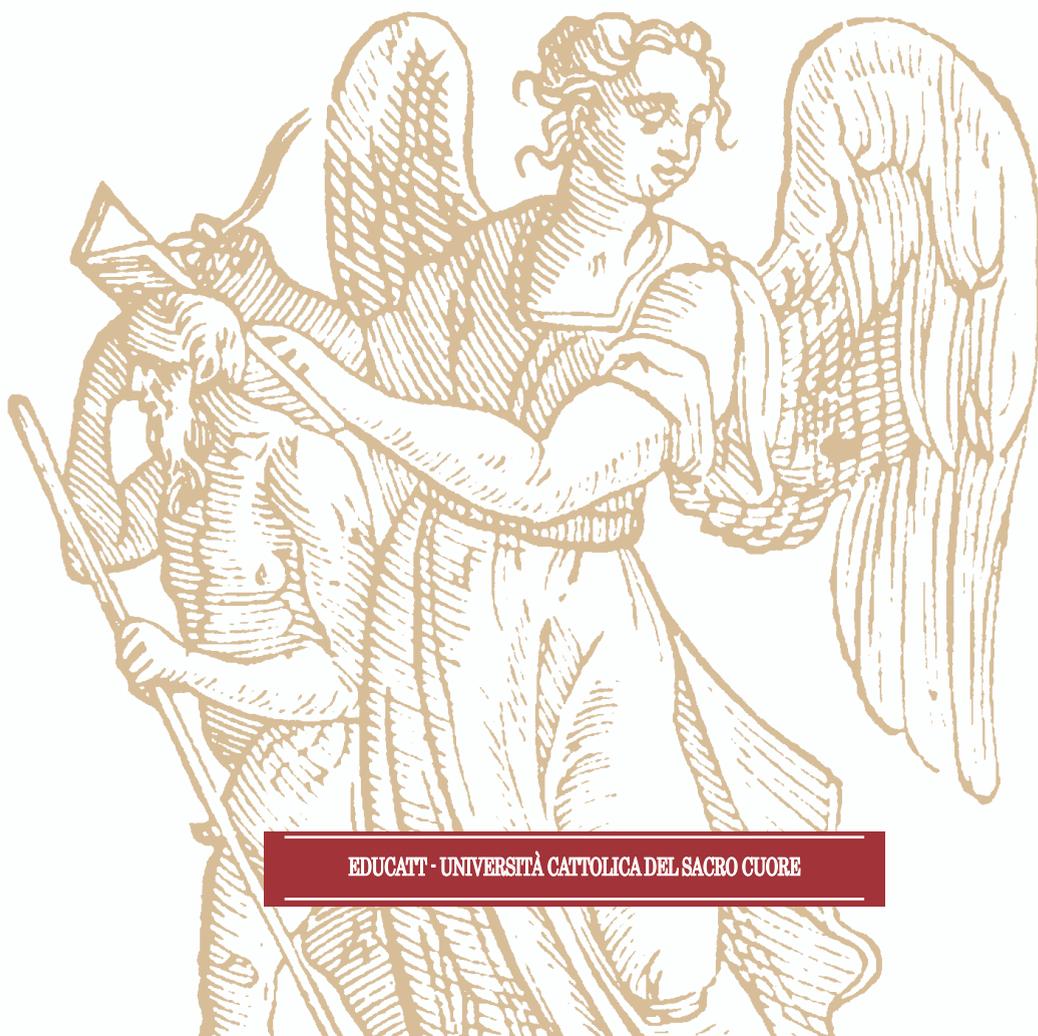

ANNALI DI STORIA MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA

DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

3

NUOVA SERIE - ANNO III 2015



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Fondati da CESARE MOZZARELLI

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Nota editoriale

Questo fascicolo degli Annali si apre con un doveroso e sentito ricordo di uno dei più sottili attori e studiosi della vita culturale e civile dell'Italia democratica: Arturo Colombo (1934-2016). Professore emerito di storia delle dottrine politiche nella “sua” Università di Pavia, editorialista del “Corriere della sera”, interprete, ma prima studioso acuto e critico, delle idee del Risorgimento e della tradizione cattaneana e mazziniana, è stato un continuo punto di riferimento per gli storici delle giovani generazioni. Fra di loro mettiamo con orgoglio e riconoscimento anche il gruppo degli “Annali”. Difatti, nell’ormai lontanissimo autunno del 1994 quando Cesare Mozzarelli lanciò l’idea di un annale storico dell’allora Istituto, lo convinsi a consultare il professor Colombo per come aprire la rivista anche agli storici del pensiero e delle istituzioni favorendo quell’ampio ventaglio tematico e diacronico che consentiva di aprire nuovi versanti di studio e di fornire ai giovani ricercatori la possibilità di presentare le loro ricerche. Arturo Colombo riassunse il tutto con il suo solito umorismo costruttivo con la frase «è meglio seguire solo la strada segnata o cercare di scoprire ed aiutare a tracciare nuovi sentieri?».

E proprio rammentando i suoi insegnamenti vogliamo continuare ad averlo qui con noi ricordando i suoi principali scritti e contributi.

Questo fascicolo della rivista contiene, come al solito, la sezione Saggi, quella dedicata a Personaggi del Novecento italiano, Oikonomica, Materiali e Argomentando.

Sottolineo qui come in Materiali siano riportati contributi che sono il frutto degli interventi e delle discussioni al Convegno su «Cittadini e cittadinanza dallo Stato nazione all’Europa unita», tenutosi a Milano in Università Cattolica il 30 gennaio 2015 e frutto della collaborazione tra gli storici delle dottrine e delle istituzioni politiche, gli studiosi di scienza politica e quelli di filosofia politica.

Robertino Ghiringhelli

Politics, power and republicanism in Florentine
Renaissance: Donato Giannotti.
History of the edition and of the European
circulation of his essay upon venetian constitution

FRANCESCA RUSSO

Il mio saggio è dedicato principalmente al *Libro della repubblica de'Vinitiani*, pubblicato nel 1540 da Donato Giannotti a Roma per i tipi di Blado. Giannotti fu un importante testimone della tradizione repubblicana fiorentina. Nato a Firenze nel 1492, egli studiò presso i grandi maestri dell'umanesimo, fra i quali Francesco Catani da Diacceto e Marcello Virgilio Adriani. Da Diacceto ereditò una profonda conoscenza per la filosofia aristotelica, che fu fondamentale per i suoi scritti politici. L'incontro con Niccolò Machiavelli, avvenuto nelle riunioni che si svolgevano presso i giardini di casa Rucellai si rivelò anche determinante per la formazione del giovane Donato. L'ex Segretario fiorentino divenne suo amico e suo riferimento culturale. Egli fu profondamente influenzato dai *Discorsi*, letti nel contesto degli Orti Oricellari. Giannotti, a differenza di Machiavelli, aveva una grande ammirazione per il sistema istituzionale veneziano, essendo la "Serenissima" un modello contemporaneo di repubblica. Decise quindi di soggiornare nella città e presso l'ateneo patavino e di scrivere il *Libro de la repubblica de'Vinitiani*, dedicato al funzionamento delle magistrature della città lagunare. Questa fu l'unica opera pubblicata durante la vita dell'autore. Ebbe molte edizioni nella penisola italiana e numerose traduzioni in lingua tedesca, di cui si dà conto nel saggio. La prima traduzione fu pubblicata da Hans Kilian nel 1557, quando ancora Giannotti era in vita. Venne anche data alle stampe nel 1631 in latino a Leida, divenendo fruibile per un pubblico europeo. Non mancarono infatti un'edizione in olandese e citazioni nel mondo culturale britannico.

Giannotti scrisse molte altre opere delle quali si dà brevemente cenno in questo scritto. Tra le maggiori si ricorda *Della repubblica fiorentina*, proposta costituzionale per Firenze, alla quale l'autore lavorò in differenti redazioni. Naufragato un progetto di edizione francese per cura di Jacopo Corbinelli, anche per l'esitanze dell'autore stesso, l'opera venne pubblicata solo nel 1721.

Giannotti fu Segretario dei Dieci nell'ultima repubblica fiorentina (1527-1530). In seguito alla sconfitta del fronte repubblicano decise, dopo un periodo in carcere e qualche incertezza, dettata dalla speranza che Clemente VII potesse dare un ordine accettabile alle istituzioni fiorentine, di aderire al nutrito fronte del fuoriuscitismo e di concludere la sua vita in esilio. Mantenne però un costante interesse per le vicende storico-politiche fiorentine e toscane, nonché l'impegno a propagandare i valori ed i simboli del repubblicanesimo italiano. Questo saggio trae origine dalla mia re-

lazione tenuta nell'ambito della sessione organizzata dalla prof.ssa Suzanne Magnanini (University of Colorado) nell'ambito della conferenza annuale della *Sixteenth Century Society* (Vancouver, 24 ottobre 2015).

