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OTTOMAN MERCHANTS IN THE ADRIATIC. TRADE AND SMUGGLING

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ABSTRACT

In the 15th century sultans discovered the economic importance of the Adriatic. They accepted doges' rule on this sea but, at the end of the 16th century, the presence of Christian and Muslim pirates marred the relations between the two states. Ottoman merchants used to cross the Adriatic to reach the markets of Venice and Ancona. Besides regular trade there was also smuggling: above all arms were exported to the Empire while wheat went westwards. Several links united the two commercial communities: for instance, subjects of the Republic embarked sometimes on Ottoman ships; in the ports of the Serenissima the sultan's merchants used to pay the same customs as Venetians and, sometimes, they also insured themselves with Venetian companies. The wars of the end of the 17th century put a momentary stop to Muslim commercial activities in Venice and in the Adriatic. However, at the beginning of the following century, Albanian vessels charged with Ottoman goods appeared again at St. Mark's docks, even if soon after, in the 1720s', short-sighted Venetian protectionist politics pushed them to prefer the port of Trieste.

Key words: Ottoman Empire, Venice, Adriatic Sea, trade, smuggling

I MERCANTI OTTOMANI NELL'ADRIATICO. COMMERCIO E CONTRABBANDO

SINTESI

Nel Quattrocento i sultani si accorsero dell'importanza economica del Mare Adriatico. Per un lungo periodo accettarono senza problemi il dominio che i dogi vi imposero, ma verso la fine del Cinquecento la presenza di pirati cristiani e musulmani disturbò i rapporti tra i due stati. I mercanti ottomani erano soliti attraversare l'Adriatico, per raggiungere gli empori di Venezia ed Ancona. Accanto al commercio regolare esistette anche una fiorente attività di contrabbando: da Venezia verso la

Porta si esportavano in particolare armi, dall'impero ottomano giungeva nella Serenissima invece soprattutto grano. Tra le due comunità commerciali esistevano diversi legami: per esempio, i veneziani si imbarcavano a volte su navi ottomane, mentre i mercanti del sultano pagavano nei porti veneti le stesse tasse dei sudditi di San Marco e, a volte, si assicuravano presso compagnie veneziane. Le guerre di fine Seicento fermarono momentaneamente le attività commerciali degli ottomani a Venezia e nell'Adriatico. Il commercio riprese all'inizio del secolo seguente, quando le navi albanesi ricominciarono a giungere al porto di San Marco cariche di mercanzia ottomana ma non molto tempo dopo, negli anni venti del Settecento, una miope politica protezionistica le spinse ad abbandonare lo scalo veneziano per dirigersi verso quello di Trieste.

Parole chiave: impero ottomano, Venezia, Mare Adriatico, commercio, contrabbando

THE ADRIATIC FROM AN OTTOMAN PERSPECTIVE

"In the year 931 of the Holy Prophet (i.e. 1524/1525 AD) this island (i.e. Corfu) has already been ruled by *Venedik* for a hundred and twenty nine years. [...] Concerning this island, the late Kemal *reis* always used to say that *Venedik* had two eyes: the left being the castle of Modon and the right being the island of *Korfuz*" (Pîrî Reis, 1988, 709).

In this way the great Ottoman geographer Piri *reis* describes the Venetian island which mounted guard at the entrance of the Adriatic Sea. In that period Venetians asserted their sovereignty on the whole water plain which spread from the city of the Lagoon as far as an imaginary line which united Santa Maria di Leuca in Apulia with the island of Kerkira (Corfu). Everyone who crossed it had to obey their laws: no foreign armed ship could sail that sea, while merchant-ships had to have a passport, to follow the established course from and to their home port, to call at Venice and to pay customs there. Venetians called the Adriatic their Gulf (*Golfo di Venezia*). In the course of centuries this name was used to indicate different areas: in the most ancient times it was a zone of influence between Aquileia in the North and the Po river in the South, but then it soon spread southwards as far as Pola and Ancona, later Otranto and Vlöre (Valona, Avlonya) and, at last, in the 15th century, Santa Maria di Leuca and Corfu.

Ottomans too called this zone of influence the 'Gulf of Venice', but from their point of view it was smaller. In the 16th century, Piri *reis* begins to speak of a *Venedik Körfezi* only when he describes the island of Korčula (Curzola) and ends with the duchy of Ferrara, on the Italian side. It was probably the presence of the independent city of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), on the Dalmatian coast, which caused this different perception. Venice achieved the conquest of almost all Dalmatia in 1420, but for this small enclave

which it had conquered in 1204 and already lost in 1358. At the beginning of the 15th century Dubrovnik was an independent republic under Hungarian supervision and the most important port of the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea (Krekić, 1990, 131–151). It remained officially under Hungary till the battle of Mohács in 1526, but from 1442 it began to pay a tribute to the sultan, in exchange for a peace agreement. In this way it began to gravitate towards the Ottoman Empire and, little by little, it became an autonomous country under Ottoman supervision. It was almost (*mesâbesinde*) part of the Empire, as documents say, while its neighbouring territories were directly incorporated into it (Biegman, 1967, 24–28; İnalçik, 1994, 256–270).

