

Sefâretnâmes – Ottoman Embassy Reports Edition

A Collaborative Publication Project of

Topkapı Palace Archives and Library,

Oriental Institute – University of Vienna,

Institute for Cultural Studies and History of Theatre (Austrian Academy of Sciences),

Austrian Historical Institute at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome,

Department of History – Ca' Foscari University Venice,

and

Don Juan Archiv Wien

Don Juan Archiv Wien (thereafter DJA; www.donjuanarchiv.at), an archive and research institute specializing in the study of European theatre, opera and cultural history, conducts scholarly projects on a variety of theatre-historical topics as well as cooperative projects with various European scholarly institutions. One such project is “Ottoman Empire & European Theatre” which, since 2008 has been realized through international symposia held annually in Vienna and Istanbul, and through publication of the symposia proceedings. Affiliated with this project is the research on “Opera and Diplomacy”, which investigates the interrelations of the two fields named in the project’s title in their Ottoman-European context, with a centre in papal Rome between the years of the second siege of Vienna by the Ottoman army (1683) and the death of Emperor Charles VI (1740). Among the most interesting of the source material relied on for the Ottoman side of this research are *sefâretnâmes*, mission reports and travel diaries by Ottoman envoys.

The wide-ranging Ottoman diplomacy, documented since 1384, includes a large number of states in Africa, Asia and Europe; here, after the Byzantine Empire (1389-1451), especially during the early periods, the Italian states, such as Genoa, Venice, Florence, and Naples played a role as well as the Dalmatian Republic of Ragusa, soon followed by the states ruled by the House of Austria, such as Spain (since 1519) and the Holy Roman Empire (since 1521), later also by France (since 1569) and others. The first and for a while the most complete catalogue of envoys and ambassadors to and from the Sublime Porte, representing fifty political states, was compiled by the Austrian diplomat, orientalist and first president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856) in his monumental *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (Pest, 10 vols., 1827-1835)¹.

Sefâretnâmes have been kept from Ottoman embassies to Africa (Morocco), Asia (Bukhara, China, Mogul India, Persia), and Europe (Holy Roman Empire; Austria, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Poland, Prussia, Russia, Spain, Sweden). After 80 years of academic research, the existence of an approximate of 50 such texts known to date can be confirmed. The oldest of the *sefâretnâmes* dates back to 1495 and originates from an embassy to Pécs in the Apostolic Kingdom of Hungary; the last two from Europe were written from Lombardy in the Austrian Empire in 1838 and from Paris in 1845.

In the Turkish Republic, Topkapı Palace Archives and Library in Istanbul holds the most relevant stock of *sefâretnâmes*; followed by Istanbul University Library; and by Vienna (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek), which holds the third largest collection and the most relevant *sefâretnâme* stock outside the Turkish Republic. The majority of these manuscript documents of diplomacy either have not been edited or have been edited in a way that is inconsistent with modern critical academic standards. It is in the interest of the international community of researchers to realize the publication of the complete corpus of Ottoman *sefâretnâmes* in historical-critical editions, including all the related sources.

Being a representative of European historians of all disciplines, the Vienna University’s Oriental Institute is ready to endorse the editing and publication of these documents with scholarly assistance.

Hence, DJA proposed scholarly (non-financial) cooperation among relevant scholarly institutions worldwide. Headed by the Topkapı Palace Archives and Library, together with Vienna University’s Oriental Institute, this cooperation actually encompasses the Institut für Kulturwissenschaften und Theatergeschichte (IKT) der Österreichischen

¹ Almost 150 years after Hammer-Purgstall, the first scholar to treat the Ottoman envoys and ambassadors and their *sefâretnâmes* up to the establishment of permanent embassies in 1835 has been Faik Reşit Unat in his *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefâretnâmeleri* (completed and edited in 1968 by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal; re-edited Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1987).

Akademie der Wissenschaften ('Institute for Cultural Studies and History of Theatre of the Austrian Academy of Sciences'), the Istituto Storico Austriaco presso il Foro Austriaco di cultura a Roma ('Austrian Historical Institute at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome') and the Department of History of Ca' Foscari University Venice.

Potential cooperating institutions may include major Turkish universities, such as Galatasaray, Istanbul and Bilkent Universities, as well as the leading universities of all countries where Ottoman ambassadors were sent to, and all institutions keeping *sefâretnâme* manuscripts. Further cooperating partners may also include U.S. universities, hosting relevant Departments of Oriental and Ottoman studies, such as (in alphabetical order) Columbia, Harvard, Michigan and Princeton Universities, and not least, the Archivum Secretum Vaticanum and Studium Fæsulanum.

