

## ITALIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO TURKISH PAEDIATRICS DURING THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

### TALIJANSKI DOPRINOS TURSKEJ PEDIJATRIJI ZA OSMANSKOG CARSTVA

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#### SUMMARY

*The Ottoman Empire maintained close relations with the neighbouring Italian city states in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Yacub Pasha (1425-1481), personal physician of Mehmed II the Conqueror, was an Italian Jew who advanced to the title of pasha and vizier. Domenico Hierosolimitano (ca. 1552-1622), the third physician to Sultan Murad III, was a Jerusalemite rabbi. His book is an important source about everyday life and medical practice in Istanbul at the time. Nuh bin Abd al-Mennab (1627-1707), also of Italian stock, was the Chief Physician of the Ottoman Empire, who translated a pharmacopoeia into Turkish. In the same century, two Italians, Israel Conegliano (Conian) and Tobia Cohen became private physicians to leading Ottoman pashas and the Grand Vizier. A. Vuccino (1829-1893) and Antoine Calleja Pasha (1806-1893) taught at the Istanbul Medical School. Italy was a favoured country for medical education during the early period of Ottoman westernisation. Sanizade Mehmet Ataulлах Efendi (1771-1826) translated the first medical book printed in the Ottoman Empire from Italian into Turkish. Mustafa Behcet Efendi (1774-1833), chief physician to the Sultan and the founder of the first western medical school in Turkey, translated several medical books from Italian into Turkish. The first printed pharmacopoeia in the Ottoman Empire was also originally Italian. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edouard Ottoni and his son Giuseppe Ottoni were well-known military pharmacists, both under the name of Faik Pasha. Probably the most*

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*influential physician of Italian origin was Giovanni Battista Violi (1849-1928), who had practiced paediatrics in Turkey for more than fifty years. Violi was the founder of the first children's hospital, the first vaccine institute, and the first paediatric journal in the Ottoman Empire.*

**Key words:** *Italian physicians; Ottoman Empire; Turkish paediatrics*

The Ottoman Empire lasted from 1299 until 1922. It was in many respects the Islamic successor to the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, with the capital in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Ottoman Turkish: Istanbul and Kostantiniyye). At the peak of its power (16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century), the Ottoman Empire spanned three continents, controlling much of South East Europe, West Asia, and North Africa. It had 29 provinces and numerous vassal states, some of which were later absorbed into the empire, while others were granted various types of autonomy. The empire had been the centre of interactions between the Far East and West for six centuries. The Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I after aligning with Germany. Its dissolution at the end of the war led to the formation of 40 new nations in East Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, many of them on land once claimed by the Romans.

Many historians refer to the Ottoman Empire with its territorial lands and administrative structure as “Islamic Roman Empire”. One of the Ottoman Sultan’s long list of titles appears to be “Kayser-i Rum” (i.e. “Roman Caesar”). Ottoman architecture (mosques and baths) was influenced by Byzantine architecture. Ottoman classical music arose largely from a confluence of Byzantine, Arabic, and Persian tradition.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire maintained close relations with the neighbouring Italian city states. The Italian community in the east, particularly in Istanbul, was the largest and the oldest compared to other European communities. Indeed, in the European quarters of Istanbul, Galata and Pera, Italian had been the most common language since the Byzantine period.

Mehmed II, who conquered Constantinople in 1453, had a personal physician Yacub Pasha (1425-1481), who was an Italian Jew, also known as Maestro Jacopo or Giacomo. He was born in Gaeta in Italy and studied medicine there. After he came to the Ottoman capital of Edirne (before the conquest of Constantinople), as Pope Nicola V excommunicated Jews and Arabs,

Jacopo changed name to Jacob. He became court physician during the reign of Murad II and continued to serve under his son Mehmed II. A year before the conquest of Constantinople, Yacub was promoted to the title of pasha, the highest military rank in the Turkish army. During the reign of Mehmed II, he was appointed *Defterdar* (Minister of Finance), and then vizier. Yacub Pasha was interested in the diseases of the adrenal gland and he named one of these diseases *behak*. This disease was later named after Thomas Addison (1783-1860), who described pernicious anaemia and changes in the adrenals in 1855 [1].

