THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHIVES OF VENICE, BOLOGNA AND MODENA FOR THE CRIMEAN STUDIES^{*}

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This paper deals with the material of Italian archives related to the history of Crimea. It demonstrates that only a few scholars have dedicated their research to Crimean studies and published papers in Turkey or elsewhere in recent years. Turkish historians have tended mainly to focus on the Ottoman Empire. Although some publications about the Crimean Khanate have been produced in historical literature during the last twenty years, the sources they use are mostly limited to either Russian or Ottoman archives. Italian archives are usually disregarded despite being important sources for historians interested in the Crimea. My aim is to guide researchers who wish to study this subject using Italian archives. First, information about archive catalogues directly connected to relations between the Khanate and the Italian city-states, such as Bologna, Modena and Venice is given. Then some examples of the documents, including letters, *dispacci*, reports and missionary records, considered to be relevant to the Crimean Khanate, will be presented.

Key words: Crimean Khanate, Venice, Bologna, Modena, letters, reports.

Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that at the time of the establishment of the Crimean Khanate, Italian City States had a large commercial network in the Crimean Peninsula. Genoese and Venetians especially played an active role in the trade of this territory. Since the beginning of the Khanate's history they were not only engaged in trade, but they also supplied necessary intelligence to their own countries. Initially, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus gave some privileges to the Venetians who

* I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Maria Pia Pedani, without whose help this paper could not have been prepared. When I came to Venice for my PhD dissertation research in 2015, she supported my research, sharing with me her profound experience in archival matters.

lived in Constantinople. According to the 1265 privilege (officially ratified in 1268), Venetians had a representative with the title of bailo. Therefore, Venetians not only had a privileged position as far as the foreign communities living in Constantinople were concerned, but also had an imperial decree that secured the life and property of the Venetians (Hanß 2013, p. 37; Spuler 1986, p. 1008). The Venetian community also had its own quarter during the Byzantine period: its last existing building was the Balkapani Han near Rüstem Pasa Mosque that was built on the site of the ancient Venetian Sant'Achidino church (Ağır 2009). Their privileged position did not change after the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed II in 1453; moreover, in the 1500s the *bailos* began to live regularly in Pera where they rented a palace, now called the Venedik Sarayı, which has long served as the Istanbul residence for the Italian ambassadors, then consul generals (Concina 1995, p. 111; Pedani 2013a). The bailo became one of the most influential foreign diplomats in the Ottoman Empire. His authority was established and extended over and over again by the agreements (ahidname) signed between Ottomans and Venetians after a war or whenever a new sultan ascended the throne: the first one was signed in 1390 and the last one in 1733.¹ Whenever the *bailo* came back to Venice, he had to deliver, in front of the Senate of the Republic, a comprehensive report (*relazione*) about the results of his diplomatic mission (Afyoncu 2012, p. 16; Bertele 2012, p. 9). By doing so, the diplomats followed the law established in 1268 that all Venetian diplomats had to deliver both a speech and a written text on termination of their missions and in 1524 the same law was applied also to every Venetian public official in the subjected lands (Pedani 2009, p. 487).

Venetian merchants carried mainly processed goods such as woolen and silk cloths, paper, copper, tin and glassware from their own country to Istanbul while they imported raw products such as cereals, spice, raw silk, cotton, leather-fur, wax and cannabis (Turan 1968, p. 254; Arbel 1995, p. 16; Mack 2002, p. 20). Thanks to the developing trade relations between Venice and Istanbul, intelligence networks expanded and the *bailo* played an active role in sending intelligence reports to the Republic of Venice (Dursteler 2002, p. 3). These reports comprised important cases and intelligence relevant to the Ottoman Empire as well as the Crimean Khanate.

