

Gossip, Rumors, and Facts: The Year 1524

N. Zeynep Yelçe, Ela Bozok

This paper investigates the reflections of domestic and foreign issues related to the Ottomans in European news networks in 1524. We examine reports, letters, and other kinds of correspondence involving news sent about the Ottoman Empire from various European cities and Mediterranean ports to Venice. Based on research carried out within the framework of the “TUBITAK 1001 Scientific and Technologic Research Support Fund” project numbered 113K655 (Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean Intelligence Network during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century), this study investigates the process/es of news production and dissemination. Our research focuses on the agents responsible for the process and the hubs where various pieces of oral and written news within a wide range of sources from official letters to eyewitness accounts, from familial correspondence to rumors came together to be delivered collectively to and from Venice. A second level inquiry of the research focuses on the use of gathered information for Venetian interests and as a tool of power in early modern European diplomacy. As such, our study addresses, among others, especially two vital questions: What was the social relevance of different kinds of knowledge and which were the places of knowledge-production? Which kind of knowledge was privileged or legitimized by whom and in which contexts?

A close reading of this quite busy one-year period from Marino Sanuto’s voluminous diaries (*I Diarii*) and reflections thereof in *Letters and Papers in British Archives* aims to shed light to the role of trade networks and diplomatic agents in early modern information networks. This paper is intended as part of a wider study which examines each year of the 1520s, in other words 500 hundred years ago, through a micro-history approach to illuminate the day-to-day working of information flow throughout a ten-year period. The years 1521, 1522, and 1523 have been studied and the findings have been presented in international conferences in 2021, 2022, and 2023.