.

ALVISE GRITTI, IBRAHIM PASHA AND YONUS BEY – 1534.

Our attention will be focused on a Venetian mission dating from 30 years after Andrea Gritti’s yet still connected with him, who was by that time Doge of Venice, and with his son, Alvise Gritti (1480–1534). It is well known that during the period 1523–1538, Andrea was Doge of Venice, but his illegitimate son Alvise Gritti was still living prosperously in Constantinople. He and three of his brothers, Giorgio, Lorenzo and Gregorio, were born in the Ottoman capital. Alvise was highly educated, having studied at the University of Padua. He was an experienced and rich merchant in grain, gems and other valuable goods in Constantinople, where he lived in a luxurious palace surrounded by hundreds of slaves and servants. The young Gritti enjoyed the friendship both of the grand vizier and the sultan. He succeeded in reaching the highest levels of Turkish power when he was appointed governor of Hungary, but he died soon after in Transylvania, in 1534.⁵⁵

Here we should imagine several of the characters that dominated the political life of the Ottoman capital in the 1530s. Among the people close to Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, who was at the zenith of his power, having reached Vienna and plundered Buda in 1529, was the first vizier Ibrahim Pasha (1536), born in Parga

54 As for example Antonio Giustianian 1513 in Sanudo (1886), XVII: 537–39; Alberi III/3, 45–50.

55 DBI, <<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alvise-gritti>>; Papo (2004–2005); Papo-Nemeth (2001); Bertelè (1932); Finlay (2008).

(a former Venetian dominion), who was a close friend of Alvise Gritti.⁵⁶ Nearly as famous is Yunus Bey, a Christian born in Modon and a convert to Islam, who was a translator for the sultan but also for Alvise Gritti.⁵⁷

All the high-ranking persons listed here were connected with the mission that embarked from Venice in early 1534, passed through the Balkans from Dubrovnik to the Turkish capital, and came back by sea in June of that year. With this mission, aimed at preserving peace with Sultan Suleiman, Venice sought to justify its conduct in an unpleasant naval incident in which the captain of the Turkish fleet had perished. The mission was successful and the efforts made on the long winter voyage by sea and land proved worthwhile. It was headed by the ambassador Daniello Ludovisi, whose secretary was Benedetto Ramberti (1503–1547), a cousin of Ludovisi and, like the latter, a long-standing secretary of the Senate. Ludovisi was an experienced diplomat who had taken part in other missions to the Porte.

There is ample documentation of this mission, preserved in the Venetian archives and partially published in the 19th century. We have two *relazioni*: that by the envoy Ludovisi, long known and published in Alberi, and the text of Ramberti, who was secretary of the mission. It should be specified that Ramberti had no right to compose *relazione* (as was the case with Gian Giacomo Caroldo), and this is why the text he published five years after the voyage was anonymous.

In connection with the preparation of a Bulgarian translation of the documents of this mission – Daniello de Ludovisi’s official relation and Benedetto Ramberti’s “unofficial” one – some new facts and new documents were discovered and publicized, which shed light on the ties between the Doge and the Sultan.⁵⁸ In view of what Filippo de Vivo has recently written concerning how the *relazioni* should be read, we might proceed in several directions: first, considering how Ramberti’s text was created; second, how it was edited for printing; and third, how it was disseminated.

Unlike Ludovisi’s *relazione*, which was pronounced before the Collegio on June 3, 1534⁵⁹, several weeks after their return, but kept closed in the archives, Ramberti’s text was copied, printed and repeatedly reprinted and translated during the 16th century. It is important to point out here that Ludovisi’s *relazione* was not mentioned by Sanudo, since his *Diaries* end in 1533; but in the last volume, LVIII, the name of Daniello Ludovisi is mentioned four times, as a very active man who made speeches at the Collegio and presented his opinions on questions concerning