My essay focuses mainly on Donato Giannotti's book upon Venice. He witnessed with his works, and above all, thanks to the translation of *Libro de la Republica de' Vinitiani* the republican Italian tradition throughout Europe. Giannotti was Machiavelli's good friend and one of his most important disciple.

He was born in Florence in 1492 and he died in Rome in 1573. He attended the lessons of Marcello Virgilio Adriani and of Francesco Cattani da Diaccetto, receiving a deep philosophical education under the teachings of Florentine humanism. Due to the lesson of Diacceto, Giannotti accrued a strong interest and admiration for the political theories of Aristotle.

He took part in the meetings of Florentine intellectuals at Rucellai's gardens, the so called *Rucellai gardens*, during its second period (1516-22), at the time when Niccolò Machiavelli explained the Roman republican model, reading a draft of his great masterpiece that he was writing at the time, the *Discourses upon the first ten books of Titus Livy*. Giannotti became a close friend and a follower of Machiavelli's ideas, even if his republican beliefs were different from the ones of his great master and friend. He was also convinced of the necessity of establishing a *Res publica mixta* in Florence, but he preferred the example of Venetian constitution, to the Roman constitution described by Machiavelli. His political theories were mostly in favor of the Aristotelian-Polybian model of mixed Constitution. He wrote about this subject in an essay, *Libro de la republica de Vinitiani*, published in 1540. This book had been printed several times in Italian States between half 16th Century and 17th Century. It had been translated into German in 1557 by Hans Kilian. Many German editions followed after that time until the first half of 17th Century. There was a Latin Edition published in Amsterdam in 1631 and shortly afterwards a Dutch translation. My paper would like to focus on the history of the circulation of this book, that became a European success. In 1656 James Harrington, in fact, in his work *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, defined Giannotti's essay as the best description of Venetian Constitution. Giannotti was also the author of *Della repubblica fiorentina*, an interesting proposal of a constitutional reform for Florence, which was never to come into being and remained unpublished until 1721.

He was during the last Florentine republic (1527-1530) *Secretary to the Ten*, the same position held by Machiavelli during the former republic. After the defeat of Florentine republic (1530), he was imprisoned and he then went on a long-life exile.

Keywords: Donato Giannotti; Florentine Renaissance; republican tradition; Florentine exiles; story of Florence; mixed Constitution in German States; Venetian institutional model; myth of Venice.

Parole chiave: Donato Giannotti; tradizione repubblicana; esuli fiorentini; storia di Firenze; Costituzione mista negli Stati tedeschi; modello istituzionale veneziano; mito di Venezia.

Donato Giannotti is one of the leading author of Florentine Renaissance republican tradition. He survived for a long while the failure of republican coalition on Florence. He nevertheless kept on his political faith, even if the chances to restore republic in his city were few. He wanted with his works, which remained unpublished, except for *Libro de la Republica de'Vintiani*, but had a relevant diffusion in the manuscript form, to give his own contribution to preserve the values of Florentine republicanism¹. His writings were rediscovered and published as collected works at the beginning and on the first half of Nineteenth Century, in the framework of the cultural research of the roots of Italian republican tradition².

Giannotti was born in Florence on 27th November 1492 from a middle-class family. His father Lionardo was a goldsmith. His mother was Alamanna Gherardini³. The economical situation of his family was not so favorable and most of all during the period of his exile, he suffered from economic troubles⁴.

He studied philosophy, Rhetoric, Latin and Greek at the “Studio fiorentino”⁵. His most important masters were Marcello Virgilio Adriani and Francesco Cattani da Diacceto⁶. The cultural influence of the teachings of Diacceto was very significant to him. At his school he learnt the importance of Aristotelian thought, that Diacceto was trying to combine with the Florentine neo-Platonic tradition⁷. The interest for the philosophy of Aristotle became a fixed point in Giannotti’s intellectual

¹ D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro de La Republica de'Vintiani*, in Roma, per Antonio Blado d’Asola, nel 1540, del mese di Luglio, con il privilegio del Sommo Pontefice, per Anni Diece.

² D. GIANNOTTI, *Opere*, 3 volumi, Pisa, presso Niccolò Capurro cò caratteri di F. Didot, Collezione degli ottimi scrittori italiani in supplemento ai classici milanesi, 1819; ID., *Opere*, per Niccolò Bettoni, Milano 1830; ID., *La Repubblica fiorentina e la veneziana*, cò Tipi del Gondoliere, Venezia 1840; ID., *Opere politiche e letterarie*, collazionate sui manoscritti e annotate da F.L. Polidori, precedute da un *Discorso* di Atto Vannucci, vol. 2, Felice Le Monnier, Firenze 1850.

³ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, in ID., *Opuscoli di storia letteraria ed erudizione. Savonarola, Machiavelli, Guicciardini e Giannotti*, Bibliopolis, Firenze 1942, pp. 55- 164.

⁴ S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, in AA.VV., *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani*, vol.54, Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma pp. 527-533; G. CAMPBELL, *Giannotti Donato* in AA.VV., *The Oxford Dictionary of Renaissance*, Oxford University press, Oxford 2003, p. 334.

⁵ S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, cit., pp. 527-528.

⁶ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 61-62.

⁷ P.O. KRISTELLER, *Francesco Cattani da Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the Sixteenth century*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1946; E. GARIN, *L’Umanesimo Italiano. Filosofia e vita civile nel Rinascimento*, Laterza, Roma - Bari 1978, pp. 142-146.

life, as he considered the Aristotelian-Polybian model of mixed Constitution the best and the most stable form of Constitution⁸. Nevertheless, in Giannotti's political education the most relevant acquaintance happened during the meetings of intellectuals, mainly aristocrats, organized by Cosimo Rucellai in his gardens: the so called Rucellai's Garden. In the "second period" of these meetings, when the young Cosimo Rucellai started to rule the reunions, (from 1516), Niccolò Machiavelli was invited to give lectures and to lead the discussions⁹. That was a turning point of the reunions of this group. Before that moment, they were discussing about literature and arts. They were all involved into friendly relationships with the Medici's family. Bernardo Rucellai, the former organizer of the reunions, was the brother-in-law of Lorenzo de' Medici¹⁰. Machiavelli's influence upon this group of his intellectuals, and especially upon Giannotti, was very strong and long-lasting¹¹. One can get an idea about that, by reading some editions of Antonio Brucioli's work *I Dialogi*¹².

In this work, there is also a detailed report of the meetings in *Rucellai gardens*, with the description of the persons attending the reunions. From Brucioli's *Dialogi* (edition 1528-1529) one can learn that Donato Giannotti was part of that group, together with Luigi Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Pietro Martelli, Giovanni Corsi, Antonfrancesco Albizzi, Iacopo Nardi, Filippo Nerli, and Palla, Giovanni and Cosimo Rucellai¹³.

Machiavelli introduced politics into their lives, especially a strong interest towards the history of Roman republic, which he considered the best model of mixed republic¹⁴. In fact, during the reunions in *Rucellai gardens*, he read some passages of the manuscripts of the *Discourses upon the first ten books of Titus Livy*, his great masterpiece devoted to this subject, that he was writing with deep involvement¹⁵.

⁸ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 61-62.

⁹ F. GILBERT, *Le "Istorie fiorentine" di Machiavelli. Saggio interpretativo*, in ID., *Machiavelli e il suo tempo*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1996, pp. 291-318.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 62; R. VON ALBERTINI, *Firenze dalla Repubblica al Principato*, Einaudi, Torino 1970, p. 145.

¹² A. BRUCIOLI, *Dialogi*, Impressi in Vinegia per Giovannantonio e i Fratelli da Sabbio, nel mese di Agosto del 1528, con privilegio del Senato di Vinegia; ID., *Dialogi*, impressi in Vinegia, per Giovannantonio e i Fratelli da Sabbio, nel mese di Luglio del 1529. Con Privilegio dello Inclito Senato di Vinegia.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ G. CAMBIANO, *Polis. Un modello per la cultura europea*, Laterza, Roma - Bari 2007, pp. 118-119.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

In 1522, a conspiracy against Medici's government was organized by some of these young men, inflamed by republican ideals. It failed¹⁶. Neither Machiavelli, nor Giannotti were part of it. There is no proof of Giannotti's participation to this project, even if the organizers of the conspiracy were among his acquaintances of the time¹⁷.