Ottomans began to sail the Adriatic in the 15th century when they conquered lands in Albania (Arnavutluk), Serbia, Bosnia (Bosna) and Herzegovina (Hersek). In 1403, Süleyman *çelebi* came to an understanding with Venice and the Ottoman navy was quoted for the first time in a peace agreement (Thomas, Predelli, 1880–1899, 290–293). In that difficult moment the prince agreed to keep his ships within the Straits. Some years later there was a war and, in 1416, the sultan's fleet was destroyed by the Venetian one at Gelibolu (Gallipoli). In 1419 Mehmed I signed a new peace agreement (Thomas, Predelli, 1880–1899, 318–319): then, he obtained that his own merchants could enjoy the same rights of Venetian subjects in the zones ruled by the doge. Thus, reciprocity was stressed as regards ships and merchants and it was maintained also in the following centuries (Kafadar, 1986, 192). It seems that the sultan wanted to exert the same control the Venetians had over their Gulf on the waters of the Marmara Sea. This fact became clearer after the conquest of Istanbul: in the Ottoman-Venetian agreement of 1454 (Predelli, 1901, 91–92) Venetian ships were obliged to land only at that port, once they had entered the Marmara Sea.

In 1479, at the end of a long war, Venetians were obliged to leave Vlöre to the sultan and to recognize his supremacy on the Egean Sea, even if the possession of the *Golfo* was not debated. Then, Mehmed II gave the revenues of his new province (*sancak*) to his admiral Gedik Ahmed *paşa*, instead of the usual ones of Gelibolu (Uzunçarşılı, 1988, 420–422; Imber, 1980, 248). Vlöre is opposite Otranto, on the other shore of the sea, where the Adriatic begins, and in that period the Conqueror was more interested in invading the South of Italy than ruling that sea and fighting again against Venice. To show his good will towards Venetians, he ordered Gedik Ahmed *paşa* to refund the damages made to them by the ships of Vlöre; Ottoman privateers had to stay far from the Adriatic and if they entered it they were to be captured and immediately punished. In return, Venetians had to give free access to all the Ottoman ships which caused no harm (Miklosich, Müller, 1865, 295–298; Bombaci, 1954, 298–319). In 1488 the following sultan, Bayezid II, promised the same to the doge, but Ottoman pirates went on raiding the Italian coast, not belonging to Venice. They reached Grottamare (1479), Montemarciano, Marzocca, Mondolfo (1485) and Sinigallia (1488) (Pedani, 1994b, 14; Nardelli, 1998, 41–54).

After a new war, the peace agreement discussed in December 1502 (Miklosich, Müller, 1865, 344–250; Theunissen, 1998, 365–379) inserted a new clause, which remained valid until 1699: in the Gulf, between Corfu and Venice, nobody could harm merchant ships in general and Venetian ships in particular. This rule was considered valid for a long period. For instance, in May 1614 (middle of *rebiyülevvel* 1023), the sultan invited his *kapudanpaşa* to protect any Venetian ship he encountered at sea and to avoid entering places subject to Venice, according to the ancient use (ASV, 19). In the Karlowitz treaty (Pedani, 1994b, 433) freedom of navigation beyond the strait of the Adriatic was granted to every merchant ship, but the island of Corfu was no longer quoted either in this or in the following Ottoman Venetian *ahidnames* (Pedani, 2004, 585–589).

Reading peace agreements, one discovers that Ottomans considered the Adriatic an inner sea, such as the Aegean or the Syrian. For them the Mediterranean was formed by different regions. The same name *Ak Deniz* (White Sea) was firstly used only for the Sea of Marmara, then for the Aegean, and only at last for the whole Mediterranean. Muslim jurists thought the sea was *fay'*, that is to say something which a state could acquire in a pacific way and they considered inland and coastal waters as different from the high sea: a sovereign could exert his rule on the waves in different ways (Santillana, 1926, 318–319; Khalilieh, 1998, 133–148). Molla Hüsrev, the great *müfti* of Mehmed II, thought that the salted sea was neither *dâr al-harb* nor *dâr al-Islâm* since it was impossible to create real borders on the waves (Melis, 2002, 161), but by the end of the 15th century the Conqueror's son, Bayezid II, agreed on sea limits with the knights of Rhodes (Rodi, Rodos). On the contrary, in Europe, most jurists (but not Venetian ones) accepted the ancient Roman law which established that no state could dominate sea waters. From this point of view the claim to call the Adriatic Sea 'the Gulf of Venice' was objectionable. On the contrary, from an Islamic perspective one could discuss about the range of Venetian jurisdiction but not about the existence of the jurisdiction itself (Pedani, 2001, 221–239; Pedani, 2002, 73–88).