56 Turan (2009); Pedani (2014), 312–313.

57 Matuz (1975), 42 sq.; Pedani (1994), 27 sq.; Pedani (ed.) (1994) ad indicem; Krstić (2012), 132–134.

58 Here I present my part of this study in abridged form. Ракова-Данова (2016), 24–69.

59 Alberi, III/1, 3–32. See Ракова-Данова (2016), 201–223.

relations with the Porte.⁶⁰ The *relazione* was published by Alberi in a single copy, which, however, was kept in Florence, in the Magliabecchiana Library, and not in Venice; this indicates, once again, the great interest shown in this *relazione* even outside the authors' native land. This edition will remain outside our focus, as it contains the usual elements and all that can be said about it is that it creates the impression that the Ottoman fleet was weak, as Ludovisi told the Signoria, something that did not correspond to reality. In fact, his informers and Ramberti's were the same. Hence, we shall go on to the analysis of the "unachieved" *relazione* by Ramberti.

BENEDETTO RAMBERTI AND THE HISTORY OF HIS MANUSCRIPT

So far there are six known manuscripts of Benedetto Ramberti's work: two in the Library of the Correr Museum in Venice (N° 1 and N° 2) and single copies in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan (N° 3), the Library of the city of Pesaro (N° 4) and in the manuscript collection of the University Library in Syracuse, USA (N° 5, this manuscript is from the Leopold von Ranke collection and is a late, 17th-century copy), as well as a copy in the Vatican Library (N° 6).⁶¹

Regarding the time these copies were made, several assumptions may be made:

Manuscript N° 1⁶² is kept in a folder containing dozens of *relazioni* by ambassadors of the 16th century which was owned by Agostino Sagredo (1798–1871), an eminent Italian collector and man of letters. This suggests that it was thought to be a diplomatic *relazione* at the time; the sign on the folder cover is: *Viaggio et Riti del stato et Imperio del Signor Turcho* (Voyages and customs of the state and governance of the Sultan). It is written on paper in dark-brown ink, with 25 lines of text per page, and contains 38 numbered leaves. It has no title or division into parts. There are marginal notes that point out some more important passages, such as geographical designations, objects and names. These notes were made in red ink and only occur in part of the text (f. 16v–21v). There are lacunae in several places. The dating of the manuscript presents no special difficulty. In the text itself, there is the date March 29, 1534, when Ramberti visited the Sultan's arsenal (shipyard) in Constantinople. *Terminus ante quem* is the death of Alvise Gritti on September

60 Sanudo (1903) LVIII: 48, 215, 498, 559.

61 Cf. 4 manuscripts (one in each of the libraries: Milano, Pesaro, Venice and the Vatican in Rome) mentioned in Veneri (2010), 417.

62 Manuscript N° 1 from the collection of the Library of Correr Museum, sign. MS PDC 394/IIc, N° 14, with handwriting from the 16th century. I express my special gratitude to Dr. Marcella Ferraccioli, who discovered this manuscript and pointed it out to me, as well as to the director of the Correr Museum Library, Dr. Piero Lucchi.

29, 1534, and the death of the grand vizier Ibrahim on May 14, 1536, since these notable persons figure in the text as still living and in positions of honour in Constantinople. It remains a mystery to us why this was not mentioned in the printed edition of 1539.

The second manuscript, in the Correr Museum Library, has the signature MSC, LXXVII, 2625, and is a relatively precise copy of the autograph from the second half of the 16th century. This is also true for the manuscript kept in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan (signature MSC O. 69), which bears the title *Viaggio di Benedetto Ramberti veneto a Costantinopoli del 1533 con una minuta descrizione di quel paese, governo etc.* (Voyage of Benedetto Ramberti, Venetian, to Constantinople in 1533, with a detailed description of these lands, governance, etc.). The other manuscripts are not known to me, beyond the information I have about them from the library catalogues – importantly, they are all marked as “Relazione of Ramberti”.⁶³ The list of preserved transcripts could probably be continued some day with more copies that are yet unknown.