In the intellectual environment of the *Rucellai gardens*, Giannotti started his long-lasting friendship and cultural relationship with Nicolò Machiavelli¹⁸. The author of the *Prince* represented for him an important benchmark and he succeeded in gaining his friend's confidence. From some of Giannotti's letters stored in *Ambrosiana* library, one can learn that Machiavelli gave to his friend Donato the manuscript of his work *Historiae florentinae*¹⁹.

Giannotti's political and intellectual growth was not only influenced by his friend Machiavelli. At the same time, he was attending the group of the so called *ottimati moderati*, the moderates aristocrats, who were discussing about politics, but were not against the Medici's power²⁰. Some of them (also his master Diaceto) were taking part to the reunions of the medicean Academy, the *Sacra Academia Medicea*. Giannotti was also likely to be part of the Academy, as it is witnessed by his first literary work, written in 1516 and dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici²¹.

In 1521 he was appointed as Professor of rhetoric, poetics and Greek literature at the University of Pisa, thanks to his important friendships among the Florentine aristocrats²². He stayed there until 1525, when he was given the permission for a sabbatical leave, in order to enhance his knowledge of the Constitution of Venice and of its institutional inner

¹⁶ F. RUSSO, *Bruto a Firenze. Mito, immagine e personaggio*, Editoriale Scientifica, Napoli 2008, pp. 257-259.

¹⁷ *Ibi*, p. 259.

¹⁸ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 64-65; J.G.A. POCOCK, *The Machiavellian moment. Florentine Political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton - London 1975, pp. 272-273; G. CAMBIANO, *Polis. Un modello per la cultura europea*, cit. p. 119.

¹⁹ Letter of Donato Giannotti to M. Antonio Michieli, (Comeano, 30th June 1533, in *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Segnatura D.191 INF. Unità Codicologica 6).

²⁰ S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, cit., p. 528.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*; R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 65-68; D. HÖCHLI, *Donato Giannotti*, in *Portgalerie der Politischer Denker*, herausgegeben von P.C. Mayer - Tasch, B. Mayerhofer, Stämpfli Verlag - Wallstein Verlag, Bern - Göttingen 2004, pp. 107-108.

workings²³. That was the very beginning of his long- life scientific interest and political admiration for Venetian model.

He went, in fact, to Padua where he met his friend Giovanni Borgherini, the son-in-law of the *gonfaloniere di giustizia* of the next Florentine republic (1527- 1530) Niccolò Capponi. There he stayed from June 1525 to November 1526, studying the institutional structure of Venetian republic, in order to describe it better in its work²⁴. He started, indeed, at that time writing his great masterpiece: *Libro de la republica de'Vinitiani*²⁵.

He came back to Florence and Pisa, but he did not stay there for a long while. His interest for the “Serenissima” was already too high to be left aside²⁶. He wanted to carry on his researches for his book upon venetian institutional system. He asked his friend Alessandro de' Pazzi to get back to Venice with him²⁷. De' Pazzi had been appointed as ambassador of Florence. Giannotti succeeded in his purpose and in February 1527, he had the chance to set for Venice²⁸. During his legacy with the ambassador he was able to deepen his knowledge of the inner secrets of international politics of Venetian republic and of all its international connections. He also became more acquainted with the political dynamics of the *Serenissima*²⁹. At this time, he wrote a second draft of his work devoted to venetian Constitution³⁰. In 1530 it went under a following revision after the defeat of Florentine republic³¹.

The *Libro de la republica de'Vinitiani* was published in 1540 in Rome, by the editor Antonio Blado, thanks to the back-up of cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, one of the main leaders of Florentine political emigrants, the so called *fuoriusciti*³². Giannotti was at the time working as a secretary to the cardinal and he had the chance of taking advantage of the huge and powerful cultural *milieu*, which surrounded him. He was thus involved

²³ S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, cit., p. 528.

²⁴ *Ibidem*; D. HÖCHLI, *Donato Giannotti*, cit., p. 108.

²⁵ F. GILBERT, *The date of composition of Contarini's and Giannotti's books on Venice*, in «Studies in the Renaissance», 14 (1967) edited by «The Renaissance society of America», pp. 172-184; H. SOLDINI, *Della republica de'Viniziani de Donato Giannotti, un projet éditorial avorté*, in AA.VV., *Varchi ed altro Rinascimento. Studi offerti a Vanni Bramanti*, S. LO RE - F. TOMASI (a cura di), Vecchiarelli editore, Manziana 2013, pp. 579-590.

²⁶ F. GILBERT, *The Venetian Constitution in Florentine political thought*, in AA.VV., *Florentine studies*, N. RUBINSTEIN (edited by), Faber and Faber, London 1968, pp. 187-214.

²⁷ S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, cit., p. 528.

²⁸ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 76-77.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibi*, pp. 77.

³¹ F. GILBERT, *The date of composition of Contarini's and Giannotti's books on Venice*, cit.

³² D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro de La Republica de'Vinitiani*, cit.

in the main erudite circles in Rome, in Venice and in the whole Italian peninsula³³.

The *Libro de la republica de' Vinitiani* had a huge success. It still remains an important contribution to the history of European political ideas and one of the author's masterpieces. James Harrington in 1656, at the beginnings of the *Preliminaries of The commonwealth of Oceana* defined, in fact, Donato Giannotti as «the most excellent describer of the commonwealth of Venice»³⁴.

The *Libro de la republica de Vinitiani* was again published by Antonio Blado in 1542 and had afterwards interesting editions in Venice³⁵. The first one was published in 1564 and the second one, stressing the importance of republics against princedom, was given to the print in 1591³⁶.

There was also a very important edition given to the print in France, in Lyons, in 1569, edited by an Italian religious and political dissenter Gian Michele Bruto, addressed to the Italians living in France, banished by their homeland for political and religious reasons³⁷.

Giannotti's masterpiece had a surprising success also in German States³⁸.

Giannotti's masterpiece was in fact translated into German and published in 1557 by Hans Kilian in Neuburg an der Donau³⁹. In the long *preface* Kilian, a convinced reformer addresses many criticisms to the

³³ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 116-117.

³⁴ J. HARRINGTON, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and a system of politics*, J.G.A. POCKOCK (edited by), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992, p. 8.

³⁵ D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro de la republica de' Vinitiani*, per Antonio Blado, stampato in Roma, 1542.

³⁶ D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro de la republica de' Vinitiani*, con G. CONTARINI, *La republica e i magistrati di Vinegia nuovamente corretta e stampata*, Domenico Giglio, Venezia 1564; ID., *Della republica et magistrati di Venetia, Libri V, di Gasparo Contarini, che fu poi cardinale, con un ragionamento intorno alla medesima di Donato Giannotti fiorentino. Et i Discorsi di M. Sebastiano Errizzo e di M. Bartolomeo Cavalcanti: aggiuntovi uno di nuovo dell'eccellenza delle Repubbliche, onde con molta dottrina si mostra, quanto siano utili i governi pubblici e necessari i privati, per conservazione del genere humano, con la diffinitione di tutte le qualità degli Stati*, presso Aldo Manuzio, Venezia 1591.

³⁷ D. GIANNOTTI, *La republica di Vinegia*, per Antonio Gyphio, Lione 1569. See also D. CACCAMO, *Bruto Gian Michele*, in AA.VV., *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, vol. 14 (1972), p. 731.

³⁸ F. RUSSO, *Il libro della Repubblica de' Vinitiani tradotto in tedesco: aspetti della circolazione del modello di "Res publica mixta" in area germanica fra il XVI e il XVII secolo*, in AA.VV., «Annali dell'Università Suor Orsola Benincasa», Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, Napoli 2012, vol. 1, pp. 248-270.

³⁹ *Respublica Venetum. Der grossen Commun der Statt Venedig. Ursprung, Erbauung, Aufnehmung [...] aus italienischer Sprach verdeutscht*, Neuburg an der Donau, 1557.

Pope and to the Hapsburgs⁴⁰. This translation is devoted to Otto Heinrich von der Pfalz, who was trying at the time to create in Palatinate a new model of State, and Giannotti's essay seemed to the translator to be a good institutional guide for his Prince⁴¹. In the *Preface* the author is not mentioned, but Kilian affirmed that he had received that book eleven years ago and afterwards he decided to translate it into German, considering the content extremely useful⁴². Another aim stressed by Kilian is the need to stop Turkish expansion throughout Europe⁴³. This should be the task pursued by the renewed Christian States, after having defeated the Pope, called the *Antichristus* and the Emperor⁴⁴.