MERCHANTS AND PIRATES

Since the very beginning of its history Venice had contacts with Islamic countries, but documents about the presence of Muslims in the city are few. This fact was due to the lack of sources as well as to the small number of free Muslims who used to travel in Christian countries in those times. Slaves, both male and female, were much more, but they are seldom quoted in the sources: there are buying and selling contracts where only names and ages are referred to, trials where the convicts were Muslims or even wills where slave maidens or servants were released. Within this plain juridical and economical background few documents make us understand unspoken feelings or unexpressed pains. For instance, on 5 March 1411, the Venetian Senate consented to the

request of a poor father who had come from Alexandria of Egypt to free his two daughters, slaves of a Venetian nobleman in Padua. He sat for so many days at the door of the *Collegio* council hall in the Ducal Palace that, at last, the Senators, tired of him, decided to give him what he desired and sent him to Padua to take the girls and return home (ASV, 47; ASV, 48).

Ottoman ambassadors reached Venice for the first time in 1384, and other missions were sent in the following period (Fabris, 1992, 199; Pedani, 1994a, 203). However, the first documentary evidence of an Ottoman unofficial presence in the city dates back to the second half of the 15th century. In 1483 Yusuf *reis* was condemned to death for having raped a boy in the inn *Al Cappello nero* near St. Mark's square, but the sultan wrote a letter to the doge asking for his freedom and Venetians released the prisoner (ASV, 42). The fact that a captain (*reis*) was in Venice means that Ottoman ships already used to reach the city. The references which can be found in Piri *reis* work hint to the same and it is probable that this geographer too had been in Venice during his youth, when he sailed the Mediterranean with his uncle, the famous pirate and (then) admiral Kemal *reis*.

At the end of the 15th century, when the Ottoman army advanced in the Balkans, sultans discovered the economical importance of the Adriatic. However, it was in the following century that a greater number of merchants began to cross this sea to reach the markets of Ancona and Venice. They came not only from Bosnia and Albania, but also from Istanbul and inner Anatolia, that is to say from the zone of Ankara and Beypazarı, where mostly camlets and mohair cloths were produced. The Adriatic Sea, patrolled by the Venetian fleet, was usually crossed by merchant ships which sailed from Zakynthos (Zante, Zaklise), Dubrovnik, Split (Spalato) or Zadar (Zara). At the same time Ottomans made themselves lords of the Mediterranean. Between the battle of Prevesa in 1538, won by the *kapudan-ı derya* Hayreddin *paşa*, and that of Lepanto (İnebahtı, Naupactus) in 1571, when the Christian fleet destroyed the sultan's navy, their Empire was the greatest single naval power in this inner sea (Imber, 1980, 225). In that period Maghreb and Aegean privateers began to raid the waves. These *levends* were officially under the sultan's protection, but they often acted as mere pirates on attacking ships of whichever nation.

The presence of pirates made sea voyages more dangerous than before and, for this reason, even Anatolian merchants preferred to cross the Balkans in order to reach an Adriatic port and then to sail to Venice. The ships were above all Venetian or Ragusean but there were also Ottoman ones, belonging to Greek or Albanian subjects of the sultan. The Republic obviously sustained its own merchant navy but we know that there were also several Muslim captains and sailors who knew this sea. In the *Kitab-ı bahriyye*, Piri *reis* informs his Ottoman readers that a ship which wanted to enter the Venetian lagoon had to take onboard a pilot from Poreč (Parenzo), since they alone knew its dangers and were entitled to pilot there (Piri Reis, 1988, 855).

Ottoman ships and sailors are sometimes quoted in documents. For instance, in 1546 İbrahim *reis* arrived in the Lagoon with his ship and asked the Venetian authorities to keep the three prisoners he had onboard, Kaya, Hamza e Süleyman, in their prisons until the moment of his departure (Gökbilgin, 1964, 172–173; Pedani, 1994b, 155–156). In May-June 1615 (beginning of *cemaziyülevvel* 1024) the sultan ordered that ships coming from Crete, Naxos (Nasso) and Mélos (Milo) which left Istanbul for Venice had to pay the established duties to the Venetian consul of Gelibolu (ASV, 4).

Documentary evidence becomes even greater when raids of pirates and privateers are involved. In the second half of the 16th century Uskoks whose stronghold was Senj (Segna) on the Hapsburg coast began to raid the Adriatic (Longworth, 1979, 348–368). They began to mar Ottoman Venetian relations on showing that Venice was no longer able to patrol its Gulf. In the Ottoman Empire there was also the widespread belief that these pirates were in reality Venetian subjects, or at least had come to terms with the Republic. This mistaken idea is repeated so many times in documents and chronicles, that it can still be found in some book of Ottoman history.