Two Ottoman Sultans had Italian origin from the maternal side. Nurbanu Sultan (ca. 1525- 1583), consort of Sultan Selim II and mother of Sultan Murad III, was probably of noble Venetian birth (Olivia or Celilia Venier-Baffo). Safiya Sultan (ca. 1550-1603), consort of Sultan Murad III and mother of Sultan Mehmed III, was born Sofia Baffo, daughter to the Venetian Governor of Corfu and a relative of Giorgio Baffo. She was captured by corsairs and presented to the Imperial Harem [2].

Domenico Hierosolimitano (ca. 1552–1622) was the third physician to Sultan Murad III in Istanbul, somewhere between 1578/79 and 1588/89. He probably owes this appointment to the Sultan's wife Safiya. Domenico was in fact a Jerusalemite rabbi (*Chaccham*), formerly known as Samuel Vivas. He was admitted to the Venetian Pia Casa dei Catecumeni at the age of 38 in 1593 and was baptised in the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in 1593. His book entitled *Vera relatione della gran città di Constantinopoli et del Serraglio del Gran Turca* of 1611 is an important source of information about everyday life and contemporary medical practice in Istanbul [2].

The Chief Physician of the Ottoman Empire Nuh bin Abd al-Mennab (Rethymno, Crete, 1627 – Istanbul, 1707) was of Italian origin, who graduated from the Padua Medical School. He translated *Pharmacopoeia by Melchios* into Turkish as *Tercume-i Akrabadin Meliku*. He married a Turkish lady and had eight sons, one of whom, Hekimoglu Ali Pasha (1689-1758), held the office of Grand Vizier three times (between 1732 and 1755).

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, outstanding Italian physicians - all Padua Medical School graduates - had been practicing medicine in Istanbul. Alexander Mavrokordatos (1641-1709), an Ottoman Greek, was personal physician to the Grand Viziers of the Koprulu family, and Grand Dragoman (secret counsellor to the Sultan). Sultan Ahmed III appointed Alexander's son Nicholas (1670-1730) to the throne of Moldavia in 1709. Israel Conegliano

(Conian) was born in Padua in 1650 and settled in Istanbul in 1675. He became personal physician to Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha (1634-83), who commanded the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683. Tobia Cohen was born in Metz in 1652 and became private physician to Mehmed Rami Pasha (1654-1706), Grand Vizier and Minister of Foreign Affairs. A. Vuccino (1829-1893) graduated from the Padua Medical School, became obstetrician in Paris and finally professor at the Istanbul Medical School. Antoine Calleja Pasha (1806-1893) was professor of organic chemistry at the Istanbul Medical School and the director of the palace pharmacy.[3,4].

In the early period of Ottoman westernisation, Italy became a favoured destination for medical education. Sanizade Mehmet Ataullah Efendi (1771-1826) translated the Italian version of a textbook *Medizinisch Praktischer Unterricht für die Feld und Landwundaerzte der Österreichischen Staaten* (1776) by Anton Baron von Störck (1731-1803). The Turkish version *Miyaru'l Etibba* was the first printed medical textbook in the Ottoman Empire (1812).

Mustafa Behcet Efendi (1774-1833), chief physician to the Sultan, after returning to Istanbul from Venice translated several medical books from Italian into Turkish. He inaugurated the first western medical school (Tiphane-i Amire) in Istanbul in 1827. Some of the school professors such as Bogos Efendi and Antuan bin Ishak had graduated from Italian medical schools. The teaching language was French, but Italian was the second language for the third-year students [5].

Hôpital du Gouvernement de Sardaigne (Hôpital Sarde) was founded for sick Italian sailors in Istanbul in 1810 and in 1861 renamed to Regio Ospedale Italiano (today Italian Hospital). At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the hospital employed Italian physicians such as Agostino Salvatori and his son Giuseppe Salvatori, Eusebio Valli, and Antonio Pezzoni [4].

The first printed Ottoman pharmacopeia (Istanbul, 1818) was a Greek translation *Farmakopiia Genike* by Dionisios Pirrou (1774-1853) of Brugnatelli's *Pharmacopea Generale* [4].

