

Vocational and Cultural Training of Albanians in the Post Middle age Period



Cultural Studies

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of a survey on professions and cultural formation of Albanians in Venice in post middle age's period, based on funds of the Venetian and Albanian archives. At the end of the fourteenth century, reports and dominance of the Venetian hegemony in Albania oscillates and changes leaving to the country a new and aggressive power in growth – The Ottoman Empire. Political instability inside Albanian territory stands for some reason the Albanian emigration. In front of all these foreigners that it is sometimes difficult to discern whether they lived in Venice or not, the city of Doxha was becoming was for many Orientals a second home where they were exercising their activities. Viewing community and official reports and referring to the school of San Maurizio in the recorded data Matricola, ie the statute which was regulating the life of society, allows us to learn about the presence of Albanians in Venice and occupations followed by them. The study except professions also provides an analysis in the field of culture where Albanians gave a very high contribution by becoming known throughout the world as well as through schools that they had created had a high cultural formation in which the creation of these schools affected very well to the preservation of cultural traditions.

Introduction

Having attended the Venice city archives I could rethink the importance and Albanian immigrants' moves towards Lagoon. With the appearance of the Ottomans in the Arber space, there were caused many flight movements toward the coast of Italy. Undoubtedly, the decline of Venetian castles in Albania, Shkoder (1479), Durres (1501) and then Bar, Ulcinj, actually caused an influx into the city of lagoons. With the decline of these castles, the emigration of Albanians in the city of Venice was very dense. From researches conducted it is shown that the number of Albanians reached 637.

Shortly before the fall of Shkodra in 1478, the Senate complained because it was in Venice "*in conspectu et oculis omnium... tanta albanesium turba fame perentium*", so decided to send them in Istria.¹⁴ In 1479 the Senate concerned issues a decree and orders that the Albanian refugees to be limited in the Venetian lagoon.¹⁵

Albanians who refused to bow down to the new invaders found in Venetian soil multilateral favors, they were caught with incumbency work in the city and took lands in Friuli, while widows of the fallen Shkodran men in war were given ample pensions.¹⁶ Despite the hospitality of the neighbouring country problems raised with Albanian emigrants but also of other countries in Venice were numerous as religious beliefs, avoidance, assimilation.

For some Orthodox Albanians who were a minority of this faith and for the Greeks who were a large number, the main obstacles to the recognition of Signor were put for their cultural identity which was not political but religious. Even if orthodox were Catholics still can not be considered more than a small margin, from the Roman Catholic state.

¹⁴ Senato Terra, Reg. 7, c. 197v, 1478. Senato Mar, Reg. 11, c. 38, 1479.

¹⁵ ibidem.

¹⁶ *Venezia e Albania tracce di antichi legami* p.7.

We might add that the Venetian State consistently reacted to Romanesque church.¹⁷ However it would take a century for Greeks to practice in freedom and in their church the Orthodox cult.¹⁸ The saying “Veneziani, poi cristiani” reflects the relationships that the city had with Latin Christianity where the Latin word found its expression in the Pope's orders.¹⁹

Thus, the city of Venice was the city of freedom because it was not subjected neither from the religion nor the patriarch, neither from the Pope although it had to face with him. It became a secular state which according to Guido Calogero this makes Venice a state which could not favour the mixture of cultures and tolerance. Despite all the difficulties that the Republic came across with, it decided to put in motion the integration mechanisms. It was not to the concentration of a single culture (as it's with its origin or the host country), but also to be considered also the migration as a cultural fact. There is seen a very large evolution of Albanians in various professional fields such as teacher, doctor, notary, artists, etc, where with their talents they were best integrated in the host country.

But the sailors, scribes, navigators, ship masters, where Albanians can be mentioned: Domenico²⁰ and Michele²¹ from Durres, scribe with Donato Blanco²², Giorgio and Pietro di Viviano in the works with the skin where they were sewing the fur.²³

One of the jobs that were exercised in Venice were also servants, but it is very important to distinguish between cheap housekeepers and those slaves brought from various eastern countries, among which an Albanian from Shkoder called Maria who was under orders of Orsatto Morosini for seven years in a row at a price of twenty pieces of gold.²⁴

But part of the council of Pergati held on November 22, 1386, which was confirmed by another on April 29, 1455, prohibits all human sales made outside and specifies that all purchases made in the territory of Durres and in other countries, should be left free and prevents them to be exported from Venice.²⁵

Another craft was the one of the courier who would take messages in short distances. In this craft were many Albanians among whom we can mention Pietro di Scutari, Nicolo di Durachio and Andrea D'Alessio.²⁶ Not missing and physicians such as Giovanni Domenico Nigros.²⁷

Another profession that is worth mentioning was also miniatures, design, and paintings which were used very cleverly by Albanians. One of them was Domenico, fabricating masks; it was Gastaldo from the School of Albanians in 1574.²⁸

Going back to the professions, other professions remain such as the one of the builders who were producing different types of decorations, for domestic uses and above all that of ornamental paintings. This kind of work was typically Balkan work and especially from the tradition of the Albanian mountains.

¹⁷ G. Fedalto, *Ricerche storiche sulla posizione giuridica ed ecclesiastica dei greci a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI*, Firenze 1967.

¹⁸ *ibidem*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.151

²⁰ Notatorio del Collegio, Reg.2,c.83v, 1387.

²¹ Grazie,XVII,c.34v,1390.

²² Raspe,3694,c.216,1449.Privilegi,II,c.40,1467.Raspe,3655,c.105,1482.

²³ M. Vicentini, *Tipografia del comercio*, Archivio Veneto sec.13-14, 1877, pg. 111.

²⁴ V. Cibrario, *opera cit.*, vol.I, pag.215.