In the period of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566) sources confirm that Venetian jurisdiction on the Adriatic was not officially questioned. For instance, in May 1531 (end of *ramazan* 937), this sultan asked the doge to send his ships to guard his workmen who were building the castle of Salona (*Sôlnî*) on the Adriatic coast near Klis (Clissa) (ASV, 36). In another imperial letter of the same date he asked the doge to allow some boats (*kayık*) to guard Obrovač (Obrovazzo) in Kırka (ASV, 35). This fact did not prevent Ottoman privateers from entering it and raiding the Italian coastline. For instance in 1506 some places in Puglia were sacked; in 1533 Venetian protested for some raids; in 1536 the admiral Hayreddin spent ten days in the land of Castro, near Otranto; in 1553–1534 Turgud *reis*, a Maghreb *levend*, was twice in Puglia and sacked Vieste; in 1566 the imperial fleet entered the Adriatic and reached Abruzzi. In this period the inhabitants of the Italian coasts began to build watch towers to be informed in advance of the enemy's approach and to be able to take refuge in some fortified place (Bono, 1964, 154–155; Volpe, 1998, 47–73; Pedani, 2002, 32; Pedani, 2005, 52–54).

At the beginning of Uskoks' raids, Ottomans believed in Venetian strength. The first Ottoman complaint to the doge about their activity was made in 1557, but still in summer 1575 Mehmed, *nazır* (superintendent) of Neretva (Narenta), praised Venetian protection and asked that, also in the future, one or two galleys should mount guard at the *boğaz* (mouth) of river Neretva (ASV, 38). However, the situation became quickly worse and worse. In the first period Uskoks attacked above all Muslim ships, saying that they were infidels. Ottoman merchants began to use Christian vessels but the pirates went on raiding these too, saying that they had onboard infidels' goods. In the end, nobody could cross the Adriatic Sea without running the risk of being attacked. Ottoman merchants, victims of robbery, made petitions to the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul and to the doge to be refunded for their losses. The Venetian authorities gave them

no satisfaction since they did not think they were responsible for piratical raids. Then, petitions (*arz*) were made to the sultan too: if Venetians considered the Adriatic to be their own territory they should also be responsible for what was happening there. Ottoman diplomatic missions were sent to Venice to uphold the rights of the victims. For instance in 1583 the envoy Hasan travelled on behalf of a *kadı* and other important persons who had been made prisoner by Uskoks; in 1588 a man of Seyyid Abdi, a court merchant, was sent by the grand vizier to recover some goods; in 1589 another envoy reached Venice for the same case, while Bali arrived with five merchants whose ship had been robbed (Pedani, 1994a, 182; Faroqhi, 2002b, 362–365).

To protect his merchants the sultan ordered the zone near Klis to be patrolled and, in June 1596 (middle of *şevval* 1004), his grand vizier İbrahim sent the *kapudanpaşa* with the fleet into the Gulf (ASV, 40). Venetians refused to be helped saying that the security of the Adriatic was their own task. Three years later, in at the end of *cemazi-yülevvel* 1007 (January 1599), the sultan officially recognized that the Uskoks were Hapsburg subjects (ASV, 41).

In the same period, above all in the South Adriatic, Ottoman subjects attacked Venetian ships. It was a retaliation for Uskoks' raids, as the sultan says in a letter written to the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia in August 1612 (middle of *cemaziyühür* 1021): Uskoks raided the zone of Makarska (Macarsca) but some Albanian boats attacked them and freed the Turks they had made prisoners; thus, the inhabitants of Gabela and Makarska equipped some *kayıks* to protect themselves from the pirates (ASV, 16).

However, this was also a period of Maghreb *levends*' increasing activity. When privateers from North Africa decided to make an expedition into the Adriatic they sailed with many galleys and other big ships since this sea was very far from their bases. Albanians and Greeks sometimes joined them as well as former Muslim slaves, who had known Christian galleys and sea-life. Maghreb privateers made few expeditions in the Adriatic but they terrified the inhabitants of the coasts. Sometimes they went northwards, as happened in 1577, when they raided Chioggia, about twenty miles from Venice (Bono, 1964, 43, 103–109, 174–175; Bono, 1993, 141–153).

On the contrary Albanian and Greek pirates had small boats which could easily find shelter among the islands of the coast. They did not need to prepare an expedition since they lived on the spot. These men learned raiding from people of Maghreb and, little by little, they began to act as pirates, sometimes even disguising themselves as North-African *levends* to cast blame on their former masters. They were above all Ottoman subjects from Ulcinj (Dulcigno, Ülkün), Durrës (Durać, Durazzo, Dıraç) and Peloponnesus (Morea, Mora). They used to attack mostly Venetian ships but they were lawless pirates. At the beginning of the 17th century, the complaints of Venetians as well as those of Ottoman subjects forced the sultan to give orders to imprison these pirates and to burn their boats (Faroqhi, 1986, 359–363; Pedani, 2002, 33–35; Pedani, 2004, 592–296).