The main objective of this study is to explain how to use Italian archival documents as a source for writing the history of the Crimean Khanate. In addition, information will be provided about the kinds of documents that are available in various

¹ See the agreements between the Ottoman Empire and Venice: 21 May 1390: Murad I; January–February 1403: Süleyman Çelebi; 30 March 1406: Süleyman Çelebi; 12 August 1411: Musa Çelebi; 6 November 1419: Mehmed I; 4 September 1430: Murad II; 23 February 1446: Mehmed II; 10 September 1451: Mehmed II; 18 April 1454: Mehmed II; 25 January 1479: Mehmed II; 12 January 1482: Bayezid II; 14 (25) December 1502: Bayezid II; 17 October 1513: Selim I; 19 August– 16 September 1517: Selim I; 1 (17) December 1521: Süleyman I; 2 October 1540: Süleyman I; 25 June 1567: Selim II; 7 March 1573: Selim II; 8–17 August 1575: Murad III; 4–13 December 1595: Mehmed III; 14–22 November 1604: Ahmed I; 8–17 January 1619: Osman II; 19–28 April 1625: Murad IV; 24 January–2 February 1641: Ibrahim I; 12–21 May 1670: Mehmed IV; 26 January 1699: Mustafa II; 9–18 April 1701: Mustafa II; 13–22 June 1706: Ahmed III; 21 July 1718: Ahmed III; 15 May 1733: Mahmud I (*sürekli sulh*). – Cf. Turan (2000, pp. 598–600); Pedani (2011, pp. 177–178). Italian archives to support the study of Crimean political, social, economic and cultural history.

Archivio di Stato di Venezia

The Venice State Archives keep different kinds of archival series which have digital catalogues and are also sometimes available in digital format.² The relations between the city of Venice and the peoples who lived in Crimea began in the Middle Ages. The Venetians had an important colony in Caffa (today Feodosia) and their merchants used to go there to trade as did the Genoese (Karpov 2000, pp. 257–272; see also Karpov 2001). They signed commercial agreements with the khans of the Golden Horde before the Crimean Khanate was established in the middle of the 15th century. The Khans Özbek (1313–1341), Janibek (1341–1357) and Berdibek (1357–1359) issued *yarlıks* for Venice in 1332, 1342, 1347 and 1358. The Bey of Sudak, Ramadan, wrote letters to the Doge in 1356, while Kutluğ-Timur Beg gave instructions for the Venetian merchants in 1358. Also Taydula khatun, Janibek's wife, wrote to Venice to settle a business affair in 1359 (Thomas–Predelli 1880–1899, Vol. 1, Nos 125, 135, 139, 167; Vol. 2, Nos 14–15, 24–28). The Latin translations³ of the letters and decrees issued by these rulers were kept among the most important documents of Venice in the chancellery series of *Pacta, Commemoriali* and *Liber Albus*.

After the Crimean Khanate was created in the middle of the 15th century, most Venetian information concerning the Khanate derived from the city-state's diplomats living in the Ottoman Empire. Thus a scholar interested in this subject must first look at the documents produced by Venetian ambassadors and *bailos* in Constantinople, above all the records named *Collegio, Relazioni* and *Senato, Dispacci ambasciatori, Costantinopoli* (ASVe BC; ASVe SDC). The *relazioni* provide one of the best-known sources for researchers in the Venetian Archives. Although the earliest *relazione* from Constantinople is dated to 1496, Venetian ambassadors' reports can be traced back to 1268 (Dursteler 2001, pp. 237–238). Now some of them are also available on the web (e.g. Alberi 1840; 1863; Barozzi–Berchet 1871; Firpo 1984; Pedani 1996; Sanudo 1879–1903; Andreas 1914).

The *bailo* had many and various duties in Istanbul. He was not only interested in gaining information about the Ottoman Empire and its army, but was also charged with solving Venetian merchants' problems. Furthermore, he was sometimes in contact with Ottoman viziers and other officials (Afyoncu 2012, p. 13). Hence, the reports these officials wrote at the end of their missions, together with the letters they sent to Venice from Istanbul yield important information to researchers about almost every subject related to the Ottomans, such as the sultans and the imperial family, economy, military and religious structure of the empire and everyday life in Istanbul. In addition, in these sources hints concerning the Crimean Khanate can also be found when

² Cf. Guida Generale degli Archivi di Stato Italiani. Roma, 1994.

³ Latin was the language of the Venetian chancellery in the Middle Ages.

relevant happenings occurred in that region or when the khan was involved in political affairs with Ottoman authorities.

Here is an example from the bailo Giovanni Correr's relazione:

"Hora a questo bisogno suppliscono per eccellenza i Tartari, perché se ne vanno essi alla caccia d'uomini nella giurisdizione di Polonia, di Moscovita, et spesso anco fra Circassi; poi riducono la preda al Caffa, dove sono compri da mercanti et condotti a Constantinopoli" (Pedani 1996, p. 234).