The *Libro de la republica de Vinitiani* was published in 1571 in Frankfurt by another editor Sigmund Feyerabend⁴⁵. The same edition was in 1574 again given to the print together with an interesting edition of *The life of the Doges*, written by Heinrich Kellner, in order to show the stability of Venetian institutional model⁴⁶. Kellner knew perfectly the institutional tradition of Venice, since he lived there for a while. He had studied law at the University of Padua⁴⁷.

Giannotti's essay was again translated into German and published by Hieronymus Megiser in Frankfurt in 1602 and in 1616⁴⁸. The editor was

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*; F. RUSSO, *Il libro della Repubblica de' Vinitiani tradotto in tedesco: aspetti della circolazione del modello di "Res publica mixta" in area germanica fra il XVI e il XVII secolo*, cit., pp. 256-259.

⁴⁵ *Respublica. Der Herrlichen Statt Venedig Ursprung, Anfang, Auffnehmung, Erbauung ihrer Herrschaft, Erweiterung, Regiment, Ordnung, Rüstung, Einkommens und Außgebens, auch wie sie sich undereinander von Anfang biß auff diese Zeit unzertheilt in Einigkeit erhalten haben und noch erhalten. Allen hohen und niedriges Standts sehr nützlich zu wissen und zu lesen*, Feyerabendt-Schmidt, Franckfurt am Main 1571.

⁴⁶ *Respublica. Das ist: Warhafftige eigentliche und kurze Beschreibung der herrlichen und weltberühmten Statt Venedig[...]*, Feyerabendt-Schmidt, Franckfurt am Main 1574, pubblicato insieme a H. KELLNER, *Chronica. Das ist: Warhafftige eigentliche und kurze Beschreibung aller Hertzogen zu Venedig Leben[...]* von dem ersten biß auff denn jetzt regierenden, Feyerabendt-Schmidt, Franckfurt am Main 1574.

⁴⁷ F. RUSSO, *Il libro della Repubblica de' Vinitiani tradotto in tedesco*, cit., p. 262.

⁴⁸ *Venediger Herrligkeit und Regiment. Das ist: Wahrhafftige [...]Beschreibung der [...] Statt Venedig, Alles aus Italienischer in unser Deutsche Sprach von einem Liebhaber der Historien mit Fleiß ubersetzt und in Druck gegeben. Durch Hieronimus Megiser*, Franckfurt, Joachim Brathering, 1602; *Respublica Venetorum. Das ist Wahrhafftige unnd außführliche Beschreibung der fürtrefflichen hoch weitberühmten Stadt Venedig, sampt derselben inner unnd eusserlichen Herrligkeiten, prächtigen Gebäuwten, schönen Kirchen und Klöstern, grössen Städten, starcken Vestungen, mechtigen Herrschaften zu Wasser und zu Land [...]* Alles aus Italienischer in unser

an historian and a linguist⁴⁹. He enjoyed living in Venice for some years and he studied law in Padua as well⁵⁰. He considers in any case, Venice as the perfect model of balanced Constitution⁵¹. In Megiser's editions also the charming of the city appeared, as the author was a political writer but also an enthusiastic traveller and describer of the beauties of the places that he visited⁵².

In 1669, there was a "last" edition of Giannotti's essay published in German states⁵³. It was deeply connected to the historical happening of Candia, and Venetian people were described in the preface such as the examples of the perfect heroes. They in fact resisted for a long time to Turkish attack. Giannotti's name is mentioned, such as it was in Megiser's edition⁵⁴.

In 1631 a translation into Latin of *Libro de la republica de'Vinitiani* appeared in Leiden⁵⁵. This edition is very important, as Latin was still the language of European intellectuals and made it possible for the text to become a well known essay throughout Europe. Shortly afterwards in fact a translation of it into Dutch was given to the print in Amsterdam in 1667, related to the Latin edition⁵⁶.

Deutsche Sprach von einem Liebhaber der Historien mit Fleiß ubersetzt und in Druck gegeben. Durch Hieronimus Megiser, Grosse, Leipzig - Frackfurt am Main 1616.

⁴⁹ M. DOBLINGER, *Hieronimus Megiser Leben und Werken*, «Mitteilung des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung», 30 (1905), pp. 431-478; L.T. ELZE, *Megiser Hieronimus*, in AA.VV., *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Band XXI, Duncker und Humblot, Leipzig 1885, pp. 183-185; A. FRIGGIERI - T. FRELLER, *Hieronimus Megiser: the man and his work*, in H. MEGISER, *Malta, the Bulwark of Europe*, A. FRIGGIERI - T. FRELLER (edited by), Gutenberg Press, Malta 1988, pp. 4-13.

⁵⁰ F. RUSSO, *Il libro della Repubblica de'Vinitiani tradotto in tedesco*, cit., p. 265.

⁵¹ *Ibi*, pp. 266-267.

⁵² *Ibi*, pp. 267-268.

⁵³ *Respublicae Venetiae. Das ist: der welt-beruffenen Stadt Venedig, und selbiger Signoriae Ursprungf. Jin einem annuthigen Gespräch zweyer Adels-Personen erörtert; Deme beygefügt, Der Venetianer und Türcken Niederlags- Register, die Vestung Candia betreffend, Durch Donatum Giannotti Florentinern*, s.l., 1669.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ D. GIANNOTTI, *Dialogi de republica venetorum cum notis et lib. Singulari de forma eiusdem Reip cum privilegio*, ex officina Elzeviriana, Ludguni Batavorum 1631.

⁵⁶ D. GIANNOTTI, *Het Gemeene- Best van Venetia*, of naaukeurige Beschrijving van de Stadt, sahet Rijk van Venetia; hasr onderhoorige Steden, Eylanden, der selver standt, gelegentheydt, vrugtbaarheydt, en rijkdommen [...] uyt het Latijn verduyts, S. IMBRECHTS (a cura di), Boeckderkooper, Amsterdam 1667.

Giannotti wanted with *Libro de la republica de'Vinitiani* to describe venetian Constitution, as itself, but also as a political model for Florence⁵⁷. In one of his letters in 1538, he cleared out that he wanted to give to the print his essay, to contribute to the political struggle for republicanism in Italian states and to help Florence, to reflect upon republic, even if, after 1537 it seemed extremely difficult that it could come back again in his beloved homeland⁵⁸. He did not want to lose his hopes. Giannotti's work is an humanistic dialogue among Giovanni Borgherini and Trifone Gabriello⁵⁹. It is dedicated to Francesco Nasi. He was one of his best friends, a Florentine republican activist, who, in 1527, took part of the riots in favour of Florentine republic⁶⁰. In the *Preface* to his work, Giannotti wrote some criticisms towards the so-called "wise men" of his time who used to praise the values and the habits of the ancients, without following their example⁶¹. Giannotti believed that it was necessary to be endowed with political virtues in the present and not only to praise them as qualities of the past⁶². For this reason, he said, he decided to write this work, because Venice, with its Constitution represented the embodiment of the perfect balance of power, of the stable mixed republic of his time⁶³. As Rome, described by Machiavelli in the *Discourses upon the first ten books of Titus Livy*, represented a good model of mixed republic in the past, Venice was the model of mixed Constitution in present times⁶⁴. The aim of the author is therefore to describe perfectly this model, by the dialogue between Gabriello and Borgherini, in order to learn as much as possible, about the inner mechanisms and the political dynamics of the *Serenissima*, and to imitate its Constitution⁶⁵. Venice was a peaceful, rich and long-lasting republic, where the power was organized conveniently. It was indeed a model to follow⁶⁶. Giovanni Borgherini, who was in the reality one of the author's closest friend and the son-in-law of Niccolò

⁵⁷ G. SILVANO, *La "Republica de'Vinitiani". Ricerche sul repubblicanesimo veneziano in età moderna, Prefazione*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1993.

⁵⁸ Letter of Donato Giannotti to M. Antonio Michieli, (Comeano, 30th June 1533, in *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Segnatura D.191 INF. Unità Codicologica 6).

⁵⁹ D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro della republica de'Viniziani*, in ID., *Opere politiche*, F. DIAZ (a cura di), Marzorati, Milano 1974, pp. 29-151.

⁶⁰ G. SANESI, *La vita e le opere di Donato Giannotti*, Fratelli Bracali, Pistoia 1899, pp. 45-47.

⁶¹ D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro della republica de'Viniziani*, in ID., *Opere politiche*, cit., p. 29.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ *Ibi*, p. 30.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ *Ibi*, p. 31.

⁶⁶ *Ibi*, p. 32.

