

KİTAP İNCELEMESİ / BOOK REVIEW

“STORIA DELLA REPUBBLICA DI VENEZIA. LA SERENISSIMA DALLE ORIGINI ALLA CADUTA”, MONDADORI: MILANO*

(*Riccardo Calimani*)

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Riccardo Calimani, the author of the book that is being introduced and evaluated, is known especially with his writing on especially Jewish History after graduated from the department of Electronic Engineering at the Università di Padua and the department of Philosophy of Science at the Università Ca'Foscari. He has written to those books about Jewry: Storia del ghetto di Venezia (Mondadori 2000), Gesu ebreo (Mondadori 2001) and Storia dell'ebreo errante (Mondadori 2002). He was awarded the Ministry of Culture in 1986 and the European Award in 1997 as well as his numerous books and articles. Also, he has written three novels on Venice.

In the first chapter (7-59p) of Riccardo Calimani's book "Storia della Repubblica di Venezia", entitled Origins: Myths and Facts, which consists of ten chapters, appendices, chronology, list of doges, notes and bibliography, various historians' descriptions of Venice are given. The most exciting of them Paolo Paruta's Citta fortunata, che i suoi cittadini fanno senza mura, fortissima e sicura (p.7) (the lucky city that makes its citizens strong and safe without walls) and Domenico Morosini's Le istituzioni, i suoi ordinamenti, non la difendono, posizione geografica: non le mura, ma le istituzioni la proteggono (p.7) are quotations that indicate that Venice is protected by its institutions, not by the protected walls or geographical location. The author remarks the names which given to Venice by the Romans and diocese Diacono after he gave to the historians' and monks' observation on Venice. After the definitions of Venice, he examines to how the first Venetians settled to here by posing questions whether the Venetians came after Trojan War, fleeing the barbarian invasions or were they in an ancient Roman settlement by starting from Roman historian Titus Livy. It is mentioned the informations given by the historians, biographers and geographers such as Cornelius Nepos, Polybios and Strabon. After that it is given the informations about the founding of Venice by making quotations from Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos and diocese Giovanni.

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The author emphasizes that Venice, which has been living with the salt industry and fishing since its establishment, especially helped the eunuch Narses in the aim of recapturing the Italian Peninsula of Byzantium. Venice is connected to the Exarchate of Ravenna by the Byzantine emperor Herakleios after it aided to Narses and the Longobard invasion. While the author is telling the first centuries of Venice, he indicates the cronicler Cassiodorus, in his *Variae*, states that the Venetians were subject to Constantinople, but other writers, first to the ruler of Italy and then to Constantinople. After the Longobard raids, Venice elected a person known as a dux and then a doge in AD 697 according to some chronicles, and in AD 713-716 according to others. The authors gives the connection Doge Orso (726-737) with the Byzantine after these progress. While Calimani is telling to the first centuries of Venice, he points out how the state of lagoon gradually develop by giving quootations from both the modern and contemporary sources. Just as the political and commercial relations of Venice were important in this process, it was equally valuable that the body of St. Marcus was brought to Venice by two merchants and made it the patron Saint of the state. The author also tells how this myth was createdd by making use of the chronicles. In the first chapter, the author continues his book by explaining that after the internal struggles, Venice together with Pietro Orseolo II, had a strong position in both commercial and political relations in the Byzantine Empire and the Adriatic Sea since 992, and that the doge received the title *dux Veneticorum et Dalmaticorum*. The author finished the first chapter by quoting the historian Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, stating that the cult of St. Marcus and the doge is very important to all Venetians, the great development of Venice came to an end with the death of Pietro Orseolo in 1009.