That is to say:

In ancient times Crimean Tatars were famous for slave raiding. They generally went to raid Poland, Muscovy and Circassia and they captured men, women and children. They brought their booty to the Caffa slave market where merchants bought these slaves and took them to Istanbul.

Tomaso Tarsia's report also deals at length with the Tatar khan's behaviour during and after the siege of Vienna in 1683. This Venetian interpreter was present in the Turkish camp and was an eye-witness of the events he described. He notes that the khan suggested to Kara Mustafa pasha to abandon the siege in advance. Therefore, after the battle, the great vizier wanted to have him in his hands probably to kill him as he had done with other Ottoman officials; for this reason the khan fled as soon as possible while Kara Mustafa put another men in his place (Pedani 1996, pp. 684–755).

Another important source for researchers are letters (*dispacci*), sent by the Venetian ambassadors, the *bailos* included, to the Senate and other offices. The heads of the Istanbul mission used to report four or even eight times every month. Most of the surviving letters date from the 1560s (Carbone 1974, pp. 11–50; Gürkan 2013, p. 24). The *dispacci* give a wider and deeper insight into the Ottoman Empire than the *relazioni*. In this source the Tatar Khans are quoted usually if they received some distinguished honour from the Ottoman sultan, as happened for instance in 1613 when the sultan gave him a jewelled sword and a golden dress (ASVe SDC, Filza 74, 1613, 30 gen./2). Another remark concerning the Crimean Tatars derives from the year 1609 and was made by the *bailo* Simone Contarini. A nobleman from Poland, as the ambassador describes, arrived in Istanbul in order to complain about the Crimean Tatars because of their invasion of the Polish settlements. This nobleman gave information about the invasion and looked for help from the Ottoman sultan. Bailo Contarini followed the progress of this story and wrote about it in detail in his letters (ASVe SDC, Filza 67, cc. 119, 233, 237, 347).

As mentioned, Venetian diplomats wrote not only to the Senate, but also to other offices, such as the *Consiglio di Dieci*, the *Inquisitori di Stato* that looked after the security of the state and the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* that controlled trade. In the archives of these institutions it is also possible to find documents about the Ottoman Empire. We must not forget the papers produced in Istanbul by the *bailo*'s chancellery either which are now kept in Venice in the series *Archivio del bailo a Costan*-

tinopoli (Pedani 2013b, pp. 381–404). Let us give an example of the news that can be found in this source: on 25 June 1636, the Venetian chancellery discussed the affair of a Tatar who said that a slave girl named Anusa, now in Venetian hands, had been stolen from his properties in Kaffa (ASVe BC, Busta 285, ad annum).

Besides the records of the diplomats sent to Istanbul, there are also other reports written by diplomats sent to the Persian rulers. One of these was Giosafat Barbaro (1413–1494) (Almagià 1964), a Venetian merchant who lived for a long period in Tanais and knew the Crimean Tatar language. In his report he recalls an episode when he lived in Venice in 1455. While walking in the Rialto market he saw two Tatar slaves and began to talk with them in their language. He realised that they were being kept in chains unlawfully since they were free men and he succeeded in procuring their freedom. Afterwards, he took them to his house and, as they walked along, they talked together. At a certain point Barbaro recognised one of the two: he was a customs officer he had met many times in Tanais. Barbaro quoted the city and the name Yusuf which he used there and the Tatar immediately felt down on his knees and said: "This is the second time you have saved my life. The first was when there was the great fire in Tanais and you made a hole in the wall so that we were able to make our way to safety." Then, Barbaro helped them to return home. He ends the story saying (Lockhart–Morozzo–Tiepolo 1973, pp. 88–89):

"Sichè niuno mai deve partendose da altri (con l'opinion de non ritornar mai più in quelle parte) dimenticarse de le amicitie, como che se mai più se havesseno a veder insieme. Possono accader mille cose che se haverano a veder assieme, et forsi colui che più po' harà ad haver bisogno de cholui che mancho po'."

Thus, when taking leave of others (thinking that he will never return to that place) no-one should ever forget his friend on the grounds that they will never see one another again. One thousand things may happen to bring these two people together again and perhaps the more powerful one may need the help of the weaker.

Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna

The Bologna University library keeps the papers and books of Luigi Ferdinando Marsili (1658–1729), an Italian diplomat who knew Turkish very well and worked for the Habsburgs (Gullino–Preti 2008). In Marsili's archive valuable pieces of information can be found not only about the Crimean Khanate, but also about the Black Sea region.⁴ The first selected document in the catalogue is a manuscript map of 16th century Crimea drawn by an unknown person. The legend gives the names of some towns and, among others, contains the following words: ... / Bacgie Serai Rezidenza del Tartar kham / CRIMEA / Che contiene 10.000 villaggi il più grande de quali havrà

⁴ For the catalogue of the archive, see Marsili.

Figure 1. A Crimean peninsula map in the 16th century

dieci case / Fortezza che guarda il fosso ... (Marsili, p. 153), that is to say: "... Bakhchysarai the place where the Tatar khan lives / Crimea / There are 10,000 villages in the peninsula and the biggest one has about ten houses / Stronghold that controls the ditch ..."

Another document in the catalogue is a genealogical tree. It starts with the name of Genghis Khan (1206–1227), and it goes on with the names of rulers of the Golden Horde but with a lot of omissions: there are *Kusti* (?), Berke (1257–1266), Mengu-Timur (1266–1280), *Casas* (?), *Belbuka* (?), *Erne* (?), *Okuz* (?), *Tamurlane* (?), Timur-Malik (1377–1378), *Emir* (Amir Pulat?) (1364–1365), *Bareb* (?), Tokhtamysh (1378–1397), *Mehemet Parvus* (Küçük Muhammad 1435–1459) and Qaadeer Berdi (1419) (Marsili, p. 288). It gives a striking example of the scanty knowledge of the Europeans about the Tatars in the Middle Ages.

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Figure 2. The Tatar khans' genealogical tree

Archivio di Stato di Modena

The Modena Archive is very rich in documents related to Crimea.⁵ Researchers have to look for the catalogue of the archives (CSCI ASM). Among the most important collections one can find documents about the warfare between Crimea and Poland in 1650, letters written by a Dominican missionary, and a general description of the Crimean peninsula in 1582. For the purpose of this study we would like to focus on two documents: the first is a report that explains the causes of the Crimean Khan Mehmed Giray's death in 1584.

⁵ For the Modena Archives, see Özkan (2004).

The report begins with a short summary of what it deals with:

"Compendio delle cose seguite l'anno 1584 et li due anni inanti in Taurica con le cause della morte de Machomete, Prencippe de Tartari Precopensi. Regnava questi anni passati nella sede della Tartaria Precopense con titolo di Cesar che appresso quella gente come appresso de Moscoviti significa imperator Machomete Chereio prencipe che nella eta sua giovane s'era mostrato soldato valoroso e praticissimo dell'arte militare, ma da poi cresciuti gli anni et facendosi grave di corpo, cominciò ad abhorire la guerra et massime la guerra straniera et lontana, tanto più trovandosi pieno di varij sospetti nella casa propria, havendosi dato a credere che li fratelli suoi medesimi pensassero di carciarlo di stato et che gli animi de paesani inclinassero alla rebellione in favor loro" (CSCI ASM, Busta 193, Specie Unica).

That is to say:

Summary of the things that happened during the year 1584 and in the two previous years in the Taurica region together with the reasons for the death of Mehmed, Prince of the Crimean (Precopensi) Tatars. In the past years the prince Mehmed Geray (Machomete Chereio) ruled the Crimean Tatar land (Tartaria Precopense) with the title of Khan (Cesar) that means emperor for that people as well as for the Russians (Moscoviti). In his youth, he had proved his worth as a soldier and his skill in the military art, but later, with the passage of time he became fat and began to detest war, especially every foreign war in distant lands. This be-haviour was caused especially by the fact that he nourished various suspicions against the members of his own house, and that he believed that his own brothers were thinking of banishing him from his state and that his subjects' minds were ready to rebel in their favour.

The second document, which is written in Latin and is composed of two pages, is very important for the history of diplomatic relations. This letter was sent from the Crimean Khan Janibek Giray to the King of Sweden on 2 December 1631. It is not the first letter exchanged between the two states, but it offers interesting clues to understand the diplomatic relations of that period.