PRINTED EDITIONS

The first printed edition of Ramberti’s text, entitled *Libri tre delle cose de’ Turchi [Three Books on Turkish Matters]*, came out in Venice in 1539 from the printing house of Aldo Manuzio. The name of the author is not given. This is a small book of 40 pages, without a preface, and without the name of the publisher indicated.⁶⁴ After the title is placed the sign of the Aldo Manuzio publishers – an anchor with a small dolphin and the letters ALDVS. It was printed by a son of the eminent Venetian publisher, Paolo Manuzio (1512–1574), whose name occurs frequently among the correspondents and friends of Ramberti. The son inherited the publishing company in 1533 and undertook the publication, probably editing the text together with Ramberti himself.⁶⁵

The second edition is from 1541 and was produced by Bernardino Bindoni (Bernardin Milanese), another Venetian publisher, under the same title: *On Turkish Matters. Three Books...* (there follows the exact title of the first edition).⁶⁶ All we know about the publisher is that in the 1540s he was actively publishing books on Turkish themes. There followed another two editions in 1543 and 1545, published again by an heir of Aldo Manuzio (in these cases, it was Antonio Manuzio), in which Ramberti’s text was included among other voyages of famous Venetians;

63 See for instance Muir (1983), 221–222, № 344.

64 Ramberti (1539).

65 Lowry (1995), 39; Richardson (1994), 107–108.

66 Ramberti (1541). See also Данова (2010), 160–161.

again the name of the author is not given in the title.⁶⁷ Evidently, there was a great public interest in literature on “Turkish matters”. A little later, after the middle of the 16th century, another famous Venetian publisher, Francesco Sansovino (1521–1583), also included Ramberti’s *Libri tre* in his publications.⁶⁸

The basic reworking of the manuscript made in the printed editions was its division into three parts, “three books”. The first of these was on the trip to Constantinople, the second was a description of the Sultan’s court and army, and the third was devoted to the supreme Ottoman statesmen, the Sultan, Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Ramberti’s narrative begins with a description of the Venetian mission’s trip through Dubrovnik and the Balkans to Constantinople. In the printed editions the description of the Turkish capital is divided into two books: Book One contains the narrative about Pera, taken to be a separate city, and Book Two begins with a description of Constantinople, its landmarks and the Sultan’s palace in the city. From here begins a considerable part devoted to the structure of the Ottoman state. Venetians had a great advantage over other foreigners in the Ottoman capital. They had access to Alvise Gratti, who was an influential person close to the grand vizier Ibrahim and to Sultan Suleiman himself, and who spoke Turkish and was well informed about the details of Ottoman government.

Now we may turn to a comparison between Ramberti’s manuscript and its printed edition. There are few additions made, but they are perceptibly different from the preceding parts, and it is evident how the editor aimed at making the text more comprehensible and interesting, as well as at abridging certain concrete data, obviously in consideration of censorship requirements. The first addition is related to the service of the foot couriers (the express messengers), who were 30–40 in number and who “already as children had their spleen removed”. The second addition is about the position of the dragoman and his salary (according to Ramberti, 500 ducats per year) and is not to be found in Ramberti’s manuscript.

The following element in Book Two, very telling as regards the editing and publishing, is the description of the arsenal. The manuscript gives a description of Ramberti’s visit to the Sultan’s shipyard, a visit that is precisely dated: “When I entered here, the day was 29 March 1534, there was nothing but 30 ships (maoni)...”

67 Ramberti (1543). The same title figures in the edition of 1545, where Ramberti’s text is on pages 109–143. Данова (2010), 160–167.

68 See for instance: Sansovino (1567).

etc. This information was understandably omitted in the printed publication. Also omitted is the mention of the Venetian working for the sultan, Messer Gianfranco Giustinian, from whom Ramberti was informed about the sultan's plans for naval war.⁶⁹ In the printed edition these data are substituted by a general phrase about the Turks' lack of skill in shipbuilding and, accordingly, the superiority of the Venetian galleys. This claim was not true, for only three years later (in 1537) the Turks would defeat Venice in a sea battle. Logically, at this point there is mention of the position of the Turkish "admiral", the "beylerbey of the sea", which at that time was held by the famous corsair Haireidin Bey Barbarossa.