Local authorities did not always act in accordance with the central government, desirous of maintaining good relations with Venice. Pirates' activity might be a source of income for them. Some governors expected to share the loot with Maghreb *levends* and their own subjects and, for this reason, they gave them protection, victuals and a market where to sell slaves and goods. Other official holders went further and became pirates or privateers. When Venetians learned of such activities they immediately presented an *arz* to the sultan requesting punishment of his guilty administrators. Thus, Imperial orders were issued. For instance, at the end of *zilhicce* 1001 (September 1593), the sultan ordered the *sancakbeyi* of Hersek and the *kadı* of Neretva to punish the *dizdar* (warden of the castle) of Neretva who had equipped a *kayık*, raided the zone of Craina and stolen 2.000 cheeses and 50 tallers from the ship of Nicolò Curazić from Hvar (Lesina, Far) (ASV, 29). In 1596–1597 (the document is of *receb* 1005) Hasan *ağa*, *dizdar* of Aya Mavra (Santa Maura, Leukás), joined some pirates from Greece and Algiers to raid the island of Zakynthos (ASV, 31). A source of the middle of *cemaziülevvel* 1014 (September 1605) informs us that some *levends* who had raided the South of the Adriatic were protected by the castles of Vlöre and Durrës (ASV, 10). According to two documents of the end of *cemaziülevvel* and beginning of *cemaziül-har* 1021 (July-August 1612) Mehmed bey, former *sancakbeyi* of Karlı Eli (Akarmania), had equipped a small galley to raid the Gulf (ASV, 15), while Mehmed bey, *sancakbeyi* of Dukagin, did the same some months later (documents of *zilkade* 1021 and middle of *muharrem* 1022) (ASV, 18).

Pirates' activity increased the number of Muslim slaves in Italy (Bono, 1999). The chances of a sea voyage sometimes turned a merchant into a prisoner and then a slave. The navies of Italian states used these men as oarsmen for galleys. In Venice this use was officially forbidden by the peace agreements made with the sultan. Venetians always preferred to use free rowers, but the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans greatly diminished the number of those who chose this dangerous life. In 1545 the use of guilty persons was proposed for the first time in the Republic. However, already by the end of the century technical improvements had diminished the number of oarsmen. In periods of war Ottoman slaves were used also in the Venetian fleet. Sometimes it is possible to find them in a period of peace, even if unofficially (Doumerc, 2001, 249). For instance in 1594 the *çavuş* Cafer discovered some Ottoman slaves in the galley *Bragadina* and in 1604 the *haznedar* Mustafa *ağa* found some other Muslim oarsmen (Pedani, 1994a, 89–90).

A war started in 1616 between Venice and the Hapsburg solved the Uskoks' problem but soon afterwards the Republic began to fight against the *harbî İspanya keferesi* (the Spanish infidels from the Abode of War) for the possession of Valtellina. This war too had some influence on the Ottoman-Venetian relations (Faroqhi, 1986, 356–359). For instance in 1620 the Spanish fleet entered the Adriatic and raided a Venetian galley where Ottoman merchants had charged their goods. Since, before leaving Venice for

Split, they had insured themselves with a Venetian company they asked for the compensation but to have satisfaction they had to obtain an imperial *nişan* which was issued at the end of *muharrem* 1030 (December 1620) (ASV, 20).

Other Ottoman subjects, going to or coming from Venice, insured themselves with Venetians in the same period. Adriatic trade was probably so dangerous to push merchants to try to avoid all risks. For instance, in a sultan's document, issued at the beginning of *muharrem* 1014 (May 1605), tells the story of a certain Mehmed: before leaving Egypt for Venice he had insured himself and his companions with the Venetian consul in Cairo, Giovanni da Mosto, against every travel risk; he was then captured by Christian privateers and, once rescued, he went to the new consul to be refunded (ASV, 9).

At the beginning of the 17th century, Venetian and Ottoman interests were almost the same. At the end of *cemaziyülevvel* 1021 (end of July 1621), for instance, the sultan wrote a letter inviting the local authorities of Škodra (Scutari, Iskenderiye) Yanina (Gianina, Yanya) Delvinë (Delvina), Vlorë, Klis, Herzek, Kerka, Lika and other places of the coast to help Venetians since the Spanish fleet was arriving (ASV, 21). In the following years (up to the 1630s') he allowed the Republic to enrol Ottoman subjects in Bosnia in order to fight against the common enemy (ASV, 22; ASV, 23). In 1621 the huge *Fondaco dei turchi* on the Grand Canal was established to host all Ottoman merchants trading in the Rialto market (Dursteler, 2006, 169–173).

GOODS AND SMUGGLING

In the Modern Age the Ottoman Empire used to trade with the West as well as the East but an important commerce existed also among its provinces. Some items which could not be easily found came from Europe. First of all there were luxury goods such as precious textiles, glass wares, spectacles, windows glasses, goldsmith's wares, paper and even world maps and books of medicine and war craft. Merchants exported from the Ottoman Empire above all raw silk, cotton, wax, camlets, mohair cloths and leather.