In 1630 Janibek Giray sent an envoy to the Swedish King Gustav Adolf (Święcicka 2005, pp. 49–62). As a response, in the following year, Gustav Adolf sent one of his noblemen, called Baron Benjamin, to Crimea to look for military support against his enemies. During the trip the Swedish envoy got sick, and was obliged to remain for approximately one year in Bakhchysarai, which was the capital city of the Crimean Khanate (Porshnev 1995, p. 131). In exchange, Janibek Giray sent Kamber Ağa, a faithful nobleman, to the king in order to negotiate friendly terms with him. Afterwards, he sent also other envoys, such as Musa and Nur Ali Oğlan. Crimean Tatars could not help Gustav Adolf as is clearly stated in this letter. Janibek Giray, however,

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did not lose the opportunity of flattering the king and, at the same time, of showing his own goodwill as far as Sweden was concerned:

In your name the envoy orally expounded that, if during the armistice the King of Poland gives back his soul to his Creator and the news of his death reaches our ears, we shall send our envoys to the senate of Poland to the effect that, if they want everlasting friendship and brotherhood with us, they should elect no other person as their king but you, since we see nobody else more worthy of such a crown than you.⁶

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to call attention and give a short introduction to the sources to be found in various Italian archives concerning the Crimean Khanate. It gives only a brief but hopefully illuminating glimpse of some of the documents that are to be found in Venice, Bologna and Modena. In this field of research Italian archives are no less important than the Ottoman and Russian archives, and sometimes they can even surprise the researchers with the high quality of the information they provide.

Abbreviations

ASVe = Archivio di Stato di Venezia

- ASVe BC = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Archivio del bailo a Costantinopoli*, Busta. 285, ad annum.
- ASVe SDC = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, Dispacci degli ambasciatori e residenti, Costantinopoli, Filza 67, Filza 74.
- CSCI ASM = Corteggi e documenti di Stati e Città Italia, Archivio di Stato di Modena.
- Marsili = Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Catalogo dei manoscritti di Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, Conservati nella Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Lodovico Frati, Vol. 27.

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⁶ "Pro interim nomine tuo legatus oretenus nobis exposuit quod si intra hoc induciarum tempus Rex Poloniae suo Creatori spiritum reddet statim atque eius mors ad nostras pervenerit aures ut ad Poloniae senatum nostros legatos mittamus quod si nobiscum perpetuam amicitiam et fraternitatem optent non aliam personam ni eorum Regem eligant quam tuam cum non alium tali corona digniorem quam te videamus" (CSCI ASM, Busta 193, c. 2).

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Appendix

Publishing Relazioni

1496 1499	Alvise Sagundino Andrea Zancani	Sanudo, I, coll. 397–400 Sanudo, II, coll. 695–696, 699–702
1500	Alvise Manenti	Sanudo, III, coll. 179–181
1503	Andrea Gritti	Alberi, III/3, pp. 1–44
1503	Zaccaria de' Freschi	Sanudo, V, coll. 26
1503	Gian Giacomo Caroldo	Sanudo, V, coll. 455–468
1508	Andrea Foscolo	Pedani, pp. 3–32
1514	Antonio Giustinian	Alberi, III/3, pp. 45–50
1518	Alvise Mocenigo	Alberi, III/3, pp. 51–55
1519	Bartolomeo Contarini	Alberi, III/3, pp. 56–58
1522	Marco Minio	Alberi, III/3, pp. 69–91