There follows a list of the provinces and their governors. It begins with the European territories and follows with Asia Minor. The beylerbeys of Greece are listed, along with six beylerbeys in Asia and one in Egypt; after that are noted the residences of the sanjakbeys. In this listing of sanjaks and of the number of timariots, I find particularly valuable the given numbers of villages and cities: for Europe 68 000 and for Asia Minor 72 000, Turkish and Christian together. It is important that Ramberti's information about the administrative districts (sanjaks) in Asia Minor was valued and used subsequently for the making of detailed maps. An example is the map by Giacomo Gastaldi, dating from 1564.⁷⁰ Book Two concludes with general calculations of the annual revenues of the sultan, by items. Here, Ramberti calculates the revenue from the head tax of the non-Muslims, the kharaj, as well as other taxes in ducats (taxes on livestock, 800 000; on mines, 600 000; revenues from salt mines, from inheritances, from donations and head tax, etc.) – in all, 1,5 million ducats. In the printed editions, there is an addition indicating that the total revenue is 15 million ducats, "five million of which are for the treasury and the rest, for the army". Such information supplied by Venetian envoys and residents can be found, as we saw, in earlier Venetian documents as well. Even the first *relazioni* note the sultan's revenues from taxes and duties by provinces: Egypt, Asia Minor and Rumelia. The voyagers immediately preceding Ludovisi's mission (and Ramberti's), Tomaso Contarini (1522) and particularly Tomaso Mocenigo (1530), also give detailed data about the kinds and number of foot soldier armies, the number of timariots, the residences of the sanjakbeys, etc.⁷¹ Hence, Ramberti continues the tradition of presenting information about the sultan's revenue.

Returning to the title page of *Libri tre delle cose de' Turchi*, in the Book Three we should expect that the "way of governance of the state" of the Turks would be presented. Instead, we find in this part several pages on the customs and mores of the Turks as well as portrait descriptions of Sultan Suleiman and Alvise Gritti; only afterwards is there a description of the military organization of the Lord (i.e., the sultan). As might be expected, in the beginning of this last part there is also an editor's/author's introduction. Here, Ramberti himself probably presented his own

69 For more on this adventurer, see Cozzi (1994), 11.

70 Brentjes (2013), 138–139, where a comparative table of the designations of sanjaks in Ramberti, Gastaldi and Ludovisi is given.

71 Pedani-Fabris (ed.) (1996), respectively 5–32, 35–39, 43–45.

“philosophical” reflections on the whims of fortune that elevate certain nations to the height of empire and crush others. His rhetorical style and language is far more lofty than everyday speech. He gives his thoughts about the grandeur of the Ottoman Empire, the turnabouts of fate (Fortuna’s wheel), and the rise and fall of states. This introduction was the product of Ramberti’s Renaissance culture and is related to similar observations, by other authors, on power and the state. Without being connected with his celebrated contemporary Machiavelli, and without being acquainted with *The Prince*, Ramberti expresses similar views on theoretical questions about the state. We should realize that when the publication was probably being planned, yet another war between Venice and the Turks was going on, which ended with the battle of Pesara in 1537. For the time being, there was no sign that the wheel of Fortuna would stop spinning to the advantage of the Turks. In this added new introductory excursus, the author demonstrates interest in the mores and customs of the Turks. We must again admit, regrettably, that Ramberti drew abundant information from his predecessors. He literally followed the description of everyday life and prayer practices of the Turks as these were presented by the Venetian diplomat Pietro Zen in his *relazione* of 1524.⁷²

The characteristic features of Turks that are stressed in the text are superstition and belief in rumours; love for luxury, shiny objects and vivid colours; love for horses, money and slaves. Their prestige and wealth is measured by the number of slaves they own. This “ethnographic” portion of the text includes a description of the mores of Turks, their religion and way of life – their eating and drinking habits, their recreations. This was evidently of interest to the reader in that time.