Capponi, wanted to know in details the structure and the interior workings of Venetian Constitution. So he asked to Trifone Gabriello many questions about it in an imaginary dialogue, located by the author at Pietro Bembo's place⁶⁷. In the whole work all the government bodies operating in Venice are described by Trifone Gabriello⁶⁸. The *libro de la republica de' Vinitiani* is a juridical scholarship essay, because it contains a very detailed description of several institutions participating to venetian constitutional system, and a deep analysis of their political role. The social reality that was located behind the institutions is also by the author carefully considered⁶⁹. Giannotti followed in this work the teaching of Aristotle, more than the one of his friend and master Machiavelli. The author of *Libro de la republica de' Vinitiani* strongly believed that the division of social classes was the anchorage of a balanced Constitution⁷⁰. He nevertheless recognised the important role played by the aristocracy in the venetian society, even if he insisted on the necessity of creating a system of checks and balances to avoid that a class becomes too much important⁷¹. He also highlighted the role of the *Censori*, a magistracy created to prevent and to fight corruption, to avoid that one family or one single person took on an excessive power⁷².

On the contrary, Machiavelli did not like venetian Constitution, as Felix Gilbert had underlined in his studies⁷³. He believed that it had the formal shape of a mixed republic, but it did not really coincide with the theoretical model of a balanced mixed republican Constitution, because of the overwhelming power of aristocracy⁷⁴. Giannotti considered, instead, Venice, a good representation of the Aristotelian-Polybian model of mixed Constitution, composed by the three main forms of government: democracy, aristocracy and monarchy⁷⁵. The main magistracies, described by Trifone Gabriello, following the hints derived by the ques-

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ *Ibi*, pp. 29-151.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ *Ibi*, pp. 53-54.

⁷¹ *Ibi*, p. 53.

⁷² *Ibi*, p. 85.

⁷³ F. GILBERT, *Machiavelli e Venezia*, in *Machiavelli e il suo tempo*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1996, pp. 319-334.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁵ V. CONTI, *The mechanization of virtue: republican rituals in Italian political thought in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, in AA.VV., *Republicanism. A shared European heritage. The values of republicanism in early modern Europe*, vol. 2, M. GELDEREN - Q. SKINNER (edited by), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, pp. 73-84; Q. SKINNER, *Political philosophy*, in AA.VV., *The Cambridge history of Renaissance philosophy*, E. KESSLER - J.

tions of Giovanni Borgherini were, in fact, *Consiglio Grande, Consiglio de' Pregadi, Collegio, Doge*. These magistracies correspond to the classical pattern of the government of the many, of the few, of the single one⁷⁶.

The *Libro della repubblica de' Vimitani* had a remarkable success in the Italian states and in Europe. It was the only one among Giannotti's works that had been published during his life time⁷⁷.

Donato Giannotti played a very important political role in the last Florentine republic (1527- 1530)⁷⁸. When on 16th May 1527 the rebellion in Florence against the Medici's government blew up, Giannotti was still in Venice where he remained for a while. The uprising was also a consequence to the Sack of Rome made by the *Landsknechts* troops⁷⁹.

The Medici were sent away from Florence and the republic was restored⁸⁰. Niccolò Capponi was elected as *gonfaloniere*⁸¹. Giannotti was asked by him to send a summary of Venetian Constitution to Florence, as a contribution for a new constitutional project⁸². He decided afterwards to set to Florence, where he arrived in July⁸³. On 23 September 1527 he received from Niccolò Capponi the role of *Secretary to the Ten of Freedom and Peace*, taking on the same position that Machiavelli had practised in the former Florentine republic, finished in 1512⁸⁴.

Giannotti was charged with many important difficult duties and his work as *Secretary to the Ten* was extremely awkward, because Florence was divided into political factions and the international situation of the time, most of all referring to Italian states, was very complicated. In fact, the Florentine republic had a hard life to survive⁸⁵. He was asked by Niccolò Capponi to write a proposal for a Constitution for Florence, in order to prevent the political struggle inside the city and settle peaceful relationships among the citizens. Following the Aristotelian-Polybian model and most of all the contemporary example of the Constitution of

KRAYE - C.B. SCHMITT - Q. SKINNER (edited by), Cambridge University Press, New York - Melbourne 1988, pp. 434-435.

⁷⁶ D. GIANNOTTI, *Libro della repubblica de' Vimitiani*, in ID., *Opere politiche*, cit., pp. 52-62.

⁷⁷ F. RUSSO, *Il libro della Repubblica de' Vimitiani tradotto in tedesco*, cit., pp. 248-270.

⁷⁸ A. D'ADDARIO, *Alle origini dello Stato moderno in Italia. Il caso toscano*, Le Lettere, Firenze 1998, p. 124.

⁷⁹ *Ibi*, pp. 124-125.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁸¹ *Ibi*, p. 126.

⁸² S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, cit., p. 529.

⁸³ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁴ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., p. 83.

⁸⁵ *Ibi*, pp. 83-84.

Venice, that he knew extremely well he wrote his proposal for Niccolò Capponi in 1528: the *Discorso sopra il fermare il governo di Firenze*⁸⁶.

In the same year, he also wrote *Il Discorso di armare la città di Firenze*, to give an answer to the military needs of his city⁸⁷. In this essay the teachings of Niccolò Machiavelli were strongly evident⁸⁸. The political life of Florentine republic was conflicted and Capponi was deeply criticized. The struggle between the moderated republicans and the people's faction raised on⁸⁹. In April 1529 Niccolò Capponi, considered by the public opinion too near to the moderated faction was, a result of the conflict, removed from his office⁹⁰.

After him a new *gonfaloniere* was elected: Francesco Carducci. He was near to the popular faction and he remained at his office until December 1529⁹¹. He was then substituted by Raffaello Grolami, who was the last *gonfaloniere* of Florentine republic and remained in power until the final defeat of the republic, after the "great siege" of the city, that lasted for a long term, thanks to the strong opposition of Florentine republicans towards the military attacks of Medici's coalition⁹².

Donato Giannotti remained in his role of *Secretary to the Ten*, also under the *gonfalonierati* of Francesco Carducci and Niccolò Capponi, even if he did not agree with their political perspective⁹³. He played also a very important role in the defence of Florence at the time of the "great siege", fighting against the huge armies of the Hapsburgs who were supporting the attempts to restore the Medici's government in Florence, according to the agreement with Pope Clement VII⁹⁴. He remained loyal to the republic and he did his best to organize the resistance of it against the troops, who were trying to invade the city⁹⁵. In this difficult circumstances, he became a good friend to Michelangelo Buonarroti, who was a fervent supporter of Florentine republic and took part to the

⁸⁶ D. GIANNOTTI, *Discorso sopra il fermare il governo di Firenze*, in ID., *Opere politiche*, pp. 153-166.

⁸⁷ D. GIANNOTTI, *Discorso di armare la città di Firenze*, in ID., *Opere politiche*, cit. vol. 1, pp. 167-180.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁹ A. D'ADDARIO, *Alle origini dello Stato moderno in Italia. Il caso toscano*, cit., p. 132

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

⁹² G. SILVANO, *Florentine republicanism in early sixteenth century*, in AA.VV. *Machiavelli and republicanism*, G. BOCK - Q. SKINNER - M. VIROLI (edited by), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990, p. 65.

⁹³ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 98-90.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

long struggle to defend it⁹⁶. He was also in charge for the republic of reinforcing the fortifications of the city. He developed some projects and it is impossible to know if they were completely built up. Giannotti and Michelangelo remained friend during their whole life. The great artist is also one of the main character of a later work of Giannotti's *Dialogi de' giorni che Dante consumò nel cercare l'Inferno e'l Purgatorio*⁹⁷.

The siege of Florence ended on 12th August 1530, when the imperial army, commanded by Ferrante Gonzaga entered the city. Bartolomeo Valori, as commissary of Pope Clement VII imposed a strict treaty of surrender for the republic, where the Emperor Charles V was recognised as the only arbitrator of the city's political future. On October 1530 he decided to give Alessandro de' Medici, Duca di Penne, an illegitimate son of the Pope, the ruling role in the city⁹⁸. Although Alessandro was not formally recognized as Duke of Florence by Charles V, he was, as a matter of fact, the new master of the city and in the *diploma* issued by the Emperor the hereditary character of the Medici's *Signoria* in Florence was clearly recognized⁹⁹. Charles V wanted to support Alessandròs power, so he later on decided to give his daughter Margareth's hand in marriage to the Lord of Florence. The opposition to Alessandròs government was very intense¹⁰⁰.