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1522 Tommaso Contarini Pedani, pp. 33–39	
1522 Tommaso Contarini Tedani, pp. 55–57	
1524 Pietro Zen Alberi, III/3, pp. 93–97	
1526 Pietro Bragadin Alberi, III/3, pp. 99–112	
1527 Marco Minio Alberi, III/3, pp. 113–118	
1530 Pietro Zeno Alberi, III/3, pp. 119–122	
1530 Tommaso Mocenigo Pedani, pp. 41–46	
1534 Daniele de' Ludovici Alberi, III/1, pp. 1–32	
1550 Alvise Renier Pedani, pp. 47–86	
1553 Bernardo Navagero Alberi, III/1, pp. 33–110	
1553 Anonimous Alberi, III/1, pp. 193–270	
1554 Domenico Trevisan Alberi, III/1, pp. 111–192	
1557 Antonio Erizzo Alberi, III/3, pp. 123–144	
1558 Antonio Barbarigo Alberi, III/3, pp. 145–160	
1558 Michiel Nicolò Pedani, pp. 87–125	
1560 Marino Cavalli Alberi, III/1, pp. 271–298	
1562 Andrea Dandolo Alberi, III/3, pp. 161–172	
1562 Marcantonio Donini Alberi, III/3, pp. 173–208 (for the general public	lic)
1562 Marcantonio Donini Pedani, pp. 127–131 (for the Senate)	
1564 Daniele Barbarigo Alberi, III/2, pp. 1–59	
1565 Alvise Buonrizzo Alberi, III/2, pp. 61–76	
1567 Marino Cavalli W. Andreas	
1570 Alvise Buonrizzo Pedani, pp. 133–158	
1571 Jacopo Ragazzoni Alberi, III/2, pp. 77–102	
1571–1573 Anonimous Pedani, pp. 159–176	
1573 Aurelio Santa Croce Pedani, pp. 177–192	
1573 Marcantonio Barbaro I Alberi, III/1, pp. 299–346	
1573 Andrea Badoer Alberi, III/1, pp. 347–368	
1573 Costantino Garzoni Alberi, III/1, pp. 369–436	
1573 Marcantonio Barbaro II Alberi, Appendice, XV, pp. 387–415	
1575 Anonimous Alberi, III/2, pp. 309–320	
1576 Antonio Tiepolo Alberi, III/2, pp. 129–191	
1576 Giacomo Soranzo Alberi, III/2, pp. 193–207	
1576 Antelmi Bonifacio Pedani, pp. 193–199	
1576 Giacomo Soranzo Pedani, pp. 201–223	
1577–1581 Anonimous Alberi, III/2, pp. 427–470	
1578 Giovanni Correr Pedani, pp. 225–257	
1582 Maffeo Venier Alberi, III/1, pp. 437–468; III/2, pp. 295–307	
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1583 Paolo Contarini Alberi, III/3, pp. 209–250	
1582 G. Soranzo (Livio	
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1584 Giacomo Soranzo Pedani, pp. 259–310	
1585 Gianfrancesco Morosini Alberi, III/3, pp. 251–322	
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1590 Lorenzo Bernardo Pedani, pp. 311–394	
1592 Lorenzo Bernardo Firpo, pp. 59–166	
1592 Lorenzo Bernardo Firpo, pp. 167–242	
1594 Matteo Zane Alberi, III/3, pp. 381–444 = Firpo, pp. 243–30	8

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1596	Leonardo Donà	Firpo, pp. 309–370
1603	Agostino Nani	Barozzi–Berchet, I/1, pp. 11–44 = Firpo, pp. 371–406
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1609	Ottaviano Bon	Pedani, pp. 475–523
1612	Simone Contarini	Barozzi – Berchet, I/1, pp. 125–254 = Firpo, pp. 473–602
1616	Cristoforo Valier	Barozzi – Berchet, I/1, pp. 255–320 = Firpo, pp. 603–668
1627	Giorgio Giustinian	Pedani, pp. 525-633
1634	Giovanni Cappello	Barozzi-Berchet, I/2, pp. 5-68 = Firpo, pp. 669-735
1637	Pietro Foscarini	Barozzi – Berchet, I/2, pp. 69–104 = Firpo pp. 737–771
1637	Anonimous	Pedani, pp. 635–683
1641	Alvise Contarini	Barozzi – Berchet, I/1, pp. 321–434 = Firpo, pp. 773–888
1641	Pietro Foscarini	Barozzi – Berchet, I/2, pp. 105–120 = Firpo, pp. 889–906
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1683	Tommaso Tarsia	Pedani, pp. 685–755
1684	Giambattista Donà	Barozzi–Berchet, I/2, pp. 287–351 = Firpo, pp. 1073–1137
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1782	Andrea Memmo	Pedani, pp. 973-1026
1786	Agostino Garzoni	Pedani, pp. 1027-1037
1789	Girolamo Zulian	Pedani, pp. 1039-1055
1793	Nicolò Foscarini	Firpo, pp. 1139–1152