A major section in the this part is the verbal portrait of Sultan Suleiman. We find this kind of portrait in other *relazioni* given by Venetian envoys, as we showed with examples from the time of Bayezid. Moreover, we know that Sultan Suleiman was an object of special attention on the part of Venetians, who even painted several portraits of him.⁷³ In this case, the verbal portrait was obviously made from Ramberti’s personal observation. We should admit that it is very detailed and made with exceptional literary skill. Here is his description: “And here is what the bodily build of Suleiman is and his mental qualities, insofar as I was able to see the former and to hear and learn about the latter from the evidence of many people. He is unusually tall, slim, with fine and delicate bones, with an ashen complexion of the face, swarthy and as if smoked. He has no hair, like all Turks, in order to wear turbans on their heads. He has a broad forehead, not very prominent. He has large black eyes and when he moves them he seems rather merciful than cruel. He has an aquiline nose, rather large compared with the other proportions of his face. He does not shave his beard, but it is cut short with scissors and those parts we call mustaches seem long and red in colour. His neck is long and very thin, and the other parts of

72 Fulin (1881), 120.

73 There is a known portrait of Sultan Suleiman by a master from Titian’s workshop; and there are also engravings by Venetian masters. See Necipoglu (2000).

his body are disproportionately long, badly tailored and sewn together.” Regarding the “mental qualities of the sultan”, Ramberti mentions first and foremost his melancholy and deep piety, but also points out other qualities inherent to a good ruler: mercy, humaneness, modesty and restraint, erudition, as well as some bad aspects – sloth, sluggishness and lack of desire for military activities.

In the next lines, we witness what is perhaps the greatest editorial intervention in the whole text of the printed edition. This is a passage of the manuscript text that was probably written on the spot in Constantinople and was later replaced by a shorter text in the printed edition. The passage relates almost word for word a conversation between Ramberti and “a Turk who has lived for a long time among Christians and who speaks Italian well”. I will take the liberty of surmising who this informer might have been who was so well acquainted with the highest ranking persons in the Ottoman state: I believe it was very probably Yunus Bey.

Ramberti has taken the liberty of sharing in his manuscript his conversation with this Turk, in which the great anxiety in the Ottoman world regarding the excessive power of the grand vizier Ibrahim and his influence over Suleiman becomes perceptible, as well as the rumours and intrigues that are rife in Constantinople. Here we are told the story of how Ibrahim reached the height of power. This part of the manuscript is replaced in the printed version by a much more moderate and sympathetic portrait of Suleiman, in which the editor (Ramberti or Paolo Manuzio?) has even taken the liberty of emphasizing that the Sultan himself valued much more highly not the Turkish histories of his own and his predecessors’ military conquests, but other (meaning the Italian) histories of war and peace, which he personally owned and which were jealously kept by his secretaries. The printed edition concludes emotionally with praise for the long duration of the rule of the Ottoman dynasty and some general inferences about the management of the state.

In Book Three, we see how very closely the narrative comes to the contents of the diplomatic *relazioni*. Ramberti explicitly mentions: “I wanted to understand the genuine causes of these matters”. This indicates with what strong attention, motivation and conviction of the need for his investigations he acted in all directions – talking to various people, crossing the capital city far and wide. Here there are also some general reflections on the way of governance of nations subjected by the Sultan.

Missing in the printed edition is one sentence in the manuscript saying that the subjected population could have followed its aristocrats and risen in rebellion, which is why these people were moved away by the sultan. It is mentioned that there are many taxes, which are oppressive for the subjects. There is also an analysis of the fighting capacity of the army; the author examines the land armies and the measures taken by the Turks to hold the janissaries in subjection, as well as the measures taken towards the Christians in the army. A critical note, which can be found in Daniello Ludovisi as well, refers to the lack of battle formation among the Turkish armies. Ramberti discovers one other shortcoming that he emphasizes

with satisfaction: the lack of a sufficient number of foot soldiers for moving the artillery, which is why the Turks were not able to capture “even a moderately fortified city”. Here are placed some observations and reflections by Ramberti regarding the janissary corps, which at that time had been reduced from 12 000 to 8 000 people. After the shipyard has been described (in Book Two), there follows the description of the fleet, this time in connection with the Sultan’s different kinds of armed forces. Here again, as in Ludovisi’s report, the ability of the Ottomans to build a fleet are underestimated. We should recall that Ludovisi himself explicitly stresses the great assistance he received from Ramberti in the preparation of the report.

