barred from access to the sites, they strug
gled to rescue from oblivion, if they could
not from decay, an important testimony
to an authentic monastic spirituality and
presence in Metohija. Unreservedly dedi-
cated to their work, which involved field
research in a less than friendly environ-
ment, they were given a generous reward:
in company with Dečani monks, they
lived to “hear, after more than three cen-
turies, the gorge of the Bistrica reverber-
ate with the sound of troparia, which, at
least for a brief moment, restored to the
Dečani Desert some of its original spir-
ituality and blissful peace”. D. Popović, B.
Todić and D. Vojvodić have given future
generations of scholars, as well as inter-
ested readers, a remarkable book which
will be a must-read for a comprehensive
understanding of the Serbian past of Ko-
sovo and Metohija. At the same time, it
will be a comprehensive and exceptionally
well-documented case study for compara-
tive research into Eastern Christian an-
choritic monasticism.

Nicolas Vatin, Gilles Veinstein and Elizabeth Zachariadou, Catalogue
du fonds ottoman des archives du monastère de Saint-Jean à Patmos les vingt-
deux premiers dossiers. Athens: Fondation nationale de la recherche
scientifique, Institut de recherches byzantines, 2011, pp. 673.

Reviewed by Ognjen Krešić*

In 1997, the Institute for Byzantine
Studies (Institut de recherches byzantines)
of the National Foundation for Scient-
tific Research (Fondation nationale de la
recherche scientifique) and the Centre for
Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan and Central-
Asian Studies (Centre d’études turque, otto-
mans, balkaniques et centrasiatiques) of the
National Centre for Scientific Research
(Centre national de la recherche scientifique/
CNRS) started collaboration on an archi-
val research project concerning the Otto-
man documents preserved in the monas-
tery of Saint John the Theologian on Pat-
mos. The actual archival work began four
years later, when the first research team
arrived in the monastery. It was made up
of Elizabeth Zahariadou, retired profes-
sor of Turkish studies at the Department
of History and Archaeology of the Uni-
versity of Crete, Nicolas Vatin, director of
research at the CNRS, and Gilles Vein-
stein, professor at the Collège de France
and director of studies at the School for
Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences
(École des hautes études en sciences sociales).

The result of their work is the first volume
of a catalogue of Ottoman documents
published in 2011. The volume offers the
summaries of 823 documents divided
into folders (Z, 1b, and from 1 to 20),
which span the period from the fifteenth
to the middle of the seventeenth cen-
tury, including several documents dating
from later centuries. The remaining part
of the archival material, consisting of 522
mostly eighteenth- and nineteenth-cen-
tury documents, is in the process of being
prepared by Michael Ursinus, and should
also appear in the form of a catalogue.

The book consists of an introduc-
tion to the Catalogue and Appendix (pp.
9–28), the Catalogue with summaries of
every document (pp. 29–566), the indexes
of personal names, most important func-
tionaries and place names, a topical index,
a chronological list of the monastery’s

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hegumens, a genealogical table of the Diakos family, and a glossary (pp. 567–664). The authors made detailed summaries of every document, which provide basic diplomatic information about the type of document, date of issue, issuer and recipient, signature and seal, contents of the reverse side, dimensions, a summary of the main text in French and, where needed, additional remarks. Most documents have short commentaries or additional information written on them in Greek, and the authors included them in summaries. They also included in their remarks all available information about the persons mentioned in the documents or drew attention to interconnections between different documents.

At the time when the Ottomans incorporated the island of Patmos into their sphere of influence the monastery of Saint John had already had a long history. It was not only the religious centre of the island but, during the last decades of Byzantine rule, it also became the most important administrative institution that governed the lives of the islanders. Facing the new developments on the neighbouring Anatolian coast, where the Turkish emirates of Aydın and Menteşe were founded, and the rapid decline of Byzantine central authority, the monastery continued to fortify its influence, and the island became a “small, practically independent, monastic state”. In exchange for the preservation of its autonomous status, the monastery paid a tribute to the emirs of Menteşe. It is believed that the monastery established relations with the Ottomans as soon as they conquered the coastal emirates, but it was only after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, that Patmos finally became part of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman central government did not formally recognize the temporal authority of the hegumen and his status was not sanctioned by a berat. As a result, communication went through the Patriarchate and the local authorities. On the other hand, the local authorities were well aware of the influential role of the monastery and its hegumen in the life of the inhabitants of Patmos.