Donato Giannotti did not have the chance to express openly his political ideas. Being one of the leaders of the defeated republic, on 17th October 1530 he was imprisoned¹⁰¹. He was inflicted severe pains and he almost lost his life¹⁰². On 17th December his imprisonment was changed into a condemn of three years of exile, thanks to a bail paid by his friend Niccolò Ardinghelli for him¹⁰³. He decided to spend his period of exile in the property that he owned together with his brother Giannotto in Comeano. There, he lived a life of hardship for lack of money, but he consoled himself from the practical concerns, devoting himself to the study¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁶ *Ibi*, p. 91.

⁹⁷ D. GIANNOTTI, *De' giorni che Dante consumò nel cercare l'Inferno e'l Purgatorio*, D. REDIG DE CAMPOS (edizione critica a cura di), Sansoni, Firenze 1939.

⁹⁸ J.N. STEPHENS, *The fall of the Florentine Republic*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1983, pp. 222-230.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰¹ B. VARCHI, *Storia fiorentina*, vol. 2, L. ARBIB (a cura di), Società editrice delle Storie del Varchi e del Nardi, Firenze 1843, p. 513.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁴ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., p. 96.

His literary interests seemed to be at the time more important to him than the political reflection, also because he tried many times to ask the Pope for a clemency measure. He wanted to pretend that he was giving up for his political republican passions in order to write some “neutral” writings. He did not succeed in his aim¹⁰⁵.

In 1533 his personal situation became even worse. His conditions of exile changed and he was compelled to go to Bibbiena¹⁰⁶. Several attempts were made to find a reconciliation with the Medici, but they yielded no results. Only in 1535 his situation changed but he was just able to come back to a more comfortable situation in Comeano, thanks to the help of Cardinals Ridolfi, Cesi e Della Valle¹⁰⁷. In 1534 Pope Clement VII died and the Florentine republicans started to hope about the possibility of a changing in the situation of the government in Florence¹⁰⁸.

A formal trial in Naples, in front of the Emperor Charles V was opened, with the aim to charge Alessandro de' Medici formally of tyrannical behaviour in Florence, of ruling against the traditions of freedom of the city. Alessandro was also considered an illegitimate ruler. The charges against Alessandro were expressed by Jacopo Nardi and the “Duke” was defended by Francesco Guicciardini¹⁰⁹. The latter won the trial and Charles V ended up the discussion endorsing formally Alessandro's position, which seemed to him a more reliable ally than the republicans to hold up his plans in the Italian peninsula¹¹⁰. Nevertheless, the republicans obtained an inferior benefit, such as an amnesty for those who had been sentenced to confinement¹¹¹. Giannotti was one of them. Consequently, on March 1536 he achieved the permission to come back to Florence. He did not take this opportunity too often¹¹².

He preferred to spend his time in the countryside, away from Florentine politics, as he didn't want to be involved anymore in the institutions.

It is extremely interesting to consider the writings of this period, even if the great part of his works remained incomplete and some of them

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibi*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁷ R. STARN, *Donato Giannotti and his Epistolae*. *Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina, Rome, Ms. 107*, in «Travaux d'Humanisme et de Renaissance», vol. 47, Droz, Genève 1968, pp. 68-69.

¹⁰⁸ R. VON ALBERTINI, *Firenze dalla Repubblica al Principato*, cit., p. 205.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibi*, pp. 205-206.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹² S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, cit. p. 531.

were dispersed (maybe also destroyed by Giannotti himself who was afraid of their “dangerous” political meaning)¹¹³.

At the very beginning of his exile Giannotti devoted himself most of all to literary works¹¹⁴. Between January and March 1531 he composed the firsts two acts of the play *Il vecchio amoroso*. This work was supposed to be written for Alessandro de' Medici, but, when it was finished in 1536, it was dedicated to the author's friend and republican exile Lorenzo Strozzi¹¹⁵.

Giannotti was at the same time studying the Aristotle's philosophy, and translating Tolomeòs *Quadripartitum*¹¹⁶. From his letters, one can learn that he also wrote a tragedy about the passion of Christ and in 1533 a tragedy about the story of Brutus, that he sent to his friend Lorenzo Strozzi. The latter was cooperating to the drafting of the work upon Brutus¹¹⁷. Unfortunately this work is nowadays lost.

In 1535 he wrote *Il Discorso delle cose d'Italia al santissimo padre e nostro Signore Papa Paolo III*. In this work, the author addressed himself directly to the new Pope, Paolo III, Alessandro Farnese, who represented a hope for the Florentine republicans. He was in fact an enemy of the Emperor Charles V and he could help them in their attempt to upset the Medici's power. The words written by Giannotti in this essay were really passionate. He wrote a heartfelt appeal to the Pope to organize an alliance of the Italian States supported by France and England, in order to fight against the Habsburgs, to avoid that Italy becomes an exclusive domain held by Charles V. He was indeed afraid that Italian States were near to lose completely their independence.

Another work composed during the time of the exile is: *Della repubblica fiorentina*. Giannotti started to write his essay devoted to the issue of the model of government to settle in Florence in 1531, meaning to dedicate his work at the very beginning to Pope Clement VII. Of course, the repub-

¹¹³ F. RUSSO, *L'idea di res publica e pensiero anti-tirannico in Donato Giannotti negli anni dell'esilio*, in AA.VV., «Annali dell'Università Suor Orsola Benincasa», Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, Napoli 2009, vol. 1, pp. 207-222.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁵ D. GIANNOTTI, *Il vecchio amoroso*, in N. BORSELLINO (a cura di), *Commedie del Cinquecento*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1962, pp. 3-83; T. PICQUET, *Le theatre du Cinquecento et la crise de la famille. Donato Giannotti, le vieillard amoureux*, in AA.VV., «Theatres du monde», *Theatre et société: la famille en question*, Études recueillies et présentées par Maurice Abiteboul, Université d'Avignon, 6 (1996), pp. 15-28.

¹¹⁶ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 98-100.

¹¹⁷ D. GIANNOTTI, *Lettere italiane*, F. DIAZ (a cura di), Marzorati, Milano 1974, p. 26; R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., pp. 97-98; W.J. LANDON, *Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi and Niccolò Machiavelli. Patron, client and the "Pistola fatta per la peste"*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto - Buffalo - London 2013, pp. 29-30.

lican feelings and the political choices of the authors were in favour of a different solution for the Constitutional orders of the city, from the one that was going on under Alessandro de' Medici's rule. The perfect model to Donato Giannotti always remained the mixed republican Constitution, drafted by Aristotle and Polybius and Machiavelli, and embodied in his contemporary times by the Republic of Venice. So in the following years, in the new drafts, Giannotti's republican proposal became more clear and the author felt completely detached from any commitment to the Medicis. His essay *Della repubblica fiorentina* went under several reviews and afterthoughts. There was a second draft around 1532 and a general review around 1538, but the author kept on rewriting parts of it during his life time¹¹⁸. He never published it. Nonetheless, there was a project to edit this work in France. The author gave the manuscript to Jacopo Corbinelli, who was in exile. This project yielded no result and Giannotti fearing for his own life, asked Corbinelli to send him back the manuscript (a copy of the original one), because he knew that the political content of his work was too "dangerous" for him. He preferred to avoid to have new disagreements with the imperial-Medicean side¹¹⁹. The work was in effect published long after Giannotti's death. It was printed in 1721 in Venice, by Gabriel Hertz¹²⁰. It is extremely interesting to examine shortly the content of *Della repubblica fiorentina* and the historical circumstances that lead Giannotti to review the manuscript of his work newly around 1538¹²¹.

This treatise was really connected to the defeat of Florentine republicans and it witnessed their hopes to transform the situation in Florence and their political proposal for establishing a balanced structure of power¹²².

The historical circumstances in Florence had a sudden change on the night of the Epiphany in 1537. On 6th January 1537, Lorenzino de' Medici, cousin, courtier and trusted friend of the Duke, killed the Duke Alessan-

¹¹⁸ G. CADONI, *Ancora sulla "Repubblica fiorentina" di Donato Giannotti: per una cronologia delle varianti d'autore*, in «Storia e Politica», 19 (1980), pp. 1-27; D. GIANNOTTI, *Della Repubblica fiorentina*, T.S. PICQUET (a cura di), *Introduzione*, Aracne, Roma 2011.

¹¹⁹ P. CARTA, *I fuoriusciti italiani e l'antimachiavellismo francese del Cinquecento*, in «Il pensiero politico», 36 (2003), pp. 93-117.

¹²⁰ D. GIANNOTTI, *Della repubblica fiorentina libri quattro*, per Gio. Gabriel Hertz, Venezia 1721.

¹²¹ D. GIANNOTTI, *Repubblica fiorentina*, G. SILVANO (a critical edition and introduction by), Droz, Genève 1990, pp. 67-68.