This part of the text was certainly written (at least in the form of preliminary notes) in Constantinople, because the person mentioned as holding the position of kapudan pasha is Hairedin Bey Barbarossa, who was raised to that position while the mission was in Constantinople. Hairedin Bey was the latest favourite of Suleiman; but unlike the Sultan, he was not so close to the Venetians, and was even hated by them. He was a personal enemy of Alvise Gritti in the last two years of Gritti’s life. We recall that at the time of the Ludovisi-Ramberti mission, he was at the summit of his glory, and Ramberti’s only option was to join in the praise and submissively flattering descriptions of those who had seen him. At that time, the diplomat of long standing, vice-bailo Pietro Zen, was no longer in Constantinople, but the bailo and other officials in the ambassador’s residence were able to tell about current life and important events connected with the rise of the sultan’s highest ranking official. Moreover, as Ludovisi recounts in his *relazione*, and as Ramberti also notes, they both had a personal meeting with him. Indeed, the fate of the Doge’s illegitimate son excited not only the Venetians but, one might say, all the inhabitants of the Ottoman capital. Alvise Gritti was a wealthy and famous man who evidently commanded respect. Ramberti joins those authors (Gritti’s secretary Francesco della Vale, Paolo Giovio, etc.) who have left us descriptions of the rise and fall of Alvise Gritti. He describes with great sympathy his physical portrait and mental qualities, leaving his whole work without any concluding words and even refraining from supplementing or changing anything after the death of the Doge’s son. The open question remains: why were these passages left as they were, given that great editorial changes had been made in the text? It may be assumed that Ramberti himself did not wish to make changes in this part of his text.

YUNUS BEY AND HIS WORKS

About a century ago, the English Ottoman scholar A. Lybyer discovered that the source of Ramberti’s information on the services at the Sultan’s court and the administration of the Ottoman Empire was a small treatise probably composed with

the participation of Alvise Gritti and published in Italian in 1537.⁷⁴ This edition, which cannot be found today, was reprinted in Lybyer; that is why it is worth recalling the latter's reasoning on the appearance of this text. According to Lybyer, the small brochure has 22 pages and two types of print, different in the size of the letters. On the title page is marked "reprinted in 1537." This suggests that an earlier edition must have existed, probably dating from 1533 and published in Venice. In more recent times, other historians have likewise supported this opinion.⁷⁵

There are sufficient data on this Turkish diplomat. Yunus Bey was not a common person – he had visited Venice as an envoy of the sultan at least five times, in 1519, 1522, 1529–1530, 1532–1533, 1537.⁷⁶ We know he was well known both in Constantinople and to authorities in Venice, ranging from the Doge, to the senators and aristocrats, and all the way to the common people and citizens of the Republic, who remembered him as rather pretentious and vainglorious.

In Sanudo, we find a description dated as early as December 10, 1518, which vividly presents the arrival of Yunus Bey, spahi and slave of the Sultan, as the latter's envoy. In October 1518 the bailo Lunardo Bembo wrote from Adrianople to the Signoria that the sultan was sending a slave of his, called Yunus Agla, spahi (native of) Modon, who knows Latin, son of (the deceased) Zorzi Taroniti, with a retinue of 4 people.⁷⁷

Yunus Bey was an exceptional case: we may number him among the most famous Turkish "friends" of Venice, as he had travelled so often between the Porte and Venice that it is hard to establish the exact number of his missions. According to the series of Turkish documents in the Venetian archive,⁷⁸ we find him on a mission from the sultan to the doge at the end of 1529, in connection with the Turkish campaigns in Hungary. He was sent from Belgrade with a letter from the sultan to the Doge (N° 250). This happened again in October, 1532 (N° 289), in connection with the next campaign. His next missions are interesting, as we find they involved financial operations: again with a letter from Suleiman to the Doge (N° 361), he was sent on a mission to collect the sum for a credit of nearly 190 000 aspri, taken by a grain merchant, Pietro Valareso, from Kasim Pasha; we learn that the merchant in question had also borrowed from Ajas Pasha an even greater sum, nearly 500 000 aspras. A third vizier – Mustafa Pasha – had given goods to the same merchant, who had restored the sum. We see that three of Suleiman's viziers had given money to Valareso and the sultan intervened on their behalf before the doge; the sums were to be collected by Yunus Bey.