The second chapter (59-78p) “Conquests and Sovereignty” starts with the doge Ottone Orseolo (1009-1026) who take the lead after the death of his father Pietro Orseolo II. It is indicated much more the internal troubles of Venice and the relationship between the Church of San Marco and the Doge of Venice became closer with the election of Domenico Selvo (1071-1084) at the beginning of this chapter. It is stated that during the reign of Domenico Selvo, there was a rapprochement with the Byzantine Emperor Alexios Komnenos I due to the threat of Norman Robert Guiscard. The testimony of the course of the war is shown by quoting Anna Komnena, the daughter of Alexios Komnenos I, one of the most important witnesses of the relations between the Normans, Venetians and Byzantines. In addition to the war, it is explained by using the work of Anna Comnena that Venice obtained privileges by Byzantine Empire and got a well position in the commercial sense in Constantinople. The second chapter is concluded by mentioning the First Crusade organized by the Christians against the Muslims in the Holy Land and the role of Venice in the First Crusade.

The third chapter (78-129p) entitled 12th Century The Rise and Development of a Empire begins with the construction of the Arsenal on the orders of Doge Ordelafo Falier (1102-1108), which the most important factor in the background of Venice’s great success in the Eastern Mediterranean and the other regions. It is mentioned to

fire and with the aid of the Crusade organized in 1110, Venice gained in privileges in Acre after the details and descriptions about the Arsenal. Although receiving privileges from Emperor Enrico IV and Alexios Komnenos I, Ordelaffo Falier who had to battle with the Hungarians, ended his reign with his death in Zara in 1118. During the period of Domenico Michiel (1118-1130) who was elected doge after Ordelaffo Falier, even though Venice had problems with the Byzantine Emperor John Komnenos II's failure to renew Venice's old privileges, but Venice's expansion in the Aegean Sea began when she attacked the Aegean Islands, which was her move against it. Moreover, it can be said that the overseas state, which will continue for many years, had been seen after these developments. At the same time Domenico Michiel created an office for Venice, the Signori di Notte, to prevent illegal work happening at night. Doge Pietro Polani (1130-1148), who was elected after Domenico Michiel, acted as an intermediary between the West and the East and ensured peace and made Venice a Commune by establishing institutions such as the Assembly of Sapientes. The third chapter is concluded by explaining the effect of Venice on the Fourth Crusade and how Doge Enrico Dandolo turned Venice into an empire after this process.

The Fourth chapter (129-176p) entitled 13th Century Serenissima's Arrogance starts with Doge Pietro Ziani (1205-1229) who was newly elected and reached many titles and continues by discussing from the difficulty of protecting the expanding territory of the republic. Indeed, the Venetian Republic, together with Pietro Ziani, had its largest colony, Crete and it was important to protect to this island. After Pietro Ziani, Jacopo Tiepolo who was a duke in the Kingdom of Candia and a podesta in Constantinople, was elected doge in Venice. The statutes he made (*Novae constitutiones sive leges*) also was discussed in the fourth chapter. Most probably the most important aspect of these laws was their maritime aspects, which Venice benefited from while colonizing the Eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea. Regarding the laws created by Jacopo Tiepolo, the author quotes another important historian, Roberto Cessi: "Tiepolo's laws were inspired by Byzantine law for the maritime part, while using Roman law for the legal part". The fourth chapter is concluded with an arrangement made in the Republic, namely Serrata. This arrangement was generally related to the elections in the Great Assembly.

The fifth chapter (176-230p) is named 14th Century The Oligarchy and Conspiracies. At the beginning of the chapter it is revealed how advanced the Duchy of Venice was in the 14th century by quoting from Martin da Canal, Gabriele Dandolo and Giacomo Bertaldo. It is especially mentioned the development of the Rialto and San Marco. The most notable part of this chapter is the parts where the change of technology in the naval wars in the Mediterranean in the 14th century and the innovations of the Republic of Venice such as large merchant galleys, new firearms and bombs suitable for his technology are explained. It is mentioned to Venice's struggle with Genoa especially for Tenedos in the territory of Byzantine Empire and the Eastern Mediterranean and the peace of Turin which was made after the war of

Chioggia in 1381 after the developments of the Republic of Venice in the seas. Then, the chapter is concluded by emphasizing that Venice increased its colonies by taking places such as Mykonos, Tinos, Peloponnese, Corfu and Durazzo in the Adriatic and Aegean Sea.