Besides this trade, smuggling flourished. There were two kinds of smuggling: the first concerned prohibited goods, the second avoiding customs and duties on import-export. Ottomans and Venetian subjects performed both in the same way. According to the *bailo* Girolamo Cappello who wrote his report in 1600 at least a quarter of the goods loaded on Venetian ships which arrived in Istanbul had not paid customs in Venice. The same (or even worse) happened as regards foreigners' vessels. Moreover, Ottoman ships which had been in Venice used to bring home a large quantity of arms, since they were better than those produced in the Empire (Pedani, 1996a, 466–467).

Both Venice and the Ottoman Empire prohibited the export of weaponry and raw materials of military importance to infidel countries. In this last category there was also wood, according to Europeans, and horses, according to Ottomans. Molla Hüsrev

considered prohibited goods, even in peace time, arms, horses and iron, since they could be used to make war (Ágoston, 2001, 181). The first documents we know about arm smuggling between Venice and the Ottoman Empire date back to the middle of the 16th century. For instance, in 1551 the Venetian government bought the weapons which had been found on Sinan *reis*'s ships and confiscated; the sum of 965 scudi was given to the captain only out of regard for the owner of the ship, Mehmed *paşa* (Pedani, 1994b, 173). In 1554 the consul in Egypt Daniele Barbarigo wrote that Jews exported arms (*azzali*) from Venice to the Ottoman Empire (ASV, 34). In 1560 Marino Cavalli speaks of a flourishing smuggling of weapons from the Venetian city of Brescia to Istanbul (Alberi, 1840, 293). In 1563 also a *çavuş* sent from Istanbul, Şecca, lamented that Venetian subjects used to sell arms to West African Muslim pirates, careless of the security of their own state and that smuggling of prohibited goods flourished in the city of Venice (Pedani, 1994a, 180).

Venetian arms were famous and, thus, the *sancakbeyi* of Bosnia, Fehad, wrote to the doge about 1587 to ask help for his man, Malkoç, who was going to Venice to sell wax (*şem*), honey (*asel*) and other goods and to buy munitions (*mühimmât*) (ASV, 39). It seems that Venetians made an embargo of these items with respect to the Ottoman Empire because it was a potential enemy and not because it was an Islamic country. In fact, when the shah, fighting with the sultan, asked them for new fire arms and men able to use them, they sent them to Persia (Rota, 2002, 580–587).

In most ancient times, in Venice export prohibitions referred also to anchors, ropes and shrouds, but often exemptions were given to do some important persons a favour. For instance in 1564 Ali, *kapudan* of Alexandria, asked to buy (or to be presented with) ropes (*gomena*), shrouds (*çarmik*) and other things which he needed to built a small war-galley (*baştarda*) (ASV, 37). At last, even galleys and other ships were bought and sold freely: for instance in 1636 a Muslim, Hasan Çelebi, and a Christian, Pietro Bevilacqua, created a business partnership and bought together the ship *Tre Lune* (Pedani, 2006, 195).

For Ottomans too arms were prohibited goods, but since the quality of their production was inferior to Venetian it was not worth smuggling these items to Europe. Arab horses were of a greater value. We do not have documents about the smuggling of these animals but there are permissions to bring one or two horses to Venice (ASV, 12). They were so important that they were also quoted in passports: for instance Simone Contarini had a special passport to come back home with the horse presented to him by the sultan himself (ASV, 24). Apart from material necessary for warfare, embargoed goods were not always the same in the course of centuries. For instance in 1589 they were gunpowder, lead, yarn, different kind of leathers, wheat, copper, sail canvas, arms, beeswax, horses, pitch and tallow, but not cotton whose exportation was expressly permitted (ASV, 1). In 1599 the Venetian consul in Egypt obtained that leather and linen could be freely exported to Venice and Crete (ASV, 32; Baschiera,

1883). Less than ten years later, another list added saltpetre, sulphur, iron and cotton (Faroqhi, 1983, 217; Ağoston, 2001, 182).

Venetians often obtain permission to export wheat (ASV, 3; ASV, 6; ASV, 11; ASV, 25) and leather (ASV, 2), when the Empire did not need them. If there was a famine to export grain one had to smuggle it (Faroqhi, 2002a, 95; Saito, 2004, 79–103). Ships on the point of leaving an Ottoman port were carefully searched by officials to find out prohibited goods or goods on which customs had not been paid (ASV, 27). Then, they received a passport. One was issued at the middle of *safer* 1002 (November 1593) for the Venetian ship *Martinenga*; it testifies that onboard there were no prohibited goods such as arms and horses (ASV, 30). Even individual merchants could receive a passport, above all if they crossed dangerous lands where it was safer to disguise themselves as Muslims. One of these documents was given to Emanuel Negroponte, who was going to Aydın, Saruhan, and İzmir (Smirne) in October 1608 (end of *cemaziyülahır* 1017) (ASV, 13); another one was prepared for Venetian merchants who went to the same zone to buy cotton in July 1612 (end of *cemaziyülevvel* 1021) (ASV, 14). Much more passports were given to Venetian interpreters or diplomats who travelled the route Venice-Istanbul (ASV, 7).