¹²² G. CADONI, *L'autocritica di Donato Giannotti*, in *Id.*, *Crisi della mediazione politica e conflitti sociali. Niccolò Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini e Donato Giannotti di fronte al tramonto della "Florentina Libertas"*, Jouvence, Roma 1994, p. 237.

dro¹²³. That was an unexpected event. Lorenzino acted almost alone, with the help of a servant, taking advantage of his proximity to Alessandro and of the Duke's trust¹²⁴. He then locked in his room the Alessandròs corpse and escaped from Florence, to bring the happy news of the Tyrant's death to the Florentine republicans who were in exile, the so-called *fuoriusciti*, and most of all to Filippo Strozzi, their political leader¹²⁵. At the very beginning they could not believe him. He was considered such as a good friend, almost a servant of the Duke and it seemed impossible that he had changed his mind and killed him¹²⁶. But soon after, the unexpected news of Alessandròs death spread itself quickly from Florence, and a new wave of hope arose among the opponents of the Medici's regime¹²⁷. Lorenzino was celebrated for his audacity. He was considered the homeland's liberator, and named and praised as the "Florentine Brutus"¹²⁸.

In the meantime in Florence, the proposal made by Innocenzo Cybo to have Alessandròs five years old son recognized as ruler of the city was rejected. The *Quarantotto* (the Florentine council) approved Francesco Guicciardini's proposition to call Cosimo de' Medici as *Capo primario del governo della città*¹²⁹. That solution was considered weak by the *fuoriusciti*, being Cosimo a very young man, but it proved to be a successful choice for the Medici. On 1559 Cosimo became the first Grand Duke of the whole Tuscany, and his power on his State was thus formalized¹³⁰.

In 1537, The *fuoriusciti* tried to put together an army to overthrow the young Cosimo and to bring back the republican free institutions in Florence, but it took them a long time to overcome their inner divisions. They created an army lead by Filippo Strozzi, but it was too late, because Cosimòs power was already settled¹³¹.

When the battle took place in Montemurlo, in late July 1537, the Medicis front was in a more favourable situation. The republicans were finally defeated and on 1 August 1537 and Filippo Strozzi was taken as prisoner. He then committed suicide.

It was a bitter disappointment for the republicans and it was the last real chance that they really had to overthrow the Medici's power, even if

¹²³ F. RUSSO, *Bruto a Firenze. Mito, immagine e personaggio*, cit., p. 286.

¹²⁴ *Ibi*, pp. 286-294.

¹²⁵ *Ibi*, pp. 293-295.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁷ *Ibi*, pp. 294-295.

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁹ R. VON ALBERTINI, *Firenze dalla Repubblica al Principato*, cit., pp. 207-209.

¹³⁰ G. SPINI, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del principato mediceo*, Vallecchi, Firenze 1980.

¹³¹ R. VON ALBERTINI, *Firenze dalla Repubblica al Principato*, cit., pp. 215-224.

many of them (and among them Giannotti) did not accept the Medici's government. They tried their best during their whole life to restore the *vivere civile*, the republican institutions, in Florence. The *fuoriusciti* were discussing animatedly among themselves after Montemurlo battle to assign to one faction or to another (most of all the aristocrats against the so-called *popolari*) the blame for the defeat¹³². The last draft of *Della repubblica fiorentina* written in 1538 was affected by this controversial mood¹³³. Giannotti was not personally involved in the battle of Montemurlo, but he had openly praised the tyrant's death made by Lorenzino and he had supported the effort of the republicans¹³⁴. He hoped in the restoration of political freedom in Florence¹³⁵. He was bitterly disappointed by the final defeat of the group headed by Filippo Strozzi¹³⁶. He wrote in the last review of his *Della repubblica fiorentina* his frustration and his criticisms against Florentine aristocracy, because they did not give any real help to the republicans¹³⁷. Nevertheless, he did not want to give up his hopes for Florence and he meant to enlighten his project for a better Constitution for his city. This aim is well-rendered in the *Dedication* of the work, written to the Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, as a symbol of the republican faction¹³⁸. He was one of the leaders of the Florentine emigrants, opponents to the Medici, with whom Donato Giannotti worked as secretary from 1539 until Ridolfi's death in 1550¹³⁹. He was very active in supporting the hopes of *fuoriusciti* to overturn the Medici's government and to restore freedom in Florence. In the *Dedication* of *Della repubblica fiorentina*, the author explained from the very beginning his passionate intent to fight to set Florence free from tyranny¹⁴⁰. He praised the role of the tyrant's slayer, who must be considered as a political hero, as someone who risks his life

¹³² P. SIMONCELLI, *Fuoriuscitemo repubblicano fiorentino 1530-54 (volume primo-1530-37)*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2006, pp. 246-335.

¹³³ G. CADONI, *L'autocritica di Donato Giannotti*, in ID., *Crisi della mediazione politica e conflitti sociali*, cit., p. 237.

¹³⁴ F. DIAZ, *Introduzione*, in D. GIANNOTTI, *Opere politiche e Lettere italiane (1526-1571)*, cit., p. 16.

¹³⁵ R. STARN, *Donato Giannotti and his Epistolae*, cit., pp. 138-143.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹³⁷ G. CADONI, *L'autocritica di Donato Giannotti*, in ID., *Crisi della mediazione politica e conflitti sociali*, cit., p. 237.

¹³⁸ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., p. 109; D. GIANNOTTI, *Della Repubblica fiorentina*, T.S. PICQUET (a cura di), cit. p. 3.

¹³⁹ F. RUSSO, *L'idea di res publica e pensiero anti-tirannico in Donato Giannotti negli anni dell'esilio*, cit. pp. 212-213.

¹⁴⁰ R. RIDOLFI, *Sommario della vita di Donato Giannotti*, cit., p. 109.

to help his community¹⁴¹. But it was not enough. In fact, if the republic had been well-organized, before the establishment of tyranny, it would have been just necessary to kill the tyrant and restore the free institution, in order to let political life resume its natural and peaceful functioning¹⁴². On the contrary, if the republic, before the tyrant had assumed the power, had been very badly organized, it would not have been enough to kill the tyrant, but it would have been extremely important to reform the institutions, to help the republic to survive for a long time¹⁴³.

That was really the particular case of Florence according to Giannotti. The evidence of this statement was given from the failure of the previous republics (1494-1512; 1527- 1530)¹⁴⁴. By his personal political experience, the author stated that these republics failed in giving themselves well-balanced Constitutions, that could be able to contain social conflicts¹⁴⁵. So when the political international situation was not favourable and they were under attack, they fell apart because they were already weakened by the fight among the internal factions¹⁴⁶. It is thus extremely important for the author to write a proposal of Constitution for Florence. It is necessary to set the city free from the Medici's tyranny, but also to provide a new, strong and balanced institutional order for the republic to come. That is the main aim that *Della repubblica fiorentina* should achieve¹⁴⁷. Giannotti wanted to give his contribution for the liberation of his homeland. His political experience and his theoretical competence were well-mixed in his essay, that witnessed his enduring faith and hope for Florence, even if he was extremely disappointed by the happenings of Montemurlo, and by the betrayal of Florentine aristocracy, who preferred the Medici's rule to the free institutions¹⁴⁸.

In the first book of *Della repubblica fiorentina*, Giannotti portrayed Florence as a city possessing all the qualities described by Aristotle for the establishment of a mixed Constitution. He also wanted to demonstrate that this kind of Constitution was the best one. He invoked Polybius' authority

¹⁴¹ D. GIANNOTTI, *Della Repubblica fiorentina*, T.S. PICQUET (a cura di), cit. pp. 3-6.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibi*, pp. 47-113.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibi*, pp. 193-243.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibi*, p. 243.

to explain his convictions¹⁴⁹. Giannotti strongly believed that a mixed republic was the model to establish in Florence¹⁵⁰.

It represented better than any other kind of government the different *umori* (social and political factions) living in the city and it succeeds in harmonizing them at best. The “mixture” should, according to Giannotti, be arranged not in an equal way, but so that one part comes first, and the others follows in a prescribed sequence. The government should not lean to the aristocrats, because there could be the danger that they would aspire to rule alone. It should be better to have a predominance of the popular faction, in order to preserve free institutions. Giannotti also wanted to establish a long-life *gonfalonierato* and a *milizia propria*, made by the citizen’s who are convened to defend their freedom.

His constitutional theory is very developed and following his political experience, his knowledge of history, and also the model of Venice and referring himself to his main authors (Aristotle, Polybius, Machiavelli), he described a new political order for the Florentine republic to be established. He strongly believed that it was important that the people who gave the advices in the republic were not the same called to decide upon the same issues. Giannotti never published his essay *Della repubblica fiorentina* during his life. It has been published in Venice in 1721¹⁵¹.