The sixth chapter (230-305p) 15th Century Between East and West: A Fragile and Fertile Balance begins again by stressing the victories of the Republic of Venice in the Adriatic and Aegean Sea, and the enlargement of the Venetian Arsenal under the name Darsena Nuovissima. It is the most interesting part of chapter mentioning football and racquet sports in Venice after emphasizing the size of Arsenal and Venice's relations with the Italian city-states. In this chapter it has been also placed the special topics like Venetian-Hungary relations and the Ottoman-Venetian relations by giving example the first war between two states in 1416 from the diaries of Marino Sanudo as well as it is mentioned that Venice was turbulent religiously, politically and commercially in the 15th century. Moreover, one of the factors mentioned in the sixth chapter is the religious and social schools in Venice under the name of "confraternite". This chapter is concluded by referring the wars between Venice and Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II and Venice became one of the three most important cities in Europe.

The seventh chapter (305-420p) entitled 16th Century Prosperity begins by dealing the discover of America, the walking around of Africa and as the balances in the Mediterranean changed, Venice faced a new situation and needed to cope with it. Then, by giving information about the balances in the Levant, the situation of countries such as France and Spain, it is mentioned that the situation of Venice, which is aware of the French pressure in Lombardy and the support of Spain against the Ottomans, is critical. However, the most important factor for Venice is the emphasis that the Rialto is still alive, despite the fact that trade is endangered by the change of sea routes. In the continuation of the chapter, it is referred that Venice, which gives much important to trade in the international relations and was the intermediary between the East and the West, lost to its dominance in the seas and trade in this century. It is noteworthy that the war Lepanto which was fought against the Ottomans and Venice participated effectively, even with seventy ships, is given in detail. The seventh chapter ends with a detailed description of the ceremony held on behalf of Doge Marino Grimani and his wife, Dogeressa, after they ascended the throne.

The eight chapter (420-487p) named 17th Century Glory and Decline starts by stating the first warnings of the decline of Venetian Republic. The first sentence of the chapter is related to the fact that although it was the most prosperous period of the state, which was also considered for the period of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I, the decline began gradually. Although Venice was experiencing its most prosperous period like the Ottoman Empire, it was on the way to collapse. The most important reason of the decline is the weakening of the economy of Europe, including Venice, due to many wars, and the dominance of England and the Netherlands in the Mediterranean. This

economic collapse experienced by Venice was also added to the plague in the early 1600s, which caused great difficulties towards the end of the Republic. Venetians constructed by the decision of the Senate the ghetto which was a new quarantine place named "il Ghetto Novissimo", after they lived this plague. The most critical decline period of Venetian Republic in 17th century was probably the Cretan Wars which lived with the Ottoman Empire between 1645-1669. The loss of Crete, Venice's most valuable colony since 1204, is described in much more detail with quotations from the war of Lepanto in "La Guerra di Candia"-it was called Candia because the duchy's capital was Heraklion. Venice lost its control in Mediterranean with the seizure of Crete after Cyprus. The chapter ends by mentioning some of the wars with the Turks after the Cretan War and the fact that England and the Netherlands were the only "super" Powers in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

The ninth chapter (487-553p) entitled 18th Century The Collapse begins by mentioning that after the long and costly wars with the Turks from 1684 to 1699, the Treaty of Karlowitz which guaranteed the Peloponnese was made, but that it did not benefit Venice much. Although Venice still dominates the Adriatic Sea, it has begun to weaken commercially. The fact that the Republic of Venice had a population of 2 million 800 thousand in an area of approximately 50 thousand kilometers in Terra (Land), Mar (Sea) and Duchy in the 18th century made it difficult to battle with countries such as France and Spain, their rivals at that time. The Venetian Republic which remaining neutral between the struggles of the "super" powers in Europe, lost to its dominance in the Peloponnese since the Ottoman Empire captured territories such as Tinos, Aegina, Argo, Naupflia, Koroni and Methoni in 1715. With the Treaty of Passarowitz signed in 1718, it became official that the Republic of Venice lost the islands of Peloponnese, Tinos and Aegina, but protected Imoschi in Dalmatia. It is mentioned that the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire remained enemies to each other, but the worst wars were left behind after the Treaty of Pasarofca. Then, it is emphasized that the Venetian Terraferma was under siege by the Austrians and that the Venetian port was still important but no longer of great importance in Mediterranean trade. This chapter which is mostly emphasized the neutrality of Venice in 18th century, ends with Venetian festivals and carnivals.