In the 17th century leather became one of the preferred items sold in Venice by merchants from Bosnia. Clearly they were no longer considered prohibited goods, since even Greeks used to export them from Egypt to Crete, as the Venetian consul in Egypt wrote in 1620 (ASV, 33). In 1601 a guild of rough leather (*cordovani*) merchants was created in Venice, but little by little it became a kind of trust which established quantities and prices. The trade evolved very badly for the Ottoman merchants who were obliged to sell only to the members of the brotherhood. Thus, in 1633 they made a petition to the Senate to obtain again free trade. The Venetian government granted their request, fearing they would go to other markets. Moreover, the Senate decreed that the guild had to admit among its members all Venetians and foreigners who asked for membership (ASV, 43). The Ottoman-Venetian war for the island of Crete began in 1644, but it did not stop trading. In 1654, for example, Christian, Jewish and Muslim merchants dealing in *cordovani* went together to the ducal chancellery to file a petition against the Venetian guild of tanners (ASV, 44; ASV, 45; ASV, 46).

Ottoman merchants, as well as Venetian ones, often smuggled goods in order to avoid customs and duties. According to what was established in peace agreements after 1419 they had to be treated as Venetian subjects in Venice and Venetian ports and to pay the same taxes. This was not enough above all for important persons of the court, involved in trade, who used to ask for exemptions from import and export duties. Venetian authorities did not like it; they usually refused to grant these petitions, but sometimes, to make a favour to a vizier or a *paşa*, decided to present them with the desired goods. In this way they avoided setting a dangerous precedent (Dursteler, 2002, 121, 126).

In their turn Venetians could use Ottoman vessels to ship their goods. Obviously this happened more often in the Levant than in the Adriatic usually crossed by ships with the Venetian flag. Some examples may be quoted. A sultan's order written in the middle of *şaban* 1001 (May 1593) informs us that the nobleman Vettore Soranzo left Salonicco for Scio on an Ottoman *kayık*; during the voyage he was killed by the captain who wanted to steal his goods (ASV, 26). Another document dated end of *zilkade* 1021 (February 1613) records that the Venetian merchant Francesco Donatelli died between Salonicco and Cassandria on Yani *reis*'s vessel and the captain took his goods and money, without giving them to the *bailo*, as established by law (ASV, 17).

Venetian merchants in the Ottoman Empire had to pay customs, but on precious stones and pearls, as repeated in an imperial order of 23 *zilkade* 1001 (21 August 1593) (ASV, 28). Ottoman customs officials often took for themselves small quantities of some goods, above all wine (especially *moscato*) (ASV, 8) and glass beads (ASV, 5) or glass wares (ASV, 8). The *bailo* often made *arzes* to the sultan for this and he obtained imperial documents obliging local authorities to control application of the law.

CONCLUSION

In the Modern Age the subjects of the sultan used to cross the Adriatic as well as Italians, Raguseans and Dalmatians did. They reached the Eastern coast and then they went on not only to Venice but also to Ancona where they had had a *fondaco* (inn with storehouse) since the 16th century (Faroqhi, 2002a, 88). In Lagoon city the first *Fondaco dei Turchi* was created in 1575, for the Albanian and Bosnian Muslim merchants. In 1621 a new larger one was established in a palace on the Grand Canal in the parish of San Giacomo dall'Orio. According to Venetian authorities it had to host all Muslims present in the city, but soon it was clear that it was impossible to put together Persians and Ottomans. Thus, the subjects of the shah went on living in inns or private houses, until 1662, when they left the city to avoid being obliged to live together with their enemies in the same building (Tucci, 1985, 55; Howards, 2000, 126).

The basis of Ottoman merchant presence in the Venetian market were the peace agreements (capitulations or *ahidname*) sworn by both the doge and the sultan (Faroqhi, 2002a; Pedani, 1996b). However, besides *ahidnames*, other important documents were sometimes produced. *Berats* and orders were often issued to settle special cases. For instance, in March 1605 (end of *şevval* 1013) an imperial *nişan* was issued to regulate the maritime matters with Venetians (ASV, 8): Aleppo, Cairo, and Crete are quoted together with the Uskoks who lived in Senj, on the Adriatic coast, and on this occasion the sultan recognized that they were under the authority of the 'king of Vienna' and not of the Venetian doge: Venetian should not be troubled because of their crimes.

The wars at the end of the 17th century put a momentary stop to the presence of Ottoman merchants in Venice and in the Adriatic. However they returned at the beginning of the 18th century, even if in the 1720s' short-sighted Venetian protectionist politics pushed Albanian vessels where most of them charged their goods to Trieste. In this way Ottoman trade was diverted from the Rialto market (Dogo, 2001, 573–602).