In 1539 he moved to Rome where he started to work as secretary for Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, one of the most important leaders of Florentine *fuoriusciti*¹⁵². Giannotti hoped in Ridolfi’s support for his personal needs but also for the liberation of Florence¹⁵³. At the time of Pope Paul III, Rome was one of the centres of the political opposition against the Medici¹⁵⁴. This conspicuous political activity appears also from Giannotti’s *Epistolae* published by Starn. In one of his letters (1541) he praised Lorenzo de’Medici, the “Florentine Brutus” for his bravery¹⁵⁵. In the *Dialogi de’ giorni che Dante consumò nel cercare l’Inferno e’l Purgatorio*, written in 1546, Giannotti expressed again his admiration for Alessandro de Medici’s slayer and his faith in the killing of the tyrant as a political solution to

¹⁴⁹ *Ibi*, p. 9-16.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵¹ D. GIANNOTTI, *Della repubblica fiorentina libri quattro*, cit.

¹⁵² F. RUSSO, *L’idea di res publica e pensiero anti-tirannico in Donato Giannotti negli anni dell’esilio*, cit. pp. 212-213.

¹⁵³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁴ G. BENZONI, *Paolo III*, in AA.VV., *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, vol. 3, Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 2000, pp. 91-111; G. FRAGNITO, *Paolo III*, in AA.VV., *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 81, Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 2014.

¹⁵⁵ Cfr. R. STARN, *Donato Giannotti and his Epistolae*, cit., pp. 138-143.

restore freedom. He showed to adhere to the myth of Brutus, following the tradition of Florentine civic humanism¹⁵⁶.

On the contrary, his friend Michelangelo, who was one of the main character of this work, written as a dialogue, did not trust anymore in the myth of Brutus that he had praised in his younger years¹⁵⁷. He appeared intensely disappointed towards the political situation in Florence and he had lost his hopes for a republican restoration. He showed to be afraid for the future¹⁵⁸. He was worried about what could happen after the tyrant's death. So he stated that it was better to keep in power an unsatisfactory Lord, than to kill him. One could always try to persuade him to change his mind and rule better, instead of choosing an uncertain future. In fact, after his death, there was always the risk of the blast of a civil war or of having a worse ruler. Giannotti did not agree on his friend's negative opinion. He still hoped that a political change in Florence could happen¹⁵⁹. This work remained unpublished until 1859¹⁶⁰.

In 1550 Ridolfi died. Giannotti started to work as secretary for Cardinal François de Tournon and remained in his role up to 1562, when the Cardinal died¹⁶¹. Tournon was a influential diplomat. He was in charge to embody the interests of the monarchy of France at the *Curia romana*. He played a very important strategic role in the Italian peninsula¹⁶². He encouraged the revolt of Siena against Spain in 1552, helping the republicans to restore free institutions there under the shelter of France. This was a very important occasion for the republicans to undermine the political

¹⁵⁶ D. GIANNOTTI, *De' giorni che Dante consumò nel cercare l'Inferno e'l Purgatorio*, cit., pp. 96-97.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*. See also A. RIKLIN, *Giannotti, Michelangelo und der Tyrannenmord*, Stämpfli, Bern - Wien 1996; trad. it., *Giannotti, Michelangelo e il tirannicidio*, cit; See also H. GRIMM, *Leben Michelangelos*, Phaidon Verlag, Wien - Leipzig 1983, pp. 679-680; S. SARACINO, *Tyrannis und Tyrannenmord bei Machiavelli. Zur Genese einer antitraditionellen Auffassung politischer Gewalt, politischer Ordnung und Herrschaftsmoral*, Wilhem Fink, München 2012, p. 37; F. RUSSO, *Bruto a Firenze. Mito, immagine e personaggio*, cit., pp. 272-280; ID., *L'idea di res publica e pensiero anti-tirannico in Donato Giannotti negli anni dell'esilio*, cit., pp. 217-219; P. SIMONCELLI, *Antimediceï nelle "Vite" vasariane*, vol. I, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, Roma 2016, pp. 150-151.

¹⁶⁰ D. GIANNOTTI, *De' giorni che Dante consumò nel cercare l'Inferno e'l Purgatorio*, Tipografia Galileana, Firenze 1859.

¹⁶¹ F. RUSSO, *L'idea di res publica e pensiero anti-tirannico in Donato Giannotti negli anni dell'esilio*, cit. p. 220.

¹⁶² M. FRANÇOIS, *Le cardinal François de Tournon: homme d'État, diplomate, mécène et humaniste (1489-1562)*, Boccard, Paris 1951; F. TOURNON, *Correspondance (1521-1562)*, M. FRANÇOIS (recueillée, publiée et annotée, par), H. Champion, Paris 1946.

balances in Tuscany¹⁶³. They considered Siena as the first step towards Florence. Unfortunately, the “war of Siena” ended in a defeat for the republicans and for France.

In 1552, Giannotti wrote for the occasion a political essay *Discorso sopra il riordinare la repubblica di Siena*¹⁶⁴. In this work, he offered his traditional pattern of a mixed Republic, where the *popolari* were at the base of the power. He underlined the urgent need of the institutional reforms. Siena was a very corrupted city, and changing in the organization of the institutions was necessary in order to be sure that political freedom could survive¹⁶⁵. The restored republic had there too many enemies. In fact, it did not survive too long¹⁶⁶.

After Tournon’s death, Giannotti moved to Venice, where he wrote, probably in 1563, *Sulla vita di Girolamo Savorgnano*, following the model of *Sulla vita e sulle azioni di Francesco Ferrucci*, written likely in 1547¹⁶⁷. They were both military biographies, describing the life of two fighters who sacrificed their lives to defend their homelands¹⁶⁸. Savorgnano died for the Venetian Republic. Francesco Ferruci died to defend the last Florentine republic. They were celebrated as republican heroes¹⁶⁹. Giannotti wanted to leave with his works witnesses of republican virtues. Nevertheless, he kept on writing about literature and about the history of the Church. He reviewed his *Epitomae historiae Ecclesiasticae*¹⁷⁰.

In 1571 he moved to Rome, where he was given a role in the *Curia romana* by Pope Pius V, but he was already very ill and he could not take up his position. Soon afterwards, on 27th December 1573 he died¹⁷¹.

Donato Giannotti was one of the last witnesses of Florentine republican tradition, that he tried to perpetuate with his political works. He had a

¹⁶³ R. CANTAGALLI, *La guerra di Siena (1552-1559): i termini della questione senese nella lotta fra Francia e Asburgo nel Cinquecento e il suo risolversi nell’ambito del principato mediceo*, Accademia degli Intronati, Siena 1962.

¹⁶⁴ D. GIANNOTTI, *Discorso sopra il riordinare la repubblica di Siena*, in ID., *Opere politiche*, F. DIAZ (a cura di), cit., pp. 443-455.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶⁶ F. RUSSO, *L’idea di res publica e pensiero anti-tirannico in Donato Giannotti negli anni dell’esilio*, cit. p. 221.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibi*, pp. 221-222.

¹⁶⁸ D. GIANNOTTI, *Sulla vita e sulle azioni di Francesco Ferrucci, e Sulla vita di Girolamo Savorgnano*, cit., pp. 433-441, pp. 457-470.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷⁰ S. MARCONI, *Giannotti Donato*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani*, cit., pp. 532-533; G. CAMPBELL, *Giannotti Donato* in AA.VV., *The Oxford Dictionary of Renaissance*, cit., 2003, p. 334; D. HÖCHLI, *Donato Giannotti*, cit. pp. 110-111.

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

remarkable success with *Libro de'la republica de'Vinitiani*, which was for a long time considered a reference text for the political writers who wanted to reflect upon the model of mixed Constitution. All the translations of this essay show the achievements of Giannotti's efforts to leave a political trace of the noble and estimated tradition of Italian republicanism. Venice was to him the institutional model to imitate, even if, his commitments, as a politician and as a political writer, were devoted mostly to Florence and to Tuscany, where he hoped to see a republican restoration. It did not happen. Giannotti had a European circulation with *Libro de'la republica de'Vinitiani*. He succeeded to gain a real "Italian" success during his life with his treatise upon Venice and most of all, between the end of Eighteenth and the beginning of Nineteenth century, when the issue of republicanism came back into the political debate. He was rediscovered and his works were published in several editions of collected works, in the framework of a general research upon the cultural roots of Italian republican tradition.

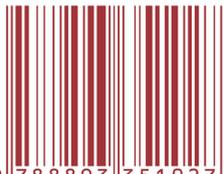


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