The tenth chapter (553-576p) named the Fall 1789-1797 starts by stressing the struggles between Austria, Prussia and Sardenia and the rebellions in Europe and the silence of Venice. The author gave an example to the neutrality of Venice was the rejection of the Senate when Spain joined a union in 1792. The Republic of Venice had refused one more time to seek alliances with Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, the Netherlands, Spain and Sardenia in 1793. The chapter naturally ends with the narrative of the end of the Republic of Venice. The author concludes to his book by giving place to the speeches in the Great Assembly, the disorder that dominates every institution in Venice, and that the French captured the city on May 16, 1797 in this disorder in this part.

The Republic of Venice, lived from AD 400 to AD 1797 and gained the independence from Byzantine Empire in 800's, became a great power by taking privileges firstly Byzantine Empire and then the European State and Turks in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea. The Republic of Venice which assumed the role of intermediary between the East and the West, made important contributions not only to itself but also to other states around it. The author has tried to write a comprehensive book by dealing with the entire history of this state, which has survived for many years. Although the book focuses on the political history and bilateral relations of the Republic of Venice in general, information about Venice's institutions, population, sport games, festivals and socio-economic situation are also very well interspersed in the book. The most striking factor in Calimani's book is the deepening and support of the subject, especially by quoting from the sources of the period.

Although Riccardo Calimani mentions almost every aspect related to Venice in his book, some topics are missing. It is a handicap of such books that some points are missing when the entire history of a state is told. Calimani does not mention the Seljuks-Venetian relations, the two states made a treaty in 1220. This treaty was important for the commercial presence of Venice and Seljuks in the Mediterranean. Even though the Venetians and Seljuks did not interact much, the author's failure to mention the relations between the later Turkish Western Anatolian Principalities such as Aydinoglus and Menteshoglus and Venice is an important loss in terms of understanding the colonization process of Venice in the Mediterranean and Aegean Islands. These principalities were so crucial that the Venetians even became the pioneers of the union (Lega) against them. Also Venetians made treaties with them via Duca di Candia. In this sense, another deficiency of the book is that it does not mention the Duca di Candia, which was of great importance in Venice's colonization in the Mediterranean, and the Venetian system there.

In addition, while the wars between the Ottomans and Venice are mentioned, the wars won by the Turks are briefly explained, while the wars in which the Venetians were also involved and won are explained in detail. Objectivity is important in using sources in historiography. In this sense, it is a lack that the author does not use any Turkish copyrighted books or archive sources even though he mentions about the Ottomans. It is acceptable to some extent that Ottoman sources cannot be read due to the language. However, the author could have benefited from Ottoman historians such as Halil Inalcık and Suraiya Faroqhi, whose many writings on Ottoman History are available in English. At the same time, books by authors like Zinkeisen and Joseph Von Hammer who wrote about the Ottoman Empire and included Ottoman-Venetian relations in their books, could be used. Besides, the Republic of Venice made so many wars at the sea against the other states but the Serenissima's aim was always to improve its maritime trade in the Mediterranean, Aegean Islands and Black Sea. In this sense, the author could deal much more with Venice's maritime trade in Mediterranean and Black Sea. Also, it is not mentioned to trade between Venice and the Islamic state

such as Mamluks, Aydınoglus and Menteseoglus. It would have been better to touch on Venice's trade rather than political and military events.