Scholars often wrote that in the Modern Age the sea was above all a frontier zone, where people of different culture and faith fought against each other: the romantic frontier hero had no need to understand the other; for him it was enough to destroy his enemy. On the contrary documents testify a more complex reality: in the Adriatic Muslim and Christian merchants and sailors shared the same way of life. Ottoman subjects from Albania or Bosnia understood and traded with men from Dubrovnik or Venetian subjects of Dalmatia. It was not a completely idyllic environment. There were often disorder, anarchy, plague, famine, raids on both sides, but undefined borders allowed people of different countries to meet and a sea, such as the Adriatic, was a means of contact and not of division.

OSMANSKI TRGOVCI NA JADRANU. TRGOVINA IN TIHOTAPSTVO

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POVZETEK

Turki so Sredozemlje obravnavali kot nekakšno tekočo ravnico, sestavljeno iz različnih morij, v katerih so vladarji lahko uveljavljali svojo nadvlado. Zato so brez nasprotovanja ali pomislekov sprejemali oblast, ki jo je Beneška republika uveljavljala nad Jadrantom na koncu srednjega in začetku novega veka. V številnih evropskih državah pa so priznavali antično rimsko pravo, po katerem se noben vladar ni mogel polastiti voda. S tega vidika je bilo torej mogoče oblast nad morjem, kot jo je določala beneška zakonodaja, izpodbijati.

Beneško-osmanski mirovni sporazumi (ahidname oz. kapitulacije) so predstavljali temelj recipročne obravnave trgovcev in trgovskih ladij tako na vzhodnih morjih Levante kot na Jadrantu. Osmanske ladje so začele prihajati v Benetke že v drugi polovici 15. stoletja; sultanovi podložniki so v beneških pristaniščih plačevali enake davke kot državljani Republike sv. Marka; občasno v dokumentih lahko na eni strani preberemo o Benečanih, ki so se s svojim blagom vkrcavali na osmanske ladje, in na drugi strani o muslimanskih trgovcih, ki so sklepali zavarovanja v Benetkah ali ustanavljali trgovska podjetja s kristjani. Število trgovcev iz Bosne, Albanije, Istanbula in Anatolije, ki so prihajali trgovat v Benetke, je skozi celo 16. stoletje naraščalo. Prvo gostišče za trgovce iz Bosne in Albanije so zgradili leta 1575, naslednje, ki je bilo namenjeno musli-

manom in je bilo veliko večje ter bolj mogočno, pa leta 1621. Leta 1605 je sultan izdal pomemben dokument, s katerim je želel urediti pomorske odnose z Beneško republiko.

Trgovsko dejavnost je predvsem v drugi polovici 16. stoletja zavrla močna prisotnost piratov na Jadranu. To so bili predvsem senjski Uskoki, podložniki habsburške dinastije, ki so s svojimi napadi vznemirili promet in poslabšali dobre odnose med Benetkami in Osmanskim cesarstvom, pa tudi Maročani, ki so na Jadranu izpeljali nekaj večjih napadov. Ti gusarji, ki so v svoje vrste sprejeli albanske in grške ribiče, so Osmanom podučili o morskih poteh. Osmansko piratstvo so ostali sultanovi podložniki, ki so živeli na obalah, dojemali kot neke vrste obrambo proti Uskokom.

V Benetke so Osmanom prihajali prodajati zlasti surovo svilo, bombaž, vosek, tkanino iz kamelje dlake, volno moher in usnje, kupovali in uvažali pa so razkošne izdelke, kot so dragocene tkanine, očala, steklarski in zlatarski izdelki, papir in tudi knjige.

Istočasno z redno trgovino je cvetelo tudi tihotapstvo. Iz Benetk so ilegalno izvažali predvsem orožje, ki je bilo boljše od osmanskega, na zahod pa je iz Osmanskega cesarstva potovalo predvsem žito, ki so ga Benetčani še posebej potrebovali v času vojn. Na obeh straneh so obstajali izdelki, ki jih je bilo prepovedano izvažati, njihovo število in vrsta pa sta se skozi čas spreminjali. Bombaž tako v Osmanskem cesarstvu ni vedno veljal za prepovedano blago, konje pa so šteli za vojaški material in če so jih hoteli izvoziti, je morala ladja pokazati poseben potni list, ki je bil zanje predviden. Enako je veljalo tudi za darila, ki jih je sultan podarjal ambasadorjem. Tudi v mirnem obdobju pa so trgovci obeh držav pogosto skušali izvažati blago brez plačila potrebnih davčnin.

Proti koncu 17. stoletja so vojne precej omejile dejavnost Osmanov v Benetkah. In čeprav je trgovanje v naslednjem stoletju ponovno oživel, ko so na severni Jadran spet začele prihajati albanske ladje, naložene z osmanskim blagom, jih je kratkovidna protekcionistična politika Benetk prisilila, da so se začele izogibati beneškemu pristanišču in so se raje preusmerile v tržaško.

Ključne besede: Osmansko cesarstvo, Benetke, Jadran, trgovina, tihotapstvo

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