The *sefâretnâmes* edition may be extended to include other embassy documents, such as *lâyības* ('memoranda'), *risâles* ('messages', 'letters') or *takerîrs* ('reports', 'chronicles'), or other relevant archival material including contemporary European journals, newspapers and periodicals, etc.; or, as types of observation covering the whole of Europe, writings by Imperial diplomats (such as Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall), relations of Venetian *bailos* (kept in the State Archives of Venice), or the eventual relations of papal legates and nuncios (kept in the Vatican's secret Archive). Such additional documents would contribute to a broad contextualization of the rich corpus of Ottoman *sefâretnâmes*.

The following conditions are anticipated for the project's realization:

- An academic advisory board shall be established for scholarly assessment of the project.
- Scholarly transparency in each phase of the project is to be maintained by all participating institutions.
- The edition of *sefâretnâmes* to be published by the collaboration of the above mentioned institutions is designed to include the following material for each *sefâretnâme*: 1) a digitalized facsimile of the original manuscript(s); 2) a diplomatic transcription² of the Ottoman language text in Arabic alphabet; 3) a diplomatic transcription of the text originally written in the Arabic alphabet into the modern Turkish alphabet; 4) a Turkish translation; 5) an English translation; and 6) a rich, in-depth historical commentary.
- An online workspace (future virtual library) offered by DJA within its official Web site shall provide the source materials (permitted by their holders) for project participants.
- Home to the most relevant stock of *sefâretnâmes* in the world, and as to preside to the project partners, Topkapı Palace Archives and Library will provide the project's workspace and future digital library with the digitalizations of their hold of *sefâretnâmes*, thus intending to inspire the other participating institutions in providing their digitalized core material for the favour of the project.
- A Web presentation will be developed by DJA to link and introduce the project to the Web sites of the cooperating institutions.
- The scholarly work shall be entrusted to the highest qualified doctoral and postdoctoral candidates as their dissertations/habilitations at their universities; hence the work will be academically embedded.
- An academic meeting for scholarly discussion and peer review will be held in Istanbul preceding the publication of each volume.
- The book series shall be published by DJA's permanent publishing partner HOLLITZER Wissenschaftsverlag in cooperation with a leading Turkish publishing house, such as The ISIS Press.
- DJA will act as the projects organizer and general editor of the series.

The cultural-historical value of the Ottoman *sefâretnâmes* is indisputable. This editing project aims to contribute to the fundamental sources of scholarly studies on the subject which embraces diplomatic, thus cultural, relations of the Ottoman Empire and the European states; and it considers Istanbul and Vienna as capitals of Empires, both of which are historically connected to Rome and the Roman Empire as their successors (*translatio imperii*).

From this perspective, and due to its status as both a centre for oriental studies since the foundation of the Oriental Academy by Maria Theresa in 1754 and as a seat of an orientalist vogue in the nineteenth century, Vienna appears as *porta Orientis* (Hofmannsthal). One very important example of the close interchange between the two empires is Murad Efendi (1836-1881), a native Viennese and later Ottoman diplomat, who, as a cultural translator, strove for mutual understanding between the both cultures.

Supported by the *Austrian Consulate General* and *Austrian Cultural Institute* (Avusturya Kültür Ofisi) of Istanbul, the project will contribute to the continuation and maintenance of the age-long cultural interchange and its legacy between Turkey and Austria.

² A diplomatic or documentary transcription of the text in its original Ottoman language that represents the manuscript in the modern Turkish alphabet without editorial emendations.

The Cooperation Partners

Topkapı Palace Museum

(<http://www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr/eng/tarihce.html>)

Constructed by Fatih Sultan Mehmet (the Conqueror) in 1478, Topkapı Palace has been the official residence of the Ottoman sultans and the centre of state administration for 380 years until the construction of Dolmabahçe Palace by Sultan Abdülmecid (1823-1861, r.1839-1861). Having had approximately 700,000 m² area during its foundation years, the palace currently ranges over an area of 80,000 m².

Topkapı Palace was inaugurated as a museum for visitors during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid in the nineteenth century. On order of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Topkapı Palace was affiliated with the Istanbul Asar-ı Atika Museums Directorate and was opened to the public on April 3, 1924; it then served as Treasury Chamberlain, later renamed the Treasury Directorate and subsequently the Topkapı Palace Museum Directorate. Together with its library and archives, Topkapı is a leading museum worldwide.

Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien – University of Vienna Oriental Institute

(<http://orientalistik.univie.ac.at>)

Founded in 1886, the Oriental Institute at the Faculty of Philology and Cultural Studies at the University of Vienna counts to the most respected Oriental Institutes in Europe. The department's research embraces historical-cultural, historical, as well as linguistic topics relating to the Near and Middle East, with particular reference to the Ottoman Empire.

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Department of History

(http://www.unive.it/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7020)

Founded in 1868 as "Scuola superiore di commercio" with a focus on economics and languages – including oriental languages – and gifted with a section of consular studies for future diplomats, the school obtained Italy's first faculty of languages in 1954 and became a university in 1962. Its Department of History became especially famous for its wide-ranging oriental studies.

Institut für Kulturwissenschaften und Theatergeschichte (IKT)

der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften –

(“Institute for Cultural Studies and History of Theatre of the Austrian Academy of Sciences”)

(http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ikt/index_e.html)

The Austrian Academy of Sciences, founded in 1847 (Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall being its first president), operates the Institute for Cultural Studies and Theatre History, among other departments. The research of this institute is guided by theories and conventions of the contemporary transdisciplinary discourse of cultural studies. The combination of diverse research fields – including among others historical, literary, translation and political studies, as well as theatre history – opens up new perspectives. The IKT's contribution shall therefore concentrate on questions of cultural translation, specifically on the paradigm of *translatio imperii* as theoretical background of the editorial work.

Österreichisches Historisches Institut Rom (OeHIRom) – Austrian Historical Institute in Rome

(<http://www.oehirom.it>)

The Austrian Historical Institute at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome (*Istituto Storico Austriaco a Roma*), founded in 1881, is one of the oldest non-Italian scientific institutions in Italy. The institute's most important areas of research concern history from antiquity to the present, as well as art history and the history of music.

Generalkonsulat der Republik Österreich / Österreichisches Kulturforum Istanbul

(<http://www.aussenministerium.at/kultur/istanbul.html>)

Both institutions are located in the Yeniköy Palace. The edifice was built in the 1850s and was gifted, together with its park, on September 28, 1882, by Sultan Abdülhamit II (1842-1918, r.1876-1909) to Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830-1916, r.1848-1916) to be used as a summer residence for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's ambassadors. Since 1991 the Austrian General Consulate and since 1994 the Austrian Cultural Forum have been housed there; they host, among many other cultural and scientific events, the Istanbul part of the DJA's annual symposia “Ottoman Empire & European Theatre”, which began in 2008.

HOLLITZER Wissenschaftsverlag
(<http://www.hollitzer.net>)

HOLLITZER Wissenschaftsverlag, part of the HOLLITZER Group (founded in 1849), is a Viennese publishing house specializing in scholarly publications in the fields of theatre, music, and cultural studies.

The ISIS Press
(<http://www.theisispress.org>)

The ISIS Press, founded in 1984, is an Istanbul based scholarly editing and publishing house, specializing in the history of the Ottoman Empire and history of Ottoman diplomacy.

Proposed Academic Advisory Board:

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Prof. Markus Köhbach (University of Vienna Oriental Institute)

Prof. Maria Pia Pedani (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Department of History)

Dr. Johannes Feichtinger, Dr. Federico Italiano (IKT Vienna) – Dr. Ulrike Outschar (OeHIRom)

[Additional members, mainly representatives of the cooperating institutions, to be defined]

Read, approved and signed

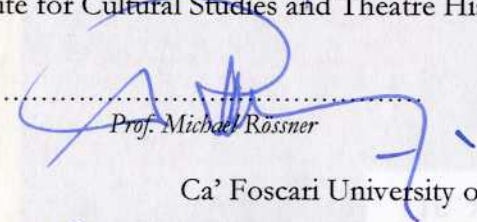
Topkapı Palace Museum Archives and Library


Prof. İlber Ortaylı, President

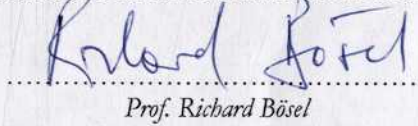
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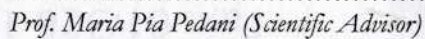

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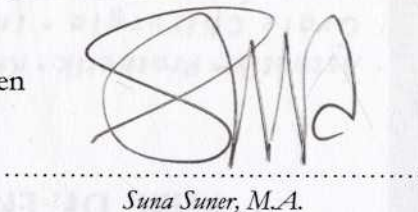

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