We may suspect there was a single person holding the monopoly on trade

74 Lybyer (1913). Yunus Bey's treatise is on pages 262–275.

75 Lybyer (1913), 315. Pedani (1994), 148, n. 112. On the other hand Lybyer (1913), 112, n. 29.

76 Pedani (1994), 144–153 et *ad Indicem*; Krstić (2012), 132–134.

77 Sanudo (1889), XXVI: on the arrival and the apparel of Yonus 10 December 1518, 249; letter of the bailo: 264–65.

78 Pedani (ed.), 1994.

operations here. A Venetian merchant Valareso had taken control over the trade in grain; moreover, the Sultan himself and the Doge of Venice (through two of his illegitimate sons, Alvise and Giorgio, who lived in Constantinople) intervened in the trade. Yunus Bey and Giorgio were sent to demand the sum for the grain that the Turks had supplied to Venice in 1536. The receipt, on the account of Pietro Valareso, for 2000 ducats has been preserved; it dates from the beginning of 1537, when Yunus Bey was again in Venice (№ 399).

Especially interesting is the intervention of Yunus Bey in the peace negotiations at the end of 1539, in the course of the preparation of the content of the peace treaty and of the capitulation issued by Suleiman for the trade privileges of the Republic. We find a preserved letter from Yunus Bey himself to Doge Pietro Lando from December 4, 1539, regarding his participation in the conclusion of peace (№ 423). This is an exceptionally important document. We learn that Yunus Bey himself gave 21 000 ducats of his own money so that peace might be concluded, as Sultan Suleiman demanded 30 000, while Venice evidently found it difficult at the moment to pay the sum. Moreover, Yunus Bey wanted to be paid back only 20 000 within a term of 3 months. Thus, the chief dragoman of the Porte was funding the peace process. This declaration dates from May 30, 1540, and was given in the presence of the bailo Giacomo da Canal and the previous bailo Nicolo Giustiniani and 8 more witnesses. From another Turkish document, we learn that Hairedin Barbarossa had also lent 5 000 ducats. (№ 424).

The correspondence regarding the peace process ends with a personal letter by Yunus Bey dating from November 1540, in which he recommends sending a new bailo and giving expensive clothes as gifts to the viziers (№ 433). The lent money was repaid within the deadline, in February 1541, when Yunus Bey again signed a declaration that he had received 20 000 ducats (№ 448). In fact, this document is signed and stamped with his personal seal. This is the last document in the archives related to the Turkish translator. Going back to the 1530s, we see Yunus Bey was serving as chief dragoman at the Porte, and also working for Alvise Gritti, son of the Doge of Venice. Probably in his own residential palace, Gritti kept a manuscript similar to the one Yunus Bey printed in 1533, when he visited Venice with a diplomatic mission. The concluding phrase of the treatise supports such an assumption: "This book is drawn [meaning "copied, translated"] by Yunus Bey, who was a Greek and is now a Turk and great translator of the Sultan and of Signor Alvise Gritti, son of the doge of Venice, and it is all true".⁷⁹ Hence, two surmises are possible regarding the way in which the information reached Ramberti. We know that the mission in question had several meetings with Alvise Gritti in the Turkish capital; consequently, people taking part in the mission may have had the opportunity of seeing this manuscript. The other possibility is that Ramberti was familiar with the text from the printed edition that had appeared shortly before he set out for Constantinople. After Gritti's death, this same manuscript (or a copy of it) was re-

79 Lybyer (1913), 262.

printed in Venice (1537). Interestingly, another edition dating from the same year can be found, produced in Milan. It figures in the Catalogue of early printed Italian editions under the following title: *Questo sie vno Libro che fu trovato dapoi la morte dil signore Aluixe Gritti fiol del principe di Venetia el qual degiara tutto il governo dil Gran Turcho ... Impresso in Milano: per Francesco Cantalouo & Nocento Cigognera compagno, 1537 adi VIII del mese de zugno, 1537, 12 p.*⁸⁰ (This is a book that was found after the death of Signor Alvise Gritti, son of the doge of Venice, which describes the whole governance of the Great Turk).