²⁵ NOTATORIO DEL COLLEGIO, VI, c.191v. *ibid.*, VII,cc. 78,83v, 1443.*ibid.*, VII, c. 81, 1442. MISTI DEI DIECI, 14,c.112, 1452. *ibid.*, 16, c. 96, 1431.

²⁶ L. NADIN, *Migrazioni e Integrazione, Il caso degli albanesi a Venezia (1479 – 1552)*, Bulzoni 2008, fq. 122.

²⁷ *ibidem*, p. 123.

²⁸ *ibidem*, p. 123.

Masters of glass was another profession, we remember the master Stefano dal Dagno who stands at the beginning of '400 who were appointed to the Murano furnaces "alla Pigna" run by an Albanian family at the end of '400, Nicolò di Biagio from Drishti, an Albanian who continues this tradition. In 1511 he was registered as owner of the oven.²⁹

Indeed an innovative measure provides that any alien naturalized citizen can work in: “*veluta, camoca, panni damasceni, brocati, et cuiscumque sortis laboreria sete auri et sete argente cuiscumque latitudinis mensure...*”³⁰

Since 1350, consuls of traders judged as not necessary the fact to increase the number of artisans.³¹ Now up to that time, foreigners were not entitled to exercise some crafts or at least should, before making use of certain materials, require government permission.³² Marriage in the Venetian land was one of the main factors of assimilation of Albanians. It was chosen between residents of the same **parroke** but not always happened between two persons of the same colony.

Mixed marriages allowed being individualized with ethnic groups. We can say that the marriage between two persons of the same colony was more frequent than between Venetians and foreigners. Also, marriages between Albanians and Dalmatians were more frequent than with the Greeks.³³ Perhaps for the need of each other on immigration and refugees they had created brotherhood associations. We can highlight as mentioned above the most frequent brotherly ties between Dalmatians and Albanians.

Regardless of communication in a foreign language, the mother tongue was used in households with relatives and friends. Then family and friendly ties were very strong to Albanian refugees. A high cultural background has influenced the Albanians through schools that they have created. As mentioned above many Albanians were Orthodox, which may well differ from baptismal names like Theodor Demetrio, Basilio, but did not constitute the majority of the Orthodox community. So around mid four hundredth Albanian and Dalmatian colonies grew in numbers and asked permission from the tithing Council to establish the Albanian school. The Albanians had to face many difficulties in obtaining authorization for the establishment of this school.

In fact the number of "small schools" increased, so tithes Council decided: “*quod non possit concedi quod fiat aliqua scola nisi captum fuerit per tres partes Consilii de Decem*”³⁴. This order obliges Albanians to fight more for the creation of the school. Until 1442, Albanians were joined in the monastery near the Church of San Severo San Gallo, protected by Lady of Good Counsel called also the Lady of Shkodra. Albanian colony then takes the name of the school of Santa Maria and San Gallo.

The school continued to exist until February 27, 1447, the day on which the Board of School allowed ten Albanians to be transferred to the Church of San Maurizio's where formally renounces its existence. Besides schools which helped in the cultivation and preservation of Albanian culture, a distinguished group of Albanian intellectuals fled from their homeland in order to escape Turkish occupation where with their knowledge and actions made a major contribution in the host country. Brothers Giovanni and Paolo Gazulli, poet Michele Marulli, chronicler Marino Barlezio, philosopher Leonik Tomeu, painter Vitore Karpagio and many others who excelled with their talent and works, left footprints on the immigration country being recognized worldwide.

²⁹ SENATO MISTI, Reg. 48, c. 15v, 1410

³⁰ CONSOLI DEI MERCANTI, Capitolare, b. 55, 1350. MAGGIOR CONSIGLIO, Novella, c.5.

³¹ COMUNE, I, c.143, 1251-1382.

³² C.I., b, 243, 1465, Not. Antonio Zio.

³³ CONSIGLIO DEI DIECI, MISTI, Reg.5, c. 44, 1349.

³⁴ CONSIGLIO DEI DIECI, MISTI, Reg.13, c.91, 1447.

Despite the integration of foreigners in the Venetian land the concept "stranier" remains an extremely portable concept. The terminology is based on the word "forestier" o "foresta", which does not show not to be Italian, but not to be Venetian. It is a political term in which Venetian state was making reference to another absolute criterion, namely "venezianità" in virtue of which a Venetian citizen, a sailor or a craftsman, born in Venice were respected more in the eyes of the authorities rather than a foreigner no matter how cultured he was.³⁵

Despite the difficulties that Albanian immigrants had to integrate into the host country in 1500, it will be to talk less about their homes because among four hundredth, documents in public or private archives are far less accurate than before. Place of residence is not always specified, many professions come and ignored. It seems as if the country is ever changing and evolving so as mentalities. This happens because the emigrants but also foreigners are integrated and better adapted to the culture of the country where they live. It is about a social transformation, mental and cultural giving less importance to the specifics to stop only to person.

Conclusions

Presenting the research and analyze the history of Venice we could see how it has been one the most evolutionary and revived states of the time. Its evolution includes all areas and it is one of the states which evolved faster than other countries. St. Mark's Republic or the Republic of Venice was a democratic state which allowed Albanian immigrants to exercise their profession in complete freedom, although in the interest of the Republic. Although Albanians faced many difficulties in the lagoon city but also in other cities, they managed to integrate themselves to the best they could in the Venetian society, where in addition to the economic development they have given to the host country; through their intelligence they have provided also a fairly high contribution. Their contribution these artists gave not only with their works but by reflecting their intellect in the universities of Padua, Venice and various Italian universities.

References

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³⁵ G.FEDALTO, *Le minoranze straniere a Venezia tra politica e legislazione, passim*.