The fact that the monastery was so involved in the functioning of the island’s society and that it had developed relations with Ottoman authorities, especially local, explains the great number and diversity of Ottoman documents preserved in its archive. Most are various types of certificates and attestations issued by the kadi (büccets, temessüks), but there is also a rich collection of documents issued by the central (fermans, berats) and local authorities (such as pashas, beys, kapudan-pashas). An especially interesting feature of the monastery’s Ottoman collection is that it contains a considerable number of documents of a private nature. Given that the island was a sacred and geographically well protected place, many people, and not only locals, chose to deposit their valuables and important documents in the monastery vaults. Moreover, the islanders used the monastery as a kind of public archives. Therefore, those interested in the life of the islanders can obtain information about various types of everyday transactions and about the kind of problems that caused them trouble.

The archive of such an important institution as the monastery of Saint John on Patmos undoubtedly is a mine of information for various areas of academic interest. In the first place, there are economic topics. The monastery possessed a large number of estates, scattered on different Aegean islands, and its monks were actively engaged in trade. Thus, researchers can follow the functioning of the monastery’s economy, the collection of revenues from its properties and the complicated operation of transporting products both to the island and to other Ottoman territories. Closely connected with this is the question of rela-
tions between the monastery and local authorities and payment of taxes due to the state. The monastery's rights over its estates and sources of income were often disputed by neighbours or local notables, and with the help of many documents one can reconstruct how such problems were handled and resolved. Also, the Ottoman documents can provide some information about the relationship between the monks and religious authorities, notably the Patriarchate in Constantinople.

The archival material from a monastery situated on an island is, of course, of great interest to researchers concerned with any topic relating to the sea. Patmos was involved in the Aegean trade network, but its trade connections were not limited to the nearby regions, but encompassed the whole of the Mediterranean. Apart from trade, the documents also provide information about agriculture and animal husbandry on the Aegean islands. The sea can bring as many problems as benefits to insular communities. The Patmiots experienced many problems caused by piracy, and several documents testify to the aid they extended to the victims of pirate attacks.

The Catalogue of the Ottoman documents in the Archive of the Monastery of Saint John on Patmos can be highly useful to all researchers interested in the history of the Orthodox monasteries in the Ottoman Empire. The documents provide information about the functioning of the monastery as an institution, about its economic activities and its relationship with Ottoman central and local authorities. Moreover, given the distinctive role that the monastery of Saint John played in the society of the island, its archive is also a source of valuable information about the life of all inhabitants of the island. Taken as a whole, these documents can give us a picture of the life on an Aegean island under Ottoman rule, which could never be completely isolated from events taking place elsewhere across the vast empire.


Reviewed by Aleksandra Kolaković*

Jovan Avukumović (1841–1928), Serbian jurist, politician, and member of Royal Serbian Academy, was one of the figures who marked the political and social scene in Serbia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A descendant of the merchant Babadudić family, he graduated in law from the Great School (*Velika škola*) in Belgrade and then continued his law studies in Germany, France and Switzerland. Avukumović began his career as first secretary of the Court of Cassation (1871), and held the office of mayor of Belgrade (1875), chief of the Police Department of the Ministry of Interior (1875–1880) and judge of the Court of Cassation (1881–1887).

As a member of the Liberal Party, Avukumović served twice as Minister of Justice, in the cabinet of Jovan Ristić (1881) and the coalition cabinet of Liberals and Radicals (1887). He was Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1892 until the King Alexander Obrenović’s coup d’État of 1893, which was the reason why the Radicals demanded that Avukumović and some other

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