Moreover, Yunus Bey in turn published, but under his own name, and in Venice at that, this same text quite a while after the death of the chief characters – the vizier Ibrahim, Alvise Gritti, and his father, the Doge of Venice, Andrea Gritti (1538). I found proof of this in the library of the Querini Stampalia Foundation in Venice, in whose catalogue is an early printed book with the following title: *Opera nova composta per Jonusbei bassa in lingua greca e tradotta in italiana la quale dichiara tutto il governo del gran Turcho e tutta la spesa che il gran Turcho ha sotto di lui cosi in pace come in guerra. Venezia, 1544 (sign. I.G. 2294)* (A new work, composed by Yunus Bey Pasha in the Greek language and translated into Italian, which clarifies the whole governance of the Great Turk and the expenditure that the Great Turk has both in peace and in war). Evidently, the brochure authored by Yunus Bey enjoyed great interest on the part of readers and was republished several times during Ramberti's lifetime. Thus we find that all the information he gave, surprising in its precision and details, was literally copied from the manuscript owned by Alvise Gritti and/or Yunus Bey, or taken from the printed edition of 1533.

As Lybyer showed, nearly the whole of Book Two of *Libri tre delle cose de' Turchi* by Benedetto Ramberti was borrowed from Yunus Bey's treatise. Indeed, no great differences may be observed, apart from changes in the order of services and some small additions, as well as some difference in the numbers of officials and their salaries; essentially, the information is the same. What Ramberti considered unnecessary and omitted was the concluding part of Yunus Bey's treatise, in which he describes the order of the army when the sultan embarks on a campaign. I will adduce some observations regarding a comparison of the two texts, that of Ramberti and that of the Turkish dragoman. They are very close, in places literally identical, the only difference being in the placement of certain passages. The dissimilarity is that Yunus Bey, when he printed his text in 1537, wrote that the grand vizier Ibrahim was already dead. This means that the Turkish dragoman wrote (or edited) his text in 1537, while Ramberti left his own text unchanged.

80 See <http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web_iccu/imain.htm>: Gritti Alvise

CONCLUSION

Let us return to the preliminary thesis concerning the close ties between Venice and the Ottoman elite in the time from Bayezid to Suleiman. Dozens of missions traveled between the doge and the sultan, and dozens of bailos resided in the Ottoman capital. We see the model of the friendly circle of Andrea Gritti, Ahmed Pasha and the translator Ali Bey in the early 16th century repeated by Gritti's son Alvise Gritti, Ibrahim Pasha and the translator Yunus Bey in 1534, with continuations until 1544 through the activity of the same Yunus Bey. This model would not be reproduced anymore. One reason for this was that the Gritti family came to an end: the father doge died in 1538, and the son in 1534. The death of the vizier Ibrahim came about in 1536. With that, the Venetian dominance in Istanbul seems to have come to an end. With the change of international policy taking place by the rapprochement between France and Suleiman, we see the entry of other foreigners as well.⁸¹ But until then, the diplomats of the Serenissima had had no rivals.

As mediators in transmitting information about the sultan (his family, his riches), the Venetian diplomats were rivaled by the Ottoman translators. The role of Yunus Bey was remarkable: he not only took part in writing the texts that present the governance, administration and revenue of the sultan, but was the author of a work written by him, or jointly with Alvise Gritti, which underwent several editions. This work, in turn, underwent several further editions when it was included by Ramberti in the *Libri tre*. Apart from that, there is a rare and valuable early printed edition of the work, translated into German.⁸² This shows that not only in Venice but also in the West in general, information on the Turks met with great interest. Which explains the dozens of printed editions of Ramberti's *Libri tre delle cose de' Turchi*.

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81 Garnier (2008).

82 [Ramberti, Benedetto], Beschreibung der Kaiserlichen Statt Constantinopel derselben gegendt, gelegenheit, Erbauung und bewonung: der gleichen der Türcken ursprung, anfang jr Regierung bis auf den yetzt regierenden Solyman, [s.l.] 1543.

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