The Ottoman pharmacy remembers two distinguished families of pharmacists; the Ottonis - Edouard, who emigrated to Istanbul in 1819 and became military pharmacist and his son Giuseppe (Joseph) – and the Della Suddas - Francesco (1814-1866), who received the pasha title as a military pharmacist and his son Giorgio (1835-1913), who was a graduate of the Paris School of Pharmacy, head of the Ottoman Military Central Pharmacy and eventually a pasha, carrying the name Faik Pasha, just like his father. He

received the Legion of Honour as an Ottoman representative for his drugs exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1867 [4,6].

However, probably the most influential physician was Giovanni Battista Violi. He was born in Modena in 1849, specialised in paediatrics in Austria, and worked in Thessaloniki, then migrated to Istanbul in 1874. In Turkey he had practiced paediatrics for more than fifty years until his death in 1928. Violi was the founder of the first children's hospital in the Ottoman Empire, Ospedale Internazionale di San Giorgio dei Bambini (1895). This hospital was the first with X-ray facilities in the empire. Ten years later (1905), the hospital was transferred to another part of the city and was re-named to L'Hôpital International des Enfants à Chichli and later to L'Hôpital et Clinique International pour les Maladies des Enfants à Chichli. In addition, Violi founded an outpatient clinic in Pera (Beyoğlu), the St George's Sanatorium for Children on Antigoni (Burgaz Island) in Istanbul (1902), and the first vaccine institute in 1880. This Etablissement Vaccinogène was the single vaccine and serum producer in the country until 1892. To support these health institutions, he also founded the Société Internationale pour la Protection de l'Enfance in 1897. The institutions were also supported by the sisters of St Vincent de Paul and by the Italian Society in Istanbul [6,7].

Last but not least, Violi founded the first paediatric journal in the Ottoman Empire, *La Pédiatrie en Turquie / Turkiye'de Emraz-i Etfal*, a bilingual monthly, published between 31 January 1909 and 1 June 1914 (31 issues) [7]. These deep-rooted historical ties between Italian and Turkish paediatricians have continued to this day with a prospect to become even closer in the future.

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## SAŽETAK

U XVI. i XVII. stoljeću Osmansko je Carstvo bilo u bliskim odnosima sa susjednim talijanskim gradovima-državama. Osobni liječnik Mehmeda II. Osvajača, Jakub Paša (1425.–1481.), bio je talijanski Židov koji je napredovao do titule paše, a poslije i vezira. Domenico Hierosolimitano (oko 1552.–1622.), treći liječnik sultana Murada III., bio je jeruzalemski rabin. Njegova je knjiga važan izvor saznanja o svakodnevnom životu u Istanbulu, koja opisuje i medicinsku praksu toga vremena. Nuh bin Abd al-Mennab (1627.–1707.), također talijanskog podrijetla, bio je glavni liječnik Osmanskog Carstva, koji je farmakopeju preveo na turski. U istom su stoljeću dva Talijana, Israel Conegliano (Conian) i Tobia Cohen, postali osobni liječnici najvećih turskih paša i velikog vezira. A. Vuccino (1829.–1893.) i Antoine Calleja Paša (1806.–1893.) predavali su na Medicinskom fakultetu u Istanbulu. Kad se Osmansko Carstvo počelo okretati Zapadu, Italija je bila najomiljenije odredište za medicinsko obrazovanje. Sanizade Mehmed Ataulah Efendi (1771.–1826.) preveo je s talijanskoga prvi medicinski udžbenik tiskan u Osmanskom Carstvu. Mustafa Behcet Efendi (1774.–1833.), glavni sultanov liječnik i osnivač prvoga medicinskog fakulteta zapadnoga tipa u Turskoj, preveo je nekoliko medicinskih udžbenika s talijanskog na turski. Prva tiskana osmanska farmakopeja također je prevedena s talijanskog. U XIX. su se stoljeću Edouard Ottoni i njegov sin Giuseppe Ottoni, obojica pod imenom Faik Paša, proslavili kao vojni ljekarnici. Vjerojatno najutjecajniji liječnik talijanskog podrijetla bio je Giovanni Battista Violi (1849.–1928.) koji je u Turskoj više od pola stoljeća držao pedijatrijsku praksu te osnovao prvu pedijatrijsku bolnicu i imunološki zavod te prvi pedijatrijski časopis.

**Ključne riječi:** Osmansko Carstvo, talijanski liječnici, turska pedijatrija